

*A. Patton*

# THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me,  
and what I shall answer when I am reproved.—HAB. ii. 1.

REV. A. H. BURWELL, Editor.]

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY, 8th APRIL, 1831.

[Vol. I.—No. 52.]

## WORKS OF BISHOP RAVENSCOFF.

The first volume (the second having appeared sometime since) of the works of this distinguished prelate has just issued from the Protestant Episcopal Press at New York. It embraces a memoir of the Bishop, several of his sermons, his charges, and some controversial tracts. We have not had time to examine it thoroughly, but from the hasty glance we have taken of it, we think our Church will find in this volume a rich source of instruction and edification. We have confined ourselves thus far, almost exclusively, to the memoir, and as we have run through it, the character of Bishop Ravenscuff has appeared to us as interesting as it was extraordinary. In another part of our paper will be found an account of his conversion, from his own pen. We learn from the memoir that it was with extreme reluctance that he consented to place it on paper, "lest the peculiar circumstances of his case might be used and perverted to strengthen the despisers of the means of grace, in their neglect of all the outward appointments of God's wisdom and goodness, to beget consideration in their hearts and lead them to repentance."

The subjoined extract is from a letter written by a personal friend of the Bishop to the editor of the work, and exhibits some of the peculiar traits of the Bishop's mind:—

"It is my good fortune to be intimately acquainted with Bishop Ravenscuff, and (I think I may say it without being accused of vanity) to enjoy his confidential friendship. Circumstances threw me more frequently in his company than either of his other clergy, and thus gave me an opportunity, enjoyed by few, of seeing him as he was in his parlour, in his study, and in all those retired relations of life, which, though not often taken into the estimate of character, serve, nevertheless, to show a man in his proper and distinguished colours. I might further say, that I knew him well in the unreserved moments of private intercourse. But never lived there a man in whom there was less reserve, and who was more perfectly the same in public and private. "I have no concealments," would be frequently say, "nor do I wish to know the secrets of others." And never did man act up more to his declarations. With a wasteful honesty (if I may so speak) he dealt out the truth to all, regardless of the fear or favour of any. He "kept back" nothing that he thought would tend to the right understanding of the truth. He was "determined" to use his own words, "to call things by their right names." In one word, he was far too honest for the age in which he lived. Had his lot been cast in the iron times of the reformation, posterity would have rejoiced in his name, and have ranked them with the Cranmers and Ridelys of those days. But being raised up, as he was, in the midst of an innovating generation, he felt called on, by every consideration of duty, to lift his voice against that strong tide of modern inventions and misnamed charity, which seemed about to drift the Church from the safe moorings of the reformation, and toss it without helm or pilot upon a sea of uncertainty and error. I have often looked with wonder at the man, whilst he has been declaiming with the zeal of an Apostle against modern pretences of charity, and have thought that if all heralds of the cross were filled with a like zeal for the truth, and reverence for primitive practice, what another aspect the Church of Christ would wear! And it has occurred to me at those times, that his fearless self sacrificing character could be summed up in no better language than that emphatic declaration of our Saviour, *Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.* He might have taken it for his motto; for it was cer-

tainly the ruling principle of all he said and did. His honesty I believe no man doubted—the policy of his unreserved declarations was, however, questioned by many, who regarded, more than he did, established forms of speech, and the little courtesies of society which are too often made to conflict with that unbending honesty and sincerity which should ever characterize the Christian.

It fell to my lot to be the bearer of a letter from our Standing Committee, announcing his unanimous election as our first Bishop. And never shall I forget the solemn nature of that interview. I found him happily seated at his fireside, with the friend of his bosom beside him, and his Bible open before him. After the usual salutation and inquiries, the documents containing the certificate of his election, &c., were placed in his hands, and as my curiosity was strongly excited to witness the effect produced on him by this unexpected and solemn call, I narrowly watched the workings of his countenance; and there I read a lesson on the awful responsibility of the sacred calling, never to be obliterated. For some moments he seemed to read and read again as if loath to believe the startling proposition. At length a deep groan relieved the awful hearing of his breast. At this sound his wife looked up from her work and cast an anxious look upon us both, as if to inquire the cause of such emotion. Not a word, however, was spoken. An impressive silence reigned throughout the chamber, broken only by hard and long drawn breathings, which seemed to say audibly, "Lord, I am not worthy! What am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" At length after pacing the chamber for a few moments, as if struggling to keep down his emotions, he paused before me, and said in his peculiarly emphatic manner, "Brother, it must be so. The hand of God is in this thing, I see it; and with his help I will go where he calls me." Then putting the papers into the hands of her who was literally his help-meet, he endeavored to return to his wonted strain of cheerful and edifying conversation. But although he failed in no iota of attention to his guest, yet there was an evident weight upon him during the remainder of my visit, which made me wonder how "the office of a Bishop" could ever be the aim of worldly ambition. There was something ever to be remembered, in the expression of his countenance, at that time. It seemed to indicate the humility of *David* in the language just quoted, without the apparent reluctance of *Moses* when called into the dangerous service of his Master. All the trials, and labours, and responsibility of his apostolic office, appeared to array themselves at once before him, as if to intimidate him, and make him doubt the divine call. But like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, (whom of all preachers he most resembled,) he took refuge in the gracious promise of our Lord—*My grace shall be sufficient for thee.*

When I next saw him, it was in Philadelphia, standing before the altar of St. Paul's, and receiving from the venerable Bishop White his commission to rule as well as minister in the Church of Christ. And never while memory retains her seat, shall I forget the startling effect of his responses upon the multitude that looked on. It was as though an earthquake was shaking the deep foundations of those venerable walls. A breathless silence reigned during the whole of the sacred ceremony; and no one, it is believed left the Church that day without feeling as if he could pledge himself for the sincerity and zeal of him who was then invested with the apostolic office.

And yet that this man should have had his enemies, yea, bitter enemies and revilers! But it need not be wondered at, for he was the unsparing champion of truth—and *ye hate me,* says our Sa-