

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

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For the Recorder. Revelation and Reason.

Right reason would invite man to the inquiry, "What is the first and most important subject, to determine the question—Is the Bible a Revelation from God to man?" This question being established in the affirmative, right reason would lead to the certain conclusion, that what God has revealed must be true, and His will demands the most sacred reverence and obedience. Even, if God should promise many things above the reach of all human power, to doubt or deny, would be a daring presumption, an indication of rebellion, against God. The Bible being established as the Word of God, it follows that this part of it is true.—The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them: for they are spiritually discerned. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Hence, if reason was not biased by a corrupt and depraved nature, the natural man would say—As I am in a state of nature with an unenlightened heart, and have not sought wisdom from above, I need not wonder that the Scriptures appear to me mysterious or contradictory. I should rather wonder at myself in not seeing my need of, and not seeking spiritual aid. The candid reasoner would see enough to confess the revealed truth—that, the carnal mind is enmity against God; that light has come into the world; but men love darkness rather than light: because their deeds are evil; and hence that their eyes against the light of right reason, as well as of Revelation. Thus the Scriptures prove themselves by experimental evidence to the rational mind, and conscience convicts of sin, at the same time. As revealed, the spirit which accompanies the Word of God reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. And this, the candid reasoner must acknowledge he has experienced under the preaching of the gospel, and must confess that he has often resisted the Holy Spirit, on such occasions. Thus leaving the lost soul without any plea of excuse; so that reason, as well as Revelation, must pronounce its condemnation just and righteous. In many cases the would be rationalist attempt to lull conscience, by pointing to the imperfections of Christians and the gross sins of false professors: the Scriptures account for, and admonish him to do these things. And it would be a vain subterfuge to plead that the majority of professors are no better than himself. The multitude of professors and false professors will rather increase, than quench, the fires of the burning lake, especially, to those who have led others there. The man who in hell did not wish his brethren to come there, to share with him in his torments. Consider if thou art this vain rationalist, stop and repent, and cease to violate your better judgement: be wise, repent and believe the gospel. Where you set the part of the madman, instead of a rational man, in the destruction of things of God's soul!!!

It must be admitted, and should be expected, that reason with all its helps must fall short of revealing the height and depth of many things revealed in the book of God. But true reason would draw forth, on such occasions, the language of admiration and reverence expressed by an inspired Apostle—O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgements, and his ways past finding out. But alas, how many who even profess to take the Bible as their only religion, reject some of its clearest revelations: because they are frightened, or biased reason cannot comprehend their consistency; or what is worse, because Revelation conflicts with human traditions and educated prejudices? We see many rejecting the Deity of Christ Jesus, because they cannot comprehend how—God was manifest in the flesh? How, in Christ dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily? Notwithstanding, no doctrine in the Bible is more clearly revealed. So clearly, that reason must be palpably violated, to evade the evidences in the Bible of this doctrine. We see many who admit the Bible as their only religion, reject the future punishment of the wicked, (a doctrine which abounds throughout the Bible) because, say they, it is inconsistent with the love of God. This is not only a direct rejection of a considerable portion of

God's word, but a blasphemous opposition to one of the attributes of God, His justice. Is it reason, that God should display His wondrous love in the gift of His Son for a rebellious world, and not His justice in executing the sentence—He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. If such objectors to express revelation, are not wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction, it must be, because of an extension of God's mercy, that they have no right to expect, without repentance: for it is not a little offence to dishonor the Son by rejecting his Deity, or to dishonor the Father by rejecting one of His glorious attributes. As proof that the two sins are of kindred spirits, they have nearly amalgamated into one, each rejecting the deity of Christ, and each rejecting future punishments. O, that God may give them repentance, that they may cease to reject revealed truth, in violation of plain reason, that truth and mercy may meet together: for without what they reject in doctrine, they must realize a woeful experience. One of the best evidences of a regenerated heart, or of light shining in the heart, so as to restore man to the proper exercise of reason, is a love and sacred veneration for the Word of God. The spirit that inspired the Revelation, regenerates the heart, and as like begets like, an association is the certain result. The language of the regenerate soul is—Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. And submission to every word, in sacred awe, is the result. Like the real mother of the disputed child before Solomon, that shuddered at the thought of cutting the child in twain, so the regenerate is not for severing or mutilating the word of God, knowingly. To this, there are exceptions. Mothers may become monsters, and regenerated children may backslide and exercise great disrespect towards their heavenly Father and His word, and thereby bring themselves under the chastizing rod. Learned theologians in a backslidden state neglecting to pray for spiritual aid, whilst under the influence of educated prejudices and excited controversy, may become fanatics upon certain doctrines or subjects, which are so plain, that a babe in Christ may not err therein. Thus it is, that God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. We see, that the doctrine of baptism has been a subject of great controversy for many centuries amongst learned theologians; yet there is but one baptism, and that God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. We see, that the doctrine of baptism has been a subject of great controversy for many centuries amongst learned theologians; yet there is but one baptism, and that God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. We see, that the doctrine of baptism has been a subject of great controversy for many centuries amongst learned theologians; yet there is but one baptism, and that God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

