

Biblical Recorder

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BIBLICAL RECORDER,
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"I have Seen an End of all Perfection."
I have seen a man in the glory of his days and the pride of his strength. He was built like the tall cedar that lifts its head above the forest trees; like the strong oak that strikes its root deeply into the earth. He feared no danger; he felt no sickness; he wondered that any should groan or sigh at pain. His mind was vigorous, like his body; he was perplexed at no intricacy; he was daunted at no difficulty; into hidden things he searched, and what was crooked he made plain. He went forth fearlessly upon the face of the mighty deep; he surveyed the nations of the earth; he measured the distances of the stars, and called them by their names; he gloried in the extent of his knowledge, in the vigour of his understanding, and strove to search even into what the Almighty had concealed. And when I looked on him, I said, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god!"

I returned, his look was no more lofty, nor his step proud; his broken frame was like some ruined tower; his hairs were white and scattered; and his eye gazed vacantly upon what was passing around him. The vigour of his intellect was waned, and of all he had gained by study, nothing remained. He feared, when there was no danger, and when there was no sorrow, to be forgotten. His memory was decayed and treacherous, and showed him only broken images of the glory that was departed. His house was to him like a strange land, and his friends were counted as his enemies; and he thought himself strong and healthful, while his foot tottered on the verge of the grave. He said of his son, "He is my brother," of his daughter, "I know her not," and he inquired what was his own name. And one who supported his last steps and ministered to his many wants, said to me, as I looked on the melancholy scene, "Let this heart receive instruction, for thou hast seen an end of all earthly perfection."

I have seen a beautiful female, treading the first stages of youth and entering joyfully into the pleasures of life. The glance of her eye was variable and sweet, and on her cheek trembled something like the first blush of the morning; her lips moved, and there was harmony; and when she floated in the dance, her light form, like the aspen, seemed to move with every breeze. I returned, but she was not in the dance; I sought her in the gay circle of her companions, but I found her not. Her eye sparkled no more; the music of her voice was silent—she reposed on earth no more. I saw a train, sable and slow-paced, who bore sadly to an open grave what once was animated and beautiful. They paused as they approached, and a voice broke the awful silence. "Mingle ashes with ashes, and dust with its original dust. To the earth whence it was taken, consign we the body of our sister." They covered her with the damp soil and the cold folds of the valley; and the worms crowded into her silent abode. Yet one sad mourner lingered, to cast himself upon the grave; and as he wept, he said, "There is no beauty, or grace, or loveliness, that continueth in man; for this is the end of all his glory and perfection."

I have seen an infant with a fair brow and a frame like polished ivory. Its limbs were pliant in its sports; it rejoiced, and again it wept; but whether its glowing cheek dimpled with smiles, or its blue eye was brilliant with tears, still I said to my heart, "It is beautiful." It was like the first pure blossom, which some cherished plant has shot forth, whose cup is filled with the dew drop, and whose heart reclines upon its parent stem.

I again saw this child when the lamp of reason first dawned in its mind. Its soul was gentle and peaceful; its eye sparkled with joy, as it looked around on this good and pleasant world. It ran swiftly in the ways of knowledge; it bowed its ear to instruction; it stood like a lamb before its teachers. It was not proud, or envious, or stubborn; and it had never heard of the vices and vanities of the world. And when I looked upon it, I remembered that our Saviour had said, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

was once the teachable child that I had loved, the beautiful infant that I had gazed upon with delight, I said in my bitterness, "I have seen an end of all perfection," and I laid my mouth in the dust.—Mrs. Sigourney.

Masked Batteries.
There is a terrible efficiency in "masked batteries." Opening on an enemy from unexpected quarters, they arrest his march, throw his columns into confusion, or put them to flight. They have played no inferior part in the present war. More than one Southern victory has been secured by them. Their very name has often smitten our invaders with panic.

Masked batteries are not unknown in spiritual warfare, where exciting less terror they are even more efficient.

Infidelity has its masked batteries. It does not always openly repudiate the word of God. But it argues that, because reason must sit in judgment on the evidences of Christianity, the interpretation of the sacred record and the character of its doctrines must be determined by their accordance with reason. Proceeding on this rule, it artfully substitutes for reason the pride and prejudice of the carnal heart, and rejects the Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, the deity of human nature, the atonement of Christ, the work of the spirit in regeneration, the distinctive teaching of Holy Scripture. So, scepticism fatally smites the soul from the masked battery of "rational theology."

