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BIOGRAPHY.

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*The following sketch of the life and character of the Rev. Dr. GEORGE DUFFIELD, late minister of the second Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia (born October, 1732. and who died February 24, 1790) is taken from his funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Dr. Green.—Gen. Assen. Mag.*

FUNERAL panegyric has been so much abused, that it has, in a measure, defeated its own design. Extravagant and misapplied encomium, by its frequency and fallacy, has rendered even the truth suspicious. The truth, however, ought to be told; and, on the present occasion, it is our intention to be governed by it, in its rigorous strictness. And, indeed, so much may be said, without going beyond its bounds, that there is little temptation to transgress.

*As a man,* the reverend doctor Duffield possessed a vigorous, active, firm, and benevolent mind. He thought with energy and quickness; and he dreaded not the labour of thinking. In promptitude of conception, and readiness of utterance, few were his equals. These qualities, in early life, enabled him to preach with a frequency, of which the instances are rare: and throughout life, they gave him a consequence and utility in deliberative bodies, to which few can attain.

To the opinions which he formed, he adhered with steadiness. He was neither frightened from them by the number of his opponents, nor soothed by the respectability of their characters or stations. His behaviour, indeed, was at the farthest remove from disrespect: but he was, in an eminent degree, a man of an undaunted spirit. The firmness of his mind

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ble instances from your childhood to the present day ; he has graciously connected your duty and happiness together, and taught you that sin will infallibly be followed by punishment ; and as if all these things were small, he has given his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. Ought you not then to love, honour, and obey him ? Or will you rather employ all the privileges he has bestowed upon you in rebelling against him, and ruining yourselves ? No, rather endeavor to obtain habits of real piety. For let me assure you upon the authority of God's word, and long observation, that true religion and virtue are the ready road to health of body, peace and tranquility of mind, wealth and public credit. "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor." But what will libertinism end in, but the total ruin both of soul and body here and hereafter ?

QUINTUS.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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### VIVAX AND PAULINUS.—A DIALOGUE:

*VIVAX and PAULINUS, are young gentlemen, who at present reside in the same neighborhood ; they were educated together and have kept up a friendly intercourse ever since the commencement of their studies. They have enjoyed the same religious privileges, tho' their improvement has, until lately, been very dissimilar : as will appear from the following dialogue.*

*Vivax.* I AM happy to see you this evening, my good friend Paulinus. I have just heard a discourse from your favourite Preacher Eusebious, with which I conjecture, you would have been agreeably entertained, and not a little edified, had you been one of the audience.

*Paulinus.* I am sorry I could not attend : but hope from your account of the sermon, that it has not been unprofitable to you.

V. Truly sir, I have often met with less entertainment from the pulpit: but as to any advantage from that quarter, you know, that is what I never expect.

P. It grieves me Vivax to find that your prejudices against the gospel and its institutions, remain undiminished: I hope however, that an attention will yet take place, in your opinions, respecting the important subject of religion.

V. No sir, my sentiments are unalterably fixed, I assure you, I object not, however, to the continuance of such a body of men, as the clergy: In the present state of the world they are necessary. Without a belief of the doctrines they inculcate, a large majority of mankind would be entirely ungovernable; nay, the human race would soon be exterminated. Men have not yet risen, to that grade of rational improvement which would make it safe to inform them, that all the alarming denunciations of divine vengeance, which they have been accustomed to hear from the pulpit, have had as their origin the craftiness of Politicians and the avarice of Priests.

P. Is it then your sincere opinion, that the doctrines contained in the Bible are false?

V. Utterly false sir.

P. And yet, you think it necessary that the mass of mankind should believe these doctrines, to be true.

V. So necessary, that the earth would soon be depopulated without such a belief.

P. It appears then to be your opinion, that, a set of Politicians, and avaricious Priests, have most wickedly and presumptuously, contrived a system of false doctrines; and have palmed this system on the world, in the name of God himself, that they might thereby accomplish their wicked designs: and yet that this appears to be the only plan, whereby the world can be governed, or the happiness of mankind promoted. A race of rational creatures, who owe their existence to a Being of inflexible justice, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, can exist only by the operation of a system of unparalleled fraud and falshood. This statement is indeed astonishing to

me ; and I would be glad to be informed, why men can be better governed, or more easily managed by falshood than by truth. What dreadful condition have men fallen into, which can render deception so salutary and necessary ?

V. Man, sir, has been deluded, by superstitious notions, and the voice of reason has been suppressed.

P. And is there no relief for him, in this unfortunate condition? If a felm has been drawn over his eyes, why should it not be instantly removed? If light is what he wants, in the name of humanity, let him have light. Or, if there is danger apprehended from a sudden blaze; if it is thought that an immediate transition from darkness to light, might be prejudicial to the organs of perception; remove the felm imperceptably, and let him have light, as he may be found able to bear it: but never hope to cure him, by the operation of the cause which made him blind. If the system of Priestcraft has blinded his eyes, let him discover the imposition and be happy.