We see, the doctrines of election, and man's free-agency, or God's sovereignty and man's accountability, made stumbling blocks to thousands, and have been ever subjects of great controversy even amongst those who are called evangelical ministers; yet it is not because God has not revealed both doctrines as clearly as language can express them; but because God in His wisdom has not revealed, how these doctrines are to be reconciled with each other. An inspired Apostle when approaching such deep things of God which reason could not fathom, would exclaim in reverential admiration of the wisdom of God, and would reprove the skeptic by saying, *Who art thou O man, that repliest against God?* But many uninspired rationalists, because their short sighted reason cannot comprehend the secret link of these revealed doctrines, reject (directly, or indirectly,) the one, or the other.—The same difficulty exists between the omniscience of God, and man's free-agency; yet who would dare deny the omniscience of God? And if any man would venture to deny his own accountability to God, Revelation, the Spirit, and his better judgement, would reprove him of sin. God requires faith in His word without being bound to give a reason for what He commands men to do, or what He reveals; as when He commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, etc.; perhaps to test their faith and reverence to His wisdom and authority; but let him tremble that demurs, when God speaks! We see the purpose of God and the free-agency of man clearly exhibited in immediate connection on Paul's voyage to Italy. The Apostle had a direct revelation, that the ship should be lost, but all the crew should be saved; notwithstanding He urged every possible means to prevent a wreck, and when the crew were about to escape from the ship, he said, *Except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.* Would the objectors to the purpose of God herein, deny the revelation of God to Paul? Or would the objectors to free-agency reject the declaration of Paul, *Except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be saved?* Do not these very objectors act out the principles they condemn, in every day's transaction of their lives? All that admit the Bible, must admit their days are numbered, and that God knows the hour of their death; yet, they employ doctors, and strive to save life, when death threatens. Aye, the true secret is, unbelief is at the bottom of such objections against revealed truth; even amongst Christians there is a want of due reverence to God's holy word. O, that men would cease to violate reason in opposing Revelation; and that men who profess to believe the Bible to be a Revelation from God, would cease to contradict such a profession, by rejecting any part or parts

of the sacred Scriptures, thereby to violate sound reason, and thus giving an occasion of stumbling to others, if not wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction.

Aye reader, God have mercy upon us all: for we have not rendered that respect and veneration due to His holy Word, the Book of books.

For the Recorder.
Ma. Editor.—Permit me to call your attention to the leading Editorial of the 'New York Recorder,' of the 25th ult., under the head of 'Late Accessions to the Churches,' and to suggest its publication in your valuable columns. I am induced to make this suggestion, as well from a regard to the intrinsic merits of the article, as from a desire for its opportune appearance in several communities where your paper ought now to have, if it had not before, an extensive circulation. I allude, of course, to those churches in our State which have been recently favored with large accessions to their numbers.

Yours truly,
J. C. S.

Late Accessions to the Churches.

