

**MEMOIR OF THE REV.
MICHAEL C. TAYLOR,
WITH EXTRACTS FROM
HIS CORRESPONDENCE**

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Memoir of the Rev. Michael C. Taylor, with extracts from his correspondence by Benjamin Hellier

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BENJAMIN HELLIER

**MEMOIR OF THE REV.
MICHAEL C. TAYLOR,
WITH EXTRACTS FROM
HIS CORRESPONDENCE**



Yours very truly
Wm Lloyd Garrison

Engraved by J. H. Buffum

From the Bust by John Adams

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. MICHAEL C. TAYLOR,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY

BENJAMIN HELLIER.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN I was asked to prepare a Memoir of Mr. Taylor, I at once consented, for I felt that a life marked by so uncommon excellence ought not to pass away without some record.

In the first instance, I prepared a Biographical Sketch which was intended for publication in the "Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine," but in deference to the judgment of some friends by whom this was read, I determined to enlarge it, so that it might form a separate volume. I was fully aware, however, that to accomplish this would not be an easy task. I knew that the life to be recorded had not been marked by striking incidents; and owing to the fact that my friend was hardly ever the subject of his own narratives, my intimate acquaintance with him had failed to give me full information respecting the details of his own history.

Shortly after his death, his widow removed to South Africa, and, in consequence of this, it was difficult to obtain access to his papers; and it will be seen that the materials placed at my disposal consisted almost entirely of letters. But even on


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account of these letters alone a separate volume seemed desirable. In them the writer is to a considerable extent, and quite undesignedly, self-portrayed; whilst they possess much intrinsic merit, and some of them especially will prove useful to those who are engaged in the religious training of youth.

Those who knew Mr. Taylor intimately will probably feel that the following pages do not give an adequate picture of their departed friend. I would remind such readers how difficult it is for any words of a biographer to do full justice to such a life. There are some men whose characters appear to us perfectly lovely not because they are frequently performing noble and generous deeds, for which indeed circumstances may furnish no occasion, but because the multitude of actions which make up their life are all marked by the same character of goodness, and there is *absolutely nothing* of a contrary kind to be placed on the other side of the account. Such was the case with Mr. Taylor; and how weak the impression made by the words of another, when compared with the effect produced by his daily conduct on those who were the constant witnesses of it!

Other readers who were strangers to the subject of this Memoir may suppose that the portraiture here given is overdrawn; and that all virtues have been exaggerated, and all faults carefully kept out

of sight. I can only say, in reply to such possible objection, that I am wholly unconscious of having done either the one or the other. It will, perhaps, be said, Were there no faults? My honest answer is that I did not detect any. I could indeed have made my friend a witness against himself, but I have not thought it right to do so. What a person says to his own disparagement in private records, designed solely for his own use, and in confidential letters, is often true when regarded as an expression of *his own feelings*; but it becomes false when accepted by another, and used against him. It is true as exhibiting his sense of the wide distance between his ideal standard of perfection and his own actual attainments; but utterly misleading if regarded as a statement of what he was as judged by the standard of attainment ordinarily reached by other men. The fault, for instance, of which Mr. Taylor most frequently accuses himself, is *indolence*; and these self-reproaches were written at the very time when his best friends were convinced, and as the issue too plainly proved, that he was constantly working beyond his strength.

In order that the reader may not have to rely on my own testimony only, I have introduced estimates of Mr. Taylor's character given by several friends who knew him well; and it will be seen that their concurrent evidence speaks of his life as *blameless*.

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The design of this little work is not to extol human virtue, but to contribute to the glory of God's grace; and to serve as an encouragement to others to follow this departed servant of God as he followed Christ.

I take this opportunity of tendering my sincere thanks to all whose communications have aided me in the preparation of this work, and especially to Mrs. Taylor, of Cradock, South Africa; the Rev. John Dury Geden, of Didsbury; and Mr. Mansford, of Westminster.

*Headingley, June 14th, 1870.*