Impenitence has its masked batteries. It does not refuse obedience to the gospel, once for all. It does not drive Christ from the heart, with what it understands to be a final rejection. But it adjourns the question of His claims from time to time. It indulges in the plea that sin shall be repented to-morrow. It postpones the service of God in youth to ripe old age, in ripe age to the decline of life—postpones still postpones—until death overtakes it, and it drops into hell. Through the mere putting off of repentance, the soul never repents; it is destroyed from the masked battery of procrastination.

Vice has its masked batteries. No debasing passion seeks, unobscured, the mastery of the soul. To take one instance in a host of many—the thirst for ardent spirits does not woo us, at the outset, to beastly drunkenness. No; it has a thousand varying pretences which hide its end. Now there is an occasional glass of liquor to be quaffed—now, an evening to be whiled away in unfruitful companionship—now, a bodily weakness to be strengthened—now, a season of mental depression to be cheered—now, an innocent custom of safe gratification to be kept up; and so from the masked battery of "moderation" the soul is stricken down into the bondage and misery of habit and intoxication.

Religious inaction has its masked batteries. The Christian, many times, does nothing for his Lord, but not from the set purpose that he will do nothing. Far from it. He has a mind to work, he tells us; but he must first acquire great strength of grace; or more thorough qualification. He has a mind to work; but in his judgment, the plan on which the church proceeds is not the best, and he must wait until wiser counsels induce the general adoption of more effective methods. He has a mind to work; but he can not work with such a pastor as has at present the oversight of the flock, or with such a membership as must share (and as he fears, resent) his labors. Therefore, he does nothing—reluctantly yet persistently does nothing. Ah! these are but masked batteries, from which fly shot that clove sunder and shatter the strength of the soul, and he lives and dies in useless inaction.—Ed. Herald.

is a thing of gloom, interfering with happiness. But those who have experienced it know better; and the testimony of all who have made full trial of it is the same as that of our soldier, "It is a glorious thing to be a Christian."—Southern Churchman.

Incorruptible Inheritance.
No poverty there! Millions of good men have left the earth poor; but has one entered heaven poor? Lazarus, the moment before he died, was a beggar at the gate; but a moment after his death his estate had grown so fast that the haughty worldling still surviving in all his affluence, in comparison with him, was a penniless pauper.—Oh poor believers! rejoice in prospect of your great inheritance. It is really immense, inestimably unspeakable, undefiled, and fadeeth not away. Has it not been your endeavor to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven? Why not obey the results there? Fear not. There is good news from that far country. Unsuccessful as you may have been on earth, your heavenly schemes have all prospered.

The treasury of God overflows with your wealth. And it is safe—perfectly safe.—Neither "moth nor rust" corrupts it, nor can thieves break through and steal it. Moreover, it shall increase—forever increase.—As long as you live on earth you add to the principal, and its interest will multiply beyond all computation, to all eternity. Crassus was rich, Solomon was rich, Lucullus was rich, but the humblest heir of God is richer far than all.

The Ransom.
During a sad war, there was a Colonel of one army taken prisoner. How could they get him set free? At last a Colonel belonging to the enemy was taken. Now, there was a way in which our Colonel might be released. They could exchange prisoners; they could give up Colonel for Colonel.

Once in the councils of heaven, there was a day when your case was under consideration. The question was, "How shall men—these children, these youths, these precious souls—be saved? There was One who sat there, whose blood was precious enough in the sight of God to buy up all souls. He said, "Lo, I come," and that was as if He had said, "Father, here is my blood; that will be a ransom." The Father accepted the blood of the Son; you know who that Son was. It was Jesus Christ, who, I doubt not, forms the subject matter of your teacher's instruction. He gave his precious blood, and ye must have that blood sprinkled on your heart, or you cannot be saved. The way to salvation is the blood of Jesus Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit. Dear children, will you not look to this Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be saved?

The Minister who liked to What his own Sycoph.
How frequently have I heard him request the gentleman who was going to precede him by prayer to be sure not to be very long. Mr. Jay, at his own chapel, always preferred going through the whole of the service himself; and on one occasion he quaintly said to a minister who had offered to pray before the sermon, "No, sir, I am much obliged to you for your kind offer; but I like to what my own sycoph."

