

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

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want to see Mr. M—— mightily.” Come next summer and breathe our fine air. My love to all friends.

Yours most truly,

JOHN H. RICE.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D.

*Mr. Lyle's, March 22d, 1827.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am here in a scene of great affliction. You will be afflicted too, when you learn that this is a fatherless family; and that Mrs. Lyle is a widow. It pleased an allwise Providence this day to remove our excellent friend and brother from this world, as we assuredly believe, to a better. He died this evening a little after sunset. His disease was a disorder of the stomach and liver. During a considerable part of the last summer he appeared to be in rather infirm health; and I persuaded him most earnestly to cease preaching, and go to the *Springs*; but could not succeed. As the winter came on, his health declined still more; but nothing could persuade him to quit his work, or disuse his favourite beverage—coffee. But it is useless to pursue the detail of causes which conspired to produce the event which we now deplore.

Mr. Lyle's last hours were not such as to permit him to communicate any thing of his feelings or views. His voice failed him, so that it was with very great difficulty that he could say any thing. And although never delirious, yet he was for some time in a comatose state; and generally the brain seemed to perform its functions very laboriously. This was so much the case, that his afflicted wife and children have to refer to his *life* for evidence of his being prepared for death. We are all thankful that here we have evidence enough. You know that there never was a man of more absolute sincerity; never one who was more entirely what he professed to be. And though he gave no dying testimony, his living one was sufficient for the purpose. Mrs.

Lyle affords the greatest pattern of calm, firm, steady resignation that I have ever seen. She says, that "for more than a thousand times she has prayed that God might order her lot for her; and now that he has done this, she has no right to murmur or repine; and does hope that he will not leave her comfortless." Her fortitude seems to sustain the whole family; and there really seems to be something of the presence of God about the house. She is no common woman. Mr. Lyle's children that are grown are all very respectable—and Archibald, who lives at home and manages the farm, is really one of the finest young men I ever saw. He has the firmness and integrity of his father, with a most uncommon stock of kindly and soft feeling. I do suppose that there is not a more respectable young man in the whole county, nor one more beloved. I fully expect that God will make the children great blessings to their mother. I do not know any thing particular of the worldly circumstances of the family. But there are you know ten children, of whom seven yet live with their mother, and several are yet to be educated.

I wish to make arrangements to have Mr. Lyle's pulpit supplied during the year, so as to continue his salary from the congregations until Christmas; or, at any rate, as long as the people will rest satisfied without a pastor. I hope that this can be done; and I have no doubt it will be a convenience to the family.

The people in general were greatly attached to Mr. Lyle, and they appear sincerely to deplore his loss. It will be felt through this whole section of the church—for his influence was great.

This event has turned my thoughts and feelings very strongly to you. May it please the Head of the Church to spare you for many years to come, and to give you health to labour in building up his kingdom of righteousness.

Mrs. Rice unites with me in most affectionate remembrance of Mrs. Alexander and the children.

I am, as I always have been since I knew you, most truly yours, &c.,

JOHN H. RICE.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

*Theological Seminary, April 14th, 1827.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I hope you will excuse me for putting you to a little trouble. There lives in this neighbourhood a black man named Billy Brown. He has been free for sixteen years; but has never obtained legal permission to reside in the State. Some gentleman, however, has *stood his master*, and he has remained here in security. He purchased his wife some years ago, and she, according to our law, belongs to him. Should he die, her case will be a bad one. He therefore determines to leave Virginia. And the question is, where shall he go? He says that he is getting old, and has no children, and therefore it does not suit him to go to Liberia. He has accumulated, it is said, a right handsome sum of money, by washing for the students, and hiring them horses, &c. I believe that his character stands fair. He has some thought of going to Princeton, or New Haven; because he thinks business can be gotten there, such as he has been used to. I have some doubts whether he could do so well, because I suppose there are in those places more hands than work. I promised to write and get the opinion of some judicious person on this matter. I do not know whom to trouble with it but you. Will you, if possible, let me hear from you on this subject immediately, and direct your letter to Petersburg, for I expect to be there all the week following this.

This case brings to my mind one on which I feel the deepest solicitude. I hear that the matter from the Synod of Ohio respecting slavery will be brought before the next General Assembly. Should this be the case, I fear that there will be a discussion of the subject. And I am under the fullest conviction that this will do very great injury. As soon