V. I am persuaded, sir, that were reason disengaged from the superstitious notions, which have been deeply stamped on the minds of men, by what is called a religious education; a principle step would be taken towards the attainment of human felicity.

P. And yet you are an advocate for the continuance of religious instruction; the native tendancy of which is to strengthen and confirm what you call superstitious notions, those clogs of reason, and the insuperable barriers to human happiness.

V. Well sir, I contend no longer; for I confess I have felt considerably hampered, in my attempt to plead the cause of the Clergy. Let them be put to silence.

P. But, my dear sir, you cannot have forgotten what are to be the consequences of such a step. Would you have the human race exterminated.

V. I fear sir, this would be the fatal issue, were they let lose from the restraints imposed on them, by their superstitious notions; but there seems to be no help for them; and

perhaps they had better not exist, than be so intolerably deluded.

P. But you have not yet informed me, why man, in his present condition, is so incapable of deriving any advantage from the truth. It appears to me you will be under the necessity of subscribing to, at least, one doctrine of revelation, I mean *human depravity*.

V. I would be very sorry to subscribe to that gloomy doctrine. No sir, I entertain a more favorable opinion of my fellow-creatures. Were men weighed in an equal balance, their good actions, I am persuaded would more than counterbalance the bad: and their hearts we must charitably suppose, are much better than their actions.

P. And yet, you are persuaded that men with these very good hearts, would massacre one another, were they not restrained by false notions, respecting a future state of rewards & punishments; still therefore, I am under the necessity of repeating my inquiry: What is the reason that the creature, with so good a heart, and so well disposed, can be led only in the dark? I would certainly have concluded, that the man who is restrained from acts of violence, only by the fear of future punishment, must possess a bad heart; he must be depraved.

V. I cannot consent to call it by so harsh a name, as *depravity*. I must confess however, that were the doctrines of the Bible generally discredited, I fear, few men would be able to confide even in a brother. The perpetration of enormous crimes would soon become common. For this reason I have, of late, thought it prudent to keep my sentiments, on these subjects, pretty much to myself.

P. In this you are certainly right. By all means conceal your discoveries: trust them not with your nearest friend. To divulge them, you know, would be to 'cast fire brands, arrows and death.' But, as we have at length agreed in one thing, perhaps we can agree further. It appears to me, Vivax, that were I of your opinion respecting the condition of the human race; did I believe that thousands were already deceiv-

ed and ruined ; did I view them daily sinking into deeper distress and delusion, without the most distant prospect of relief : with the small degree of philanthropy I possess, I should be a very unhappy man. But perhaps with your other important discoveries, you have found out some plan, whereby the evils we lament in the present state, will be removed. Perhaps you have been enabled to anticipate the bliss of a future state of existence, where neither error nor vice, nor misery shall ever enter.

V. No sir, to be candid, I cannot pretend to any such discovery. My prospects have been limited to the present world, and my happiest moments have been those, in which my mind has been entirely occupied by temporal concerns ; without a single thought of death, or what may possibly happen to man after death.

P. You have sometimes, however, reflected seriously on those important subjects. May I be permitted to inquire what your future prospects are, in the hour of serious reflection ?

V. You know, Paulinus, that the opinions of Philosophers, respecting a future state, have been very various and fluctuating. And notwithstanding the important discoveries, which some of them pretend to have made ; their most plausible conjectures are involved in such darkness and uncertainty, that after many attempts to confide in them ; my mind has found no relief from fearful fore-bodings respecting a future state of retribution. Nay, the oftener I reflect seriously on the subject, the more gloomy is the prospect, as it respects mankind in general ; and the more terrifying with respect to myself. And, I suppose you will believe me, when I assure you that this is the greatest objection I have to your favorite preachers ; they never fail to lead my mind into a train of the most gloomy ideas respecting a future state.

P. Were I persuaded, Vivax, that preachers are the kind of men you have represented them, I cannot suppose that any

story they could fabricate, would have much influence with me. You speak of them as impostors, and yet feel under their discourses, as though you believed them to be vested with all the authority to which they lay claim.

V. In spite of all my efforts to discredit their doctrines, and to hear them with a callous heart; their words will press upon my mind with irresistible energy. Perhaps this may be the effect of a religious education. I fear, I shall never obtain an entire freedom, from the influence of certain notions, which I imbibed almost with my mother's milk; respecting good and evil, heaven and hell, &c.

P. You are not absolutely certain then, that the statements made to you in early life, on these important subjects, were false.

V. This certainty, sir, is what I have long sought in vain: were I possessed of this, I could bid defiance to any preacher; but in my present wandering condition, the weakest of them sometimes alarm me exceedingly.

P. And yet, in this state of uncertainty, have you not professed yourself an established unbeliever? Have you not attempted to make proselytes to infidelity, as well as to infuse prejudices into the minds of many against the scriptures, and those who explain them?

