

Correspondence.

THE EXPERIENCE OF A YOUNG MAN.  
"WHAT A FOOL I HAVE BEEN TO REJECT JESUS SO LONG."

BY REV. EDWARD TAYLOR HAMMOND.

In looking over some papers, a few days since, I found a most interesting letter received last spring from a young man in New Jersey, who has found out that he has been most unwise to reject Christ all his life. I cannot but believe that this story of conversion will be productive of good.

Paul loved to relate the manner in which he, a proud Pharisee, was led as a penitent believer to the foot of Calvary. When, at the command of Festus, he was arraigned before King Agrippa, he made little use of his acute reasoning powers and stores of logic, but he related the manner in which he had been led to see that he had all his life been rejecting Christ, in such winning tones, that this haughty, worldly king, saw the reality of the great and blessed change which, by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, he had experienced through his new birth in Christ, and was compelled to exclaim, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

It is my most earnest prayer that some of the thousands of readers of the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN in the army, who are so nobly striving to quell rebellion and to maintain the sanctity of law, may be led to see that they have broken God's commands, which are "holy, and just, and good." And, what is far worse, that they, like this young man, have all their lives long been rejecting the Lord Jesus who has given himself a ransom for us.

I feel it my duty to write you my experience, hoping that my simple story may be the means of awakening in some poor sinner's heart a love for Jesus. That it may do so, is my most earnest prayer.

I was attracted to your meetings in the First Baptist Church merely out of curiosity, as I would have gone to a theatre to see some new prima donna. I first took a seat, with my wife, in the gallery, near the stairs, thinking that perhaps I would not like the performance and I would be handy to get out.

I was deeply interested in the discourse, which was simple, plain truths, and I could understand them, and all that was said appeared to apply to my case. After the sermon, I remained, and was much amused at looking down at the inquirers and the different ministers and Christians, as they went about speaking to different ones; and I remarked to my wife that we had better go, as most of the ministers knew me, and if they saw me, they would be coming up and speaking to me, and I did not want any of them buzzing about me.

As I was attentively watching the proceedings down stairs, some one tapped me on the shoulder; I looked up, and a young Christian friend of mine was standing there. I shook hands with him, and he asked me how I was? I said, "pretty well." He said, "you mean, perhaps, that you are well in body?" I said, "certainly." He then said "how is it in reference to your soul's welfare?" I told him that I had not given that matter much attention. He asked me if it was not time I was thinking about the matter? I told him, perhaps it was. After few more kind words, he left.

I went home feeling pretty badly. The next day I felt worse, and during the day I tried several times to get rid of my bad feelings, by cracking some joke, or taking a drink. But it was of no use, as that only made me feel worse. The next evening I did not get to the church till after the singing. Meeting had commenced, and I walked right up the middle aisle and took a seat. I began to realize that I was a poor sinner, and I felt miserable. Several ministers and Christians talked to me, yourself among the number, and one or two wished me to go home and pray; but I did not promise to, and I did not.

The next evening I had an engagement of a political nature, and all the time that I spent at the meeting I felt miserable. I was forced to reply in a debate that was before the meeting, and I got up and utterly failed in my attempt. I sat down ashamed of myself, and called on some one to take my place, and I got excused, not to go home; no, but to go to the inquiry-meeting. As soon as I entered the church, I sought out Dr. Fish, and told him I wished him to get my wife, and wished him to pray with us. Just then you extended an invitation to all those that wished prayer to come to a given part of the house. I got my wife and we took a front seat. You made a few remarks, and then asked us all to get down on our knees. I hesitated a second, as I never had been on my knees that I could recollect; but I got down and repeated aloud the prayer after you, and when you were through and went on with your prayer, I still prayed with you.

I started for home, feeling miserable, and when I came to the last crossing, I was agitating in my mind how I should get up the curb-stone, it seemed as if I never had such a load to carry. As soon as I reached my room, I told my wife I must get down and pray. We did so, and my prayer was that Jesus would take me just as I was, a poor miserable sinner. I soon as I laid my head on my pillow, it seemed as if I could hear him singing "Come to Jesus just now," and "Happy day, happy

day." I went to sleep in that frame of mind.

