

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

"RIGHTHOUSNESS, TEMPERANCE, AND JUDGEMENT TO COME."

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TERMS.

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The following article will be read and noticed as the production of a mind of high order, and as the result of thorough investigation into the real causes of moral power among the ambassadors of Christ. The proposition laid down by Professor Eaton we consider of vital importance to those brethren who have the means of an education;—though it be far, very far from us to intimate that "much learning" is indispensable to usefulness in the church.

The great usefulness of general information, on the "world as it is," seems to be very happily introduced in the latter part of the article. The minister, who reasons with men from the visible things of creation to their great Original, takes the unbeliever on the fore-ground of dispute, and to do this successfully, he must have the key that unlocks the secret storehouse of nature.

Professor Eaton has been extensively known hitherto, but this address will most surely give him a highly honorable introduction to the community, as an officer of Hamilton Institution, both as a scholar and divine.—*American Bap.*

EXTRACTS

From the Inaugural Address of Prof. Eaton.

"The exigencies of the times, then, demand a thoroughly educated ministry. This may seem rather a bold and startling proposition to many Baptists, but a deep conviction of its truth urges me to advance it, and I trust my previous remarks have fully prepared my brethren to receive it with favor. I verily believe without such a ministry our nation can not be saved. We can not too much magnify the office of the Christian ministry. I will not, however, stop here to descant upon its sublime and unspeakably important relations to God and man. Compared with it, how contracted the sphere, and mean the station, of the mightiest earthly monarch! I speak of it now merely as a centre of conservative influence to save the nation. Its position to the people is such; its action so constant, direct, and uninterrupted; its opportunity to exert a moulding influence upon the mind and heart so fair and full, that I will venture the assertion, (even at the risk of raising the senseless cry, 'church and state,' 'priest craft,' &c. id omne genus,) that the temporal as well as the eternal salvation of the land depends more upon the Christian ministry than upon any other body of men. How immensely important that its influence should be of the highest kind, powerful, and unrestrained, acting beneficently upon all the great interests of humanity. Now, however favorable its position, however constant and direct its action, however fair and full its opportunity for exerting an influence, it can not keep its hold upon an intelligent and educated community without it is itself intelligent and educated. It can not, indeed, fully exert its beneficent power without it is considerably in advance of the general mass in knowledge and information.

Added to the considerations just mentioned, are others of a more special character, suggested by a contemplation of some of the peculiar features of the age, which most forcibly demonstrate the importance to the ministers of God, of that discipline and enlargement of the mental powers, which a thorough education can alone impart. One of the most remarkable features of this most remarkable age, is the grandeur of the conceptions, and the magnificence of the enterprises, which men form and execute. Things are conceived and done upon a great scale.—New energies and new capabilities seem to have been discovered in the world of mind as well as in the world of matter. An elevation and extent of view, a vastness and stretch of purpose, a depth and intensity of feeling, and an energy and promptitude of action, characterize the present movements of the human mind. The enterprises of the church, as those of the world, are strongly marked with these characteristics. The conceptions of enlightened Christians, as respects the field and object of their labors, have been widening and widening, until they have come actually to embrace the world and the conversion of its millions to God. They have come to talk as familiarly of the conversion of the world as formerly of sending the gospel to a destitute neighborhood, not as a "consummation devoutly to be wished," and fervently prayed for, merely, but as a work which the Son of God is now calling upon them with commanding and animating voice to attempt and accomplish. The plans projected, and the means devised, for the accomplishment of this glorious object, partake in some measure of the grandeur and magnitude of the object itself. Ever and anon some new plan is announced, whose moral sublimity fills the mind, and thrills along every nerve of Christian philanthropy. At one time we hear of supplying the millions of our own country with the word of God in the brief space of two years: the astonishment of our minds at the boldness of the conception had scarcely subsided ere the work was done! Again we hear of providing schools for the instruction of our whole youthful population in this precious word. Our minds are delighted and our hearts cheered at the energy and success with which this great and benevolent object is now being prosecuted. Finally we hear of giving the word of life to the whole world!—Yes, the church seems at last to be rousing and shaking herself, and taking hold in earnest of her appropriate work. She is casting out the

gospel net over the world. She is planting her moral machinery upon every shore. A cordon of her mighty agencies even now belts the earth. Now does it require a well informed mind of strong and expanded powers to form even an adequate conception of these sublime movements of the Zion of God? Much more does it require such a mind in one who is called not only to take a conspicuous part in these movements, but to lead and direct them!"

