

THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

VOL. V. NO. 18.

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WHOLE NO. 227.

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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN

Presbytery of Winchester.

The Presbytery of Winchester met at Harper's Ferry on Wednesday, the 18th ult., at 7 1/2, P. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. W. H. Foutz, D. D. The clerical members were all present but one, viz: Rev. J. H. Jennings. Rev. L. F. Wilson was chosen Moderator, and Rev. J. O. Proctor, Temporary Clerk. The following Commissioners to the next General Assembly were chosen, viz: Rev. Charles White, (Principal), and Rev. John Johnston, (alternate), and Ruling Elders, Geo. Manry, (Principal), and Dr. Bushrod Taylor, (alternate). Valerius W. Wilson, son of Rev. L. F. Wilson, and now a student of Washington College, was taken under the care of Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. Mr. L. C. Vass, candidate, was dismissed to the care of West Hanover Presbytery.

Rev. W. H. Foutz, D. D., asked leave to resign a part of his pastoral charge; and it was resolved to cite the congregation of Patterson Creek to appear at the next meeting of Presbytery and show cause why their pastoral relation should not be dissolved. This change is designed to open the way for the introduction of a missionary into that field.

The organization of a new church at Barton, Alleghany county, Maryland, was reported.

The following standing committees were elected for the ensuing year, viz: **On Domestic Missions**—Rev. Messrs. Foutz, White, Johnston, and Woodworth. And ruling elders—L. F. Glass, and J. D. Armstrong.

On Education—Rev. Messrs. L. F. Wilson, Proctor, Dutton, and W. V. Wilson. Ruling elders—D. Gibson and P. R. Harrison.

On Church Extension—Rev. Messrs. White and Graham. Ruling elders—J. N. Bell.

In answer to the proposal submitted by the Synod to the consideration of Presbytery, it was resolved, That we respectfully decline any change in our bounds.

Each of the sessions of Presbytery was occupied in considering certain overtures from several of the churches, asking the Presbytery to memorialize the General Assembly to restore us to our former Synodical relations. It was unanimously

Resolved, 1. That the Presbytery of Winchester memorialize the General Assembly in 1861 for a change of her Synodical relations with the Synod of Baltimore, to the Synod of Virginia.

Resolved, 2. That the Synod of Baltimore be respectfully requested to throw no obstacle in the way of the proposed change, but to favor the requests of the memorialists.

The fact of the restoration of the Synod of Virginia within our bounds revealed the very gratifying fact that the spiritual condition of the churches was perhaps never more encouraging than at the present time. In one church (that of Romney) a revival of great power has occurred, and in all the churches, with two or three exceptions, cheering additions have been made. While in many there are numbers awaiting an opportunity to profess their faith in Christ.

The following supplies were appointed to vacant churches, and destitute places, viz: Rev. Messrs. Foutz, Raymond, Graham, White, Johnston, Woodworth and Campbell, one Sabbath each at discretion.

Rev. L. F. Wilson, one Sabbath at Sir Johns Run.

Rev. W. B. Dutton, one Sabbath at Kabetown.

Rev. J. H. Jennings, one Sabbath at North River, and one at Concord.

Rev. J. O. Proctor, one Sabbath at North River.

The following action was taken respecting the missionary work within our bounds, viz: **Resolved, 1st.** The Presbytery require churches making application for aid to the Board of Missions, to state the amount of salary which they will pay to their missionaries.

Resolved, 2. That said churches be called upon, year by year, to state whether the amounts promised by them for the support of their missionaries has been paid.

Resolved, 3. That Presbytery will not render its appropriations to the churches, until the amounts promised to the churches has been paid.

Resolved, 4. That as far as practicable missionaries shall be appointed at the regular meetings of Presbytery.

Resolved, 5. That the amount of aid to be given be determined by the Presbytery.

Resolved, 6. That no missionary be commissioned within the limits of any pastoral charge, other than the pastor of that charge.

The next stated meeting of Presbytery will be held at Romney, Wednesday, Oct. 3d, 1860 at 7 1/2, P. M.

The Presbytery will hold an adjourned meeting at Winchester, Tuesday, July 17th, at 7 1/2, P. M. J. B. GRAHAM, Sec. Clerk.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN

Presbytery of Winchester.

convenience and comfort to the dwellings of his most substantial neighbors.

For the above mercies and favors we desire to record our humble but heart-felt thanks to the Giver of all good.

ONE OF THE SESSIONS. **Fincastle, April 20th, 1860.**

FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN HERALD.

Dr. J. W. Alexander on Preaching.

