

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

EDITED BY T. MEREDITH.

NEWBERN, N. C. WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1835.

VOL. 1, NO. 40

TERMS.
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BISHOP STONE'S PASTORAL LETTER.

The bishop of Maryland has recently addressed a Pastoral Letter to the members of his Diocese. The subject treated is of the highest practical importance.—*Missionary.*

Importance of the Lord's Day.

The duties appropriate to Sunday are not of such trivial consequence, that, being performed when convenient, they may be omitted at pleasure, without any offence to God or injury to ourselves. In addressing myself to those who believe in the divine Institution of the Jewish Sabbath, and in the transfer of its sanctity, and religious obligations to the first day of the week, otherwise called the Lord's-day, it cannot be necessary to bring forward any scriptural proof in support of its claim to our regard. My object is merely to point out the best mode of giving full efficiency to the observances of that holy day.

Previous preparation for it.

In order to carry into the duties thereof a devout and fervent spirit, attain as much preparation of heart on the preceding night, as time and circumstances will permit. Avoid, then, as far as possible, all those engagements and occupations which are most likely to dissipate the mind, or to leave upon it a vivid impression of worldly pleasure or care. Teach yourself to look forward with mingled hope and fear, desire and trembling, to the sacred privileges awaiting you, and remember that your eternal destiny might turn upon your mode of improving the approaching day.

Duties proper for it.

When the Christian Sabbath begins to dawn, do not say within yourselves, "I may now indulge protracted slumbers in the morning, as I have no secular concerns calling me to wakefulness and energy." But ask if you have no duties of a spiritual character to perform, that summon you to be up and doing; unrepented sins that call for deep heart-felt contrition; no graces in imperfect exercise; no habits to be vigorously assailed. An impartial retrospect of the past week, and of your past life, would soon banish a tendency to slothful indulgence, and bring to your recollection how much time has been spent in idleness and folly. Reflection upon this, if properly improved, would cause you to retire to your closets, there to unburden a guilty conscience, there to pour out your souls before God in acts of prayer and praise, praise for his past forbearance and prayer for his continued patience and mercy. The omission of such important duties, shows a forgetfulness of God, and an alienation of the heart from him, which ought to awaken in us the deepest apprehensions. Ask yourselves, then, whether you delight in the performance of the duties of prayer, reading the holy scriptures, and self-examination. By prayer we become transformed into the likeness of the blessed Redeemer, by reading the Bible with prayerful attention we become wise to salvation, and by self-examination we become acquainted with the corruption of our own hearts, are brought to see the necessity of the plan of redeeming love, and are moved to "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Public Worship.

Faithful compliance with the duties just enumerated, will lead to the performance of another often neglected duty—I mean the public worship of God. This duty is more immediately connected with the Christian Sabbath, as private prayer is the duty of every day. It is indeed a lamentable consideration, that so many are negligent and irregular in waiting upon the Lord in his holy sanctuary. In an age like the present, when so many things assuming the appearance of novelty, captivate and allure the unthinking multitude, and draw them off from the line of duty, the utmost caution should be employed by those whose station imparts to them a salutary influence over others, by precept and example, to cherish respect for the Lord's-day. Nothing can be more important to the public welfare. In some sections of the country, when a minister goes to church, he has no assurance that he shall find his flock waiting with anxious expectation to hear from his lips the words of eternal life. That must in a great measure depend on a variety of circumstances beyond his control; and while he has toiled, and prayed and wept before God for the souls of his people, some novel exhibition in the neighborhood, some tumultuous assembly, or strangely modulated voice, extravagant gesture, is allowed to attract the gaping crowd, and divert them from the wholesome doctrines of the gospel of Christ. How discouraging this neglect is to a minister whose practice is to be regularly found at his post, I need not remark.

Poor Excuses.

Others venture to offer excuses for absence from worship, which they would consider insufficient to detain them from any place of secular duty, profit or pleasure. A cloudy morning or an occasional visitor will keep many from church, who will travel through storms and tempests, rather than neglect the smallest temporal concern. Some hesitate to expose their servants and carriages in attending the house of God, while they scruple not at all, for their own pleasure, to expose them at night, and in tempestuous weather.

