

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER, FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA

Rev. E. McLeod, }

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

{ Editor and Proprietor

VOL. 8.—NO. 27

SAINT JOHN NEW BRUNSWICK,

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1861.

WHOLE NO. 390

Religious Selections

BUTLER'S THEOLOGY.

The following introductory Lecture to Butler's Natural and Revealed Theology we publish without abridgment, as promised in our review of the work a few weeks since.—[ED. INTELLIGENCER.]

Introductory.

PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY. NECESSITY OF STUDY. MINISTERS MUST BE CALLED OF GOD. ERRORS WITH REGARD TO PREPARATION. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY DEFINED. HOW IT SHOULD BE STUDIED. BENEFITS OF STUDYING THEOLOGY.

The object of the Gospel Ministry has been often misapprehended. In all ages, men have assumed it with little reflection, and unprepared for its solemn duties. Many have regarded it as a profession, designed merely for instructing the people in morals and religion, and to preserve the traditions and usages of the church. In their view the qualifications are such as are adapted to the office, viz.: natural capacity and education. Of supernatural endowments, they make little account. Such views and practice have had extensive prevalence, not only in Europe, but also in this country.

Many spiritual Christians, in view of the above named perversion, have gone to the other extreme, and denied the necessity of any exertion of our own to qualify ourselves for the sacred office. They urge, that since it is the prerogative of God to appoint his own ambassadors, and he is able to furnish them for the work, it is needless and even presumptuous for them to employ any human preparation. But they overlook the Divine economy on this subject. Under the Jewish dispensation, those called to the sacred office, were required to be thoroughly versed in the law. Hence, schools of the prophets are mentioned. 1 Sam. xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, &c. We find fifty students of one of these schools assembled on a certain occasion. 2 Kings ii. 7.

Christ instructed his apostles. He could have endowed them miraculously in a moment; but he chose to keep them as his scholars three years, sending them forth to labor only occasionally, before he commissioned them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the nations. Paul enjoined upon Timothy, and by implication upon all young men called to this work, to study to show himself approved of God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Still some consider it wrong for those called of God to spend time in study; and to denigrate them a men-made ministry. They would have them go forth as they are depending wholly on God. If he was now wont to communicate with men by an audible voice, by angels, or by visions, as in ancient times—if Christ and the inspired apostles were now on earth, there would be more plausibility for such position; though they all used appropriate means. But since the age of miracles and of special inspiration is past, what must be the consequence of neglecting to use the means suited to our case?

Some good men, who have measurably imbibed this error, have still been useful, though they would have been much more useful, had they been guided by more enlightened and scriptural views. Others, however, acting upon such theories, have done much harm. They have not instructed sinners, or led them in the path of salvation, but have been in the way of those who would.

We cannot be too deeply impressed with the fact that the Gospel Ministry is Divinely constituted, that no one should assume its responsibilities but he that is called of God as was Aaron and that he qualifies and furnishes for the work. All this, however, does not, in any degree, supersede the use of means on their part, but should incite them the more to diligence and faithfulness, in view of the greatness of the work, and the aid they will receive, if true to their trust.

Those who have the ministry in view, should, at the outset, be guarded against certain dangerous errors:

1. That preparation for this work is a light thing. While listening to a successful minister, it may seem easy to preach a good sermon. Let those who think so try it. It may not be difficult for many to talk half an hour from a text of Scripture; but to preach to the edification of an intelligent assembly, is quite different. Could we understand all that has concluded to make a successful preacher, the amount of labor expended in discipline and research, our estimate of the attending difficulties would soon be changed. Nothing valuable can be acquired without labor, and, as a general rule, those who labor hardest succeed best.