When I awoke the next morning, I cannot describe what my feelings were; I was entirely a different man. It was quite early. The first thing I thought of doing was to pray. I told my wife so. She said it was too early to get up. I told her I did not care how early it was, I must get up and pray. We did so, and when I sat down to the breakfast table, I asked a blessing.

I can assure you that I have had more pleasure in one hour's time than I had in all my life time before, and I have often thought *what a fool I have been to reject Jesus so long.* I thank Jesus daily that you came to Newark and pointed me to my Saviour, who has pardoned my sins and made me happy. I now love to be in the prayer-meetings and among Christians, and engaged in all good works.

From your Christian friend,

It is now eight months since this letter was written. Yesterday came another letter from this same young man. And I have reason to know, from others, that every word of this last letter is true. I give an extract, in the hope that it may encourage some young man to believe that God is able to help those who give themselves up to Christ, to live consistent and devoted lives.

I remember that Dr. Mark Hopkins, of Williams College, once told the students of two men who were conversing of the evidence of their hope in the Lord Jesus. When the first was asked how he knew he was a Christian, his answer was: "Because I have hold of Christ." "But," said the other; "what will you do if the devil cuts your hands?" This staggered him. "Well," said he, "how do you know that you are a Christian?" "Oh!" he replied, "CHRIST HAS HOLD OF ME, and the devil can't cut his hands off!" So, my dear young man, if you will but come and believe in Him who suffered untold agonies on Calvary's cross for you, saying:

"Just as I am—Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because thy promise I believe,  
O, Lamb of God, I come!"

"Just as I am—Thy love unknown,  
Has broken every barrier down,  
Now, to be thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O, Lamb of God, I come!"

you will then hear the loving, compassionate Saviour's words: "I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE." Heb. xiii. 5.

Just read this second letter, and see if this young man does not seem to be one of those "Who are kept, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation?" 1 Pet. i. 5.

You, too, dear young man, may be one of that number, if you will but "flee from the wrath to come," to Jesus, the only refuge from the righteous displeasure of a holy God, who hates sin more than suffering.

If it had not been for the outpouring of the Spirit last spring in this city, perhaps I still would have been travelling the downward path to hell. But, thanks to a kind Providence, I can say, to-day, that I am a Christian. You, perhaps, may say, "How do you know you are a Christian?" I can soon tell you. I love those things that I used to hate, and hate those that I used to love. I love the prayer-meetings and the society of Christians. I am superintendent of a mission school, and the Lord is blessing that school. It is situated some two miles from my house; but I am always there, rain or shine, and always feel refreshed after the duties of the school are performed. It is a pleasant duty, dear brother! Only think of the gay, careless being engaged in such a work as this! Most certainly the Lord has been good to me. I am also connected with the "Young Men's Christian Union," which is accomplishing much, and, I think, doing a great work, in holding meetings and distributing tracts and books. So you see from this that I am not idle. I feel that I wish to be doing something for Jesus all the time. I feel that I am growing in grace, and that I have more and more every day to thank the Lord for. I remain,

Your affec. brother,

I have often seen the writer of these letters standing up, with two thousand others, and singing, with a joyful heart, "The Lord has pardoned all my sin, That's the news!" I feel the witness now within, That's, etc. And since he took my sins away, And taught me how to watch and pray, I'm happy now from day to day: That's the news; that's the news."

Oh! that every unsaved reader might heed, before it is forever too late, the entreaty,  
"And Christ the Lord can save you now, That's the news!"  
Your sinful hearts he can renew, That's, etc. This moment, if for sin you grieve, This moment, if you do believe, A full acquittal you'll receive: That's the news; that's the news!"

A NEW EDITION, the Fifth, of Kurtz's celebrated work: The Bible and Astronomy, appeared in Berlin late last year. It is somewhat abbreviated and popularized as compared with the fourth edition. Late theories upon the duration and significance of the six days of creation, broached in the intervals between these two latest editions (seven years) are not noticed and Kurtz maintains his so-called "Restitution Theory," according to which the six days are a brief summarizing repetition of the great geological processes of countless preceding ages, then brought to a close.

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FROM OUR CORRESPONDING EDITOR,  
IMPROVEMENTS AT LE ROY.

