

BIBLICAL RECORDER

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JOSIAH WILLIAM BAILEY, EDITOR.

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REST: FOR THE MASTER AND HIS PEOPLE.

There were times we know in the Master's life when He went apart—retired from sight of all mankind. It is explained now and then that He went apart to pray, or that He separated Himself in preparation for some unusually important task, or He rested. He grew weary. On the road through Samaria He sat by the well—tired. He drew the deep breath of weariness and knew the half-relief of relaxation. But He was not too tired to give to the woman that came of the Water of Life—the sole relief for the world weariness. Doubtless there were other times when He grew weary of the contact with men and women—a weariness that those who have known it recognize as peculiarly trying; or weary of that ceaseless conflict—for Jesus saw and felt the conflict between Himself and the World even when the surface of conditions was undisturbed; or weary of the slowness of His chosen followers to apprehend Him—a weariness that well might have broken His heart; or weary of the burden of a life that was busy with tremendous business though so poised that it seems ever calm and easy; or weary of a task whose gravity was far beyond human power to appreciate or endure but which was accomplished with a mastery that marks it almost light in thoughtless human estimation; or weary with sorrow, the sorrow of the world's hardness, the sorrow of a cruel doom; the sorrow of a life that was denied all but the least of the measure of human fellowship it craved, that denied Him even His mother's understanding;—weary, yes, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of the Living God, would grow weary, and had undoubted reason to do so. He who came bringing rest to all peoples, craved it at times for Himself with heart and body aching.

And He found it in retirement, in going apart.

Dr. Broadus scouts the notion that Jesus never smiled. Surely He smiled. Sitting in the homes of His friends, or guest at some wedding occasion, or teaching His chosen ones, surely the light of pleasure broke upon His face. Nevertheless there was reserve in it. He did not smile just so. He was restrained by the stupendous mission that He was charged with, and in the light that broke upon His face was vaguely though surely, the shadow of the Cross. It was peace that He had rather than pleasure. If ever there was an earnest life, it was His; if ever there was a grave life, it was His. Men say, with a sneer, of this or that man, "He takes life too seriously" or "he takes himself too seriously;" "he fails to see the humor in things." Very well perhaps for us mere men to perceive that we are of no great consequence, and therefore need not grow so hot over our little to-dos. But Jesus—that sort of humor could not succor Him. His recourse was—apart; was retirement; was rest; was fellowship with God, fellowship undisturbed.

Prayer—that fellowship; for it is fellowship always—must be the great recreating spring, the supreme source of rest, to all His followers. One good hour of such fellowship will renew the wings of life. To be sure we find God in the crowd and in the daily round of work; but the rest of God, the fellowship of God, that comes in fullness only where nothing else is suffered to disturb. It is a great hour when that tide flows in.

Let the men who say that there is no time to retire remember Jesus. If ever man had no time, surely He! There are men who say that the minister should not rest lest Satan slip in in his absence. But Jesus who had the real battle to wage, gave Satan that opportunity.

Truth is, rest is demanded by the economy of the kingdom of heaven as well as by human na-

ture. Satan will overcome a tired minister far sooner than a flock that is resting their shepherd. The human mind and heart and body grow tired. The machinery will not work. Instead of life flowing forth one must bail it out with buckets—ever a warning. The man falls into a rut. His style wants freshness. His message seems flat. He himself is stale. And all is unprofitable.

Give him leave to "come apart and rest a while." Nothing less will save him.

It is now early summer. In a few weeks the vacation season will be on. Health resorts and pleasure resorts and all resorts will be crowded in a few days. We hope that hundreds of our readers will seek rest somewhere. Would that the husbands and sons that may read this sentence might think to give their patient wives and mothers a trip, a holiday, a period of change and diversion. How sweet life would grow again! And we would, too, that the men who are working as if this life were all and there were no heaven, might come apart and take time for the higher things. And, last, but not least, we would make a plea for the preacher.