Sunday Visits.

One practice which prevails more or less in every section of the diocese, I must mention with the utmost reprobation, that of receiving and paying visits on the Lord's day. In the visitor this is a great violation of worldly decorum as of religious obligation. For in many cases, it compels his host, whatever may be his secret regret and disappointment, to accept the idle chat of an indolent companion, as a substitute for the precious privileges (private or public) of the Lord's day. By this means the worship of God is neglected, his authority is insulted, the sanctuary of the Sabbath is violated, the means of grace are allowed to produce no lasting impression, and the ministers of Christ are inevitably left to mourn over the declining state of religion and of morals. This sacrifice of spiritual improvement is not confined to the persons who occasion it; it exerts a certain influence on the minds of your children and domestics. The former deprived of their religious instructions, the latter of their rest from labour, actually robbed of the privilege, which God had mercifully allotted them on his Sabbath, they cease to reverence the day and its divine institution. Light and trifling conversation is suffered to occupy the season which should be attended with hopes and meditations full of immortality. Under the existence of such a state of things the decay of parishes, and the growth of infidelity, are the sure and certain consequences. Trivial is the excuse for your own neglect of homage to God, that you do not prevent your families from attending church, but that upon all suitable occasions, you recommend the duty of attendance on the means of grace.—This is not in conformity with the maxim founded upon universal experience—that example is more efficacious than precept. While you neglect so important a duty, there is little reason to hope that your children will duly appreciate privileges which they see so lightly esteemed by their parents.—Are your children now afflicted by living without the love and fear of God? Ask yourself what has been the influence of your example in this respect. Its effects may be as injurious to servants, who, from neglected education, soon learn to slight sacred things, even with the best example set before them.

THE NECESSITY OF SEEKING THOSE THINGS FIRST, WHICH ARE OF THE FIRST IMPORTANCE.

A great part of the evil which prevails in the world, consists in an entire neglect of what God commands, or in doing what he hath expressly forbidden; but not the whole of it. There may be an attachment to many things, which in themselves are right, and yet the whole may be rendered worse than void by the want of order, or a regard to things according to their importance.—Our Lord did not censure the Pharisees for attending to the lesser matters of the law, but for attending them to the neglect of the greater. If we pursue things as primary, which ought to occupy only a secondary or subordinate place in the system, we subvert the whole, and employ ourselves in doing what is worse than nothing.

I think I see the operation of this principle among us, and that to a wide extent. I see it amongst the unconverted, amongst the converted, and amongst different parties or denominations of Christians. 1. It is by this that great numbers who lay their accounts with obtaining the kingdom of heaven will be found to have deceived themselves.—It may be too much to say of them, that they do not seek the kingdom of God; but they seek it not as a first or primary object. The world is their chief good, and the kingdom of God only occupies a secondary place in their affections.—They wish to attend to their everlasting concerns; but they cannot spare time. Now we can commonly spare time for that which we love best.—The sensualist can find time for his pleasures, and the man of the world for getting money.—They can think of these things when sitting in the house, or walking in the way; and every thing else is made to bend, or give way to them. The result is, this profligate conduct mars the whole; for God and religion must be supreme, or nothing. There are certain relations even amongst us in which it is impossible to be contented with a secondary place. If a wife give her heart to another than her husband, and aims only to oblige him so far as to keep him in tolerable good humor, it is what cannot be endured; he must be first, or nothing; and such is the claim of heaven.

