



THE  
PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1853.

---

---

Miscellaneous Articles.

---

RELIGION IN TEACHERS.

ONE of the characteristics in the organization of a Christian institution is, that its instructions should be communicated through CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

There may be the most perfect system of agriculture on scientific principles, and yet without proper implements, and the right kind of men to use them, the fields will be comparatively barren, and the harvests small. The cultivation of every country depends upon the character of the farmers. But not more than the inculcation of religion depends upon the character of its teachers. The maxim that an unsanctified ministry is an unprofitable ministry, is applicable in its general principles to the ministers of education. A person may possess all the other qualifications and accomplishments of his calling, but he is deficient in the qualification of teaching religion just in proportion as he fails to possess, or to exhibit, its true spirit. Whatever be the branch of study, the teacher is incompetent to teach it adequately, unless he himself fully *understands* it. The simplest process of arithmetic demands a knowledge of first principles. The great truths of Christianity cannot be presented in their relations to Christ and holiness, without heart-knowledge answering to head-knowledge, and confirming its enunciations.

Another principle, brought into operation in the selection of religious teachers, and which can never be safely dispensed with, is that of *sympathy*. The possession of knowledge, without aptness to communicate it, is necessarily inefficacious, especially in religion. The eloquent help in impressing divine truth upon the human soul is the sympathy of the living teacher. Even a stam-

those who shall be your crown of rejoicing in the day of our dear Lord Jesus. Nor will you fail of endless glory, though your hearers should perish by their own fault. From, dear sir,

"Your obedient, affectionate friend,

"JOSEPH SMITH.

"Cross Creek, Jan. 16, 1790.

"Rev. Mr. PATTERSON."

Such were the views and sentiments of this western pioneer of the gospel ministry, and "though dead, he yet speaketh." If the foregoing account of this eminent servant of God, be rendered in any measure instrumental in promoting amongst the rising ministry, an increased degree of devotion to their sacred work and of love to the souls of men it will be an abundant compensation for the time and trouble expended in the preparation of this article. To the divine blessing, for this purpose we commend our humble offering. If this paper shall meet the eye of any of the descendants of the venerated subject of this Memoir, may it contribute to quicken their steps heavenward. J. S.

---

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PRESIDENT DAVIES.

THE engraving [Rev. SAMUEL DAVIES?]\* the frontispiece of this Number, is a copy of one found among the papers of a lady who, in her young days, was a member of the congregation and also of the church under the care of Mr. Davies, in Hanover, Virginia. She lived to the advanced age of about ninety years. A nephew, the Rev. William S. White, D.D., pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Virginia, remembers, when quite young, hearing this old lady read the printed sermons of Davies, often in tears, and say of some of them, "I heard him preach this myself." Sometimes she would get from her cabinet of mementos a little gilded frame, with the face of a man, and set it before her, and read the sermons with deep emotion. He remembers such expressions as "Dear man! how like him; I can hear his voice as I read." Upon searching, a few years since, among the old lady's mementos and keepsakes and papers, which had been carefully preserved by the family, this picture was found and recognised as the one she so highly prized. In the estimation of one who owed his salvation to the preaching of Davies, as a means, it was "so like the dear man!" In that *likeness* is its value.

The following chronology is copied from a table in Davies's handwriting, in a Bible now in possession of his descendants, near Petersburg, Virginia. In several particulars it differs materially from the dates

\* The Editor of this Magazine is not satisfied with the proof that this engraving is one of President Davies. Historical facts cannot be considered as *established* on evidence so slender. He does not deny that this *may be* Davies; but he confesses that he is not free from doubt. On this account no name has been added to the engraving. The publication of the likeness is made with a view of settling the question, if possible. Antiquarians will probably be able to throw light on the subject. The testimony of the good lady is quite decisive as to the point that the portrait *resembles* Davies. This gives it value, even if it be an engraving of some other person. C. V. R.

hitherto given in any printed memorial of him, except Foote's Sketches of Virginia. It differs from the monument in Princeton, in the date of his birth, and supplies the loss of the Records of Presbytery.

Samuel Davies, born, New Castle County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 3d, 1723.

Licensed, July 30th, 1746.

Ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle, Feb. 19th, 1746-47.

Married Sarah Kirkpatrick, Oct. 23d, 1745.

Separated from her by death, and bereaved of an abortive son, Sept. 16th, 1747.

Settled in Hanover, Virginia, May, 1748.

Married Jane Holt, Oct. 4th, 1748.

Sailed for England from Philadelphia, Nov. 16th, 1753.

Returned to Virginia, Feb. 13th, 1755.

Accepted the Presidency of New Jersey College, July, 1759.

Lost my father, aged 79, August 11th, 1759.

His children were, William Davies, born August 3d, 1749, Thursday, 7 o'clock, P.M.

Samuel, Sept. 28th, 1750, Friday night.