The North Carolina Baptist preacher and his wife, we know them. In Conventions and by fire-sides we have met them. Good and true and cheerful despite all around; their thought for others, their lives offered as sacrifices in hundreds of unheralded denials, they accept their lot and do their work as become followers of the loving and patient Master. Candidly, they do not receive what they deserve. A few are right well paid; some are right well loved. But there is room for vast improvement. It means so much to a preacher to be encouraged. It means so terribly much to one not to be encouraged. His life is given to love; and if unloved—well, he at least has fresh fellowship with his Master. We heard a man say of a preacher in this State the other day that his heart is breaking because his congregations are falling away and his people are growing indifferent. It is enough.

Shall we men and women in Baptist churches in North Carolina not say to our ministers and their wives this summer: "We value you, we love you; you deserve rest; let us give it to you"? It will cost little; it will burden no one; but it will be a great contribution to the cause of Christ.

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER.

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him,
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came.
—Sidney Lanier.

A RULE.

"If you your lips would keep from slips, five things observe with care: of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how and when and where." It is important also to note what you speak.—Exchange.

HOW CLOSE?

"A man once advertised for a coachman. Of each applicant he asked this question: "How near to a precipice could you drive without going over?" One said within a yard, another a foot, etc., but one answered, "I would keep as far from it as possible." He got the job."

REASONS FOR FREE TEXT BOOKS.

BY THOMAS H. BRIGGS, JUNIOR.

All the American commonwealths, all enlightened modern nations, are thoroly committed to the principle of free public education. To make the school free is to make free all that belongs to it. To the school belongs the house and grounds, the furniture, the apparatus, the teacher, school stationery and text-books. The child needs a book to study, pencil and paper for the expression of his thoughts as much as a seat to sit in, a roof to shelter him, or a teacher to instruct him.

The free school idea has been an evolution. At first only the building was furnished at public cost, then fuel and apparatus, then a part of the teacher's salary. Fifty years ago tuition was charged in almost every State. Free instruction was next added, then came free chalk and free ink, school libraries and supplementary reading. Only one step is needed to make the schools of Illinois altogether free, namely free text-books.

The movement toward free text-books has shown a like progressive development. First has come free books for indigent children, next a law permitting districts to furnish books and supplies, lastly legislation requiring them to do so. At present ten States and Territories, all south of Mason and Dixon's line, make no provision for free text-book laws. Ten have compulsory free text-book laws. Most large cities outside of the States of the last class furnish free text-books.

The positive advantages of free text-books are:

1. They increase the school attendance; this is established by the uniform testimony of superintendents wherever free text-books are introduced.

2. They save time in the organization of the school. Not only is time lost while the children are "waiting for pay day or for father to go to town," but delay chills the enthusiasm. They become restless, inattentive, mischievous and unmanageable.

3. They will secure complete uniformity of books within the class or grade. Such uniformity is lacking in a large fraction of our rural schools. Tenant farmers, miners, and railroad men make frequent changes of residence. School boards hesitate to demand of these new comers a fresh supply of new text-books.

4. They enable teachers to control better the organization and management of their school.

5. They make possible a richer course for lower grades. Two series of readers may be had for alternate classes.

6. They make it easier to change text-books where changes are needed. Many schools are still using books that have been officially pronounced by State Superintendents as "obsolete and unfit."

7. Free text-books are vastly cheaper for the community. They may be bought at wholesale and used with successive classes. The average annual cost in the experience of several cities is less than one dollar per pupil. In stationery the saving is still greater. Dealers selling at retail must make large profits. Children are usually unable to take proper care of their stationery when purchased. Investigation shows that under private purchase, the cost of text-books and stationery is nearly three times as great as under a district purchase system.

8. Free text-books afford new opportunities to enforce lessons of respect for public property, a sort of education sadly needed in many communities.

A free text-book system would not require every child to use the free books. Parents may buy private copies for their children if they wish to do so. In other States this is rarely done. The furnishing of text-books to indigent children only is not satisfactory. In fully one-third of the districts investigated the needed books are not furnished. Many pupils are unwilling to accept the loaned books if the act carries with it the implication of pauperism. The public school is not the place for stamping the brand of inferiority upon the children of the poor.

Free text-books do not involve free shoes. Text-books belong to the school and are a part of its equipment. The State has not undertaken to clothe its citizens, but it has undertaken to educate them and must see that it is well done. If free text-books make the school more efficient it is the plain duty of the State to provide them.