

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS, TEMPERANCE, AND JUDGEMENT TO COME."

EDITED BY T. MEREDITH,

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TERMS.

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MR. ADAMS'S ORATION.

The following forms the conclusion of Mr. Adams's oration on the death of La Fayette. It will be found interesting on several accounts.

Such, Legislators of the North American confederate Union, was the life of Gilbert Motier de La Fayette, and the record of his life is the delineation of his character. Consider him as one human being of one thousand millions, his contemporaries on the surface of the terraqueous globe. Among that thousand millions, seek for an object of comparison with him, assume for the standard of comparison, all the virtues which exalt the character of man above that of the brute creation; take the ideal man, little lower than the angels; mark the qualities of the mind and heart which entitle him to this station of pre-eminence in the scale of created beings, and inquire who that lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Christian era, combined in himself so many of those qualities, so little alloyed with those which belong to that earthly vesture of decay in which the immortal spirit is enclosed as La Fayette.

Pronounce him one of the first men of his age, and you have not yet done him justice. Try him by that test to which he thought in vain to stimulate the vulgar and selfish spirit of Napoleon; class him among the men who to compare and seat themselves, must take in the compass of all ages; turn back your eyes upon the records of time; summon from the creation of the world to the present day, the mighty dead of every age and every clime—and where, among the race of merely mortal men, shall be found one, who, as the benefactor of his kind shall claim to take precedence of La Fayette.

There have doubtless been, in all ages, men whose discoveries or inventions, in the world of matter or of mind, have opened new avenues to the dominion of man over the material creation; have increased his means or his faculties of enjoyment; have assisted him in nearer approximation to that higher and happier condition, the object of his hopes and aspirations in his present state of existence.

La Fayette discovered no new principle of politics or of morals. He invented nothing in science. He disclosed no new phenomenon in the laws of nature. Born and educated in the highest order of feudal nobility under the most absolute Monarchy of Europe, in possession of an affluent fortune, and master of himself and all his capabilities at the moment of attaining manhood, the principle of republican justice and of social equality took possession of his heart and mind, as if by inspiration from above. He devoted himself, his life, his fortune, his hereditary honors, his towering ambition, his splendid hopes all to the cause of liberty. He came to another hemisphere to defend her. He became one of the most effective champions of our Independence, but, that once achieved, he turned to his own country, and thenceforward took no part in the controversies which have divided us. In the events of our Revolution, and in the forms of policy which we have adopted for the establishment and perpetuation of our freedom, La Fayette found the most perfect form of government. He wished to add nothing to it. He would gladly have abstracted nothing from it. Instead of the imaginary Republic of Plato, or of the Utopia of Sir Thomas Moore, he took a practical existing model, in actual operation here, and never attempted or wished more than to apply it faithfully to his own country.

It was not given to Moses to enter the promised land, but he saw it from the summit of Pisgah. It was not given to La Fayette to witness the consummation of his wishes in the establishment of a republic, and the extinction of all hereditary rule in France. His principles were in advance of the age and hemisphere in which he lived. A Bourbon still reigns on the throne of France, and it is not for us to scrutinize the title by which he reigns. The principles of elective and hereditary power blended in reluctant union in his person, like the red and white roses of York and Lancaster, may postpone to a future time the last conflict to which they must ultimately come. The life of the patriarch was not long enough for the development of his whole political system. Its final accomplishment is in the womb of time.

The anticipation of this event is the more certain, from the consideration that all the principles for which La Fayette contended were practical. He never indulged himself in wild and fanciful speculations. The principles of hereditary power were in his opinion the bane of all republican liberty in Europe. Unable to extinguish it in the Revolution of 1830, so far as concerned the chief magistracy of the nation, La Fayette had the satisfaction of seeing it abolished with reference to the peerage. A hereditary crown, stripped of the support which it may derive from a hereditary peerage, however compatible with Asiatic despotism, is an anomaly in the history of the Christian world, and in the theory of free government. There is no argument producible against the existence of hereditary peerage, but applies with aggravated weight against the transmission from sire to son of a hereditary crown.—The prejudices and passions of the people of France rejected the principle of inherited power in every station of public trust, excepting the first

and highest of them all; but where they clung to it, as did the Israelites of old to the savory delicias of Egypt.