2. It is owing to this, among other causes, that many Christians go from year to year in doubt with respect to their interest in Christ and spiritual blessings. It is very desirable to have clear and satisfactory views on this subject. To live in suspense on a matter of such importance, must, if we be not sunk in insensibility, be miserable. How is it that so much of this prevails amongst us; when, if we look into the New Testament, we shall scarcely see an instance of it among the primitive Christians? Some have done so, alleging that it is impossible for a person to be a believer without being conscious of it. Surely this is too much: for if the grace of God within us, whatever be its degree, must needs be self-evident to us, why are we directed to keep his commandments as the mean of knowing that we know him? The primitive Christians, however, had but little of this fear; and the reason of it was, they had more of that perfect love to Christ, to the Gospel, and to the success of it, than we have, which tended to cast it out.—If we make our personal comfort the first object of our pursuit, (and many attend the means of grace as if they did,) God will make it the last of his; for it is a general principle in the divine administration, "He that honoreth me I will honor; but he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed." If we seek the honor of God; we shall find our own peace and comfort in it; but if we make light of him, he will make light of us, and leave us to pass our days in darkness and suspense.

3. It is owing, if I mistake not, to the same cause, that various denominations of Christians, who at some periods have been greatly blessed of

God, have declined as to their spiritual prosperity. Several of our religious denominations have arisen from a conscientious desire to restore Christianity to its primitive purity. From this motive acted, I believe, the greater part of the Reformers, the Puritans, the Non-Conformists, and the Baptists. I do not know that any one of these denominations were censurable for the separations which they made from other professing Christians. It may be alleged, that they have torn the church of Christ into parties, and so occasioned much evil; yet some of them did not separate from the church of Christ, but from a worldly community calling itself by that name; and those who did, pretended not to be the only people of God in the world, but considered themselves merely as withdrawing from brethren who walked disorderly. It is a melancholy fact, however, that no sooner have a people formed themselves into a new denomination, than they are in the utmost danger of concentrating almost all their strength, influence, zeal, prayers, and endeavors for its support; not as a part of Christ's visible kingdom, wishing all good to other parts, in so far as they follow Christ, but as though it were the whole of it, and as though all true religion were circumscribed within its hallowed pale. This is the essence of a sectarian spirit, and the bane of Christianity.

I am a Dissenter, and a Baptist. If I confine my remarks to the faults of these denominations, it is not because I consider them as greater sinners in this way than all others, but because I wish more especially to correct the evils of my own connections.

If we wish to promote the dissenting interest, it must not be by expending our principal zeal in endeavoring to make men Dissenters, but in making Dissenters and others Christians. The principles of dissent, however just and important, are not to be compared with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God; and if inculcated at the expense of it, it is no better than tithing mint and cummin to the omitting of the weightier matters of the law.—Such endeavors will be blasted, and made to defeat their own end. Those Dissenters among whom the doctrines of the Puritans and Non-Conformists have fallen into disrepute, are generally distinguished by this species of zeal; and it is principally from such quarters that complaints are heard of "the decline of the dissenting interest." Where they are believed and taught, and their progress, whether among Dissenters or others, viewed with satisfaction, we hear of no such complaints. It is a curious fact, that while a certain description of Dissenters are inquiring into the causes of the decline of the dissenting interest, a certain description of the established clergy are inquiring into the cause of its increase?

If we wish to see the Baptist denomination prosper, we must not expend our zeal so much in endeavoring to make men Baptists, as in laboring to make Baptists and other Christians. If we lay out ourselves in the common cause of Christianity, the Lord will bless and increase us. By rejoicing in the prosperity of every other denomination, in so far as they accord with the mind of Christ, we shall promote the best interests of our own. But if we be more concerned to make proselytes to a party than converts to Christ, we shall defeat our own end; and however just our sentiments may be with respect to the subjects and mode of baptism, we shall be found symbolizing with the Pharisees, who were employed in tithing mint and cummin, to the neglect of judgment, mercy, and the love of God.—*Fuller.*

From the Episcopal Recorder.

REVERENCE FOR THE SUPREME BEING.