Mr. Editor: The accompanying letter of my distinguished and lamented friend and relative, Dr. James W. Alexander, was addressed to me in the first year of my ministry—while pastor of the church of Winchester, Virginia. I send a copy for publication with the hope that it may prove as beneficial to others as it has been to me.

It is especially commended to the attentive perusal of young ministers and theological students. B. T. LACY, New York, March 6th, 1860.

FRANKFORT, March 22, 1847.

My Dear Sir: I was very glad to receive a letter from you, Mr. B., having previously taken pleasure in the news of your prosperous entrance upon the pastoral life.

You have much cause to rejoice in so early a settlement in a pleasing and important charge; you will need enough to do. Let me, as somewhat your senior, most earnestly exhort you to acquire and maintain, not merely an interest, but an enthusiasm in your profession. It is the lack of this which causes so many ministers to turn aside with the chief energies of their minds to collateral pursuits, and others, who avoid this fault, to arrive very speedily at the maximum of their ministerial stature. The totus in illis is nowhere more important; and I sometimes fancy it is not characteristic of our young preachers. Especially would I urge upon you the cultivation of a temper, which shall make you, every day in the week, regard your discourses as the chief affair of life.

All great preachers have done so. This will make your sermons the genuine efflux of interested feeling. Among your three weekly sermons, I hope you will have one of the expository sort. I have just finished the Hebrews, in a series of sixty-two lectures. No exercise has ever given me more pleasure, and none has been more tolerated by my hearers. I have studied the passage exegetically, but have taken no notes with me.

While I am glad that you write one sermon a week, I am not so clear that you ought to read it. "Haud imperitus loquor," I practice reading, once in three times, from long habit; but if I was to do the thing over again, and were at your stage, I would never take a line of manuscript into the pulpit. Pardon me when I add, that you will find advantage in treating all the great points, as soon and as often as possible. I made a special examination of this position, which has led many, including myself, to pass by those topics which are frequently discussed. For the same reason, I would prefer the trite text; for the necessity of the case, they must be most important ones. I made a special examination of hundreds of texts, in order, preached on by Wesley, Whitefield, and Robert Hall, and found that with few exceptions, they were all of the most hackneyed sort. It is a great saving of time, and tends to method and good preaching, to read a little theology every week on subjects to be used in sermons. My poor experience goes to this point, that the best sermons are pondered long, and then written as fast as possible.

Above all my dear friend, seek to preach sermons which flow out naturally from a full heart. Nothing so fills the minds with material as a depth of present experience. Viewing the subject in a purely rhetorical light, I believe half an hour of prayer is better than a day of study. The very glow sets the thoughts moving. Hence it is good to pray over a discourse to God before one preaches it to the people. Visiting every week, among truly pious parishioners, is very suggestive of preaching matter. McCluysne used to go to sick and dying persons on Saturday evening to get his feelings adjusted. I recommend to you to finish all preparations by Friday night. One day's rest is marvellously productive of spring on the Sabbath.

I am unable to find the genealogy of our family, of which you speak; but will have it copied for you whenever it turns up.

My wife and children and brother return to you their kindest regards. Our youngest child lies very ill. We are in the Lord's hands, and to him do I commend it. At Princeton all are as usual.

I am your sincere friend and kinsman, J. W. ALEXANDER.

COME TO CHURCH.—The Rector of St. Paul's church, Chatham, [England], had printed the following card for distribution: "To any man or woman who thinks his dress on her dress not good enough to come to church."

"DEAR FRIEND:—Your soul is more precious than your body. Do not let your dress keep you from the house of God."

"Come there, as you must come to Christ, just as you are."

"Do not deny yourself the pleasure of going to church, because you think your clothes are not good enough."

"God looks at a man's heart, not at his clothes."

"Jesus Christ spoke just as kindly to the poor beggar as he did to the rich Zaccheus (see Luke 18, and 19). But, in order that you may feel quite comfortable in attending the church, this paper is printed to tell you that if you go in at the North porch, and take any seat you like under the gallery, you will be in one of the best parts of the church, and can see and hear very nicely, while scarcely any one can see you."

"Come, then, in your working dress, if you have none other."

"Come in the morning and afternoon, as well as at night. All three services are different. Let your children sit with you. Your forefathers used to walk many miles to church. The Bible tells us 'not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together'; and Jesus invites us, saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

"While so much is being done abroad, it should provoke us to more labors at home."

Sabbath Reform.

Documents No. XII. of the N. York Sabbath committee is a pamphlet of 82 pages, showing the results of efforts to prevent the desecration of that day, and it speaks encouragingly of the success of their efforts in this direction. At a great public meeting at the Cooper Institute, Rev. Dr. Hoge, of the Brick Chapel, was one of the speakers. We copy his address from the document.