V. All this I have done; and now confess my guilt in so doing: but whether it will serve to extenuate the offence, or not, I must observe, that these things were often done, as I may say, in self defence. Had I been unmolested by the Bible and its friends, I believe I would not have molested them—as they interrupted my peace, the only weapons in my possession were used, to repel the injury, and procure ease for a troubled mind.

P. What! do you talk of a troubled mind Vivax? Many have supposed, that you unbelievers, were the happiest mortals on earth: and that it was impossible that any one, free from the influence of priestcraft, and Bible prejudices, should be troubled like other men.

V. And we, sir, have uniformly endeavored, to give currency to this false opinion.

P. And yet, you have declaimed loudly against hypocrisy, and every species of insincerity, as the most hateful of all human vices, and, as if they were confined to professors of religion.

V. Yes, but were the truth known, I fear, more hypocrites would be found among professed infidels, than within the pale of the visible church, in proportion to the number of professors, belonging to each of these bodies. Be assured, my friend, it is a difficult thing for a man who *thinks*, to become an established infidel.

P. So I have always thought. But why should any man dissemble here? Hypocrisy, among professors of religion, is a base crime, which, when detected, is justly abhorred: but of all hypocrites, he certainly deserves to be most despised, who pretends to be more wicked than he really is. But perhaps you are unfortunately singular; and others may have obtained that firm persuasion of the truth of their principles, of which you are yet destitute.

V. Ah! Paulinus, you are happily unacquainted with the many fearful forebodings, that necessarily prey upon the minds of unbelievers, I grant, you may meet with many professed infidels, who appear to entertain no doubts upon the subject; but such men are either hypocritical pretenders, or creatures that never think. The larger number of professed infidels, are of the latter description—Rakes and libertines; store-boys, apprentices, and half-thinking young attorneys; whose researches have never extended beyond a *pamphlet*, or a newspaper publication, may be undisturbed by the difficulties which lie in the way of all systems of infidelity. You may believe them, when they tell you, they have no doubts or fears respecting the subject: they have never examined it; perhaps they never will be capable of examining it, until a change takes place in the structure of their intellectual faculties.— And, with respect to men of erudition, it is only necessary to

look into their writings, to discover the marks of prejudice, of a malignant temper, of pride and impatience of control; but rarely will you find a passage that will induce you to believe that its author possessed unshaken confidence in his own doctrines. Notwithstanding my great partiality for these authors, I must confess, I have often been tempted to believe that they wrote, not with the benevolent design of delivering mankind from error, but with a view to convince themselves, that the cause they had espoused, was defensible.

P. That a man should teach others, with a view to convince himself, that the doctrines he inculcates are true, is preposterous enough. Had you known that Eusebius, and other preachers who have so often interrupted your repose, were only preaching to produce conviction in their own minds, you would doubtless have considered them despicable guides.

V. Yes sir, and despicable blind hypocritical guides are the apostles of infidelity, as I have found to my cost.

P. But, to return to the subject you first mentioned, from what text did Eusebius entertain his audience to-day?

V. My recollection will not enable me to give you the words of the text. The object of the preacher, was to describe the future inheritance of the saints; and to confirm their hope, that in due time, they should possess this inheritance. In the prosecution of his plan, the scriptures were his guide. He spoke of heaven, and the rapturous joys of the mingled throng, of saints and angels, who surround the throne of God, as though he had just descended from that glorious assembly. He spoke of exceeding great and precious promises, made to believers, not as if he suspected them to be cunningly devised fables; but manifesting the strongest assurance, that the God of truth had made these promises and confirmed them by his oath; and that they had been sealed by the blood of his only begotten Son: and hence it was inferred, that they were calculated to afford strong consolation to those who fly for refuge to the hope of the gospel. I confess the sermon hath made a deep impression on my mind. What a fool have I

been to suppose, that Christians were rendered unhappy by their religion. When I now compare the Christian's prospects, with the frigid system of infidelity, and the thick darkness and despair, in which this system leaves its advocates, in the time of trial—in the hour of death—I blush and am thunderstruck. Alas ! that I should ever have opposed the glorious doctrines of the grace of God ; and endeavored to establish in their room, doctrines of unparalleled stupidity, presumption and wickedness.

P. I rejoice unfeignedly, my friend, at the change which has so unexpectedly taken place in your sentiments. I hope, that after a careful, candid examination, you will not hesitate to subscribe to the peculiar doctrines of christianity, which you have hitherto so strenuously opposed ; and that you will find in the gospel, a remedy for the evils which you have seen, and lamented ; but for which you were ready to conclude, no remedy could be found.

V. As for the doctrines of the Bible, sir, I have acted towards them, as most of my deluded brethren have acted. I have opposed them without knowing what they were ; always taking care to view them through a wrong medium. All the distinct knowledge I have had of the Bible, amounted to this, It condemned me to endless misery as an inexcusable sinner. And with respect to the prospect of relief from the deplorable condition in which sin has placed us ; I am now so far persuaded of the sufficiency of the gospel plan, that my earnest prayer to God is, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'—The sun now disappeared and the dialogue ended.

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