John Rodgers, August 20th, 1752, Thursday, 2 o'clock, A.M.

Martha, Nov. 14th, 1755, Friday, 7 o'clock, A.M.

Margaret, March 19th, 1757, Friday, 1 o'clock, A.M.

A daughter who died in the birth, Nov. 2d, 1758.

His descendants are numerous in Virginia. From this table it appears that he was a few months short of twenty-three years of age when licensed to preach; and that he was one year older at his death than appears by the inscription on his tombstone, being born in 1723 instead of 1724. At his death he was about thirty-seven years and three months.

Mr. Davies excelled in all that makes a useful and popular minister—the spirit of the man, the matter of his sermons, personal appearance, dignity of manner, readiness of wit, sweetness and power of voice, an earnest desire to glorify God in the salvation of men, and over all these the freshness of youth with unaffected modesty. Of all the traditions, correct and incorrect, that have been handed down in profusion about this man of God, there is not one of a mirth-moving kind. In the midst of facts and narratives stirring the heart with generosity, patriotism, self-abasement, enthusiastic admiration for the cause for which he plead, and an earnest desire to be great and good like himself, there is not one that excites a feeling approaching to ridicule, either toward him, his cause, or his fellow-men. An unrivalled preacher, he was the kindest of critics on the performances of other preachers; and, in his graphic journal, he speaks in the highest terms of some whose names have hardly reached us, as excellent sermonizers. Mr. Smith, the President of Hampden Sidney, said the best sermon he ever heard was from James Mitchell, of Bedford, and the next best from President Graham. Mr. Davies says of Mr. Bostwick, "He has the best style extempore of any man I ever heard." Always and everywhere a minister, Mr. Davies was always revered as a minister of Christ.

Mr. Davies wrote sermons, read sermons from the pulpit, and also delivered his message without notes, conforming to circumstances. But whether he read his sermons or preached without notes, he delivered his message with animation, and often with tears. He notices in his journal the failures in his own feelings and manner while preaching. "When I speak on solemn subjects with an air of unconcernedness, or mere natural vivacity, I feel guilty, and seem to myself to make a very ridiculous ap-

pearance." Probably none of his audience ever thought him in that condition. But he says that sometimes he did not read some parts of his prepared sermons, because he did not think himself in the right state of feeling to pronounce such passages with sufficient tenderness.

Davies was a warm advocate of the great revival of religion that spread over and agitated the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and parts of Virginia, New York, and New England, and was a principal agent with Robinson and others in its spread over Virginia. Judging from its immediate effects and after-influences, the revival in Virginia has always been considered among the most pure with which the Church has ever been blessed. His sermons, prepared for his ordinary ministrations, with no design for public inspection through the press, written mostly during his laborious services in Virginia, and printed after his death, give evidence that the Confession of Faith, in its more strict construction, was the platform of his belief. Such sentiments and expressions would flow naturally from no other creed or construction of the Confession of Faith. He demonstrated what he believed, that orthodoxy had the true revival spirit, and kept himself from formalities on the one side, and enthusiastic wildness on the other. His hearers wept sometimes aloud, and sometimes they fell prostrate; but they always, when inquired of, said it was from a sense of their sinfulness, and the purity and mercy of God, and the glory of Christ. Many of the converts under the ministry of Davies lived to be very old, surviving him many years, and these, both black and white, were, to the end of their days, examples of godly living and experimental Christianity. The coloured members of his church were noted through life, and even in their children, for their conscientious observance of the requirements of the Gospel of Christ.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties thrown in the way of obtaining license for preaching places under the existing laws of Virginia, his places of preaching were constantly increasing, and his invitations to preach in distant neighbourhoods multiplying. People would ride fifty or sixty miles to hear him preach; becoming interested, would return on his communion seasons, bringing their young children with them on horseback, fording James River, and remain days at the meeting; and becoming members of his church, by their entreaties for a visit, they would extend his rides and his preachings to new neighbourhoods, until the extent of his journeyings, and the number of his appointments became almost incredible. A semicircle whose radius is about a hundred miles would cover his field of operations; with occasional visits to neighbourhoods much more remote.

Previously to Braddock's war, the hindrances thrown in the way of Mr. Davies, by a wrong construction of the laws of the State, were trying to the highest degree. These legal difficulties have been very generally misapprehended. The decision of Sir Dudley Rider of England in his favour, was obtained by Davies before he went to England, and not afterwards, as stated by Dr. Miller, as may be seen by Dr. Avery's letter in Foote's Sketches of Virginia, p. 214; and was of no service to him. The Attorney-General of Virginia, Randolph, contended that the act of William and Mary, called the Toleration Act, having been adopted by the Virginia Legislature as a part of their code, was a Virginia colonial law: under this law Mr. Davies had the liberty to preach still, and that too according to the colonial construction of the law: that any construction put upon it in England would not affect the construction put upon it in the colony. Randolph was for

confining those who dissented from the Established Church to as few places as possible; and in this construction he was defended by the Bishops of London, of whose diocese the colony was reckoned a part (see *Sketches*, p. 177 and 179). To preach in unlicensed houses all knew to be against law: the right to license houses was restricted by the Government and Council to themselves as the General Court. The question always was, what neighbourhoods should have houses licensed to preach in? and how many houses one preacher might occupy? In debating these questions Mr. Davies and Attorney Randolph tried an argument.