The congregation generally thought that he could do it better than any one else; and he had always considered that the prayers, which seldom occupied more than a quarter of an hour, including the Lord's Prayer, which he invariably repeated, prepared his mind for the sermon. It is a remarkable fact, that on entering the pulpit he would open the Bible at that part where the Lord's Prayer appears, having on several occasions forgotten that part of it, which so much annoyed him that he adopted this mode of preventing any future vexation on this point.—*Recollections of William Jay, Minister of Ayley Chapel, Bath.*

Christianity in Cities.
Now, as at all past periods, the great battle of Christianity and of the church is in the large towns. Those central seats of human activity and life are the fulcrum by which she would move the world. The heaven that would leave the whole lamp must be planted in the very center of the mass. Wherever man is, there Christianity, the religion of man, follows, and the cities are pre-eminently the haunts and the rallying-points of man. They constitute the very backbone and spinal cord of the social system of the world, through which, therefore, every intellectual and moral influence that is to fall upon the happiness and welfare of the race, circulates. Here, then, in this thronging, weeping place of concourse, the heavenly wisdom ever lifts her voice.—Incaruate love still betokens the city and weeps over it; and the same instinct, taught from His inspiration, which led the steps of the Missionary apostle straight to the Antioch, the Corinth, and the Rome of the old world, still directs the eyes of the Christian philanthropist to the London, the Manchester, and the Glasgow of the new. The course of ages has only tended to enhance the importance of this principle. If the city has always been the master position in the battlefield of truth, it is pre-eminently so now.—*North British Review.*

Patience of God.
How wonderful it is! Think what he hears and sees, and yet though immaculately holy, so that sin is infinitely offensive to him, and infinitely powerful, so that he can punish it, how he spares! Take the oaths that are uttered. He hears them all, and they soar up in one horrid chorus to the skies. Take the cries which wrong and outrage, extors from widows, orphans, and the oppressed. He hears them all, and how, as Abel's slaughtered corpse called from the ground, must they pierce His ears and demand vengeance! The blood which is unjustly shed, drawn from the veins of innocence, he sees it all, and it is sufficient to make rivers. What a foul stench reeks up from corrupt cities, dwellings, and hearts of depraved humanity! And it all mounts to Him. And yet he spares—Keeps back the struggling thunders. How amazing His patience! He is a God and not a man, and therefore his compassion fails not.—*Rev. J. Bruce.*

Walking with God.
There is a singular force and pregnancy often to the descriptive phrases of Scripture—two or three words limning a character. What can be added to heighten our conception of a Christian when it is said of him, as it was of Enoch—"He walks with God?" In the Christian who has attended to the distinction of his description, there is a thoroughly reconciled and accordant mind, a mind perfectly according with the Character and Will of God, as He has revealed himself. There is, first, the knowledge of God in all his attributes and purposes; then, approval; no wish to change anything—admiration of Him as he is; of his plan, as it is; of his administration, as he sublimely conducts it. Here faith comes in as an integral quality—one essential in him who walks with God. God is infinite in his being and purposes; consequently, but little of him comparatively can be revealed to the human apprehension. Here, where communication is not, vision is not, knowledge is not, faith must be. So it is that he who walks with God, walks by faith. It is faith that apprehends God, and brings him near. Though all is dark ahead, or the way is beset with dangers, and no end or safe conclusion is revealed, faith encourages the soul to go, for God goes with it.

Tears.
There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power.—They are messages of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, of unexpressed love. If there were wanting any argument to prove that man was not mortal, I would look for it in the strong convulsive emotion of the breast, when the soul has been agitated, when the fountains of feeling are rising, and when tears are gushing forth in crystal streams. Oh, speak not harshly of the stricken one weeping in silence! Break not the solemnity by rude laughter or intrusive footsteps. Despire not woman's tears; they are what make her an angel. Scoff not if the stern heart of manhood is sometimes melted into sympathetic tears; they are what help to elevate him above the brute. I love to see tears of affection. They are painful tokens, but still most holy. There is pleasure in tears, an awful pleasure. If there were none on earth to shed tears for me, I should be loath to live; and if no one might weep over my grave, I could never die in peace.—*Dr. Johnson.*