To become a useful minister, requires the most earnest and faithful use of the means God has provided. One may obtain the name of minister, his credentials, and perhaps his livelihood, without such preparation. But the undertaking is unworthy and base. If a man is too proud or too lazy to apply all his energies to the work, let him never think of entering the ministry. Great as is the destination, it is one, not of nominal, but of real laborers. True ministers of God have ever been humble, toiling self-sacrificing, martyr-spirited; and the same spirit is just as requisite now as ever; and un-

less one is willing to become a martyr for the truth—feels somewhat as Paul did, when he exclaimed, I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, he may rest assured that God has not called him. Men require long and hard training to fit them for the common avocations of life. Is less required of him who is to be an ambassador of Christ to a sinful world; to whom is committed the task of leading his fellow men from sin and death to holiness and heaven?

2. Another error is, that there is any magical way of obtaining the qualifications. Let no one suppose that the fact of having the ministry in view, or attending school, or pursuing certain studies, will fit him for the sacred office. Some, with the best advantages, improve little, because they do not faithfully use their advantages. There are indeed differences in natural capacity. Still, there is but one path to usefulness. No short cuts, or patent rights, or labor-saving machinery will avail much here. They have been often tried, and found to minister only to quackery. Some indulge in vain notions on this subject, imagining that they shall be transformed, they know not how, into efficient and accomplished ministers. But there is no such magical or transforming process. Knowledge, which the priest's lips should keep, must be acquired by the use of appropriate means. There must be close, vigorous, persevering, self-application. Books, teachers, institutions may be of great advantage to the student, if faithfully used otherwise they will be of little service to him. Nay, he may be positively injured, by obtaining a mere smattering, a knowledge that puffeth up, a philosophy falsely so called.

3. Another error is that of supposing that intellectual culture is sufficient. If active piety is necessary anywhere, it is so for the Gospel minister, and for the Christian student. Abstract study and scientific exercises will but lessen the spirit of devotion, unless the heart is fixed on God, the more we study, the more spiritual we may become. And how essential that this be so. You are constantly dealing with the truths of revelation—with matters of faith; and how can you discern spiritual things, unless yourselves are spiritual?

Besides, when his course of study is completed and he goes forth to public labor, what is one to do without fervent piety, faith, consecration? That so many, thus destitute, have been put into the sacred office, is the main cause of the prejudice existing against education for the ministry. My great desire is, and ever has been that those who go out from our institutions shall add their names to the bright list of those who have shown that religion and learning are not only compatible, but most naturally and closely allied: who have united to a well disciplined and furnished intellect, a heart deeply imbued with the Divine spirit, and have consecrated all to the blessed work of honoring Christ in the salvation of souls.

THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY to which I propose to invite your attention in the following course of lectures, may be denominated the science of religion. Its object is to present the principal truths of the Christian religion in a connected form. It relates especially to the scheme of Gospel Redemption,—to such objects as have the most direct bearing upon the salvation of the soul.

In proceeding to the consideration of this subject, it may be remarked that one great source of instruction is the BIBLE illustrated and confirmed by nature, and interpreted in the light of reason and experience. We come therefore to the Scriptures to learn what God has therein revealed. We use our own powers, with whatever helps we may have, to learn what he has revealed; and having learned this, it is for us implicitly to receive and practice it. The error with many is that they do not obtain their views from the Bible, but first construct a theory from their own notions or human tradition, and the resort to the Scriptures to obtain support for it. Thus they would exalt themselves, their reasonings and theories above the teachings of God. Not that human reason and Divine revelation ever conflict. Revelation often transcends reason—presents subjects which the human powers cannot fathom. All matters of scriptural revelation, which are level to our capacities, are, and appear consistent with our reason, and it can pronounce no doctrine of the Bible absurd. The office of human reason, then, with reference to the truths of revelation, is simply to ascertain what God has taught; and then it is our duty to receive these teachings implicitly. To do otherwise is the height of presumption. When one does not regard the doctrines of the inspired word conclusive, but makes human speculation the ultimate standard, he plunges into a region of shade, darkness, and death, as the whole history of philosophy shows. Go to the Bible as learners, divested, so far as possible, of prejudice, and thence derive every doctrine and system. It is for the interest of all alike to know and hold the truth, and the truth alone. If we hold a single sentiment contrary to Scripture, the sooner we renounce it the better.

