

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE KIND OF PREACHING FOR OUR TIMES.

#### No. II.

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FIRST of all, the preacher should cultivate a *certain quick sensitiveness* to the demands of his place and time. The most important qualification for the physician is that he have the diagnostic instinct. Let him detect the nature of the disease; the books will indicate the treatment. For a preacher to dwell continually upon one set of principles would be as though the physician were to confine himself to one or two remedies for all sorts of disease; while for the former to satisfy himself with administering to his people merely a whole body of divinity in regular course, and say, "this now should make them all right," would be as though the latter were to treat his patient with the entire contents of the pharmacopœia, and say, "I can do nothing more for you than this!"

The quick sensitive apprehension of his people's spiritual requirements, this is a primal necessity. Not some generic but special sense of it. Not merely a scholarly comprehension of the world's general ailments, but those of his own people. A genuine sympathy indeed with the great problems the great world is thinking about, so that if any of those problems are vexing his hearers he may be able to help solve them; but, more than this, a subtle understanding of individual wants among his people, which comes partly out of a natural aptitude and largely out of the cultivation of the spirit of love, enabling him to give to every man his portion in due season. What are called sermons for the times may on occasions be altogether untimely, and if continuously dealt in will become most utterly so; while yet it shall be the height of cruelty to close one's eyes to the public, social, literary, political, and philosophical situations and needs, and let the most thoughtful and practical minds in the congregation suffer for lack of sympathy, stimulation and wisest direction. The old simile holds, and the preacher is a fisherman, and must cast different flies for different sorts of fish, and may not foolishly complain against God or nature if the trout will not take to a bait intended for a sturgeon.

from those eyes which are pathetic with longing for you. As Peter, encountering that gaze of infinite tenderness, was stricken with grief and wept bitterly, so may you, sinning one, in view of His love and changeless mercy. Lord, lift Thou the light of Thy countenance upon us, so that we may be revealed to our own selves and that we may behold Thee, also, the Morning Star of our souls! Then in that other morning we shall awake satisfied with Thy likeness—in that morning which shall lead on the glorious noontide of eternal life!

#### HOW TO INHERIT THE PROMISES— DILIGENCE, FAITH AND PATIENCE.

BY A. T. PIERSON, D.D. [PRESBYTERIAN], PHILADELPHIA.

Hebrews vi: 11, 12.

THE reference here, as in chap. xi, is to a *Race*. *Endeavor* and *Endurance* are needful, and *faith* inspires both.

I. *Faith*: the faculty of making the unseen and future real and present. We naturally walk by sight. *Unreality* is our greatest hindrance.

*Doctrine* is unreal. Our creed is a form not a fact. We hold truth without grasp or grip: e. g., the Bible as God's word, prayer as a power, pardon of sin, indwelling of the Spirit, etc.

*Worship* is unreal. Formalism displaces spirituality.

*Fellowship* with God is unreal, and so far powerless.

II. *Endeavor*. Our temptation is to indolence, avoidance of energetic effort.

1. As to hindrances. "Let us lay aside weight—sin." Temptation to shirk all painful struggle after victory. Bodily, mental, spiritual indolence make all progress impossible.

2. As to successes. Danger of being satisfied with past achievements. Spinoza says there is no greater foe to progress than the laziness which self-conceit begets. In the Stadium were three square pillars, one at the

starting point inscribed "Excel," one at the goal inscribed "Rest," and one at the *middle of the course* inscribed "Hasten." The danger was midway, that the foremost racer would relax his effort. Comp. Phil. iii; 13, 14 Danger of indolence. It prevents search after truth, power in prayer, conquest of sin, etc.

III. *Endurance*. Patience is holding on. Dr. Vaughan distinguishes *constancy* and *consistency*. He is a constant who holds to his *purpose*; he is consistent who holds to his *plan*. Patience includes both; it keeps one end in view, and seeks that end by the same path throughout one straight, consistent road.

Thus we have a *successful race*. Faith makes the invisible and the future, vivid and real; and it incites to diligent endeavor and patient endurance. Thus we "inherit the promises," which, like the territory promised to Israel, must be taken possession of by actual march.—Josh. 1: 8. No part of the land became theirs until they trod upon it with their feet. To get the crown we must reach the goal; to reach the goal we must run the race.

#### LOST OPPORTUNITY.

BY ROBERT F. SAMPLE, D.D. [PRESBYTERIAN], NEW YORK.

*Sleep on now and take your rest.*—Matt. xxvi: 45.