Temptation.
John Newton says, Satan seldom comes to Christians with great temptations, or with temptations to commit a great sin. You bring a green log and a candle together, and they are safe neighbors. But bring a few shavings and set them a light; and then bring a few small sticks and let them take fire, and the log be in the midst of them and you will soon get rid of your log. And so it is with little sins. You will be startled with the idea of committing a great sin, and so the devil brings a little temptation and leaves you to indulge yourself. "There is no great harm in this." "No great peril in that," and so by these chips we are easily lighted up, and at last the great green log is burnt. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

Lead us not into Temptation.
The following is a good illustration of the fulfillment of this petition of the Lord's prayer:—"Three Indians in the vicinity of Green Bay became converts to the Temperance cause, although previously addicted to putting the enemy in their mouth that stole away their brains. Three white men formed the charitable resolution of trying their Indian sincerity. Placing a canister of whiskey in their path, they hid themselves in the bushes to observe the motions of the red men. The first one recognized his old friend with an 'ugh!' and making a high step he passed on. The second laughed saying, 'we know you!' and walked around. The last one drew his tomahawk, and dashing it to pieces, said 'ugh, you conquer me, now I conquer you.'"
Dr. Holland says, "That if persons are always supposing that they are liable to a certain disorder, the nerves will so act on the part that it is very likely to come upon them."

Christianity and Women.
To women in general Christianity says that its Author said to one of the sex:—"Thou art loosed from thine infirmity." To the female infidel is a monstrous character; she despises her own mercies and seeks for self a cruel yoke.

As life with purer current flows,
As knowledge tills more ample fields,
More pure and more exalted grows,
The homage man to woman yields;
More angel-like her influence shows,
More angel-like the power she wields!

This is more true of Scriptural knowledge than of any other. The Bible puts woman above the reach of a thousand cruelties, and she suffers wherever Christ and his love are unknown. Let her abide in the love with hope and charity. She should be steadfast in the truth. She needs a Saviour and the shield of a Saviour's authority.

An Early Engagement.
It was a maxim of Frederick the Great, of Napoleon, to keep their forces concentrated and to lead them by the shortest possible route to meet the enemy. This may, however, be represented as not always applicable in war.

Our spiritual conflict it is always safe, being else is safe. Delay brings access to the ranks of Satan. Delay causes our own ardor and enthusiasm to wane.—Delay induces desertion from the host of God. We plead, then, at all times, for an early engagement. Lost time is lost power. This is the day for battle! This is the place for battle! This is the crisis for battle! Let such be your constant conviction. Let there be no truce with the spirit of indolence.—*Religious Herald.*

Family Prayer.
I suspect, everybody secretly admits the obligation of family prayer. I judge so from the trouble many are apt to apologize for neglect. It tries them not a little to say they ever themselves with an excuse.—The usual plea is inability. They have not the gift, they say. What gift? Can they neglect their families together night and morning? Have they not so much authority over them, and kneeling down express their own desires to God? If they cannot kneel in prayer in a moment, yet can they kneel a form? It requires no great gift to kneel in prayer in an audible voice. But when it is so hard at first, it will soon be so if persevered in. The most of those who make this apology presume on their inability. They say they cannot before they have tried. But until they have tried they do not know whether they can or not.—What if some have tried once and failed? One failure should not dishearten them, nor to their eyes twenty. Demosthenes tried speaking many times before he became an orator. Besides, how so those who presume on their inability to conduct family worship neglect what assistance they might receive from God, if they were to make an humble and faithful experiment?

Why one should condescend to read this, I do not pray in his family. I advise him to commence immediately. He knows this never will be sorry for it; but he is not sure that he may not be sorry for it if he does not. If there were no other reason in favor of the practice, this alone would be sufficient. I think it is Jay who says that family without prayer is like a house with a roof—it has no protection.—What do you like to live in such a house?—*Rev. Dr. Nevins.*

The Danger of Halting.
What is it you are wavering between? Dust and ashes and "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." On your right hand is heaven and an immortality of blessedness; and on your left hand is disobedience, rebellion, discontent, remorse, despair, and an immortality of misery. Between the two you are halting! While you halt, "the factor is deepening that will soon be stamped forever." Indecision becomes deepening; you decide for hell while you waver about heaven.