"Will a knowledge of natural philosophy, then, contribute to ministerial efficiency? The following considerations, among others which might be mentioned, may help us to the right answer:

1. This knowledge will put the minister in possession of a vast store-house of illustrations, which in this scientific age he will find available and serviceable in the elucidation and enforcement of divine truth. God is the author, both of the material and spiritual universe. He, who formed mind and gave it laws, created matter and ordained its laws. Natural objects and moral agents, with all their attributes, modes of being and action, are productions of the same Omnipotent wisdom. Both are radiant with the signatures, and manifest forth the glory of the Author. Between these two creations thus issuing from the same hand, combined and harmonized as they are in the present constitution of things, we find striking analogies and correspondencies. Now we are far from entertaining the belief that these analogies and correspondencies between the material and spiritual universe, or between the modes of God's procedure in each, are of such a kind as to render it legitimate and safe to introduce the reasonings and inferences proper to one into the other. This would be preposterous. The nature of spirit must of necessity be widely different from that of matter, and earth must have its own peculiar operations and laws. But God has nevertheless wonderfully compounded and fitted them together in the constitution of man; and such analogies, correspondencies, and mutual adaptations are found to exist between them, as to constitute the material world a vast storehouse of striking and opposite illustrations of spiritual truths and spiritual processes. Indeed, man is so constituted, that he must needs receive knowledge and instruction through the medium of his senses which take cognizance of matter. Hence results not only the practicability, but the necessity, of teaching abstract and spiritual truths by visible examples and sensible images, not less than by precept and pure reasoning. The Bible is full of imagery, shadowing forth the most important spiritual truths. Our blessed Saviour, who knew perfectly the nature of man, for he was its author, had constant recourse to this mode of instruction. How often he seizes upon the objects and processes of nature to explain, illustrate, and enforce divine truth. In this he was imitated by his apostles, especially by the philosophic and seraphic Paul; and we find the most sublime and mysterious truths in the glorious scheme of redemption, viz. the new birth, and the resurrection of the body, explained and illustrated by operations in nature. What are the ordinances of the church, but striking instances of this mode of conveying spiritual instruction? Who has not observed the fact, that an appropriate illustration oftentimes more forcibly exhibits, and more indelibly impresses upon the mind, an important truth, than the clearest demonstration? The minister therefore can not possess a store too ample and rich of illustrative materials. He should lay under contribution alike the vast dominion of nature and the wide range of human affairs. Now a familiar acquaintance with natural philosophy, lays at his feet the treasures of nature. Her grand and beautiful objects, her multiplied and multifarious relations, her curious and diversified processes, her sublime and comprehensive laws, and her rich and varied scenery, all may be made tributary to the enhancement of the value and efficiency of his ministrations. It is true, the minister should never draw his illustrations from sources with which his auditory is unacquainted; but the study of natural philosophy is becoming more and more common, and extending to all classes; he may therefore without restriction avail himself of its treasures."

From the New York Weekly Messenger.

RELIGION THE BASIS OF OUR LIBERTY.

No sentiment ever uttered is more true than that the prosperity of our country is interwoven with the prosperity of the Christian Religion. The moral principles contained in the scriptures, form the basis of all our laws; and of all that is excellent in the laws of every civilized country under heaven.