During the winter now nearly past, very considerable accessions have been made to our churches in various parts of our country. New members have been gathered into the fold of the Redeemer, and taken upon themselves the vows of his service. The question arises, are these to be accessions of strength, or accessions of numbers only? This will depend, under God, upon the training which they may hereafter receive in the church, and upon their own conceptions of the nature of the obligations which they have assumed. A word or two to such may not be inappropriate. Such persons should bear in mind that the church of Christ is not a "voluntary association," in the sense ordinarily attached to those terms. The believer unites with the church of his own free will, and unites also with others in that relation; but the obligation which binds him to his brethren exists by virtue of a common relation to Christ, the living head. The real binding obligation of a church member is to Christ, and this obligation cannot be thrown off or laid aside at the will of one of the parties to the contract. The idea seems somewhat current amongst young Christians, that they are at liberty to withdraw from the church relation whenever they choose to do so, just as they may from any society of man's organization. This is a great mistake. The obligations which a church member assumes are not vacated, even when he may have been excommunicated for some sin by his brethren; for the duty which we owe to Christ is founded in the nature of things, in the debt which he paid for us on the cross, and it is not affected by the failure on our part to discharge it. The criminal who is shut out from civil society for a breach of the law of his country, is not relieved from the obligation of obedience to that law. Its binding force is perpetual. So with the duty to serve Christ; it is binding upon all and at all times; and the union with a church by profession of faith is merely the recognition of the duty on our part and the entrance into a covenant relation which entitles us to certain privileges from which the law of Christ previously debarred us. We have in reality assumed no new obligation, except one of gratitude for the new privileges bestowed.

From this point of view, the young convert should examine the duties arising out of the church relation. He should bear in mind that no secession from the visible church can effect the nature of the claim which God has upon him for his service and love. Again, the young church member should remember, that, in entering the visible church, he enters as a learner, upon a process of training; that his proper relation to the pastor and deacons, and elder members, is that of a pupil. Whatever may be his experience in other walks in life, he should remember that, as a church member, he enters upon a new and as yet untried field of action. It is too often taken for granted that it needs no long years of thought, and study, and prayer, to become acquainted with the Word of God in its manifold applications to the human life and human duty. The great deficiency of our time is an almost total disregard of the results of experience. A feverish and unhealthy distaste for every thing that is, and an unbounded and reckless confidence in every thing that is not, mark the times that are passing over us. Change, radical and destructive, is identified with progress. Movement is called reform, by those who never admit the idea that, in this sinful world, a retrograde movement is possible. This feverish tendency penetrates from without, into the Church, and is always likely to affect the young, and that class of older persons, unhappily too large, upon whom time confers no wisdom, and to whom experience has no value. The young disciple should shrink back from entering upon those courses of action that involve the necessity of cherishing motives not sanctioned by the spirit of Christ, however excellent the end had in view may seem. The maxim, that the end justifies the means, is not confined to the Jesuits alone. It is one of the chiefest influences by which the enemy of souls moves good men to serve his own purposes. In the name of philanthropy, Christian professors have labored directly to scatter the firebrands of discord among the churches of Christ. In the name of zeal for truth, they have indulged passions disgraceful to the Church, and unworthy the Christian name. Satan looks upon no object with greater pleasure than the labors of those who send disunion among the friends of Christ under pretense of

advancing the interests of truth. In looking over our denominational history for the past twenty years, we recollect no popular idea, no set of dogmas, whose influence has tended to the disruption of churches, to the separation of pastor from people, that has not in the end been shown to be more or less fallacious and unsound. There are mental epidemics which sweep over the churches at short intervals, and we know of no safer test to apply to them, than to inquire what effect they have upon the unity, harmony, and piety of the churches where they prevail.

It is easy for any one to call to mind persons in the ministry and among private church members, who have been anxious for the reputation of advocates of reform and progress. Setting this before their minds as an end, whatever interferes with the success of their speciality must be broken down. Watch the history and the progress of such men. They become the disturbing forces of every organization with which they are in any way connected. Churches and benevolent societies are rent in twain or annihilated and crippled, all for the sake of "truth." They are always burdened with "a mission." They represent themselves as lights shining in a dark place. They are anxious for the honors of martyrdom. Their discourse is of the degeneracy of the Church and the ministry, especially those who are in any way distinguished for their attainments or services, or who may have been honored by a college degree. John the Baptist is their model rather than Christ. They become philanthropists and reformers by trade. They seem more anxious, like the youthful James and John, to call down fire from heaven to consume their enemies, than to imitate the Son of God, who rebuked his erring disciples. The track of such men through the churches is like that of fire through a forest. The charred and lifeless trunks remain, extending their bare and withered arms to heaven, whilst the blossom and fragrance, the life-giving sap and green plumage, are gone for ever. The young disciples should be warned against surrendering their minds to the influence of such men. A love for the Church and its peace, an earnest desire for the salvation of souls, should be the controlling impulse of the new convert to the Saviour. Let him cling instinctively to those whose counsels and prayers first led him to the Saviour, and whose spirits vibrate most in harmony with the throbbings of their earliest love. Let him remember that nothing can be done effectually to remove the evil that overshadows the world, except through the same process of renewal by the grace of God which he has found so necessary for himself.