How imminent the peril of those that are halting! It is now, or it is never; it is here, or it is nowhere. The door will soon be shut, that can never be opened, and a day will set that can never be crossed.—O! I could bring to every halting man the notion that as a sinner, without Christ, he is lost. He stands on the narrow ledge of life above him is the terrific mountain of hell, and that he has no power in himself to scale the shore of eternal safety and peace, and hold of its hope set before you, and your soul shall live. He is "a sinner and penitent in mercy." "I have loved with the Lord God, I have not repented in the death of a sinner, but rather as he should repent and live. Turn ye, ye sinners, for why will ye die!"—*Rev. Hays.*

"Feeling" and Doing.
More "doing" for Christ is the universal demand of all the churches. It is the one point on which all are agreed. All desire to see among Christians more good works, more self-denial, more practical obedience to Christ's commands. But what will produce these things? Nothing, nothing, but love. There never will be more done for Christ till there is more hearty love to Christ himself. The fear of punishment, the desire of reward, the sense of duty, are all useful arguments in their way, to persuade men to holiness; but they are all weak and powerless until a man loves Christ. Once let that mighty principle get hold of a man, and you will see his whole life changed.

Let us never forget this. However much the world may sneer at "feelings" in religion, and however false or unhealthy religious feelings may sometimes be, the great truth still remains behind, that *feeling* is the secret of doing. The heart must be engaged for Christ, or the hands will soon hang down. The affections must be enlisted into his service, or our obedience will soon stand still. It will always be the loving workman who will do most in the Lord's vineyard.

Anticipating Evils.
Enjoy the present, whatsoever it may be, and be not solicitous for the future; for if you take your foot from the present standing, and thrust it forward towards to-morrow's event, you are in a restless condition. It is like refusing to quench your present thirst by fearing you shall want drink the next day. If it be well to-day, it is madness to make the present miserable by fearing it may be ill to-morrow—when your belly is full of to-day's dinner, to fear that you shall want the next day's supper; for it may be you shall not, and then to what purpose was this day's affliction? But if to-morrow you shall want, your sorrow will come time enough, though you do not hasten it; let your trouble tarry till its day come. But if it chance to be ill to-day, do not increase it by the cares of to-morrow.—Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God send them; and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly; for this day is only ours—we are dead to yesterday, and we are not born to the morrow. He, therefore, that enjoys to-day enjoys as much as is possible; and if only that day's troubles lean upon him, it is singular and fruitless. "Sufficient to the day (said Christ) is the evil thereof," sufficient, but not intolerable. But if we look abroad, and bring into one day's thoughts the evil of many, certain and uncertain, what will be and what will never be, our load will be as intolerable as it is unreasonable.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Little Cares.
Commit thy trifles unto God, for to Him is nothing trivial. He alone knows the bitterness of the heart; and blessed is the thought that in those petty and trying cares, He sympathizes with and sends us comfort, if we will only "cast all our care on Him, for He careth for us." Our earthly friends can sorrow with us in our great trials; in the loss of friends and fortune, in sickness and such like troubles, but in these little cares to which we ourselves can give no name, there is only our heavenly Friend can soothe and calm us.

Sunset.
Who is there who has ever looked up to the "golden gates of the resplendent West," and beheld them arrayed in all their magnificence, and watched the beautiful departure of the god of day, and has not felt himself lifted from earth to Heaven, and his feelings spiritualized by the contemplation of the scene? The glories of sunset can be seen, and enjoyed in their greatest fulness only in the country. The winds are now hushed among the foliage—the birds of heaven have ceased their warbling—the voice of the labourer is no longer heard—silence hangs like a canopy upon the scene. At such a season, go walk abroad in the country—carry along with you no book to aid your reflections—go alone or with a friend—let your heart be open to the influence of the scene—let its home-like delights rise up unexpressed—reign yourself freely and entirely to the emotions of your own bosom—and if you have not been too far corrupted and contaminated by intercourse with the world, you will return a better, happier, and a holier man.

For the War.
"I asked a Sunday school teacher if he expected to continue his efforts of that kind during life." "Certainly," said he, "unless Satan's kingdom is destroyed first—I have enlisted during the war." A good example for others.

In the spirit of the above resolution, a faithful teacher in London, attended school forty years, and was absent only three Sabbath days.

There is no religion in making yourself miserable; God loves to make poor sinners happy; in the Old Testament he bids you delight yourself in the Lord; and promises the desires of your heart. In the New, he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

The surest remedy against the fear of death is the hope of heaven.

The greatest enemy of human happiness is sin.