Let our jurisprudence be divested of this feature, and society is reduced to its original elements of barbarism. The right of the strongest must prevail; a despot must rule our country; our women become slaves, and our property the prey of robbers and assassins. What were Rome and Sparta, those models of heathen excellence without the conservative principles of revealed religion. In one, debauchery was taught by the sages; in the other, the youth were instructed in thieving by their patriotic mothers, and punished for betraying their praise worthy depredations. China at present exhibits the fairest model for the contemplation of the enemies of Christianity, of a government and laws divested of the pure influence of revealed religion. Here despotism, superstition, and the grossest idolatry are interwoven with their civil code. The emperor keeps a numerous and well appointed Seraglio; and polygamy is allowed to the grandees and Mandarins. In the higher orders of society their females are kept in a sort of slavery, and the Chinese peasant yokes his wife and his ass to the plough.

To the religion of the Bible then, we are indebted for our dearest social and domestic enjoyments; and for every excellence which characterizes the institutions of civilized countries. He must therefore be the worst enemy of his kind, who attempts to sap the foundations of religion;

and to substitute for its influence the unholy and unrestrained passions of men. It is to the principles of toleration taught by the Christian religion, that the infidel is indebted for the liberty which he possesses of assailing it. She is the genius of Liberty which he so ostentatiously professes to worship, while he madly thrusts a dagger at her vitals. To her followers, who, in the hour of danger, would repel force with force, she commands, "Put the sword in thy sheath." To the misguided bigot who would call fire from heaven to consume those who follow not with us, she meekly replies, "Ye know not what imagine of spirits ye are of."

The foregoing remarks are elicited from a consideration of the alarming progress of infidel principles in most of our large cities; and the unblushing effrontery with which those principles are avowed and propagated by infidel publications. In these vehicles of treason, the fundamental principles of religion and of social order are assailed; openly where it can be done with impunity; insidiously, where it is found necessary to effect the purpose. But while infidelity is arraying its force on the one hand, we rejoice that the friends of religion & of liberty are equally vigilant on the other. A spirit of enterprise is awakened among the various religious denominations, which must check, if it does not effectually stay the flood of ruin which has threatened to devastate our land. To the youth of our country, to whom its future destinies must be confided the patriot looks with the deepest interest. If these be preserved from the contaminating principles of infidelity, our country is safe. Let the youth of America remember, that if ever our liberties are destroyed it will be by the corruption or subversion of Christianity.

EVIL SPEAKING

But suppose our evil speaking be truth—certain, indisputable truth. Are we justified? Say, first, whether you have ever done the thing you desire to conceal; never said the thing you would blush to hear repeated; never thought the thought you would not for worlds that any one should read. If never, then go tell the worst you know, say the worst you think, of all around you. There is One in heaven who knows: He hath said, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again;" but never mind, zealous propagator of the truth, go on to tear away the veil with which your neighbor tries to hide his faults; the time is not quite come, when, if some one veils not yours, the rocks and mountains will not serve you for a covering; and truth will be sufficient to prove you deserving of everlasting misery.

Yet this is not all. God is taking account of something mortals overlook. What was your motive for that injurious truth you told this morning? For that remark you made to another's prejudice, too true to be disputed? You saw you had spoke, whether you had or not? It will not do to run a risk in this. While you are keeping a register of other's faults with so much justice, there is One more just than you, who registers your thoughts, and every secret motive of your heart. Jealousy is sin; envy is sin; strife is sin; unkindness, retaliation, anger, hatred, variance, all are sins; and, evil speaking itself is declared in holy writ to be so. Will you risk the accumulation of sin upon your soul, and swell the dark catalogue that is against you, for the mere sake of setting the characters of men in the proper light, and undeceiving every body as to their neighbors' actions?

