Henry Taylor

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Henry Taylor was an eighteenth-century reverend and poet, though not much else is known about him. He was baptized 1711 and died 1785. He attended Queen's College, Cambridge. His church jobs included being the rector of Crawley and a vicar in Portsmouth. He is not a well-known poet, and he most likely did not write many poems during his lifetime. His poem "Paradise Regain'd" was first published in 1758 in Robert Dodsley's first edition of *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes, By Several Hands.* More than a hundred years later "Paradise Regain'd" was featured, along with some of his other works, in Peter A. Taylor's *Some Account of the Taylor Family*, published in 1875.

Henry Taylor's "Paradise Regain'd" is in quatrains of alternating iambic pentameter and iambic tetrameter, rhymed ABAB. It examines vice and virtue and how they relate to each other. Rather than the original story of how Paradise became lost to mankind because of their indiscretions, Taylor writes about the ways in which we can find a new Paradise, one that is not lost due to sin but rather gained through the very qualities that make us human. "Paradise Regain'd" celebrates the pleasures of men and women, instead of condemning them, and tries to explain how true virtue in humans lies in the realization of this. Paradise in "Paradise Regain'd" is not in The Garden of Eden, the earthly habitat of Adam and Eve (traditionally in the ancient Middle East, which is why Taylor refers to "Asiatic climes" and the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates). Taylor wants us to seek eternal residence in this place of happiness and delight, but instead of clinging to the old tale of human deterioration, we should instead celebrate the possibility for everyone to attain an innocent and happy lifestyle by eschewing luxury and other urban corruptions.

The poem shares a title with John Milton's sequel to his most famous poem *Paradise Lost* (1667). Milton's *Paradise Regained* was published in 1671, and it deals with the heroism of Christ and his eventual victory over Satan's temptations. The defining themes of Milton's poem are an enduring faith in God and having the spiritual strength to persevere through trials where our faith is put into question. Henry Taylor chose to title his own poem after Milton's and the two poems do share similarities. They both relate to the struggles of being human and how that can put a strain on our relationship with God. However, Taylor's

"Paradise Regain'd" seeks to celebrate the human experience of pleasures that are separate from the vices that God would not forgive. Where Milton believes firmly in the Fall of Man (we are all born sinful), Taylor supports the emerging philosophical movement of Sentimentalism (we are all born innocent and only become corrupted by civilization). In this, Taylor is probably influenced by writers such as the Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson.

Further Reading

Anderson, Jarod K. "The Decentralization of Morality in *Paradise Lost*." *Rocky Mountain Review,* vol. 64, no. 2, 2010, pp. 198–204.

Pipatti, Otto. "The Origin and Development of Moral Sentimentalism." *Morality Made Visible: Westermarck on Shafetsbury, Hutcheson, and Hume.* Routledge, 2019, pp. 99–121.

Paradise Regain'd[392]

I.

SEEK not for Paradise with curious eye
In Asiatic climes,[393] where Tigris' wave,
Mix'd with Euphrates[394] in tumultuous joy,
Doth the broad plains of Babylonia lave.[395]

II.

'Tis gone with all its charms; and like a dream,
Like Babylon[396] itself, is swept away;
Bestow one tear upon the mournful theme,
But let it not thy gentle heart dismay.

III.

For know where-ever love and virtue guide,
They lead us to a state of heav'nly bliss,
Where joys unknown to guilt and shame preside,
And pleasures unalloy'd[397] each hour increase.

IV.

Behold that grove,[398] whose waving boughs admit,
Thro' the live colonade,[399] the fruitful hill,

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[392] *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands. Vol. VI.* R. and J. Dodsley, 1763 [1st ed. 1758]; *Eighteenth Century Poetry Archive*
[393] *Asiatic climes* the East, here the Middle East
[394] *Tigris' wave mixed with Euphrates* the Tigris is the easternmost of the two great rivers that define Mesopotamia (Iraq), the other being the Euphrates
[395] *Doth the broad plains of Babylonia lave* washes the land of Babylon
[396] *Babylon* the capital city of the ancient Babylonian Empire (today, Iraq)
[397] *Unalloy'd* not mixed with anything, such as negative feelings
[398] *Grove* a small group of trees
[399] *Colonade* a row of columns, usually supporting a roof for example in a Greek temple (present spelling is "colonnade")

A moving prospect[400] with fat herds replete,
Whose lowing voices all the valley fill.

V.