Christian Theology should be studied diligently. It requires, at least equal application as mathematics, languages, or any other department of study. If one can afford to be superficial anywhere, it is not, surely, in these matters of such transcendent importance. If, through the ignorance or carelessness of an attorney, a case is lost in court, and thousands of dollars are swept away, this may be esteemed a trifling; if, through lack of a physician's skill, health or even life is sacrificed, this is not essential; but if he who is set to watch for souls, misleads them to their eternal ruin, who shall declare the awful consequences?

Christian Theology should be studied patiently. The subjects presented involve numerous and great difficulties, which can be overcome only by earnest, patient, persevering research. There is no better time to enter upon their threshold; hence we cannot begin too early. Shrink from no obstacle; be diffident, respecting your own attainments, obtain help from every quarter, bear criticism with meanness, turn all to good account, and ever press onward. Now we know but in part; but, if faithful, we shall know more hereafter.

It should be studied with faith. As before intimated, if any one needs active piety and faith, it is the theological student. Much of what he learns, he must take on the authority of God, and by faith. "The carnal man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." Each doctrine should, so far as it can be tested by our own experience. The internal evidence is often the most satisfactory. It is not enough to have a theory. It is a great and good thing to be able to say, we know these things as so from our own experience.

It should be studied prayerfully. All our powers and attainments are very limited. The apostle Paul could well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" We should feel our need of the Divine arm at every step. "To pray well," said Luther, "is to study well."

Let us, finally, consider some of the benefits to be derived from a course of theological study. 1. It tends to give us clear and definite views of each doctrine. By arranging the scriptural proofs together, comparing them with each other, and studying them as illustrated by Christian experience, we obtain well defined conceptions of each subject. True, in the limited time allotted us, we are not able to make a full investigation; but a good beginning may be made, and foundation laid for future labors.

2. Such a course of study is of great service in comprehending the system of scriptural doctrine as a whole. By studying these doctrines separately, and in their natural order, we better learn their various bearings and relations. Such study guards against partial and prejudiced views—against unduly magnifying some truths to the neglect of others—and enables us to put a just estimate upon all. Correct views of Christian doctrine are of great importance, especially to the religious teacher. The world abounds with error on morals and religion—error in innumerable forms, and of pernicious tendency. Such error the Gospel minister will encounter everywhere; and unless he has skill to expose and suppress it, his preaching will be of little avail. Not that he needs to be a perpetual controversialist. Were he never to come in conflict with any false teacher, and never to preach a controversial sermon, he would still need a thorough and discriminating acquaintance with the doctrines which must furnish the basis and substance of his sermons.

3. The study of Christian Theology is of the highest importance in disciplining, enlarging, and liberalizing the mind. Its themes are the most practical and exalted that ever occupied the soul of man. The being and attributes of God—creation, fall, and consequences—the scheme of redemption, its author, method, conditions and results; the new life, its commencement and growth; the gospel, its introduction, its institutions, and ordinances, the final consummation on earth, and future, endless retributions. These subjects, while in their essentials, are level to the smallest human capacities, afford ample scope for the most powerful minds forever. Nor are they mere theories; but throughout practical and essential to our highest well-being. To study such subjects aright must have the most happy influence upon us. In view of them, we see how great a privilege it is to be a Christian, and especially the minister of such a gospel—to have our energies devoted for life to the contemplation of these glorious realities, unfolding them to others, and winning them to the participation. Surely, he who desires the office of a bishop, or minister of Christ, desires a good work.

PREACHING ON THE ROAD.

The former pastor of a church in Western Massachusetts, in the course of a conversation one day with a member of his church, asked him the history of conversion. He replied as follows:—"My father was a pious man, and very particular to have me in my place on the Sabbath; but though I should have been shocked at the idea of showing outward disrespect for the sanctuary, I rarely thought of what I heard there as any concern of mine. He always attended the weekly prayer meeting, but never said anything to me about going with him, and I supposed it was a place for Christians only. I knew he wanted to see me a Christian, and I hoped I should be one by and by."

"In a remote part of the town lived Mr. B., with a family of sons, some of them near my own age; whose road to church was past our house. One

day, when I was about sixteen, as I was working with my father I asked, 'Are not Mr. B.'s family rather slack?'

