

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

T. MEREDITH, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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TERMS.
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INTREPID FAITH.

Extract from Dr. R. Fuller's Sermon.

The next proposition is, that to every man a certain definite time is given in which to finish his course; "His days are determined, the number of his months is with Thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." We all die, says the scriptures, and are as water sinking into the ground and returning no more. Our lives roll on like rivers. We may be renowned or obscure; we may become benefactors or scourges of our race; our existence may be calm and bright, or dark and turbulent; but to each a period is allotted, after which we are confounded in the tomb—even as rivers, the most celebrated and unknown, the tranquil and impetuous, those which desolate and those which bless the earth, all traverse spaces accurately prescribed, and then lose their names and distinctions in the ocean.

Such are our lives, and do not pass lightly over this thought. Ah my hearers, if Almighty God should this moment reveal to us the future, what startling discoveries might we not make; what alterations in a few months; how many graves ready and opening under our feet. Here the youngest and giddiest might stand aghast at finding themselves already touching the fatal limit. There the rotund of mirth, and the eager aspirant after honor, and the man all absorbed in business, might be seen pale and terrified at that message, "This year thou shalt die." All around us, and at our very sides—in these pews—in the circles where we move—in our families—how many unexpected and melancholy changes might we not behold if God should disclose what even a year shall bring forth. My brethren, God hath not revealed to us the future, nor do we require any such knowledge. Use the reason which has been vouchsafed you.—Look at the scene in the midst of which you daily live; and what is hourly passing about you. Open your eyes to the spectacle now exhibited. Listen to the voice which now speaks. Be warned, be wise, reflect, meditate on the truth I am now urging, that to each of us there is prescribed a time in which to finish our course, a period fixed and definite, and that cannot be just sed.

And not only is the time certain and definite, but, I remark once more, it is short and rapidly hastening away. "The time is short," says the apostle; and of all the admonitions of the Bible this is that which seems least to require a preacher to make us feel it. "What," indeed, as the holy Psalmist enquires, "is your life?" The longest human life, what is it! Compare our life with that of the generations before the flood—men who reckoned not by years but by centuries—and what is it! What is it when compared with the duration even of inanimate objects, these venerable walls—those seats—this pulpit! Why the very pages of this old Bible—so frail that a rude touch would rend them—how many eyes which have rested on these pages are now quenched in death, how many lips which have expounded these pages are now sealed in the tomb. And what if I could go on and compare our life with eternity. What if we could comprehend the incomprehensible, and measure the infinite, and fathom the fathomless, and then compare our little shrivelled breath with eternity, with the boundless abysses of the future, with myriads upon myriads of ages accumulating ever and ever—ah! imperceptible atom, grass cut down in a moment, flower, smoke, vapor, shadow, dream, nothing.

Yes, my brethren, "Man that is born of a woman is of but a few days," and these days pass rapidly away. The world passeth away and the fashion thereof. "The fashion of this world passeth away"—the "fashion" the vain pageant, of this world passeth away. The image here is that of a procession marching before our eyes. It may be surmounted by gay banners, and be decked in every brilliant hue, and move to all the pomp of festive or martial music blown from reed and shell and metal, but it is soon gone. It is yonder, and scarcely can you hear the faint notes of its coming; it approaches; it is before you in its imposing array; it has passed; it is gone, and the street is left silent and deserted again.
 "It passeth away" is written upon every thing here. We look, we love, we desire, we possess, no matter how dear and cherished the object, but soon trace upon its fragile form this melancholy inscription, "It passeth away." Our pleasures, what are they doing? Passing away. Our affections, what are they doing? Passing away; they are, says the apostle, "but for a moment." Where are the companions of our childhood! Where are the associates of our youth! Our fathers, where are they? Who are those who once trod these hallowed courts, and filled this sacred desk?—Gone!—Gone! They have finished their course;

they have passed away. And we my brethren, we are following them. We, too, are "accomplishing as an hireling our day." "Our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle;" and every thing around us is changing, consuming, vanishing "as a cloud passing away." This young year is passing away. This Sabbath is passing away. These seasons, these songs, these prayers, these opportunities—all, all, are fleeting, passing away, hastening to be gone.

