

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

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In this state of things, a few pious persons who had become disgusted with the cold and heartless services of the capitol, conceived the idea of establishing a Presbyterian congregation in the city, and of building a church for it, near Rocketts, and looking about for some evangelical preacher to lead them in their enterprise, they had turned their eyes towards Mr. Rice; for they had heard him preach several times, on his occasional visits to Richmond, and elsewhere, and were satisfied that he would be the very man for their purpose. Some of them, accordingly, had broached their wishes to him, which he could not, of course, help hearing with interest; but their whole plan was as yet too immature, and too uncertain, for him to embrace it at once; and he could, therefore, only encourage them to proceed, and allow them to hope that he might perhaps be brought to aid them in it at some future day. So the project had rested, until the Rev. Drury Lacy, it seems, paid them a visit, and preached with so much effect, that their desire to enlist Mr. Rice in their service, was greatly increased; and they now renewed their application to him in more definite terms.

The following letters will show the progress of the movement, (with some other matters,) and we shall, by and by, see its effect.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.

Charlotte, January 3d, 1811.

There is great uncertainty in my going to Philadelphia de-
portment was owing, in some measure at least, to the times in which they lived, when neither the world nor the church was yet awakened to a sense of religion as it has since been; and that they both lived to see and acknowledge the error which they had committed. I have been told, that Mr. Blair, particularly, who was a man of real piety, and greatly esteemed by his brethren, confessed his fault publicly to the Presbytery to which he belonged, even with tears.

next spring, because there will probably be a competition among us for the office of representative of Hanover Presbytery, and I have no reason to expect that a preference will be given to me. Should there, however, be a call for my services, I shall willingly accept of it. As to the plan proposed by you, I feel these difficulties. I do not know exactly how to bring myself to *candidate* for the pastoral office, having been always of opinion that the people, and not the minister, should be the solicitor on such occasions. Besides, I do not know what I should do, or say, were I persuaded that every man who was hearing me, thought, when I rose up, "Now, I'll see whether this man will *do* or not." The other difficulty arises from the apprehension, that should I be called to the place of the late Dr. Tennant, I should be *obliged* to teach for my *living*. Now, one powerful motive for removing from my own place, would be the prospect of delivery from this necessity, and of having more time for study and preaching. It is probable indeed, that as long as I live, I shall have a boy or two, the children of particular friends, in my family; but I wish most devoutly to have some other means of support. I think, however, that I shall not long be supported in this way *here*. I mean that there is little probability that I shall continue long in this place. Not that my school is not large enough. Indeed, my principal difficulty is to keep the number as small as I wish. But, all things considered, I hold myself ready to go where Providence may call me. And I just sit here, waiting for, and observing as narrowly as I can, the dispensation of Heaven. Where I am clearly called, there will I go; but I must first be satisfied that I am called.

Se quid novisti rectius candidus imperti.

Have you heard of Mr. Lacy's trip to Richmond last month, and of the effects which his preaching produced? I have understood that a number of persons since that

time have determined, if possible, to get some evangelical preacher to live in the place. The plan laid by major Quarles is, to subscribe and rent a house for an academy, to the charge of which the minister of their choice is to be invited; and he is to build up a church, from the pew rent of which a salary is to be raised for him; and then, if he chooses, he may drop his school. Quarles, Watt, and a few others, who are most deeply interested in this business, are very sanguine in their expectations of success.

From some late communications that have been made to me, I have reason to believe that they depend on me to do the work for them. And indeed, *could I establish a church in Richmond, "built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone," I should do well.* But I fear that this is a task not easy to be accomplished. I foresee many difficulties in the way. Let me wait, however, until the thing is formally proposed.

TO MRS. JUDITH RANDOLPH.*

Charlotte, Feb. 3d, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Although my duty calls me to other employments than that of writing letters this morning, yet I cannot bear that

* This lady was the widow of Mr. Richard Randolph, a brother of John Randolph of Roanoke, and was at this time living at her seat called Bizarre, near the small town of Farmville, in the county of Cumberland. Some two or three years before the date of this letter, she had put her son Theodoric Tudor Randolph, (a youth of much promise,) to school to Mr. Rice; and the lad falling sick, she had visited him at his teacher's house. This, of course, brought her to form an acquaintance with the pastor and his wife, which soon ripened into a lasting friendship, and produced the most happy fruits. The counsel, indeed, of such a friend as she found in him, was particularly valuable to her, as she had been called to suffer great and peculiar sorrows, (growing out of circumstances well known in that part of the country, and the subject of a *cause celebre*, but which I do not