This is not the time or the place for disquisition upon the comparative merits, as a system of government, of a Republic, and a Monarchy, surrounded by republican institutions. Upon this subject there is among us no diversity of opinion; and if it should take the people of France another half century of internal and external war, of dazzling and delusive glories; of unparalleled triumphs, humiliating reverses, and bitter disappointments to settle it to their satisfaction, the ultimate result can only bring them to the point where we have stood from the day of the Declaration of Independence—to the point where La Fayette would have brought them, and to which he looked as a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Then, too, and then only, will be the time when the character of La Fayette will be appreciated at its true value throughout the civilized world. When the principle of hereditary dominion shall be extinguished in all the Institutions of France—when government shall no longer be considered as property transmissible from sire to son, but as a trust committed for a limited time, and then to return to the people whence it came; as a burdensome duty to be discharged, and not as a reward to be abused; when a claim, any claim, to political power by inheritance shall in the estimation of the whole French people be held as it now is by the whole people of the North American Union—then will be the time for contemplating the character of La Fayette, not merely in the events of his life, but in the full development of his intellectual conceptions of his fervent aspirations, of the labors and perils and sacrifices of his long and eventual career upon earth, and thenceforward, till the hour when the trump of the Archangel shall sound to announce that Time shall be no more, the name of LAFAYETTE shall stand enrolled upon the annals of our race, High on the list of the pure and disinterested benefactors of mankind.

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON IN 1755.

As I thought it would be the height of rashness to venture back through the same narrow street I had so providentially escaped from, I judged it safest to return over the ruins of St. Paul's to the river side, as the water now seemed little agitated. From hence I proceeded with some hazard, to the large space before the Irish convent of Corpo Santo, which had been thrown down, and buried a great number of people who were hearing mass, besides some of the friars; the rest of the community were standing in the area, looking, with dejected countenances, towards the ruins: from this place I took my way to the back street leading to the Palace, having the ship yard on one side, but found the further passage, opening into the principal street, stopped up, by the ruins of the Opera house one of the solidest and most magnificent buildings of the kind in Europe, and just finished at a prodigious expense; a vast heap of stones, each of several tons weight, had entirely blocked up the front of Mr. Bristow's house, which was opposite to it, and Mr. Ward, his partner, told me the next day, that he was just that instant going out at the door, and had actually set one foot over the threshold, when the end of the Opera house fell down, and had he not in a moment started back he should have been crushed into a thousand pieces.

From hence I turned back, and attempted getting by the other way into the great Square of the Palace, twice as large as Lincoln's-Inn Fields, one side of which had been taken up by the noble quay I spoke of, now no more; but this passage was likewise obstructed by the stones fallen from the great arched gateway. I could not help taking particular notice, that all apartments wherein the royal family used to reside, were thrown down and themselves, without some extraordinary miracle, must have unavoidably perished, had they been there at the time of the shock. Finding this passage impracticable, I turned to the arched way which led to the new Square of the Palace, not the eighth part so spacious as the other, one side of which was taken up by the Patriarchal Church, which also served for the Chapel Royal, and the other by a most magnificent building of modern architecture, probably indeed by far the most so, not yet completely finished; as to the former, the roof and part of the front walls were thrown down, and the latter, notwithstanding their solidity, had been so shaken, that several large stones fell from the top, and every part seemed disjointed. The Square was full of coaches, charrlots, chaises, horses, and mules, deserted by their drivers and attendants, as well as their owners.

The nobility, gentry, and clergy, who were assisting at divine service when the earthquake began, fled away with the utmost precipitation, every one where his fears carried him, leaving the splendid apparatus of the numerous alters, to the mercy of the first comer: but this did not so much affect me, as that the distress of the poor animals, who seemed sensible of their hard fate; some few were killed, and others wounded, but the greater part, which had received no hurt, were left there to starve.