"Why, William," answered my father, 'he is one of the most energetic and thriving farmers in town. What were you thinking of to ask such a question?' 'I don't know, only I see him go by to meeting every week with a load. Sometimes there will be three of his boys with him, and I thought they must let things run at loose ends, if they all left their work so.'

"Well, you were mistaken this time," and so the conversation dropped. "But it set me to thinking more seriously than I had ever thought before. I asked myself, 'Why did they go to the prayer meeting?' Soon I began to feel my own need of prayer, and to desire the prayers of God's children. I began to attend the prayer meetings too, and found there, as I trust, a prayer hearing God."—[Tract Journal.]

Illustration of Faith.

A correspondent of the Methodist writes of a sermon which he heard preached by Bishop Baker, and cites the following impressive illustration used by the preacher:

One step further in our discourse brought the feelings of the assembly to a crisis. "What," exclaimed the bishop, his voice trembling with emotion, "what substitute have you for the faith of the Christian in the hour of affliction and mourning? I had a little child, the joy of my heart and the delight of my eyes; she clung the last to my neck when I left home on my itinerant journey, and was the first to meet me with her cherub smiles when I returned; her little life was bound up with mine. I left her once at my door, blooming with health and beautiful with her loving looks, as I passed away from her eager gaze. When, after laborious days, I returned, I found her—what? a blackened cinder—she had been burnt to death! My heart was broken—no, it was not broken, for my faith came to my support. It whispered to my agonized soul, that though my lost child can never return unto me, yet I shall go unto her—that she still lives—that her charmed frame shall even be restored to its beauty. Would you take from me my faith, and leave me desolate and hopeless with my dead? What can your philosophy or infidelity do in a sorrow like this?"

The effect was irresistible, tears seemed to jet out from all eyes around us. The story could not but touch every heart of parental feeling there, especially the heart of woman. There were probably many mothers present who had lost their children; at all events, women in the galleries and below broke out into audible exclamations and sobs; and strong men, standing in the aisles, looked as if they would sink down. This was natural eloquence—the right kind of eloquence. There is nothing else like it for popular assemblies, or, indeed, for any kind of assemblies. How salutary it is! How it enters the soul like a healing balm, though it wrings tears from the very heart! We all went home better people for that sermon.

What Mothers can do.

Forty-two years ago there was born to the wife of a poor and obscure blacksmith, a son. The father died, and soon after, the mother, and their history and memory perished from before men. The infant child was left to the care of whomsoever might take a fancy to it; but as months passed, then years, one friend took it up and then another; and how, he could scarcely tell himself, he obtained a collegiate education and found his way into the ministry when, one day a thousand miles away from the play-grounds of his childhood, after preaching to a large attentive audience, on old lady met him at the foot of the pulpit-stairs and said: "I was present at your birth; I knew your mother well, and I do not wonder you have risen to be a minister of the Gospel, for it was her habit to give you to the Lord in prayer before you were born." Blessed mother! unknown to the rich and great of her time, known, perhaps, even to her neighbors as the "blacksmith's wife," she worked, and lived, and loved and prayed in her poor little obscure sphere, until it was her Master's will that she should go up higher; and she went early, because she was early ready; but her works follow after and upward unto heaven, as one by one souls saved by her son's instrumentality cross over Jordan, and meeting her with other angels bright on the better bank, they join hand to hand and file away upward to the Father's bosom, chanting in glory: "Saved by grace through her prayers."