There, thro' the spiry[401] grass where glides the brook,
(By yon tall poplar which erects its head
Above the verdure[402] of the neighb'ring oak,)
And gently murmurs o'er th' adjoining mead;[403]

VI.

Philander and Cleora,[404] happy pair,
Taste the cool breezes of the gentle wind;
Their breasts from guilt, their looks are free from care,
Sure index[405] of a calm contented mind.

VII.

'Tis here in virtuous lore the studious fair
Informs her babes, nor scorns herself t' improve,
While in his smile she lives, whose pleasing care
Dispenses knowledge from the lips of love.

VIII.

No wild desires can spread their poison here,
No discontent their peaceful hours attend;
False joys, nor flatt'ring hopes, nor servile fear,[406]
Their gentle minds with jarring passions rend.[407]

IX.

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[400] *Prospect* what you look at or see in front of you
[401] *Spiry* curving or coiling in spirals
[402] *Verdure* fresh green color of flourishing vegetation, greenness
[403] *Mead* short for *meadow*
[404] *Philander and Cleora* typical names of shepherds in pastoral poetry
[405] *Index* indication of something
[406] *Servile fear* the fear of a servant in relation to their master
[407] *Rend* to tear apart

Here oft in pleasing solitude they rove,
Recounting o'er the deeds of former days;
With inward joy their well-spent time approve,
And feel a recompence[408] beyond all praise.

X.

Or in sweet converse[409] thro' the grove, or near[410]
The fountain's brink, or where the arbour's[411] shade
Beats back the heat, fair Virtue's[412] voice they hear,
More musical by sweet digressions[413] made.

XI.

With calm dependence ev'ry good they taste,
Yet feel their neighbours' wants with kind regret,
Nor cheer themselves alone, (a mean repast!)[414]
But deal forth blessings round their happy seat.

XII.

'Tis to such virtue, that the pow'r supreme
The choicest of his blessings hath design'd,
And shed them plenteous over ev'ry clime,
The calm delights of an untainted mind.

XIII.

Ere yet the sad effects of foolish pride,

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[408] *Recompence* to reward a person for something done or given
[409] *Converse* could indicate sexual intercourse, as opposed to conversation, in the time the poem was written
[410] *Or … or near* in contemporary literature we would use either…or
[411] *Arbour's shade* a bower or shady retreat in which the sides and roof are formed by trees and/or intertwined shrubs like vines
[412] *Fair virtue's* fair meaning beautiful; the most valued virtue of that time was courage, preferably related to equity or justice
[413] *Digressions* turning aside from a path or track
[414] *A mean repast* a stingy meal

And mean[415] ambition still employ'd in strife,
And luxury did o'er the world preside,
Deprav'd[416] the taste, and pall'd[417] the joys of life.

XIV.

For such the Spring, in richest mantle[418] clad,
Pours forth her beauties thro' the gay parterre;[419]
And Autumn's various bosom is o'erspread
With all the blushing fruits that crown the year.

XV.

Such Summer tempts, in golden beams array'd,
Which o'er the fields in borrow'd lustre[420] glow,
To meditate beneath the cooling shade
Their happy state, and whence their blessings flow.

XVI.

E'en rugged Winter varies but their joy,
Painting the cheek with fresh vermilion-hue;[421]
And those rough frosts which softer frames annoy
With vig'rous health their slack'ning nerves[422] renew.

XVII.

From the dark bosom of the dappled[423] Morn

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[415] *Mean* of little value, inferior
[416] *Depraved* could relate to taste, appetite; otherwise meaning something rendered bad or morally corrupt, perverted, wicked, etc.
[417] *Pall'd* weakened
[418] *Mantle clad* wearing a loose sleeveless cloak (in this case, of flowers)
[419] *Gay parterre* bright, lively-looking space in a garden occupied by ornamental flower arrangements
[420] *Lustre glow* shining by reflective light
[421] *Vermillion-hue* to have red cheeks from cold weather
[422] *Slack'ning nerves* weakened nerves
[423] *Dappled* spotted, speckled

To Phoebus[424] shining with meridian[425] light,
Or when mild Ev'ning does the sky adorn,
Or the pale moon rides thro' the spangled night.

XVIII.

The varying scenes in ev'ry virtuous soul
Each pleasing change with various pleasures bless,
Raise cheerful hopes, and anxious fears controul,
And form a Paradise of inward peace.

[424] *Phoebus* also known as Apollo, deity in Roman and Greek mythology; poetic term for the sun
[425] *Meridian light* midday or noon

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