"Time rolls his ceaseless course.
 The race of yore that danced our infancy upon the knee,
 How are they blotted from the things that be.
 How few, all weak and withered of their force,
 Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
 The tide returning hoarse
 To wait them from our sight."

My brethren, my very dear brethren, poor mortals, children of an hour, have you any just conceptions of a life so brief and transient as ours?—"He fixeth as a shadow and continueth not."—"Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth, and my years are as nothing before thee."—"Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."—"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

From the Baptist Advocate.

THE LOW STATE OF PIETY IN THE MINISTRY.

The "Baptist Memorial" for April, contains an article entitled "The present Ministry," adapted to revive the churches, which is worthy of a prayerful perusal, by every preacher of the gospel. The writer is obviously a pious minister, who has become sensible of his own inefficiency, and the lack of piety and devotedness in the "present Ministry."

We see, in almost every religious periodical, articles on the low state of religion in our churches, depicting in strong colours the ravages of the spirit of the world among our communicants, and lamenting the fewness of conversions in our congregations; but how seldom do we meet with an article, either in our weekly or quarterly publications, on the low state of piety in the ministry.—We complain of the fearful indifference to experimental religion manifested by our brethren, of the difficulty we encounter in interesting them in purely devotional meetings; but how seldom have we inquired honestly before God, how far their lack of faith, love and devotedness may be legitimately traced to a deficiency in those essential elements of Christian character among ourselves.—It is a general truth, manifest to the most superficial observer, and substantiated by history, that the ministry gives character to the church. The religious character of a pastor being given, who has had the oversight of a flock one year, the general religious character of that flock may be easily ascertained. If he is humble, laborious, and deeply pious, if he watches for souls, as one who feels that he must shortly give account before the awful tribunal of the judgment, if he is doing all he can to mature piety in his own heart, to promote the spiritual interests of Zion, and the conversion of sinners, there you will find a church in some measure revived, there will occur at least occasional conversions.

But on the other hand, if he is a man who cares more for his own popularity than for the approbation of God, more for his own reputation than the salvation of souls, if his piety is weak and superficial, there you will find a church pre-eminently enjoying external prosperity, but which as far as the spiritualities of Christ's kingdom are concerned, is as "a heap in the desert, that knoweth not when good cometh," to which angels from heaven's battlements point, and say with tearful interest—"the dead are there."

If this position is correct, viz: that the actual state of the churches is as a general truth, a fair exponent of the spiritual condition of the ministry, does not the apathy pervading Zion, the absence of revivals, and the feeble responses made to the death cries of a sinking world, indicate that her watchmen are asleep, or that they enjoy but little of primitive, apostolic consecration? The ways of Zion do mourn, few come to her solemn feasts, her gates are desolate, but where are the "priests" who sigh over her desolations, who are "in bitterness" because her sons and daughters have gone "into captivity." Where can be found one Jeremiah exclaiming in the agony of a heart awake to the interests of deathless souls and the glory of God—"O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over the slain of the daughter of my people." Alas! the alarming fact is, that the most of us are satisfied, virtually if not theoretically satisfied, with the present state of things.

That satisfaction is exhibited in the formality of our devotions, the destitution of fervor, point and power in our sermons, in the worldliness of our conversation, and in the greater attention paid to organizations and out of the church, than to the growth of piety, the increase of moral power in the hearts of our brethren. It is exhibited in the spirit manifested in our ministerial conferences, where we criticise every body, excepting ourselves; every subject, excepting our own delinquencies. It is exhibited in our associations, where we are so anxious "to get the floor," to speak and fritter away precious time, which our fathers dedicated to strictly devotional exercises.

I write in a spirit of self-condemnation. Verily, the writer is guilty before God. Guilty of living beneath his privileges, of urging others to high attainments in piety, and not developing, in his own life, an example of turgid growth in