"He said he felt it was profitable though painful for them to be here. Most of them had come from influence, and made them feel that all was safe with them. But at the meeting they had had things that ought to make the stout heart quake. Would to God that all our industrious, honest citizens could be made to understand the true nature of the Sabbath."

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Parents Laying Up for Their Children.

How much! Is a parent bound to work harder than he is able, or to deny himself the comforts of life, to lay up for his children? In moderate circumstances he is bound to lay up all he can save and earn for them, over and above what he wants himself. Must it all be saved for them? May he give nothing away, because he is not rich? May he repulse all the agents of missionary and other charities, by saying, "I have nothing to give." If he is rich, may he hoard up all his great estate for his children? or if not so rich? These are serious questions—cases of conscience, I think, and not always easy to be settled.

Indeed there is no general rule, applicable to all cases, by which they can be settled. Where there is a large property, some families will need more and some less. "With man to go, his money is not safe."

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Process of Dying.

So prevailing is the dread of death, that death has been called the "King of Terrors." There are many things in connection with it which we know to be trying, and to these known trials, we attach agonies unknown. Hence we invest death with numerous strange and mysterious terrors, by which all our life time, we are held in bondage.

It is, however, quite possible that our imagination of the evils of the pangs of dissolution exceeds the reality, and that when "the pains, the groans, and dying struggles" come to be actually encountered, they will prove much less awful than we have feared. Touching this subject, the following from an article in the *London Quarterly*, will be found comforting and instructive.

"The pain of dying must be distinguished from the pain of the previous disease, for when life ebbs, sensibility declines. As death is the final extinction of corporeal feelings, so numbness increases as death comes on. The prostration of disease, the painful fatigue, engenders a growing stupor—a sensation of subsiding softly into a coveted repose. The transition resembles what might be seen in those lofty mountains, whose sides exhibiting every climate in regular gradation, vegetation luxuriates at their base, and dwindles in the approach to the regions of snow, till its feeblest manifestation is repressed by the cold. The so-called agony can never be more formidable than when the brain is the last to go, and the mind preserves to the end a rational cognizance of the state of the body. Yet persons thus situated commonly attest that there are few things in life less painful than the close. 'If I had strength enough to hold a pen,' said William Hunter, 'I would write how easy and delightful it is to die.' 'If this be dying,' said the niece of Newton, 'the very expression,' adds her uncle, 'which another friend of mine made use of on his death-bed a few years ago.' The same words have so often been uttered under similar circumstances; that we could fill pages with instances which are only varied by the name of the speaker. 'It is the easiest thing imaginable.' 'I thought that dying had been more difficult,' said Louis XIV. 'I did not suppose it was so easy to die,' said Francis Suarez, the Spanish theologian. An agreeable surprise was the prevailing sentiment with them all. They expected the stream to terminate in the dash of the torrent, and they found it was losing itself in the gentlest current. 'The whole of the faculties seem sometimes concentrated on the placid enjoyment. The day Arthur Murphy died he kept repeating from Pope,

"To-night half my reason, half by mere doze,
To welcome death, and calmly pass away."

"Nor does the calm partake of the sensitiveness of sickness. There was a swell in the sea the day Collingwood breathed his last upon the element which had been the scene of his glory. Captain Thomas expressed a fear that he was disturbed by the tossing of the ship; 'No, Thomas,' he replied, 'I am now in a state in which nothing in this world can disturb me more. I am dying; and am sure it must be consolatory to you, and all who love me, to see how comfortably I am coming to my end.'"

"A second and common condition of the dying is to be lost to themselves, and all around them, in utter unconsciousness. Countenance and gestures might in many cases suggest that, however dead to the external world, an interior sensibility still remained. But we have the evidence of those whom disease has left at the eleventh hour, that while their supposed sufferings were pined by their friends, existence was a blank. Montaigne, when stung by a fall from his horse, tore open his doublet; but he was entirely senseless, and only knew afterwards that he had done it from the information of the attendants. The delirium of fever is distressing to witness, but the victim awakes from it as from a heavy sleep, totally ignorant that he has passed days and nights tossing wearily and talking wildly. Persons who had occupied the entire of their lives in the pursuit of the instant of recovery; or, if any were inclined to adopt the solution, there is yet a proof that the callousness is real, in the unfeeling manner in which bad sores are rolled upon, that are too tender to bear touching when sense is restored. Wherever there is insensibility, virtual death precedes death itself, and to die is to awake in another world."

Power of Example.