From this Square, the way led to my friend's lodgings, through a long, steep and narrow street, the new scenes of horror I met with here exceed all descriptions; nothing could be heard but sighs and groans. I did not meet with a soul in the passage who was not bewailing the death of his nearest relations and dearest friends, or the loss of all his substance; I could hardly take a single step without treading on the dead, or the dying: in some places lay coaches, with their masters, horses, and riders, almost crushed in pieces; here, mothers with infants in their arms there ladies richly dressed, priests, friars, gentlemen, mechanics, either in the same condition, or just expiring; some had their backs or thighs broken, others vast stones on their breasts; some lay almost buried in the rubbish, and, crying out in pain to the passengers for succor, were left to perish with the rest.

From the New York Observer. LOVEST THOU ME?

We make a profession of Christianity, and go along from day to day, and perhaps, from year to year, supposing that we are Christians, and that all is well with us; that we are equipped for the encounter of death, and prepared to meet our Judge, and take our place in heaven, when it may be we are not able to answer till after long consideration, and then not with a little doubt and misgiving, so simple a question in Christian experience, as "Lovest thou Me?" Peradventure the utmost we dare say after all our reflection and self-research is, "I really do not know how it is. I hope I love him." This will never do. The question, "Lovest thou Me?" is one which every person making pretensions to Christianity ought to be able to answer affirmatively at once. Indeed, we ought not to give our Saviour any occasion to ask the question. It is very much to our discredit—it should make us blush and be ashamed—that our manifestations of love to Him are so equivocal a character, as to leave the very existence of the affection doubtful, and to render it necessary for Him to interrogate us in reference to it. There are many less lovely beings than Christ that have not to ask us if we love them. We act in such a manner towards them that they can not for a moment, doubt the fact of their being dear and precious to us. They do not want our words to assure them. They have our uniform conduct and deportment making the silent yet most forcible declaration. Has your parent to ask you if you love him, or your child? Have husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and friends to ask this question to each other? Oh, no!—none but Christ has to ask us if we love him! And He has not only to ask the question, but to wait, sometimes a long while, for an answer. We have to consider and go into an examination, and call up our conduct to the bar of judgment, and dissect our very hearts, before we can venture an answer. This is strange. It is not so in other cases. If a relative or a friend, more from the gratification of a renewed expression of our love, than from any doubt of its existence, ask us if we love him, do we keep him waiting for an answer? Do we say, "Well I must consider, I must examine myself. I hope I do." No, indeed. We are ready with our affirmative. Nor is it a cold Yes we return, but we express our surprise at the question. "Love you!" And we assure the person in the most emphatic and ardent language that we love him, and all our manner shows him that we speak out of the abundance of the heart. But we do not express surprise that our Saviour should ask us if we love him. We do not wonder at the question from him. We know too well how much reason we give him to doubt our affection.

Why should there be such a difference in favor of the earthly objects of our love? Is not Christ as lovely as those other beings—as deserving of affection—as attractive of love? He is altogether lovely. Are they? He possesses infinite loveliness. Nor does that express all. He is essentially Love. Not love at rest, but in motion; nor far off, but near; exerting infinite energy in action, exercising infinite energy in suffering; earth the scene, and man the object. It is He who asks, "Lovest thou me?" And he whom he asks it is the man, the intelligent spectator of all his love, eye, its chosen and cherished object.

If Christ was not nearly related to us as those other beings are, that might be the difference in their favor. But who is so closely related, so intimately joined to us as Christ? He formed us, and in him we live, move and have our being. Does that not imply nearness? Is He divine, while we are human? He is human, as well as divine—one of the brotherhood of flesh and blood. He came down to earth to take our nature on him, nor went up to heaven again without it. There it is—our humanity allied to divinity, divinity radiant through it, on the throne. Is He not related to us? He says of every one who does the will of his Father, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." That alone relates to him more than all human ties. But that is not all. Christ is the husband of the church; He is one with it. If we are his disciples, He is the vine and we the branches—He the head and we the members. Yea, "we are the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Does not this express a near and intimate relation? Now it is one so near to us, who asks, "Lovest thou Me?"

Have our friends whom we are so conscious of loving, done more for us than Christ, or made greater sacrifices for us? Are we under greater personal obligations to them?

"Which of all our friends to save us, Could or would have shed his blood? But this Saviour died to have us Reconciled in him to God."