The Presbyterian Church in this place was never, we judge, in a more prosperous condition than at the present time. They are united and happy under the faithful ministry of Rev. C. C. Kimball, and are devising "liberal things," both as an indication of present prosperity, and a like warrant for the future.

In the first place, an old debt of near two thousand dollars is in process of liquidation. The subscription for that purpose lacked but one hundred and fifty dollars of the desired amount more than a week ago. We judge, from the manner in which the people are taking hold of it, that it is all cleared off by this time. And in the next place, they are moving for an organ. About six hundred dollars have already been secured for this purpose. And to this it may be added, that at the last communion (first Sabbath of March) nine persons were received to the church; four by letter, and five on profession of faith. The spirit of the church is buoyant and hopeful. Every thing indicates true prosperity.

THAT HORSE AND BUGGY.

It was a happy thought of a dying girl. Her pastor had been unceasing, tender and thoughtful in his attentions. He was often at her bedside; he had read to her from the Holy Scriptures; he had knelt and commended her to God in fervent prayer. She had leaned upon his counsels, was strengthened by his prayers, and was grateful for his coming, as she lay, week after week and month after month, wasting away, and looking for the slow but sure approach of the grim destroyer. And she was not ungrateful of the fact that it cost him a weary walk of some four or five miles every time he came to see her; for she lived at a considerable distance from the parsonage, and as yet the minister was not provided with horse and carriage for such services.

As the end was evidently drawing near, the dying girl called her father to her side, and asked what portion would be falling to her, or how much he could give her, if she were well, and just starting out in life. The answer covered some two or three hundred dollars. She further asked if her father would be willing to buy with that amount, a horse and buggy and robe, and present them to her dear pastor, as a reward for his faithful attentions, and to enable him more easily to visit other sick ones. The request was cheerfully granted; and now our excellent friend, Rev. T. D. Hunt, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Waterville, is handsomely equipped for his pastoral rounds.

RAILWAY LITERARY UNION.

Rev. Yates Hickey has ceased from his connection with the American Tract Society at New York, and has in view another project bearing the above designation. A bill is now pending in the Legislature of this State to charter an institution, to be called the "American Railway Literary Union," with headquarters at New York and Chicago; the object of which is to scatter proper reading upon all the lines of travel, in the States and British Provinces. The hope is to get such control of the lines of travel, by contract, that improper reading matter may be excluded, and that which is unobjectionable, both secular and religious, alone be offered for sale.

Good men are named as corporators in the bill, and the object aimed at is plainly one worthy of all praise; but all the friends of improper reading, those interested in the poorer class of novels, so many of which are now offered in cars and steamers, will rally against such an enactment. They call it monopoly, abridging the liberty of the press, and the like. We only fear that they will be too successful in their opposition.

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

Rev. Dr. Daggett, has now been twenty years pastor of the church in Canandaigua—was settled there in January, 1845, and on the return of that anniversary, preached a sermon appropriate to the occasion. His thoughtful people regarded it as a fit time for adding five hundred dollars to his salary. That is money well bestowed and well deserved.

GOING WEST.

We fear the Presbyterian Church in Penn Yan are about to lose their esteemed pastor, Rev. Frederick Starr, Jr. Indeed, we understand he has given them notice that he is going West, to act, we believe, as Financial Agent of the Lake Forest University, near Chicago. Mr. Starr has made warm friends at Penn Yan, where he has been settled some three or four years; he has made himself particularly useful and popular among the young people, by whom he will be much missed, and who will try hard to keep him where he is; but he has peculiar qualifications for the post he is now called to fill. We understand he still retains his position as Financial Agent for Auburn Seminary, and is to spend his summers in this region, looking after its interests.

A SECOND VISIT.

The good people of Sweden recently called on their pastor, Rev. J. C. Taylor, and made a handsome donation, of which due notice was given at the time. But they enjoyed that visit so well they were inclined to try again; so on the 9th inst. they crowded the parsonage a second time, and left some seventy-five dollars as a token of their good will.

AN OLD MAN.