Nutritious Preaching.

"Do you like Dr. S. as well as ever?" was the question once addressed to a member of the A— Street church. "O yes; his sermons are roast beef and plum pudding to us for a whole week." This was high praise surely, and bespoke a full larder, as well as no small skill in setting out the feast. It gives us at once, an idea of the man, and of his sermons. And of the study too whence such sermons came. We catch a glimpse of a quiet room, better stocked with standard works than with the literature of Tupper and Gillfillan—of a patient, prayerful man, rising from his knees to adjust his manuscripts for the day; and of an open Bible on the study-table. The hat and cane are laid aside, for he has already paid a visit to the suffering family in the adjoining alley, or to the sick bed of a dying parishioner; and "it is well before preaching to look over the verge." While such a man writes let no one needlessly intrude, for the robbery of his hour is the plundering of a whole congregation. In a minister's study hours the "talk of the lips tendeth to penury."

Of the discourses of Dr. S., on which such a savoury eulogium was pronounced, we had no personal knowledge; but we can easily conjecture some of the qualities which made them so nutritious. 1. They must have had a great deal of Bible in them. Not an occasional scrap, or a dainty passage culled out to beautify a sentence and round off a period, but wholly saturated with the Word of God. Hamilton tells us that Dr. Chalmers' discourses "held the Bible in solution." The strong meat is found in the Scriptures alone. The preacher who never "wears out," or wears his people out either, is he who delves daily in the gold mines of revelation. 2. Those nutritious discourses must have had a great deal of prayer over them. There are other men beside the staid Quakers who believe that he who preaches aright must preach "as the Spirit moves him." And through Divine aid comes down the invisible ladder by which the prayer of faith ascended to the heavenly Intercessor. McCheyne never wrote a line without previous petition to God. Holy John Welch rose at night, and spent hours in pleading for the celestial baptism. "I am convinced," writes an eminent clergyman "that even aesthetically considered, one hour of prayer is a better preparation for sermon writing, than a whole day of study." 3. They had a great deal of every-day religion in them. They were practical. There is a painful lack with many ministers, of knowledge of human nature in its daily workings. They are not ignorant men. They are tolerably familiar with John Owen, and Matthew Poole, and Francis Turretin, know all about the Council of Trent, and may even aspire to an acquaintance with the Magdeburg Centurions. But to the living, acting, laughing, weeping, tempted, and singing world around them, they are well nigh strangers. During the week their parishioners have been driving a plow, or hammering a lapstone, or pleading a cause, or have been "up to their eyes" in cotton bales, and snags and casks. When the Sabbath comes, these parishioners bring to the sanctuary their every day wants and trials, as citizens, as men of business, as parents, as husbands, or as children. They want preaching that shall tell them how to live, as well as what to believe. They want plain instruction. They want doctrine, but doctrine made portable and practical. They hunger for truth, but truth simplified, and purged of scholastic technicalities. We once heard a young licentiate of great promise preach a sermon in which he talked about the "governmental theory of the atonement," and garnished his discourse with such words as "predicatio" and "potential," and "subjective." The whole discourse smelled strongly of the class-room, and had probably been "sat upon" by an inquest of theological students during the author's senior year. We would like to have whispered into the brother's ear—"You will learn that sermon up before you have been in the ministry twelve months." The Sabbath teachings which are carried into the week are those which treat of every day wants and every day duties—which meet the Christian, and tell him how to grow in grace and holy living—which soothe the afflicted with gospel consolations—which tell the young how to shun daily temptations, and the aged how to prepare for death—which point the anxious inquirer to that cross beneath which he may quiet his aching heart. And the simpler these teachings, the better. A discourse which a minister would not be willing to read to his children and domestics, with a good hope that they would understand it, is not usually a safe sermon to take into the pulpit. "It takes all our learning," said Archbishop Usher, "to make truth simple."

A Methodist Minister in the Water.