That those who make light of sin in themselves, and sport of it in others, should do this, we need not so much wonder; but to return again to those who care themselves religious, distinctively from a careless and unbelieving world. You know, or pretend to know, the extent of nature's corruption; you bewail before Heaven your inability to conquer it; you may sometimes feel there is absolutely no good in you. How then can you venture to appoint yourselves the judges of your fellow creatures, and take delight in exposing and talking of their faults? Do you not know the difficulty of conquering one native and deep-rooted sin? Do you not know the tears a Christian sheds in secret, for the sin he cannot conquer? Do you not know that the path of life is dangerous, and full of temptations, we have not in ourselves the power to resist? And yet you go on criticising, censuring, exposing one another; whispering from house to house of this person's inconsistencies, and that person's neglects; and one should not do this, and another should not say that. Oh! it is little, little indeed, with all your profession, you know of your own heart, or it would surely find you other work.

If you think any one is more deserving in the sight of God than you are, you have a step downward yet to make, ere you reach the place of safety at your Saviour's feet; and when you come there, whatever God, who reads all hearts, may think, you who read your own, will believe that it is worse than any other. And, oh! if you did really know, so well as you profess to do, the agony of conscious sin to one who hates it; you would not, by your hard speeches, add one feather's weight to the intolerable burden. Would you have mocked at Peter when he denied his Lord? When Paul besought relief for the weakness that exposed him to Satan's influence, and was denied, would you have reproached him with it? Yes, you would, but remember that your Saviour did not.

If such is the evil, where is the remedy? What the best principle cannot exterminate, may seem to admit of none. Take up the thistle before it has taken root to deeply. Where there is not a malicious love of mischief in the heart, which I trust is very seldom, we speak evil because we always have done so, and because we have always heard it done. Let the young be watchful against the habit, and resist the example. To assist them in this, the first thing is to induce a habit of thinking as well of others as they can; for those who think no evil will say none. You hear something you are disposed to blame; but you may have misconstrued the words. The speaker may have used stronger expressions than he was aware of; he may have regretted them as soon as spoken. Accustom yourself to such reflections as these. You see, or are told of, an action that you disapprove: perhaps there was some reason for it no one knows; some temptation that at least extenuates it; some mistake that led to it. Try to believe so.

You are shocked by defects and vices of characters in others: say to yourself, ere you condemn, some neglect of education, some bad example, some physical disorder, or mental imbecility may have caused all this: you will be in no hurry to speak the worst, while you are thus endeavoring to think the best; and it will besides keep you in better humor with your fellow-creatures, and consequently more amiable in your deportment to-

wards them. The next thing is to accustom yourself to watch your own actions, and the secret movements of your own heart, and to lay by the account of them. Then, when you are disposed to censure, there will come the thought, "I once felt that evil passion too. I remember when I committed that same fault; I have not that wrong propensity, but then I have this other, which is as bad." This habit will make you humble; and whatever makes you humble, will make you lenient. Another preventive is, to store your mind with other matters, and provide yourself with better things to talk about; for it is the want of mental occupation that makes us so busy with other men's faults, and the cause of so much evil of each other. Let those who would resist this habit, consider the difficulties, the dangers, the sorrows, that lie in the path of all to their eternal home; the secret pangs, the untold agonies, the hidden wrongs.—Thus the heart will grow soft with pity towards our kind. How can I tell what that person suffers? That fault will cost them dear enough without my aid. Thus you will fear, by a hard word, to add to that which is too much already, as we shrink from putting the finger on a sore. And lastly, accustom yourselves to entreat Heaven for your fellow-creatures; asking pardon and forbearance of God, towards what is wrong in them. Then, I am sure, you will not be eager to expose, and hasty to condemn them. Strenuously accustom yourself to all these things from your childhood onward, and it may be, that the disgraced thistle will not grow.—*Caroline Fry.*

VOLTAIRE.