Alexander Milliner, of whose extreme

age we made some notice a year ago, died on Monday last, at Adams Basin, twelve miles west of this city, at the age of one hundred and five years. He was a drummer boy in Washington's body guard in the Revolution. He was married in 1800, at forty years of age; lived with his wife sixty-two years, when she died, at eighty-two years of age. He leaves seven children, forty-three grandchildren, and seventeen great grandchildren. His funeral was attended in this city yesterday; old men attended him to his last resting-place, the pallbearers being from among the oldest citizens of the place.

A CALL.

Rev. C. B. Gardner, of Clarkson, has received and accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church of Cuba, and is soon to remove to his new field of labor.

OUR FLOODS.

It is conceded, we believe, by all, that our winter has been one of more than usual severity, both in respect to the long continued and steady cold, and the great abundance of snow; but Spring is at last coming, and all seem to be glad of it, except as it comes with such a mighty rush as not a little to disturb some of our plans and arrangements. The warm suns of a few days, and a few showers are giving us the largest floods which we have had for thirty years; so that railroad tracks in every direction are more or less submerged. Bridges are carried away, and, as we write, the regular trains on the New York Central and Erie roads are all stopped. We trust the embargo will soon be removed, if not, this letter will hardly meet the eyes of our readers at the time intended; and so we will write no more upon this uncertainty.

C. P. B.

ROCHESTER, March 17, 1865.

NOTICES FROM A PARISH JOURNAL.  
NO. V.

"HE'S DRAFTED, AND IF HE GOES, THE LORD WILL TAKE CARE OF ME."

Some twelve years ago, a sober lad who had received a very moderate education in a rural parish in the county of L—, emigrated to America. He carried the lessons which had been instilled into his young mind by an humble, now sainted mother, with him. The first week after he arrived he hired two sitting in Dr. B.'s church, and at the next ensuing communion he handed in his certificate, and was duly received into fellowship. He soon found employment in Mr. W.'s store, as a porter, in which he was retained until the last draft, respected and esteemed by his employers as an honest, faithful servant, attending to his duties during the week and his Sabbath privileges on the Lord's day. Five years ago he gave his hand and heart to a member of the same church, then living at service with a respectable American family in Spruce street, Philadelphia. The thrifty, honest couple lived in the enjoyment of all the happiness which God sees fit to bestow on those who walk in his commandments blamelessly.

The war broke out, and he was urged to enlist, but declined. Again and again he was importuned to become a volunteer, but his attachment to his wife, his employers (who were remarkably kind to him), and, above all, to his church, induced him to resist every appeal. Finally the draft came, and it fell to his lot to serve the country to which he had taken the oath of allegiance. The thought of leaving his happy home and exchanging the felicities of domestic bliss for the camp was very trying. The pastor of the church to which he belonged, called to pay a visit of condolence, and found him not at home. Before engaging in prayer with his excellent wife, he opened a conversation upon the subject of the draft, and the pending separation between the happy, pious couple. "I was sorry to hear that your husband was drafted," said the pastor. "Yes, it is very hard to part," replied the humble Christian woman, "after living five years and more so happy together; but it comes in the course of Providence, and we should not complain. Perhaps we have been too happy, and thought too much of each other, and the Lord has seen fit to separate us to try our faith."

"You husband is naturalized?" said the pastor. "Oh, yes, sir; he felt that it was his duty to become a citizen. His employers and all his American acquaintances were so kind to him, that he believed it would be wrong for him not to become a citizen. And if the country that gave him the means of life needed his service, and his life too, he thought he must give it."

"Won't he try to get a 'substitute?'" replied the pastor. "No, no, he'll never do that. He prayed over the matter, and asked the Lord to direct him, and if he saw it right to call him, he resolved to go. And I advised him to that course. The Lord did call him, and the Lord can preserve him in the field as well as in the house." "But are you not afraid that he may fall in the field?" "Yes, yes, I'm afraid; but he's drafted, and if he goes, the Lord will take care of me." "I am delighted," said the pastor, "with your faith; and would only say, fear not, for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name."

It is truly refreshing to find such instances of child-like confidence in God; and while it must be owned, with deep regret, that there may be many in the ranks who have never sought either the guidance of God when entering, or his protection when in the field, still it is to be hoped there are not a few who have

entered the army with as deep a sense of duty as they have ever approached a communion table. In the case thus cited, we have, it may be presumed, one of a large class of humble Christians, men of unpretending and unostentatious piety, who are serving God and their country with their whole hearts, and who are encouraged, yea strengthened, in their deeds of daring, by the prayers of their wives and Christian friends at home.