And yet we know we love those friends, but this friend we know not whether we love him or not—we only hope we do!

Do other beings find such difficulty in loving Christ? and are they at such a loss to know when they do love him? Oh, no. His Father testifies, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And he is called also his well-beloved, his dear Son. All the angels of God love and worship him, and delight to ascribe infinite worthiness to him. It is only men who find any difficulty in loving Christ. It is only the human heart that hesitates and hangs back. Is there any reason for this—any reason why men should be the last to love Christ, and why they should love him least of all who behold his loveliness? I see none; but I think I see reasons many, and strong, and tender, why we should be first, and most forward, and warmest in our affection to him. How many worlds he passed to alight on this! How many created natures he rejected, when, from all of them he chose the human to be united to the divinity!—Others have sinned, yet not their sins bear he, but ours. It may be said of other creatures, "He loved them," but of men only can it be added, "and gave himself for them." And yet who is so backward to love him, as redeemed man? Nor tardy merely. Oh, how parsimonious of his love—loving him

so little, that often he cannot ascertain if he loves at all! Shame where is thy blush, and sorrow, where thy tear.

From Abbott's Religious Magazine. WHERE DID HE GET THAT LAW?

In a neat and beautiful city, in one of the northern States, lived a lawyer of eminence and talents. I do not know many particulars of his moral character; but he was notoriously profane. He had a negro boy, at whom his neighbors used to hear him swear with awful violence.—One day, this gentleman met an elder of the Presbyterian church, who was also a lawyer, and said to him: "I wish, Sir, to examine into the Christian religion. What books would you advise me to read on the evidence of Christianity?"

The elder, surprised at the inquiry replied:—"That is a question, Sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life."

"It is too late," said the inquirer. "I never knew much about it; but I always supposed, that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend now, however, to examine the subject thoroughly, myself. I have upon me, as my physician says, a mortal disease, under which I may live a year and a half or two years, but not probably longer. What books, Sir, would you advise me to read?"

"The Bible," said the other.

"I believe you do not understand me," resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn; "I wish to investigate the truth of the Bible."

"I would advise you, Sir," repeated the elder "to read the Bible. And," he continued, "I will give you my reasons: Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now to reason on any subject with correctness, we must understand what it is, about which we reason. In the next place, I consider the internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures stronger than the external."

"And where shall I begin?" inquired the unbeliever. "At the New Testament?"

"No," said the elder; "at the beginning—at Genesis."

The infidel bought a Commentary, and went home, and sat down to the serious study of the Scriptures. He applied all his strong and well disciplined powers of mind to the Bible, to try rigidly but impartially its truth. As he went on in the perusal, he received occasional calls from the elder. The infidel freely remarked upon what he had read, and stated his objections. He liked this passage, he thought that touching and beautiful, but he could not credit a third.

One evening, the elder called and found the unbeliever at his house or office, walking the room, with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued, not noticing that any one had come in, busily to trace and retrace his steps. The elder at length spoke. "You seem, Sir," said he, "to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?"

"I have been reading," replied the infidel, "the moral law."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the elder.

"I will tell you what I used to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of handitti; that having a strong mind he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai, he played off some sort of fire-works to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural."

"But what do you think now?" interposed the elder.

"I have been looking," said the infidel, "into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add any thing to it, or take any thing from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is perfect."

"The first commandment," continued he, "directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If he be our Creator, Preserver, and supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat him, and none other, as such. The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profaneness. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, he ought surely to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage, significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship him, harmoniously and without interruption. One day in seven certainly is not too much; and I do not know that it is, too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from family relations. Injuries to our neighbor are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property and character. And," said he, applying a legal idea, with legal acuteness, "I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greater offence must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery every injury to purity, and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected, by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbor."

"I have been thinking," he proceeded, "where did Moses get that law? I have read history; the Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest and best Greeks and Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get this law, which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a law, in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age, as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he ob-

tained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel,—infidel no longer,—remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity. He lived several years after this conversation; about three I believe. He continued to pursue the study of the Bible,—his views of the Christian religion expanding and growing correct. Profaneness was abandoned. An oath was now as offensive to him as it was familiar before. When his former gay companions used one, he habitually reproved them. He remonstrated with them upon its folly and want of meaning, and said he could never imagine before, how painful profane language must be to a Christian. But did he become a sincere disciple of Christ? He always expressed great doubt upon that point. He could hope for nothing from the world, and he was afraid that he might choose other pleasures from that circumstance, without a radical change of feeling.