During and after Braddock's war, less and less trouble was given about preaching places, principally because the dissenters had become so numerous, and the defence of the frontiers had been accomplished principally by them. By degrees the laws under which Davies had suffered, became a dead letter, and in about a quarter of a century from the time Davies left the State, so great had become the change of public sentiment, that Virginia, by her act for religious liberty, became the most tolerant of communities. The ministrations of Davies in Virginia increased dissent, and dissent at last broke down intolerance.

From his multiplied labours in Virginia, Mr. Davies was called to accompany Rev. Gilbert Tennent to England, to seek pecuniary aid for the college now familiarly called Princeton College. His graphic journal speaks modestly of those labours which were crowned with success, in his numerous applications to the dissenting congregations in England, and the Established Church in Scotland. No personal application was made by Mr. Davies to government, while in England, either for pecuniary aid, or for redress of grievances of dissenters in Virginia. The opinion of his friends in England was entirely against any such applications, and there is no evidence in his journal of his having any kind of interview with King or Council, or of his preaching before the Court.

Mr. Davies was very successful in his labours among the coloured population of Virginia; and the impress of character remains on some plantations to this day. The children are taught by their parents in the doctrines and truths of the Bible, and are made familiar with the Shorter Catechism, and exhibit in their lives the power of those truths they embrace in their creed.

Some years after his visit to England he was called to the Presidency of that College whose funds he had greatly increased by his agency during that visit. His friends in Virginia mourned his departure, and in their grief at his speedy death, sometimes thought the confinement to a college had not been favourable to the health of one accustomed to range freely on horseback over hill and dale, enjoying the excitement of a successful ministry.

The pecuniary circumstances of Mr. Davies was never very abundant. The kindness of Christian friends supplied in part his expenditures in preparation for the ministry; part of the liberality going from Virginia through Mr. Robinson. His salary as a minister was not at any time large, and he never expressed any desire to accumulate. For his services on his agency to England it appears that the Trustees were expected to pay the travelling expenses, and the Synod supplied his pulpit in his regular congregation; further compensation was not promised. In his journal for Wednesday, September 19th, 1753, he says:—"Was uneasy to find that the Trustees seemed to expect that I should furnish myself

with clothes in this embassy; with what pleasure would I do it were it in my power, but alas! it is not: and therefore, notwithstanding the pliability of my nature, I *must* insist upon their providing for me in *that* respect, as one condition of my undertaking the voyage." Of the patrimony he received with his wife we are not informed; it in all probability was not large, though generous.

His constitution in the early part of his ministry was evidently inclining to the hectic fever, and wasting, and found his remedy in the climate of Virginia, and his active exercise. Under the close study to which he applied himself as President of the College it gave way, and he fell at the early age of thirty-seven years and three months. His usefulness and fame are abiding. His sermons will be read with admiration and profit. How could he write such in his busy life?—and yet in what other life could he have written such? In the excitement and activity and variety of his ministry, his heart and imagination had full play. He wrote sermons according to the necessities of the case, and wrote with all his might, and wrote for all generations. Christ has said that he that would be great must serve;—the servant of all the greatest of all. With a delicate constitution, in a situation of labour and exposure unfavourable to extended research and literary study, he has left an example of fervour, unambitious striving after excellence and abiding influences, that will make coming generations glad to look upon his image and meditate upon that grace that shone so brightly in him. "*Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

ALIIQUIS.

[A more extended account of President Davies, may be found in Foote's Sketches of Virginia.—ED.]

---

## Review and Criticism.

---

THE FAITHFUL MOTHER'S REWARD; A Narrative of the Conversion and Happy Death of J. B., who died in the tenth year of his age. With an Introduction, by the Rev. Charles Hodge, D.D. Philadelphia; Presbyterian Board of Publication.

Mother—faithful mother—the faithful mother's reward! What higher reward can a faithful mother have, than the conversion of her child? This book points out the methods of Christian nurture which God blessed with his Holy Spirit. The book contains a very remarkable narrative; and no intelligent mother should fail to read it. When such books are published, one involuntarily exclaims, "Would that they could have a universal circulation!" Dr. Hodge has so exactly characterized the work in his introduction, that we insert the first paragraph.

"There is much to commend the following narrative to Christians generally, and especially to Christian parents. 1. It exhibits a peculiarly