grace; of being too well satisfied with merely proclaiming the gospel, going through the round of public service while destitute, in a great measure, of the unction of the Holy Ghost; of proclaiming the infinite resources of grace opened in Christ to the believer, and the glorious prospects before him; of depicting the frailty of moral life, the necessity of immediate preparation for eternity to the sinner; and yet living before both, as if these truths he insists so much on in the pulpit, after all, are merely unimportant abstractions. He would sink low in self-abasement before God; and from that humble position he would ask his brethren in the ministry—is not the state of living, growing piety lamentably low among us? Can we, under God, "revive the churches," unless we are revived ourselves—is not a frightful amount of their worldliness, contentedness with a naked "hope," and their general inefficiency chargeable upon us? Brethren, let us examine ourselves. In the serene light of the Bible, our ordination vows, and the oft-acknowledged claims of God, and a ruined world, let us thoroughly scrutinize our own hearts. Is our preaching successful?—An able writer, in the March number of the Christian Review, in an article "On Edwards as a Sermonizer," has the following just remarks:—"A growing and attentive congregation will not satisfy a faithful minister. If none are pricked in the heart, if none come to him in private to inquire the way of life, if there are no spiritual births under his ministrations, all other indications of prosperity pass for nothing." COLFAX.

THE ENDLESS REST.

BY ANDREW DICKINSON.

This peaceful, holy stillness round,
 Forshadows endless peace profound.
 The Rest beyond the sky:
 Light, air, and the soft summer wind
 Scarce ruffling the smooth lake, remind
 The soul of peace on high.

Oh, glorious day, of light the soul!
 Perpetual may thy pleasures roll
 Through my extatic breast!
 Too feeble words no utterance find:
 Dumb is expression, while the mind
 Admires this glorious Rest.

Blest Spirit! on this cloudless day,
 Shine inward with far brighter ray
 Than earth's material sun:
 Rise, Sun of Righteousness, on me!
 So shall this heart, rekindled by thee,
 Approach thy shining throne.

An opening heaven solates my eyes;
 Thither my heart with rapture flies.
 Quick as the fleeting thought,
 To amarantine plains and streams,
 And the wide sea of glass that gleams,
 With heavenly brightness fraught.

Blest Spirit! Land! thy genial skies,
 Above created good I prize!
 How gladly I'll forego,
 For an inheritance of bliss,
 All earthly dreams of happiness,
 In this dark sphere below.

Music in streams melodious there,
 Trembles along th' ethereal air,
 And hills give back the strains:
 The atmosphere is peace and love;
 Praise rolls in incense-clouds, that move
 O'er the eternal plains!

Anthems of everlasting love
 Thrill the bright spirit realm above;
 And waves of peace divine,
 Swell into rivers of delight;
 While hills on the enraptured sight
 In heavenly landscape shine.

Up to this Paradise of God,
 Haste, haste, my soul! 'tis the abode
 Prepared for thee above!
 With grace unspeakable and fair,
 Jesus, the King of Peace is there,
 To feast thee with his love!

From the Ch. Watchman.

THINGS THAT TROUBLE A PASTOR.

1. To see some members of the church habitually absent themselves from the regular weekly prayer meeting, and from the monthly church meeting, when they have solemnly pledged that they would not "forget the assembling of themselves together." Christian, where is thy honesty!—where thy sense of obligation to God, and to the church!—"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it." Redeem your pledge and comfort the fainting heart of your pastor. There never was a time, when Aaron and Hur Christians were more needed, than now. It is one of Satan's devices, in staying away from such meetings; for he holds you with a firmer grasp, if he can keep you from praying; and he hopes thus to weaken the hands of the pastor, and get a victory over you, him, and the church.

2. It greatly troubles a pastor, to know that some of his people do not have family worship.—How such a man degrades himself in the eyes of his children! How unfaithful to the solemn trust reposed in him, to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!" There can be no family religion without family prayer; and how can prayerless families be really a Christian family!

A minister of the gospel, accompanied by a companion who was not a Christian, was once visiting a professedly Christian family. He had anticipated much enjoyment, and expected to find a household of faith like that of Cornelius, who was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house." But what was his astonishment in

finding there was no family altar. He was not asked to pray during his visit, even on the Sabbath. The astonishment of his companion was not less than his disappointment and grief, and as they were conducted to their chamber exclaimed, "What! do they not have prayers here?" Oh, what a house that must be where there are no "prayers!" A certain minister, on a journey, stopped for the night at a house, where resided a similar prayerless family; who as they were about conducting him to his chamber, asked the father if they did not have prayers. He was answered in the negative. He then declared he dared not sleep in such a house and forthwith departed. Christian reader, is your house without a family altar?—Better be without insurance. You are in danger. Your children sleep in danger. What if you should be called up at midnight to behold one of them dying! Could you pray? Would not that child reproach you justly in neglecting their eternal welfare? Why be a stumbling block to your children? Why a grief to your pastor, and a mark for the irreligious to shoot at? Bitter regrets await your dying hour; and is there not unhappiness now? "Repent and do thy first works." TITHES.