More than a hundred years ago there lived in London the wife of a sea-captain; who were her ancestors, where she was born, or what of her life, no one knows or ever will know now. She was early left a widow with a fatherless child; but she feared God, and felt her responsibilities to the child of her love. But in spite of a mother's teachings he went to sea, and became one of the most profligate of young men; but never, in all his wanderings and dissipations, could he rid himself of the remembrance of the sad, pale, and sweet face of his mother, nor her earnest, patient, and loving teachings. She died, but her prayers bound him fast to the throne of God, and John Newton became one of the best of men. His pious conversation was the means of converting Dr. Buchanan, whose work, Star

in the East, led Adairam Judson to the Saviour, converted Dr. Scott, the commentator; Cowper's piety was deepened, Wilberforce became a changed man, and wrote A Practical View of Christianity, which converted Leigh Richmond, who wrote The Dairyman's Daughter, and how many souls that book has awakened and led to the Saviour, and will continue to do, only the records of eternity can tell. Mothers! however poor, and obscure, and unknown, look upon your boy-child and remembering what God hath wrought through such as you, take courage, and pray in faith that the same he can do by you.—[Hall's Journal.]

Wait and See the End.

If our eyes always open to see the end as well as the beginning of troubles, we should find our experience similar to that of the merchant in the following story:

"A merchant was one day returning from market. He was on horseback, and behind him was a valise filled with money. The rain fell with violence, and the good old man was wet to the skin. At this he was vexed, and murmured because God had given him such bad weather for his journey. He soon reached the borders of a thick forest. What was his terror on beholding on one side of the road a robber, with leveled gun, aiming at him, and attempting to fire! But the powder being wet by the rain the gun did not go off, and the merchant, giving spurs to his horse, fortunately had time to escape. As soon as he found himself safe he said to himself: 'How wrong was I not to endure the rain patiently as sent by Providence! If the weather had been dry and fair I should not, probably, have been alive at this hour, and my little children would have expected my return in vain. The rain which caused me to murmur came at a fortunate moment to save my life and preserve my property.' It is thus with a multitude of our afflictions—by causing us slight and short sufferings they preserve us from others far greater and of longer duration.

GOD NOT IN THE HOUSE.

A Scottish laborer went to work for a wealthy farmer. It was regarded as something of a favor to be employed by him, as he was a prompt and liberal paymaster, and had everything about his farm in order. The Scotsman remained with him only for a few days. "You have left Mr. Runyan," said a neighbor.

"Yes," was the reply. "Was the work too hard?" "No." "Wages too low?" "No." "Why did you leave then?" "God was not in the house," and he went on his way leaving his questioner to ponder on the strange answer.

Family worship was not known under Mr. Runyan's roof; nor was there a single praying member in his family. The laborer did not like to live under such a roof. He did not like to be even for a season, a member of such a family. Of how many houses in our happy land can it be said in truth, God is not in the house. The house may be spacious, elegant, furnished with every comfort and convenience, but God is not in it. There are none in that house to thank him for the blessings bestowed upon them. There are none there to serve and honor Him!

Mr. Thomas Farmer.

British Methodism, and in fact, British Christianity, has recently lost a noble ornament and benefactor in the death of Mr. Thomas Farmer. A London paper in referring to his liberality says:—

Benevolent! he was benevolent—one of the most illustrious impersonations of charity the Church ever knew.

A volume might be written to record the liberality of the deceased; but much too little would be said if it were not affirmed of him, that benevolence was a principle, a habit, a delight. That man is considered great who, by common consent, stands at the head of his class. We speak with reverence of the greatest warrior, the greatest statesman, the greatest poet, the greatest philosopher, the greatest architect, the greatest engineer—and we are much mistaken if the high and honorable position may not be claimed for THOMAS FARMER, the greatest giver. He was a prince in his benefactions, and by his example in systematic, continuous, life-long liberality, he becomes a pattern to the universal church. His name and his acts will be held in everlasting remembrance.

We have pleasure in giving to our readers the following brief notice of this godly man, from an English paper:—

No layman in Methodism was better known or more deservedly esteemed than the late Mr. Farmer. He was born a Methodist, lived a Methodist, and died a Methodist; and no man ever more thoroughly honoured his profession by a consistent, upright life than he did.

He was born at Wolverhampton in 1790. His father was Mr. Richard Farmer, and carried on chemical works until middle age, at Kennington.