OPPORTUNITY once lost can never be recovered. As soon bring back the sun of yesterday.

We may lose the opportunity,

1. Of salvation. The soul has its crises, cycles. It has its seed time and its harvest. "My spirit shall not always strive with man."

2. Of moulding Christian character. Youth is the formative period. Conversion may come late in life, but character, modified by grace, will remain, determining the quality of the after years.

3. Of preparation for Christian service.

The student who dozes over his books in school days will never rise to eminence. The Christian who sleeps when he should have prayed will work feebly.

#### 4. Of usefulness.

Some we might have saved have perished. Power we might have wielded lay dormant, and has been taken from us.

#### 5. Of preparation for trial.

Jesus knew, when He led His disciples into the garden, that they might there receive strength to endure. He knew, an hour later, that the golden opportunity was lost.

Opportunity! What memories, sad or joyous, it calls up! What light it sheds, or shadows casts over all the prospects of human life! Much has already been lost. Much remains. Let us rise and be going.

### THEMES AND TEXTS OF RECENT SERMONS.

1. **New Things not always Safe.** "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart."—2 Sam. vi : 3. Wm. A. Bartlett, D.D., Washington, D. C.
2. **The Strength of an Emotion.** "The joy of the Lord is your strength."—Neh. viii : 10. Rev. T. D. Ware, La Fayette, Ind.
3. **The Secret and Sureness of Peace.** "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," etc.—Isa. xxvi : 3. Denis Wortman, D.D., Saugerties, N. Y.
4. **The Reign of Christ the End of the Prayers of His People.** "Amen and Amen. The Prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."—Ps. lxxii. Chas. F. Deems, D.D., New York.
5. **Effect of the Vision of God.** "Therefore I was left alone, and there remained no strength in me," etc.—Dan. x : 8. A. T. Pierson, D.D., Philadelphia, Pa.
6. **The Nation's Hour of Peril.** "Seek ye the Lord and ye shall live; lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel."—Amos v : 6. Rev. R. M. Somerville, New York.
7. **Seeing God—in nature, in human history, in Christ.** "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—Matt. v : 8. Wm. Elliot Griffis, Boston, Mass.
8. **Imaginary Goodness.** "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets."—Matt. xxiii : 30. Saml. H. Virgin, D. D., New York.
9. **The Good Work.** "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me."—Mark xiv : 6. Howard Crosby, D.D., New York.
10. **Breakfast with Jesus.** "Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst enquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord."—John xxi : 12. R. V. Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

11. **A Mission and a Promise.** "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me."—Acts i : 8. Dean of Peterborough in Westminster Abbey, London.
12. **An Effective Ministry.** "They went together [Paul and Barnabas] into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of Jews and also of the Greeks believed."—Acts xiv : 1. F. A. Noble, D.D., Chicago, Ill.
13. **The Bond and Purpose of the Ministry.** "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."—Rom. i. 11, 12. Alex. MacLaren, D.D., Manchester, Eng.
14. **Justice and Redemption.** "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."—Rom. iii : 26. Rev. Canon Liddon, St. Paul's Cathedral, London.
15. **Wisdom and Salvation.** "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching; to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i : 21. R. W. Dale, D. D., Birmingham, Eng.
16. **Individuality.** "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether it be good or evil."—2 Cor. v : 10. Rev. Canon Westcott, Westminster Abbey, London.
17. **Oracular Speaking.** "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."—1 Pet. iv : 11. T. D. Witherspoon, D.D., Louisville, Ky.
18. **The Eternal Companionship of Deeds.** "For their works follow with them."—Rev. xiv : 13. R. V. Rev. P. H. Swift, Ph. D., Rockford, Ill.

### SUGGESTIVE THEMES.

1. **The Language of Blood.** ("The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.")—Gen. iv : 10.)
2. **The Mystery of Duty.** ("Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me?")—Ex. v : 22.)
3. **Pride and Prejudice Dominant.** ("Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?")—2 Kings v : 12.)
4. **The Dire Consequences of Deception and Falsehood.** ("The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed, forever. And he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.")—2 Kings v : 27.)
5. **How Sinners Abuse God's Forbearance.** ("Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.")—Eccles. viii : 11.)
6. **Christopathy.** ("With his stripes we are healed.")—Isa. liii : 5.)
7. **God's Judgment against the Rum-seller.** ("Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and makest him drunken!")—Habak. ii : 15.)
8. **The Dishonesty and Impudence of Sin.** ("Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.")—Mal. iii : 8.)