PROTESTANT CHURCHES AMONG THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF FRANCE.

Never have the Roman Catholic people been more disgusted with the superstitions of their Church, and the avarice of their priests, than at present; and never has there been a more favorable opportunity of preaching the gospel to them. This is what the Pasteur Napoleon Roussel proposes to do, by establishing churches in many parts of France. What he did in La Haute Vienne last year will give an idea of what he proposes still to do. Only a year ago La Haute Vienne had not a single pastor, nor a single Protestant church. M. Roussel went to a village which had shown a desire to embrace the gospel; after struggling for some months against the opposition of the clergy and the civil authorities, but with the concurrence and sympathy of the people, evangelical worship was established and adopted by the entire of the inhabitants of the place—the church itself was delivered to the Protestant pastor—the Mayor attended the preaching—and the Romish priest was converted. Now, Villefavard has a pastor, a schoolmaster, two or three hundred hearers frequent the church every Sunday, and one hundred and thirty six pupils attend the school during the week. A similar work has been successively done by M. Roussel at Balledent, at Limoges, at Rancon, at Thiat, at Claviere; and now these six churches, served by six pastors, present a population of six thousand persons, who hear, with more or less regularity, the preaching of the gospel. It is a work of this kind that M. Roussel desires to pursue in other parts of France. He intends as he has hitherto done, to act independently of all societies, neither asking further direction, nor accepting a salary from any. If he is left without other resources than his own, he will not the less continue the work on a small scale. But if some brethren encouraged by the past, wish to help the work in future, M. Roussel will give it an extension proportioned to the help that will be given. Thus, whether he may be alone, or have one or many assistants, he will build places of worship as he has done in the Haute Vienne, or preach in barns, extended or contract his journeys, and his work. As soon as the church is established, M. Roussel places it under the direction of a Societe Evangelique, or of a National Church according to circumstances.

A NATURAL PLACE.

There is a spot on the earth, or in the ocean, where Nature reigns predominant. It is in the Pacific, and was visited by Lieut. Wilkes, and is thus described in the narrative of the United States exploring expedition:

On the 19th August we made Dog Island, one of a group of sixty-five coral islands, and despatched boats to see if a landing could be effected, while the ships began the surveying operations.—The number of birds seen hovering over the island, which proved to be the case. Several turtles were caught, and a number of specimens obtained.—No traces of inhabitants were found, and the state of nature every-where, indicated that it had not been inhabited at any recent period.

There were a great many sharks, both in the lagoon and outside, which were so ravenous that they bit at the oars. It was by no means pleasant to have to swim through the surf to the boat with these dangerous animals so numerous around us. The landing on a coral island effectually does away with all preconceived notions of its beauty, and any previous ideas formed in its favour are immediately put to flight. That verdure which seemed from a distant view to carpet the whole island, was in reality but a few patches of wiry grass, obstructing the walking, and offering neither fruit nor flowers to view; it grew among the rugged coral debris, with a little sand and vegetable earth. It is somewhat surprising that a few trees forty or fifty feet high should have found sufficient soil to protect their growth. Most of the trees, however, are of stunted size, being not more than ten to fifteen feet in height, and eighteen inches in diameter. Van Schouten and Le Maire visited this island, 10th April, 1616, some two hundred years before, and it was even then clothed with vegetation. If their description is an accurate one, the island appears now to be rather higher, as they report "from what they could judge, the greater part of the island is overflowed at high water;" this is certainly not the case now. The number of birds on the island