A habitual awe of the majesty and presence of God is a sentiment most suitable to us. It is that in which we most honor him, and through which we receive an influence from him that breaks the power of irregular passions and the hold of unworthy objects of the heart. This sentiment has been peculiar to eminent saints both ancient and modern. We however see, or think we see sermons and religious discourses of this day less characterized by it than those of distant periods. Even the writings of the early divines of this country are distinguished from the present hortatory and perceptive style by the frequency with which they bring to mind the character and various perfections of God. They make him a great and awful being. He should be so viewed, and then our thoughts upon him will be his restraints upon us. We could not better express in a few words our idea of piety than to call it—the keeping up of the recollection of God in the soul, with such thoughts and affections as his manifested professions and designs are adapted to inspire. Such recollection of him would do more than anything we can substitute in its place, to expel from the heart that vanity, levity and worldliness, which we term our forgetfulness of God, and which is the fruitful source of our departures from him. The keeping of this recollection seems to have distinguished the most eminent saints, and to have disposed them to refer every thing to his will, and to acknowledge him in all their ways. Some have been so affected by it as never to mention his name without a pause or other token of reverence. Such a feeling must be of most wholesome effect on the heart.—This was true of Robert Boyle, and he delighted to meditate upon God; it was his occupation. At the age of twenty-two, he writes—"I find the study of those excellent themes, God's Word and his Providence, so difficult, and yet so pleasing and inviting, that could heaven afford me no greater blessing than a clear account of the abstruse mysteries of divinity and providence, I should value the having of my understanding gratified and enriched with truths of so noble and precious a nature, enough to court heaven at the rate of renouncing all those unmanly sensualities and trifling vanities, for which inconsiderate mortals are wont to forfeit the interest their Saviour so dearly bought them in it." Here we have suggested the noblest themes—themes that will reward our study, store our minds with truest wisdom, and while we are musing upon them we shall take a great distance in knowledge and excellence from those who are busied with the sciences and hopes of the world. We shall learn how to estimate and to take all events, as well those which mock or disappoint our designs, as those which exceed our wishes.—We shall see ourselves in the arms of a Universal Providence, and shall rejoice to feel its care and own its control. The idea of God present to the mind helps us to feel that He is All in all. It imparts to piety a meditative character, which may abstract much from our agitations and fears, but will add more than it takes, to our efficiency and comfort.

Our religion will thus rather be a walk with God who never changes, than a creature that has features and compliances that make with the characteristics of the age. It will hang ever upon the arm of the Lord, and root in his truth and perfections. He will be to it as a great shade in a weary

land and as the morning upon the face of nature—its rest and its glory. So shall we see and know God in his ways. So shall we feel his care. So shall we be his children and be his Provider. Even as a mother o'er her children bending Years with maternal love: her fond embraces And gentle kisses to each in turn extending; One at her feet, one on her knee she places, And from their eyes, and voice, and speaking faces, Their varying wants and wishes comprehending. To one a look to one a word addresses, Even with her frowns a mother's fondness blending.

So o'er us watches Providence on high, And hope to some, and help to others lends, And yields alike to all an open ear, And when she seems her favors to deny She for our prayers the boon suspends, Or, seeming to deny, she grants the prayer.

Trans. of Filicaja, from Edin. Review.

EFFECTS OF THE BIBLE.

We may imagine the destiny of some particular copy of the Bible or New Testament in one of the native languages; and strange interest would attach to such a volume, could there be any sign to indicate this destiny, at the moment of its issuing from the repository. It may be supposed to come into the hands, in a way much like casualty, of a heathen somewhat more thoughtful than his companions. Disgust or indignation at the first aspect of what he finds there may prompt him to throw away the book which he may perceive to be virtually, an impeachment of his religion, his gods, his priests, and himself. But a certain disquiet of curiosity mingled with a deeper sentiment, shall have seized him, and shall impel him irresistibly to that book again; he shall feel as if the eye of a spectre had glanced upon him, and stricken him with a fascination that compels him to follow whether he will or not. A rising suspicion that all within him and around him, may have been wrong, shall be aggravated, by repeated perusal, to full conviction; while the dawn of the true light and of a happier state is breaking on the night of his soul. Communications and discussions with his relatives and neighbors may accompany the latter part of this process; and his finally complete persuasion will be followed by zealous exertions to impart what he will deem the greatest good on earth. The vast majority will undoubtedly resist; but within a year he shall find one or two and in the next several more, surrendering to the same convictions; and then, as it were, instinctively unfolding their new faith, as a net for proselytes.—Who shall presume to say what the consequence may not be in fifty or in thirty years?—Which of our christian deriders of the madness of missionary hopes, would venture to pledge his fortune for the inviolateness, half a century hence, of those shrines and idols, at present frequented and adored in the district where such a man is, perhaps at this hour, beginning by the intrusion of the supposed Bible, to be disturbed in his unchangeable notions and rites, as those christians have so often pronounced them?

