

The Literary Journal

THE LIFE OF THE REVEREND AND VENERABLE

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Formerly Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxon, late Archdeacon and Canon of Carlisle; Vicar of Appleby, Westmorland; and sometime Incumbent of Trinity Church, Reading. By the Rev. Charles Hole, of Trinity College, Cambridge, Rector of Loxbear, Devon, author of "A Brief Biographical Dictionary." Vol. I London: Richards, 187, Piccadilly.

The subject of this memoir was born at Wilton, in October, 1797, and was the eldest son of Mr. John Phelps, master of the Free School in that town, his mother being a daughter of Mr. William Whitmarsh, a medical practitioner in Wilton, and coroner for the county. This child had the advantage in two wise, affectionate, and conscientious parents for the training of his earliest years, and the eleventh Earl of Pembroke manifested a friendly interest in his career. In the year 1810, Mr. Phelps resolved to bestow upon his eldest son, now approaching his thirteenth year, a classical education, and for this purpose the youth was sent to Hyde Abbey School, Winchester, then under the mastership of the Rev. George Richards, not a few of whose pupils distinguished themselves in after life, two of them rising to great eminence, the Right Hon. George Canning, and the Oxford Grecian, Dr. Thomas Gaisford, Dean of Christchurch. In the month of August, 1815, the *Salisbury Journal* announced a vacancy in the tenure of the Wiltshire Scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and young Phelps determined to become a candidate for it. He won the scholarship against several competitors, matriculated October 20th, and began residence at Oxford, October 28, 1815. He passed his Degree examination in May, 1819, obtained his Fellowship October 10th, and quitted Oxford October 11th, 1822. On the 10th of the following month Mr. Phelps was admitted to Holy Orders in Salisbury Cathedral, by Dr. Fisher, then Bishop of this diocese, and on the 17th he commenced his duties as curate at Hindon, which place he served alternately with Pertwood. Between Hindon and Pertwood, and about a mile northward of the former, was a third parish, Chicklade, with its hamlet of some twenty houses, and a little church. Chicklade House, in this parish, vacated for Mr. Phelps's accommodation by Sir William Parker, was excellently adapted both in itself and in its situation for a few private pupils on good terms. Here, says his biographer, he resided for three years and a half, and adds :—

As he was single-handed, the Bishop admitted him almost at once (December 22nd) to priests orders. It was a common thing in those days for a youthful clergyman to commence in sole charge of a parish, without the advantage of an experienced superior at hand, and so it was with Mr. Phelps. His intimacy therefore with Mr. Stephen Hawtrey, who had been the instrument of his coming, was doubly welcome. Ere three weeks had elapsed from his ordination, we find him preaching at Broadchalk, which was about the same distance from him as Wilton was, and in the same general direction. Mr. Hawtrey, too, paid frequent visits to Chicklade House. Earnest and painstaking as Mr Phelps had hitherto been at school and college, he was the same now in the blessed employment of winning souls for Christ's kingdom. He looked upon his flock as a people committed to his

care by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and it was his joyful endeavour to communicate the glad tidings to their ears, and to bring home to their hearts and consciences the life-giving doctrines of redemption. He soon began the useful exercise of extemporary delivery, from notes. This was by Mr. Hawtrey's prompting; for Mr. Phelps being on one occasion at his friend's house, and urgently required to preach without time to write out a sermon in full, he was induced to try the experiment of notes, and ere long his own congregation had the benefit of his success. In pastoral duty he was conscientious and unremitting. A very fair school was already on foot at Hindon, under the patronage of Lord Calthorpe, and this truly Christian nobleman gladly assisted him from his purse in every useful measure. Before twelve months had elapsed his lordship visited Hindon, and expressed himself pleased at the promising condition of things. Pupils came in time, and at Easter, 1823, after Nicolson had studied with him in solitude for six months, Mr. Phelps was glad to admit as a first companion a son of Bishop Ryder. By September, just twelve months from his commencing, his number was completed, and he had a full house, with a tutor's anxieties added to big pastoral labours.

On the 21st of November, 1823, Mr. Phelps's father died, after being master of the Free School at Wilton for thirty five years. On a marble monument in the chancel of Wilton old church is a full inscription, and we are persuaded a just and honest tribute to his memory, from the Archdeacon's pen. The widowed Mrs. Phelps survived her husband many years. On Thursday, July 8th, 1824, Mr. Phelps was married at the little church of Chicklade to Octavia, daughter of the Rev. John T. Frowd, an old Fellow of Corpus, who resided at Chicklade. Early in the year 1824 Mr. Phelps was appointed one of the Masters of Harrow School, and to that seat of learning he removed in April of the same year. With this event the first volume of the biography closes. The second volume now in the press will present to us his mastership at Harrow, his curacies in and near Reading, his Reading incumbency, and his brief archidiaconate in the north under Bishop Waldegrave. The biographer has executed his task, as far as it has hitherto proceeded, with ability and care, and has given us a faithful portrait of the Archdeacon as a student, as a son, as a friend, as a Christian, and as a faithful minister of the Gospel of Christ. The author earnestly prays that one result of his labours may be "the kindling of some warmth within more of Christian circles, that youths of lofty principles, youths gifted with patient pains-taking, may in greater numbers feel the flame of a sacred ambition urging them into the path which this Wiltshire youth trod with so much blessing accruing to himself and others." The volume contains much interesting correspondence, and cannot fail to prove interesting to those of our readers who can appreciate the zealous labours of an earnest servant of the Church. '

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