

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

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BY WILLIAM MAXWELL.



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at. I find it hard to understand him. Is the fault in me or in him? I heard of your conference; but do not know any thing of the results. Did it come to any thing? It is seldom that much good results from meetings of this kind. Pray let me know. And tell me whether Dr. Taylor accounts for the fact, that *every individual* of Adam's posterity *begins* his course of moral action by sinning, and goes on to sin until grace prevents.

Mrs. Rice and I unite in dearest friendship for all your family, and all other friends at Andover. Present us to them by name.

Most truly yours,

JOHN H. RICE.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

*Union Seminary, Jan. 8th, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter came to hand yesterday. And I want to answer it while the feeling which it excited is fresh.

One of the blessings, and one of the sorrows, which the New Year brings with it, is the more than usually vivid recollection of old friends. To a man somewhat advanced in life, many of the remembrances are very painful. Of all that set out in life about the time we did, how few survive! Among those who are gone, are many of our associates, some of our dearest friends, with whom we used to take sweet counsel together. But there *are* survivors; and here and there one, whose friendship has become more consistent, and more solid in the course of years. This is a season to think of them, and recal past scenes, and live over again in imagination days long gone by.

As far as my observation goes, there are two errors to which aged men are exposed. One is of holding on, and refusing to admit that they are old. We have seen some instances of this. The other is precisely opposite. It is allowing themselves to grow *prematurely old*. Failing to

exercise their faculties, they become rusty, and move like an old door whose hinges are never oiled. I have no doubt about the fact, that when the organs through which the mind acts, fail, mental imbecility ensues. But I am equally certain, that ceasing to exert our faculties greatly impairs their strength. And I am convinced that when a man, whose life has been very active, *retires*; he very soon sinks into second childhood. It is a dangerous experiment, and I feel very unwilling that you should try it. The harvest is so great, and the labourers are so few, that I think they who have borne the heat and burden of the day, ought still to go out into the field, and if they can do no more, hand food and drink to the young men who are strong to labour, and active in working.

I perfectly agree with you, that there is too much bustle and noise in our religious enterprises. Too much challenging and provoking and fighting the world. The greater union and co-operation manifest now among the enemies of religion is, I believe, to a considerable extent owing to this very cause. And I do expect that they will be goaded on, until they find that in every trial of strength they have an overwhelming majority. Perhaps the discovery is already made, and the enemies of righteousness are willing enough to come out to the encounter. If so, *we* may live to see bad days for the church. It will require no cunning, no effort, to divide the Christian host. That work is done already. And there is nothing now to be done, but to conquer the *sections* in detail.

The great fault, it seems to me, in this day is, that christians instead of going steadily and zealously forward to promote *true religion*, and then relying on its influences to make every thing work well, are endeavouring to conquer the men of the world by force. The effort is not so much to convert them by the means prescribed in the gospel, as to overpower them. The weapons of their warfare are often carnal.

The Lord is prospering the Seminary, thus far, beyond

my expectation. I know that you take an interest in it, and will remember us in your prayers.

There has been no breach in your old friends since you last heard from this neighbourhood. Major Morton is very healthy and very happy. He comes to see me every Saturday, and stays until Monday. We have had thus far a very open, mild winter—the weather generally very delightful.

Mrs. Rice unites with me in love to Mrs. A. and in earnest wishes that the Lord may bless you and your family, this year also.

Most truly,

J. H. RICE.

TO MR. KNOWLES TAYLOR.

*Union Seminary, March 2d, 1830.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have not written to you a long time; but you are never long out of my thoughts. My spirits have not been good since Christmas; and one reason is, that I have had too much to do. Another is, that my health has been much less firm than common; and for the last six weeks I have been consumed by a slow, debilitating fever, which has put it out of my power to do any thing at all. This makes all my work go on very slowly. I have lately, however, had some good hope that I was about to enjoy more health, and better spirits. I do not know, however; and it is all just as the Lord pleases.

The progress of our Seminary is good. We have this winter thirty-five students; and a very fine spirit of piety among them. The number of our friends, and the influence of our Institution is growing. I do not think the liberality of New York ever did a better thing than when it gave us a Professorship.

I am sorry that the business of Mr. Bruen's Library is so delayed. It is impossible for us to take any decided and