

# BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## THE STRUGGLE WITH SIN.

If the people who claim that they have reached a point of sinlessness are correct in their claims, they are much to be congratulated. There is no terror in this life like the terror of sin. There is no depression so horrible as that that comes of knowing that one cannot resist temptation. There is nothing so pitiful as the conflict in the human heart as to which of two ways it will take, the good or the evil. Nothing could be sweeter than to feel that one has at last broken the bonds of sin and is free. If this writer understands anything at all, it is this, that sin is the one affliction of life, that the one burden and sorrow of the heart is sin, that the one dominant struggle that rends the soul is the struggle with sin.

There are disappointments, of course. Hearts' dearest wishes are denied. Fond plans fail, and sweet hopes are rudely broken. But these are nothing when weighed in the balance with sin. There is a heaviness of spirit that falls upon the best of us now and then. Friends seem not friends; life is not life; there is no joy in the open fields, no peace in the far away, no satisfaction in one's work. But this heaviness is as a shadow compared with the black pit of sin perceived in one's own soul. And death itself robs every heart, and the grief over the still form of a loved one passes all power to describe. But yet more grievous is the lot of him who knows that he has sinned and knows that temptation will return yet again and find some strange and subtle response in his soul.

Sin is the supreme affliction. It is not only the root of our life's sorrows; but it is the chiefest of them. It alone is so enormous as to require the sacrifice of the Son of God.

How unworthy of man is sin. He who stands upright must crawl in the dust. He who has the hope of good must make company of evil. He who knows the right must dally with wrong. In all the annals of philosophy there is no paradox like this. We are so fair within in our better moments, so exalted in our inmost souls, and so dark and base in a moment's time. We who love our fellows treat them with bitterness; who so desire honor stoop to dishonor; who so love love woo the spirit of hate. But the more grievous burden of the conflict is not here—not even here. It is when a man contemplates the Source of his being, when he reckons with Him from whose bosom he came; when a man stands—as we every one stand this hour—before the all-knowing and the Holy Judge; and worse, yet, when one stands before that Judge and understands how He has loved, how He has suffered, how He has died for him; it is at such a time that the terror of the chasm that sin has set between him and his higher self, that the horror of the blackness of his heart appears in indescribable proportions.

The burden would bear any one to the earth but for the hope that he has in the Sin-bearer, in Him who taketh away the sin of the world. Had Christ not come the race must have long ago despaired. We who cannot find the perfected joy of sinlessness, can find joy nevertheless in the peace of Him who redeems us from our sins.

But by this very mark we will strive to be sinless. One will not sin that grace may abound. To such a one, grace will not abound, but condemnation. An overwhelming assurance in the forgiveness of God is assurance of nothing so much as that the man so assured is deeply ignorant of God and himself and is under condemnation. We will not sin because grace doth abound. But by the very fact of recognizing that grace we will strive the more against sin. We have a

Sin-bearer, but His purpose is to make us holy as well as to redeem us from the bondage of sin. And he will arm us for the conflict. He will strengthen us in the struggle with the Tempter. And He will give us victory. He is one who understands the conflict in every detail. He has been through the battle. He knows us. And He is able to keep us. Who shall separate us, then, from Him? Remember Paul's exulting defiance to the powers of evil. Nothing can suffice to separate God from us. But in a moment the least things can separate us from God. The sun shines for every creature, and not the greatest mountain or the mightiest storm, neither life nor death can separate the sun from the smallest insect. But the insect may separate itself from the sun with a leaf. Nothing can separate God from His child—nothing but the child, who, by a sin, in a little matter or a great one, can stretch a chasm wide and dark and deep beyond plummet's sounding. He is able to keep us, if we will that He shall. Our danger is not in principalities and powers, not in life nor death, but in ourselves. In the struggle with sin there is no refuge save in constant closeness to Jesus Christ. The moment one forgets His presence, that moment his security is gone.

## THE BRIGHTENING DAYS.

The old, old wonder of the lengthening days  
Is with us once again; the winter's sun,  
Slow sinking to the west when day is done,  
Each eve a little longer with us stays,  
And cheers the snowy landscape with his rays.  
Nor do we notice what he has begun  
Until a month or more of days have run,  
When he exclaims, "How long the light de-  
lays!"