The following accurate delineation of the character of Voltaire, and account of his awful death, is from Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity by the Rev. Daniel Wilson, now Lord Bishop of Calcutta.—*Sou. Churchman.*

"I acknowledge the extraordinary talents of Voltaire; the brilliancy of his parts, the fecundity of his imagination, the versatility which could apply itself to almost every subject, the beauty of a style which lost little of its charm at the close of a long life, the diligence which was never relaxed, the reputation and success in some branches of elegant literature, which gave him so wide a sway over public opinion. But I ask what was his moral and religious character?—ask how far it was probable that his objections against Christianity sprung from a sincere and steady pursuit of truth? Talents, if separated from morality, are of no value; such a question as religion. Let us see how people ever remember that angelic powers, perverted by thorough hatred to goodness, are the very things which render the spiritual adversary of mankind so formidable and detestable. Impiety, says his biographer, revived as he was the cradle. He learned to read at the age of three years, by comparison with an irreligious book to memory. His

talents were early turned into infidelity. When a boy at school, his daring blasphemies, connected with his natural talents, induced his tutor to predict, that he would raise the standard of deism in France. As his youth advanced, he was admitted into those horrible associations of debauches and infidels, in the highest classes of society who disgraced the close of the reign of Louis XIV. In mature life he was remarkable for an unsettled, satirical, impetuous disposition; a temper wayward even to malignity; outrageous violations of the decencies of the domestic circle; ridicule and hypocrisy at the deathbeds of his friends; duplicity, untruth, and even perjury in his dealings; artifice, buffoonery, sarcasms, and the most unblushing calumnies, in his controversies; a treachery towards his friends, so deeply seated, that he loaded with flatteries and caresses in his letters, the very persons whom he was at the same time covering with ridicule; and even calumniated, in clandestine writings, some of those individuals on whom he was pouring forth, in his ordinary correspondence, the warmest testimonies of friendship or consideration. As he approached old age, (he lived to be eighty-four) his impiety became systematic, restless, aggressive, persevering, malignant, and almost furious. All seemed to him to be lawful in his contest against religion. His motives in his attacks on Christianity, were not concealed.—So far from pretending to have truth on his side, or to aim at truth, he was accustomed to say, 'I am weary of hearing that twelve men established the gospel; I will see if one can overthrow it.' His enmity and hypocrisy were carried so far, that he erected a Christian church, adjoining his chateau, at Ferney, and dedicated it to the Almighty, at the same moment that he was habitually applying to the Divine Saviour of mankind, a term too horrid to be cited. I say nothing of the impurity of his conduct, the gross obscenity of his language, and conversation, the notorious adultery in which he lived; because all this he avowed, it appears, in all he said and did. It is thought, indeed, nothing of by the infidel party; it forms the conventional style of their books and correspondence, and constitutes one of the darkest features of their moral degradation.

"And what were the last days of Voltaire?—Hypocrisy the most debasing, and terms the most frightful, united to render them a fearful lesson of what infidelity may bring a man to at last. When he thought himself in danger of death, he sent for Abbe Gauthier, crying out, 'I do not wish to have my body cast in the common sewer.' He then scrupled not to declare, that he wished to die in the Catholic religion in which he was born, and that he asked pardon of God and the church for the offences that he might have committed against them.' As death approached, his terrors overcame him.—His friends never came near him but to witness their own shame. He said to them, 'Sirs, it is you that have brought me to my present state; be gone—I could have done without you all.' He was alternately supplicating and blaspheming God, and crying out, 'O! Christ! O! Jesus Christ! M. Fronchin, struck with horror, retired, confessing that the death-bed of the impious man was a fearful indeed. The Marshal Richlieu flew from the bed-side declaring the sight to be too terrible to be sustained. And the nurse who attended him, being many years afterwards requested to wait on a sick Protestant gentleman refused till she

was assured he was not a philosopher, declaring if he were, she would on no account incur the danger of witnessing such a scene, as she had been compelled to do at the death of M. Voltaire."

"This simple incident is most touching and important. It is nature itself. I received the account from the son of the gentleman, to whose dying bed the woman was invited, by a letter now in my possession.

From the American Baptist.

THE BAPTIST CAUSE.

Hamiltonville, Pa. April 16, 1835.