We may, without extravagance, suppose those events to happen in a great number of instances, here and there in that realm of darkness; and we might add many other diminutive incidents and agents. The possible effects of a few tracts, conveyed in a manner appearing at first unaccountable, to a great distance from the place where they may have been put into pagan hands, by good men little apprized of the dignified appointment with which those humble gifts left their own, have been delightfully exemplified in some of the recent accounts of the mission. Among the little causes thus presented to the imagination as destined to produce great effects, will appear some images of the infantine countenances of the pupils now taught, and thereafter to be taught in those numerous schools brought into existence by the mission, not indeed contrived for proselyting, as the immediate purpose, but certain to contribute to it directly in the course of years.

You are glad to admit how reasonable, how sober it is, to expect that many such apparently inconsiderable things will thus grow to magnitude in the progress of their effects contributory to the success of the good cause. But it will occur to you that in imagining those diminutive causes, we have not begun quite at their beginning. It is a pleasing thing to see, in the hands of the supposed pagan, the book or tract which may thus explode his superstition, and perhaps be the cause of ultimately setting his temple and idols on fire; but how is that formidable substance to come gratuitously into his hands? Think what must have preceded. Think of the complicated process of its preparation, involving so many kinds of workmanship.—This brings the train of the operation up to its originating matter in your own hands, a commencement so long antecedent to the pagan's receiving the supposed book, the event from which we have dated such pleasing consequences, but on which consequences we are not to be indulging our anticipative congratulations as if the book were to fall from the sky. The little cause, then, which we may follow onward to such effects—see it deriving itself from a still less—a piece of money, which may have carried its image and superscription, in the insignificance of ordinary service, through a thousand hands, at each movement very harmless to the cause of evil, till it has come into that hand which devoted it to produce a Bible, which may have the effect at length of a thunderbolt on an idol's temple. Here is a direct answer to the question, perhaps querulously asked, what can we do?

John Foster.

From Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ.*

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE.
There are many Anglo-Saxon versions of different parts of the Old and New Testament.—The four Gospels were published by Matthew Parker, William Lisle, and Thomas Marshal, in the years 1571, 1638, and 1665. This last edition was printed at Dordrecht, with the Moco-Gothic version, and reprinted at Amsterdam, in 1684.—As the Anglo-Saxon version was evidently made from the version in use before St. Jerome's, it is much valued by those, who are curious after the readings of the old Italic.

The most ancient English translation is that of *Wicliffe*. It was finished about the year 1367. It was revised by some of his followers.—Both the original and revised translation are still extant in manuscript; the printed copies of it are not uncommon. The manuscript copies of the latter are more rare than the copies of the former.

The principal printed editions are, 1st, those of *Tyndal* and *Coverdale*; 2d, the *Genevan Bible*, or the translation made by the English, who fled to Geneva, to avoid the persecutions of queen Mary; 3d, the *Episcopal* translation, made in the reign of queen Elizabeth, under the direction of

Matthew Parker, the celebrated Archbishop of Canterbury; 4th, *King James Bible*.—It was printed in 1611, and is that which is at present used in all the British dominions; the original copy, with the manuscript corrections, is in the Bodleian library; 5th, the English translations made by the *Roman Catholics*. The chief of these are, the *Rhemish Testament*, printed at Rheims, in 1582. In the year 1586, Dr. Fulke, master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, reprinted this translation together with the bishops Bible, in two columns. It is a curious performance, and very much deserves the attention of those, who study the subjects in controversy between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, particularly such as turn on scriptural interpretation.—The *Dowry Bible* is printed in two volumes quarto, in 1606, 1610. It is said to be made from "the authentic Latin." A new edition of it was published in five volumes octavo, in 1750, by the late Dr. Challoner. Besides these, a translation in two volumes large octavo was published at Dowry, in the year 1730, by Dr. Witham. It is enriched with useful and concise notes.