was incredible, and they were so tame as to require to be pushed off their nests to get their eggs. The most conspicuous among them was the frigate bird; many of the trees were covered with their nests, constructed of a few sticks. The old birds were seen, as they flew off, inflating their blood-red pouches to the size of a child's head, and looking as if a large bladder were attached to their necks. The gannets, scoty terns, and the beautiful tropic-bird, were in countless numbers; the former guarding their eggs (which were laid on the ground without a nest) with care, remaining by them, and even suffering themselves to be captured without resistance. Their hoarse croaking was quite deafening. Some droll sights were seen of crabs walking off with snakes, and both again seized by some stout bird and borne away. Armies of soldier or practical crabs were seen moving in all directions with their shells. We enjoyed ourselves much, and found no use for our guns, powder, and shot; as many specimens as we could desire were taken with the hand, both old and young. In some cases the tropic-birds were taken off their nests, and from others their eggs were taken without disturbing them; indeed, I have never seen any barn-yard fowls half so tame. The various snakes, the many coloured fish, the great eels, enormous and voracious sharks, shells, mollusks, spiders, with the curious lepidoptera, seemed to have quite possession, their webs stretching in every direction, and occasioning us much annoyance; all gave a novelty to the scene, that highly interested and delighted us. In the afternoon we returned on board, loaded with specimens; and the survey being completed, we bore away on our course. There are no coconut palms on the island, as has been reported by Capt. Fitzroy, in his voyage; nor is there any fresh water to be found.

NO COMFORT IN INFIDELITY.

The Boston Investigator of the 9th inst. contains an editorial notice of the recent death of Wm. C. Bell. Our readers will remember that this Mr. Bell was the agent in the free States of Cassius M. Clay's new paper, and that he presided over the famous infidel convention, held in New-York in May last. He has been well known for the last twenty years past in Kentucky as a notorious infidel—one always willing to avow and defend his principles. He died in the interior of Pennsylvania, June 20th. It is said that he retained his infidel views to the last, and dictated a paper to that effect. It may be useful to notice the remarks which his death has occasioned in the organ of skepticism. The editor of the Investigator writes, "We bid him adieu with a mixture of tranquil and painful reflections. We remember with gratitude that he lived not in vain; that he gave somewhat to the illumination of the public and the reformation of his age, more to the elevation and improvement of his co-workers, and most of all to the joy and satisfaction of those with whom he was connected by bonds of consanguinity and love. But the reformer himself, that such a portion of mind in so devoted a friend of humanity is so untimely extinguished."

There, reader, is the infidel hope! Friends who loved Mr. B. as a man, and admired him as a reformer, believe that his mind is "extinguished"! He has lived out his brief day, and perished in annihilation! True, he had intellect, and one might have supposed, in an unguarded moment, that the "portion of mind" which dwelt in "so devoted a friend of humanity" would be found at last to have a nobler destiny than a dog, but no! such hopes are only pleasing illusions—that mind has been "extinguished." How differently the eye of faith views the exit of the Christian reformer from this world. Wilberforce was such a reformer; and we believe that his career of glory only commenced on earth; that he has gone to a wider and nobler sphere of action, where his mental and moral powers will develop forever. We believe that as far from having perished, he has only begun to live, and that he will shine as the stars while eternity lasts. Contrast the two beliefs, ye who are tempted to reject the religion of the cross, and to plunge into the doubts of infidelity. You may be flattered by ungodly companions for the time, but when you die, they will coldly say that your mind is extinguished. Does your immortal, expanding soul welcome annihilation, and leave the Christian's heaven?—A. Y. Exam. (Alec.)

POPIISH EDICT TO PHYSICIANS.

The Archbishop of Ferrara has forbidden doctors and surgeons to visit the sick, unless they (the patients) can produce certificates of their confession.—the edict runs thus:—

"We remind physicians and surgeons, that in compliance with the apostolic constitutions, it is their duty, should the case appear serious or likely to become dangerous, on their first visit to pronounce their patients that they ought to be confessed, to the end that, the soul being cured, the cure of the body may be more profitably undertaken.

"If, on the second visit, the patient have not been confessed, the medical attendant must repeat his admonition, threatening at the same time to give up the case if the advice be not complied with.

"Finally: if the certificate of confession be not produced on the third day, the medical attendant must stop his visits, and not resume them until the confession be regularly attended.

"Physicians and Surgeons who do not conform to this mandate, will incur the censures and penalties ordained by the sacred canons and apostolic constitutions—as well as such other arbitrary penalties as it may seem good to us to inflict." L'Hospital de Bruges, 3 Mai 1845.