Dear brother Going—I have for a long time past been a silent spectator, waiting with the most intense interest the signs of the times, and viewing every revolution among the Baptists in America, as tending to bring the general affairs of our denomination to an important crisis.

The approaching session of the Baptist General Convention, will doubtless be one of the most interesting ever held, not only from the fact, that new and increasingly interesting missionary fields, all white to the harvest, are daily opening and spreading the most inviting prospects before the denomination, but from the circumstance, that hundreds of our churches, are looking up to this meeting as the delightful period, when the denomination shall take some decisive measures to present the claims of our denominational peculiarities, upon the practical obedience of the christian public, in a distinctive and permanent form.

In these respects, the Baptist is far in the rear of almost every other denomination. By an amalgamation for benevolent effort with various other denominations, our strength is weakened, and our energies in a measure wasted. Our hands are tied, and our lips sealed from a development of those peculiar sentiments, dear as the blood that warms our heart, and which have been the glory of the denomination, from the days of him that cried in the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord."

To effect a union of effort and harmony of feeling among the Baptists in America, it is necessary that there should somewhere exist a pure and perennial fountain of religious knowledge and doctrinal sentiment, the stream of which should flow to all our churches; and thus, from the centre of the circumference, make all our brethren as to the heart and of one mind."

It is not enough to say, the Bible alone is our creed—its paramount claims upon our obedience, clothed as it is with all the authority of divine revelation, we all acknowledge, and to its sacred precepts we humbly bow. Not to a humanly dependent body, acknowledging no higher ecclesiastical tribunal on earth than that which exists in its own bosom; in this its dependence we too rejoice. But there must stretch along from heart to heart, and from church to church, a cord of fraternal affection which touched at any point, will vibrate the whole length. There must be some common bond of union, some medium through which our sentiments, and views, and feelings, not only upon the doctrines of the gospel, but upon the great benevolent operations of the day, may be clearly understood by all our brethren, so that we may act in concert and harmony, and thus present a well trained, disciplined and united phalanx of christian soldiery.

To effect this, and to hold a co-ordinate rank with our christian brethren of other denominations in the dissemination of the denominational peculiarities of each, it is indispensably necessary.

I. To establish the Baptist Publication Society, where we can have the privilege of publishing our own sentiments as we please, and of supplying all the Baptist Sabbath Schools in the union also with our own books. Our schools are now suffering, and many of them complaining because such books as contain our distinctive principles, suitable for Sabbath Schools, cannot be obtained. Shall we let other denominations supply their schools with books advocating their own principles, and we still pledge ourselves to publish nothing in the least description of our peculiar sentiments? The honor and the prosperity of our denomination, the principles of sound doctrine, and the voice of our churches, all come in to sustain the call for such a Society.

II. The present exigencies of the denomination, clearly call for the organization of a Baptist General Publication Society, (which, by the way, may be connected with the Baptist General Tract Society, and thus save great expense,) where all Baptist books may be published.

One object desirable to be secured by such a publication society, is, to save from oblivion many valuable works written by our fathers in the church, and characteristic of our sentiments, which otherwise would be lost.

Another object is, to prevent those which are published from being garbled, and made to speak a language they never designed to speak. A publication society thus organized, could publish books much cheaper than they now are.

Another important object is, that we may have a general depository of Baptist books, where our brethren from all parts of the country, can send their orders and be sure to be supplied. But as it now is, we have no general Baptist book store, no place where we can be certain to find such books as we want, but churches, bible-classes, Sabbath schools, ministers and private brethren from the country are constantly embarrassed, and very frequently fail of procuring Baptist books, and are consequently compelled to take those published by other denominations. It is but a few months since, one of our brethren in Philadelphia wished to procure Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity: he sent to New York, Hudson, Albany and Baltimore, but could not procure a single copy, and was therefore obliged to send to England! Such a society would collect, and publish all our standard works, which would greatly tend to increase a thirst for reading and study in our churches, as well as to instruct our