

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

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BY WILLIAM MAXWELL.



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deeply impressed by his discourse, which seemed to be *in power, and in demonstration of the Spirit*, indeed. After this, he continued preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath, in the same place, (and occasionally in the Capitol,) and, on the evenings of other days, during the week, at different private houses; and many persons (especially ladies) of all churches, *heard him gladly*. Some of those, more particularly, who had lost relatives or friends in the late disaster, and *whose hearts the Lord had thus opened to attend to the things which were spoken of him*, waited upon his ministry with earnest affection, and hung upon his lips with a satisfaction which they had never experienced before.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

*Richmond, May 14th, 1812.*

MY DEAR SIR,

You will perceive by the date of this letter that I have changed my place of residence. We arrived here on Friday last, and mean to continue here until Providence directs our removal to some other place.

The breaking up in Charlotte was a very severe trial. Neither the people nor I knew until parting time came, how much we loved one another. We parted, however, in the warmest friendship; and I hope that the affection of my dear people (for so I must call them,) for me will continue, as I am sure that mine will for them.

We have been here so short a time, that we have not yet found a place of permanent abode; we however have no difficulty in getting temporary lodgings.

I was received very cordially by the people, and preached twice last Sabbath, to a very large audience. The people generally were very attentive, and not a few considerably affected. I was surprised to observe the very great numbers who attend church in this place. Every house of worship was crowded; and I was told that not less than

five hundred went away from the Mason's Hall (where I preached,) unable to find seats.

A spirit of reading, and of inquiry for religious truth, is spreading rapidly among our town folks. I have proposed to several to establish a Christian Library in the city. The proposition meets with much acceptance, and I hope to be able to tell you in my next how many subscribers we shall probably obtain. If this plan succeeds, my next effort will be to establish a Bible Society. Of the success of such an undertaking I am not able to form the least conjecture; but I am adopting some measures to ascertain the extent of the want of Bibles here, which I fear is exceedingly great considering the population.

The spirit of religious inquiry is, I am convinced, extending its influence considerably in several parts of old Virginia. Mr. Speece has been urging me vehemently to undertake the editorship of a periodical work, having something of the form of a Magazine. His plan is to publish, once in two weeks, a sheet containing sixteen 8vo pages; to be devoted to the cause of truth and piety. I believe that such a thing, if well conducted, would meet with very considerable encouragement; and if I could engage the assistance of a few of my brethren, I would willingly make an experiment of the matter. Could you give any thing in this way to your native state, and to your old friends? I fear that your time is already so much occupied that the request must appear unreasonable; but I venture to make it.

I have been to see Mr. Blair since I came to town. He received me in a friendly way, and assured me of his disposition to cultivate a spirit of brotherly love. On my part I feel the same temper, and I hope that every thing will go on very harmoniously. I however feel very much my need of the counsel and advice of a brother for whom I feel a more zealous friendship than I expect ever to feel for

any other man. O! that you were near me! But I will have done with fruitless wishes. I hope now to hear from you more frequently than ever.

I am afraid that the good people here will find it hard to pay for the completion of their church. It is now sheeted in. The shingles, flooring plank, and pews are all in readiness; but their fund is exhausted, and they will be very much *pestered* to raise a sufficiency for their purposes. Will not the brethren afford us aid; will not the people to the North assist us? The Methodists have built a new church here, and expect to pay for it in part in that way. An agent went on very lately from this place to solicit aid, and two days ago he forwarded from Baltimore six hundred and forty dollars for the church.

Mrs. Rice joins with me in sincere regard for you and Mrs. Alexander. Give my love to James, and all the boys. May Heaven bless you and yours—so we pray.

JOHN H. RICE.

TO MRS. JUDITH RANDOLPH.

*Olney, (near Richmond,) May 29th, 1812.*

“I have just returned from Norfolk whither I went last week for the purpose of administering the sacrament to a small Presbyterian congregation in that place. I am glad that I went; for I have reason to hope that it was not in vain.

I have a comfortable hope that I shall be an instrument of doing good in Richmond. The prospect at present is that I shall preach to very considerable numbers of people, and may we not hope that the gospel will prove “a savour of life unto life among them.” You will not forget to pray for my success.”