In the Camp of Distribution, at Arlington Heights, on the 8th of November, 1864, the following jottings were made in a delegate's journal: B— H—, of Wisconsin, aged 35, a native of that State; has been married twelve years—has a wife and four living children—was induced to enter the service as a volunteer: Hard work parting from wife and family. Had no sense of religion till he came to the camp. Wife a member of the Presbyterian church—a praying woman. She spent several nights in prayer, when he made up his mind to go to the army, though he enlisted at a tavern when half tipsy. Under a sermon in the Chapel of the Christian Commission he was impressed, convictions deepened, he became more and more concerned. At last his case became desperate. After several days of dreadful agony of soul, he found peace with God, and united with the church. He received the Lord's Supper at the soldiers' communion and was rejoicing in Christ Jesus when the delegate left the camp. On reporting the glorious news to his praying wife, she wrote him a letter, which deserves to be printed in letters of gold and distributed in every regiment in the service. The document seems almost like inspiration.

"Saddened," she says, "by the frolic that led you to enlist, I am now gladdened by the joyful news that this was the Lord's way of bringing you to Himself. I often prayed you to stay. I now pray you to go. Little did I think that the Lord had prepared a new heart for you before you should enter the field. And now, my dearest Ben, I shall not fail to pray, morning, noon, and night, that the Lord will preserve you in the day of battle, and bring you safely back to us when the war is over. But, if you fall in the service of our country, you fall in the service of the great Captain of your salvation, and He will be a husband to me and a father to our dear children."

Seldom does it fall to the lot of the Christian minister to find such instances of piety and strong faith in the wives of patriotic soldiers. This, however, may be accounted for, in some cases, by the peculiar material of which the United States army is composed. The spirit of Christian patriotism has pervaded the country. In every city, town, village, indeed, in every family, this spirit is rife. Hence it is that multitudes of Christian men have gone into the ranks from a stern sense of duty, as in the case of the first instance cited in this article. Then, again, many ungodly men have, while influenced by drink and an irreligious companionship, rushed into the army without any proper motive. These have been followed by the prayers of God's people, both among their own friends and others, whilst the Christian Commission has, under God, been following the camp with all its evangelical appliances. And as God's own means are used in faith and accompanied by prayer, many are brought to Christ, who have never given their salvation a single thought. They are doing their duty just as the Philippian jailor was doing his, without any regard to the glory of Christ or welfare of the country; and the voice of prayer, or the song of praise, or the counsels of Christian philanthropy, or it may be, the roar of the cannon and the clang of drums, like the thundering of the earthquake which shook the prison, arouse and alarm the careless and the ungodly, and they are plucked like brands from the fire.

In such cases, and we bless God that there are not a few of them, we have a signal incentive to duty. Let us not give up even runaways. Onesimus was a runaway, but the Lord watched him, and sought and caught him in Rome. Poor Ben, from Wisconsin, was literally a runaway; but he was pursued, not by the cry of vengeance, but by the prayer of faith, and the Lord, too, followed him, and caught him in the rendezvous of Distribution, on the heights of Arlington, and sent him forward to the front where, if alive, he now is, a brave soldier of the cross.

The latter of the cases thus introduced also brings to view a very precious truth in connection with the economy of grace. It certainly proves that God's mysterious providence is always made subservient to his purposes. Doubtless he who plans, because he knows, the end and the beginning, so rules and overawes even the very folly, as well as the wrath of man, and makes it praise him. In the whole career of poor Ben, prior to his conversion, we see and hear of nothing but sin and folly. As he said himself, "For the last ten years of my life I not only hated religion, but made a mock of sin." Yet it seems that the Lord loved him, and had planned his salvation. But he had also planned a singular chain of Divine providence by which he should bring him into the kingdom of grace, and in doing so make it apparent that he owned the prayers of a godly wife, and the preaching of the glorious gospel as subservient instrumentalities in the fulfilment of his divine purposes with regard to this monument of saving mercy.

A PUPIL OF CHALMERS.

PARSONITIS.