REV. JOHN ANGELL JAMES' CONVERSION.—In a public lecture, Mr. James once said:

"If the present lecturer has a right to consider himself a real Christian, if he has been of any service to his fellow-creatures, and has attained to any usefulness in the church of Christ, he owes it in the way of means and instrumentality to the sight of a companion, who slept in the same room with him, bending his knees in prayer, on retiring to rest. 'That scene, so unostentatious, and yet so unconcealed, roused my slumbering conscience, and sent an arrow to my heart; for though I had been religiously educated, I had restrained prayer, and cast off the fear of God; my conversion to God followed, and soon afterwards my entrance upon college studies for the work of the ministry. Nearly half a century has rolled away since then, with all its multitudinous events; but that little chamber, that humble couch, that praying youth, are still present to my imagination, and will never be forgotten, even amidst the splendor of heaven, and through the ages of eternity.'"

A HAPPY MAN.—A minister was directed to go to a certain place, where he would find an instructor. When he came to the place, he found a man in ordinary attire, to whom he wished a good morning. "I never had a bad morning," replied the man. "That is very singular. I wish you may always be so fortunate." "I was never unfortunate," said he. "I hope you will always be as happy," said the divine. "I am never unhappy," said the other. "I wish," said the divine, "that you would explain yourself a little. 'That I will cheerfully do,' said he. "I said that I never had a bad morning; for every morning, even if I am pinched

ed with hunger, I praise God. If it rains, or snows, or hails; whether the weather be serene or tempestuous, I am still thankful to God; and therefore I never have a joyless morning. If I am miserable in outward circumstances, and despondent, I still praise God. I wish that I might always be fortunate; but I cannot be unfortunate, because nothing befalls me but according to the will of God; and I believe that his will is always good, in what he does or permits to be done. You need not always be happy; but I cannot be unhappy, because my will is always resigned to the will of God."

Oh! that He were a Christian!

How often do we hear these words. Here a sister utters them concerning another beloved. There a wife for a tender husband. Ministers often breathe the desire for young members of their flocks, and friends of those whose generous and manly hearts have won their own. It is the utterance for a sincere, honest, tender interest in the salvation of souls.

What have you done to prove that you are in earnest in your aspiration in behalf of your friend?

1. *Have you prayed for him?* Your wish is a prayer indeed, and may not be unheard by him who knows our unbreathed desires. But have you gone purposely to the mercy seat in his behalf. Have you uttered his name before a great advocate? Have you sought his salvation with that intensity of longing which could only be uttered with strong "crying and tears"? Perhaps God will that you should be importunate, while you have been satisfied with a vague wish.

2. *Have you spoken to him of Christ?* "The redemption of his soul is precious;" have you ever told him of that Redeemer, by whom his soul may be saved? Have you ever affectionately warned or entreated him? He may need a word from you to turn his life to Jesus. Perhaps he may be longing to know how you found your way to the cross, and came to the blessedness of the Christian hope. Do you act wisely or faithfully, not to say a word to show the solicitude which you feel for him?

3. *Have you thought to persuade him to go with you to the house of God?* A few gentle words might win him away from some place of pleasure or vanity to the prayer-meeting. A kind invitation might induce him to enter with you into the place where the gospel is proclaimed. There the Spirit of God may meet him, and renew him. There, at least Jesus will be held up before him, and the cross held up before him, and the cross meet his vision. Do you do right to separate from him without an attempt to lead him with you?

4. *Have you shown him in your life what it is to be a Christian?* How many sermons might be preached every day, and by irresistible point and force, by simple conversation, and by the example of a holy life. Have you tried its virtue with the one whom you wish to win? Have you been "a living epistle," to be constantly "known and read of him." Can he see the grace of God working in you, and daily restraining, guiding, and purifying you? What self-denial do you daily show, proving to him your love for Christ?

Reader! what do you do to make your friend, brother, husband, a Christian? Do something—do everything that God commands you, and patiently, calmly, confidently await the blessing. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

Clerical Curiosities.

Dr. John Blair Smith, President of Union College, was an eloquent extemporaneous preacher. His custom was to hold a small Bible in his hand, in which was fitted a bit of paper, which he would bring to his eye at each new turn of his discourse. One day in an animated burst of feeling, his thumb, which held down the paper to his eye, let go its charge, and the fugitive "notes" sailed away on the breeze into broad aisle. The doctor very quietly tore off a small piece of newspaper which he had in his pocket, put it under his thumb, and then went on as usual with his sermon, lifting his "notes" to his eye as before, to help his mental motions, much to the amusement of some of the spectators.

Dr. James Muir, of the District of Columbia, wrote all his sermons, and read them memoriter. But unless the manuscript was in his pocket he could not go on at all, though he never used it