For seventy years he has lived amongst men, and lived to good purpose. If one man in every

thousand of mankind did half as much good to their fellow-creatures as did Mr. Farmer, what a paradise we should have on earth! John Wesley died in the year 1791. Only a few months prior to the death of the founder of Methodism, Mr. Farmer was born, destined to be as good in his character as that model Methodist. Goodness, simple, earnest, and essential goodness, marked Thomas Farmer from early childhood. When only in his teens, his benevolence was practically tested by going on a begging excursion with Dr. Coke for missions. If an impression can be made on the fleshly tablet of the human heart, surely the words "Missions to the Heathen" will be written on Mr. Farmer's heart. Mr. Farmer was a man of business. "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," was the broad phylactery across his forehead.

To men in the high walks of politics or literature, the name of Thomas Farmer may be little known; yet men love it in the farthest regions where our language is spoken, and it will reappear in the Christian annals of many a people now emerging out of heathenism, in the history of many a beneficent enterprise now only rising into vigour, but destined yet to fill the world with its fruits. His death will be lamented where many of the world's proudest ones have never been heard of, and his memory will be fresh when theirs is forgotten. The fame of the good is meeker in life, but mightier in death, and more truly immortal, than that which is earned by the service of the world. It sounds like rhetoric, but it is sober fact, that from Polynesia to Canada, from China to England, men whose regard any one might value, will feel that in losing him they have lost a benefactor. A Sierra Leone Negro some years ago, having pronounced his name so as not to be understood, expressed his surprise that it should not be recognised at once. "Why our General Treasurer?" and that exclamation told how familiarly the good folk there considered him their Treasurer, and was but the echo of a feeling cherished by multitudes on many different shores.

How was this great influence won? Not by extraordinary talents, not by ambitious efforts, not by startling projects or novelties, or singularity; but by a long course of steady, pure, and bountiful goodness. Mr. Farmer began life with affluence, and being blessed with sound business talent, and with a prospering smile from Providence, his career was one of solid success, and his home relations were singularly happy. He always seemed to dwell on three things as the foundations of the rich enjoyments he felt crowning his latter days—an early conversion, a happy marriage, and his adopting, at the outset of life the principle of consecrating to God the first-fruits of all his increase, and that in a definite proportion. He was the oldest member of the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Bible and Missions were the two labours which had most of his love; but in behalf of schools, both day and Sunday, of the Evangelical Alliance, the Strangers' Friend Society, and of every other good work, he was ever ready to give and toil. For he was not one of those superb benefactors who cast forth their gold, but will not bend their head or furrow their brow for the cause they patronize. No committee-man was more regular, or more minute in looking into business than he. For many years he steadily devoted the largest part of his time to these sacred duties, sparing comparatively little for his own business. And moreover we believe that the general impression is correct, that for a long period all that his business yielded was given away. His benevolence is too well known to be dwelt upon, and perhaps none can tell how great has been its influence upon others, in different denominations, but especially in his own. When it was proposed to elect him a Vice-President of the Bible Society, some of those worthy people who can do right if assured that others did it before, raised a doubt whether there was a precedent for conferring that honour on a non-titled gentleman. A member of the committee reckoned up that in a given time Mr. Farmer and his family had contributed more to the society than all its titled patrons put together.

In looking over the various reports of religious societies which pass through our hands, it has always been to us an assurance of "sound in the faith" when we saw Mr. Farmer's name on the committee. His well-known face is engraved in the most central position in the fine picture which commemorates the centenary of Methodism. We shall not here reproduce any details of Mr. Farmer's exertions in promoting the centenary of Methodism in 1838 and 1839; nor shall we extricate any portions of his public speeches, some of which are before us. He was married early, and he married well. His children, also, have married well. On this subject Mr. and Mrs. Farmer sought goodness rather than greatness or riches. How pleasant will be recollections of many foreign missionaries, who shared Mr. Farmer's hospitality, and real kindness, ere they sailed from old England. How delightful the reminiscences of hundreds of preachers at home who have shared in like manner the hospitality of this truly happy family at Gunersbury House, Acton. But from all these recollections which crowd the mind, Mr. Farmer is gone. His gifts were never held by him as a title to dictate, and override his less wealthy fellow-labourers. His gifts were never held by