From the Eclectic Review.

THE MINOR PROPHETS.

The Minor prophets cannot be understood without a careful attention to the relative position in which the kingdoms of Judah and Israel stood to each other, and the extent to which the idolatry of the calves was carried in the latter kingdom. The separation of the tribes after the death of Solomon, which was the punishment of his own sins and those of his people, was the beginning of sorrows of the Jewish nation. United, they might have withstood for ages the hostile attacks of the proudest enemies; but divided, they both fell under the dominion of Babylon. Nor was this all. To prevent the ten tribes from going up to Jerusalem, which might have weakened his authority, and formed a bond of union between the now separated States, Jeroboam determined to set up the two calves for worship in Bethel and Dan; the one at the northern, the other at the southern extremity of his kingdom. But this master piece of state policy, as he no doubt deemed it, failed throughout; for the more pious of the people and the priests, abhorring the new idolatry, fled from Israel to Judah, and materially strengthened the two tribes which clung to the house of David 2 Chron. xi. 13—17. The prophets were especially raised up to rebuke this idolatry, and most of them were sent to the ten tribes, tho' they sometimes gave powerful exhortations to the people of Judah, both to confirm the piety of the faithful, and to guard the more lax among them from the contagion of Israel's apostasy and guilt, to which not a few in Judah and Benjamin were secretly prone.—The knowledge of these facts gives peculiar point to the exhortations of Hosea, (who was contemporary with Isaiah,) and especially to his fine appeal from the close of the eleventh chapter to the end of his prophecy. He draws this distinction between the two kingdoms. "Ephraim," meaning the ten tribes, compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints." "Ephraim feedeth on the wind and lieth down after the east wind; he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oils are carried into Egypt. The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah."—There is much force and beauty in the following allusion to the patriarch Jacob's vision at Bethel, viewed in connection with these circumstances. "Yea, he hath power over the Angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication to him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us." Thus, in those very fields in which Jacob, their renowned ancestor, had conversed with angels, and drawn down the blessing from heaven, his degenerate descendants had set up idolatry of the calves, and provoked the Most High to scatter them among the nations.

From the Lutheran Observer.

HOW SINNERS ARE HARDENED BY PROFESSORS OF RELIGION.
No truth is more fully established by experience, than that professors of piety are narrowly watched in their worldly transactions by the professedly irreligious. The particular class of men who thus closely scrutinize the words and actions of their more sober neighbors, may be denominated the self-righteous, or those who justify themselves in the sight of God by their strict adherence to truth and honesty. All the promises which they make, are fulfilled punctually, as they ought to be; and in their buying and selling they scorn with honest indignation any unfair advantage. These same self-justified persons find no little pleasure in the real or supposed advantage which they possess in these particulars, over their professedly pious neighbors, and congratulate themselves not a little in this superiority. In their view it is quite a triumph over Christianity itself, and furnishes them with an argument of great power not only to despise the individuals whom they have found guilty of falsehood or fraud, but also to suspect all who profess godliness, and to regard with comparative content, even the solemn ordinances of God himself. It ought to be sufficient for such persons to know, that when they are honest in their dealing and adhere to the truth strictly in their promises and statements of facts, they are performing nothing more than their duty to themselves and their fellow beings. If they transgress the ordinary rules of society in reference to truth and honesty they injure themselves; and therefore an adherence to these rules cannot be meritorious in the sight of God. They ought to know too, that it is the grossest injustice and unfairness, to charge upon Christianity, which is pure and holy, the faults of its possessors. When the gospel teaches all men to speak the truth in simplicity, and to do to others as they would have others do to them, is it not great wickedness to charge upon this gospel the frauds and lies of those who profess to be guided by it? The truth is, these non-professors of piety, unwilling to come under all the requisitions of the Bible, and