I learned these particulars, a few years since, from one of the parties. The lapse of time may have caused some immaterial variation, but I believe no other. I have endeavored to be more than substantially correct, and have therefore left many important ideas unexpanded, as I understood them to occur in the actual conversation.

Let the reader meditate on this history for it is believed to be rich in practical instruction. The main thought is this, that the moral law is a monument,—a sublime monument,—of the great moral transaction at Sinai, at the delivery of the ten commandments. But let him mark also the species of unbelief, the practical temper inspired by disease, the lingering nature of the complaint, the judicious advice and kind attention of the Christian elder, the beautiful arrangement of Providence by which these concurred, the excellence of the moral law as explained and felt, and the glorious reforming power of the Bible.

From the Christian Watchman. URSULINE CONVENT.

We have already remarked upon the report of the Select Committee, to whom was referred the petition of Benedict Fenwick and others, for an indemnity for their loss of property in the destruction of the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown. The resolutions proposed by the committee came before the House for discussion on Wednesday the 11th, and were continued until Thursday evening, when the debate was terminated by yeas and nays, as will be seen in another column.

The debate arose upon the resolution of the committee to give to the petitioners as a gratuity \$10,000. Those in favor of the gratuity plead variously; some thought that the appropriation might be made to the Ursuline Convent, as being an Institution of Learning; others as the dictate of sympathy and common justice; and others as a test of their catholicism. Those oppose to the resolution argued, that they could see no just reason why the gratuity should be granted. The petitioners ask for an indemnity as a matter of right; but both branches of the committee concur in the opinion that they were not entitled to the indemnity as a question of right. They therefore, could not vote for the proposed gratuity; because the petitioners had not asked for it; because from what they knew of the Institution they did not especially need a gratuity; and because the proposed act would constitute a dangerous precedent. The petitioners had sought redress in the ordinary way; the courts of justice were as open to them as to others, and they had availed themselves of their privileges. They had indeed failed of obtaining satisfactory redress, either for want of evidence or for want of ability on the part of the prosecuted, and they had therefore appealed to this House; but if the Legislature should grant the petition, they would constitute themselves into a high Court of Appeals, and there would be no end to these petitions, for whoever loses his case in a court of justice always considers himself injured.

The decision of the House upon this question was a correct one, as we believe, but the debate should have been spared. The report of the committee should have been recommitted, with instructions to confine themselves strictly to the question before them. The petitioners, very properly, knowing as they did, that there was no other ground on which they could with propriety come before the Legislature, ask for the indemnity as a matter of right; and it was the duty of the committee to inquire, whether an indemnity upon this ground could be granted; they did so, but they did more. They would have the Legislature look a little into these matters of religion, and they did so.

The Legislature of Massachusetts have been so long tinkering upon religion, that they seem to have acquired a strange propensity for this kind of tinkering. It therefore only needed the suggestion of a committee to induce them to go into a debate of two days, upon the comparative merits of the Catholic and Protestant forms of religion.

The destruction of the Convent had no connection with any form of religious faith, or with any denomination of Christians. It was just as fair, should a mob assail a Medical Institution, because they supposed that it had been instrumental in occasioning a violation of the sacredness of the grave, to say that the medical profession were persecuted, as to say, that the Catholics were persecuted because a mob had assailed a Convent, in consequence of their supposing that it had been instrumental in restraining the personal liberty of a female.

In the minds of disinterested persons who know the facts, there is not the shadow of a doubt, that the elopement of Miss Harrison, who for several years had been secluded as a Nun in the Convent, and her subsequent return through the influence of the Lady Superior and the Bishop, without any explanation to the public, was the immediate cause of this outrage. The men who committed the act were men of no religion, they had not even any correct moral principle. They acted rather under an excited but mistaken feeling of republicanism.