DEAR BROTHER MEARS:—I notice in my PRESBYTERIAN, of March 2d, an article from *Blackwood's Magazine* under the above caption, by a writer who claims to have "solved" the "problem" respecting the cause of this disease. The solution given may do very well for the locality of the writer, but I doubt whether it will accord with the experience of Americans. That there is a difficulty of the vocal organs prevalent, particularly among clergymen of a certain class, is but too evident. Its cause and cure we all desire to learn.

I differ from the writer you quote with respect to the cause, at least so far as this country is concerned. We all know that there is a tendency to bronchial affections with thousands who are not public speakers. Our experience in the present war has shown bronchitis to be very prevalent. Hundreds of young men who had no profession, have died of this disease in the army, many of whom might not have suffered any serious inconvenience from it for years, had not the peculiar experiences and exposures of camp life developed it. In those thus predisposed, the habits of the ministry tend more strongly to develop this disease, than those of any other class except the soldier. This tendency to disease of the vocal organs and throat we find among all classes—among males and females—the young as well as the mature and old. The modern scourge, *diphtheria*, which so desolates our homes, leaves its mementoes in many a sore throat and impaired vocal powers.

These chronic throat diseases are of most frequent occurrence with persons of sedentary life, and without doubt exhibit their severest types in a clergyman. This is certainly to be accounted for in some way by their habits, and yet I do not think the cause given a sufficient one, and for two reasons, viz:

We need but to look back to our childhood's days and call to mind those self-denying good men who used to ride or walk the circuit and preach at the "school-house" to assure ourselves, that *unnaturalness of voice* cannot be the cause! What can be more "unnatural" than the tone in which those itinerant laborers preached the Gospel? *There was nothing natural in it.* Not a word was spoken in the voice they would use on any other theme, and yet these men were never afflicted with this prevalent "parsonitis." It is, therefore, clear that unnaturalness is not *all*—not the only producing cause.

My second reason is: The men who are thus afflicted are not those who have adopted an unnatural tone in preaching. In this country, at least, those who do preach in such a "tone" to the greatest excess, are, as a rule, free from the other affliction. They are our best, our strongest, our most effective men who are its victims; men who preach Jesus Christ with all the energies of an earnest soul; men who are for the most part natural in their delivery—as natural, at least, as the one habit now to be noticed will admit of.

What, then is the cause of this affliction so peculiar to clergymen?

I would not be wiser than my fathers are, but from a brief experience in the work of the ministry, and no small observation among ministers, I am led to conclude that we owe it to the pen! The confinement of the study and the position at the "study table" are unfavorable for the chest and vocal organs. Then on the Sabbath the minister goes into his pulpit with a heart full of his theme, but depending on his *manuscript* for the "form of sound words," by which he will set forth Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The effort to read keeps the head thrown forward beyond its natural position in speaking, thus cramping the vocal organs and preventing their free action. The preacher would win souls to Christ. Pathos, deep emotion and strong passion are struggling for utterance, while the very position of the head and chest absolutely forbid the free natural use of either the muscular powers used in speaking, or of the organs of speech. Such a violation of nature's self must produce irritation and disease. I am hence led to conclude that the "cure" is to be found in the freedom of *unwritten discourse*. My own experience has taught me that I can speak longer, and with greater ease, when standing in a natural position, than in the best position I can have in reading. *Poor light, small windows and stained glass* greatly aggravate this difficulty. It is moreover true, I think, that those who are happily exempt from this *mild*—those classes of the profession which has not reached, are those whose habit is not to speak from a *manuscript*.

I am aware that this solution brings up another question grave and practical—one upon which much is being said and written, but of which I will not venture to speak. I hope our fathers in the ministry who may have tested by years of labor the comparative benefits of *unwritten* and written discourse will give to your columns, and through them to us who are younger in the work, the results of their observation and experience as bearing on this point. E. B. M.

So long as you see one star in the sky, the sun is not risen. So long as one leak admits the water, the ship is not safe; so long as one sin reigns in a man's heart, and is practiced in his life, Jesus is neither his Saviour nor his King.

Boaz did not give Ruth a quantity of corn at once, but kept her gleanings. That is the best charity which so relieves another's poverty as to still continue their industry.