A correspondent of the Mountain Messenger and Recorder, writing from Williamsport, Moos county, Va., Jan 22d, thus describes a "Scene in January—a Methodist minister in the water!" It happened on the 18th inst., a very cold day. The northern blasts were spreading the white mantle of winter over the earth, and the beau-

tiful Ohio was bridged with ice, when beheld a Methodist minister and his audience were gathered to the baptismal waters, made sacred by the solemnity of a large audience in witnessing the burial of nice willow converts the preceding Sabbath according to the divine law, and their rising again to walk in newness of life.—But what meaneth the gathering of our Pedo friends at the same sacred place? To administer the ordinance of baptism? Yes. Not to pour, or to sprinkle, but to baptize. It was, however, a few evenings previous, announced by the minister that on the following Sabbath he would attend to the ordinance of baptism; and accordingly a bowl of water was prepared and carried to the sanctuary; but when he came to question his candidates, four out of five were like the Indian, who, after reading the New Testament, could not be baptized in a bowl, but chose a place of much water. Their convictions, from beholding the solemn scene referred to, were such that nothing less than immersion would suffice; and now they go down into the water, (not at or near by it,) and after removing the ice, the preacher immerses four individuals by their names, in the name of the Trinity.—The action was tolerably well performed, and the scenery was beautiful. The ice-bound river was skirted on the one side with the thriving village of Williamsport, and directly opposite the handsome town of Marietta. The appearance seemed commanding, and the snow falling in flakes around them added still more to the grandeur of the scene. But the most striking part of all was a Methodist minister in the water!

But, Mr. Editor, are we not to learn something from all this? Yes, we learn that Baptist sentiments are advancing, and our Pedo friends must adopt them in order to keep up their membership. Especially is it so as it relates to baptism. When young converts choose to be buried with Christ by baptism, even though they be members of Pedo-baptist churches, do they not virtually say that Baptists are right?—When will our Methodist friends cease to speak against that ordinance that they so often acknowledge by their own practice?

A Will and a Way.

A poor woman who was ardently pious, on hearing some benevolent object presented, had a strong desire to contribute to it at least the widow's mite. She went home and searched the house but could find nothing. She was greatly distressed. She knew not how to be denied the privilege of casting a little into the treasury of the Lord. She entered her closet and prayed earnestly that God would make her submissive, if it was clearly his will that she should give nothing. On leaving her closet, she went into a back apartment, and spying a little bag of dried seeds, she took them down and thought to herself that some one might purchase them. Just at this moment her minister came in. She disclosed to him her feelings and showed him the seeds. He took them, and observed that he was going over the river, and perhaps he might sell them. On his way he met a brother in the ministry who invited him to address a missionary meeting that evening. He consented to do so; and in the midst of his address, he told the touching story of the poor woman, and presented her bag of seeds for sale to the audience. A gentleman arose and offered five dollars for them. He took the seeds and offered them for sale again. Another person offered five dollars for them; and thus they proceeded until they obtained twenty dollars for the bag of seeds. The minister took the money, and, carrying it to the woman, spread out four five dollar bills before her as the avails of her seeds. She was overwhelmed under a sense of divine goodness, and most cheerfully gave the whole to the Lord.—*Morning Star.*

Courageous Faith.

Mr. Kincaid relates the following incident, strikingly illustrative of the character of Christian Karens:— Two young Karens, from the province of Pantanau, were sent here by the pastor of a church to bring letters, and to get a few books. Ten New Testaments, Pilgrim's Progress, seven tracts and two hymn books, were wanted. They remained two days and then set off on their long journey back. The books were carefully rolled up and put in the bottom of a basket, and then the basket filled up with rice and dried fish.— This done, they gave the parting hand, and in a tremulous voice said to each one of us, "Pray for us, that we may be delivered from the calamity of falling into the hands of officers with these books." Two Christian boys, some sixteen or seventeen years old, trusting in God, set off on a journey of 130 miles to get this handful of books. Here is faith that will remove mountains.

BENDING A TREE.—Some years ago, a gentleman in one of our Southern States had a wild reckless son. He had long passed the age when the rod is deemed necessary to insure obedience, but one day after some great offence, the father resolved to whip him. The youth submitted, but after receiving the chastisement, quietly turned to the parent, and pointing to a small tree near the door said—"Father I wished you would bend that tree for me." Surprised, the father answered, "Why do you mean?"—"Can you do it?"—"No of course not."—"You could have done it once—and so it is with me; there has been a time when you could have bent me to your will; it is too late now."

Do to other: as you would they should do you.