So let some kindly deed, however slight,  
Be daily done by us, \* \* \*  
Till we feel the night  
Is less within our souls, and broader spaced  
Has grown the cheerful sunshine of the heart.

## WILL STEER CLEAR OF OKEFINOKEE.

The Biblical Recorder, whose editor is becoming more and more of a crusty old bachelor, has the following:

"The Dallas, Texas, women who asked Mrs. Roosevelt for a gift to sell and then refused to accept her gift of a handkerchief because it was not an expensive one, may be ladies, but they evidently do not know the rules. They disgraced the women of the South."

There is a world of injustice in this criticism. The handkerchief was accepted, and it brought the largest revenue of anything in the bazar. The Dallas women, dear Bailey, are the brightest, most considerate and queenliest of their sex. True, some of them criticised the fabric that came from Washington, but the entire matter was distorted by prurient sensation-mongers who, by some strange abnormality, have secured positions as press reporters. After printing the foregoing unjust and ungallant paragraph, Editor J. W. Bailey is warned never to come nearer to Dallas than the Okefinokee Swamp.—Texas Baptist Standard.

## SHALL WE BAPTISTS DO LIKEWISE?

North Carolina sends greetings to the Synods of Iowa and Wisconsin. Each has resolved not to depend upon the Home Mission Board any longer, but to do all its own work, and Iowa is going to raise \$18,000 a year (almost up to the North Carolina Standard) and Wisconsin is going to raise \$13,000, which the Interior says is about a dollar a member. We are surprised to learn that there are only 13,000 Presbyterians in Wisconsin, but we suppose that the State is still more noted for its beer than for its Presbyterianism.—Presbyterian Standard.

## LENT.

Is this a fast—to keep  
The larder lean  
And clean  
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish  
Of flesh, yet still  
To fill  
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour  
Or ragged go,  
Or show  
A downcast look and sour?

No! 'tis a fast to dole  
Thy sheaf of wheat  
And meat  
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,  
From old debate  
And hate—  
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;  
To starve thy sin.  
Not bin—  
And that's to keep thy Lent.

—Robert Herrick.

## THE CHANGED CONDITIONS.

There is a college president in North Carolina whose tongue never fails him. His identity will be disclosed by a story that has recently been told of him. Having spoken at a certain place in his peculiarly enthusiastic strain of the need of industrial education, a young lawyer, none too harassed with clients, accosted him. "Doctor, do I understand you to hold that the one thing, the only thing, the whole thing for North Carolina boys now is to learn trades and practical industries?" Yes, sir. "But, doctor, do you know how I came to go to school and become a lawyer?" No. "Well, you came to this town a few years ago and made a speech just as you have to-day, save with even more enthusiasm. You told us that all that North Carolina needed was well-educated men, men prepared to teach and preach, and practice law and medicine. You pointed to our industrial life, our farming, and declared that our one want was men of culture to lead us. And I was induced by your eloquence to go to school, leave the farm and become a lawyer. Now, you see, here I am, and according to you, I've made a mistake. We all ought to be farmers and mechanics."

But the doctor was not daunted. "Hold on, my dear sir, what I said a few years ago was all right. And what I have said to-day is all right. There is no inconsistency. Too many of you fellows took my advice, and now I must move heaven and earth to get the farmers and mechanics able to support you. We shall reach a balance in a few years."

And, heaven knows, we do need men who are cultivated, men of the highest culture, and men who are skilled, men who are masters of land and machines; and happy shall be when these qualities shall be found in each man. For there is no reason why a farmer or an artisan should not have the same basis of culture as the preacher, or the lawyer or the doctor or the teacher; nor is there reason why teacher or preacher or lawyer should be ignorant of practical industries. That is not effective education that acquaints a man with the glow of letters only to blind him to the light of nature.

By the way, our school debaters will find this a suggestive theme for discussion—Resolved, that there is more need in North Carolina of Industrial Training than Higher Education.