

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—SYMPOSIUM ON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.

ARE THE PRESENT METHODS FOR THE EDUCATION OF MINISTERS SATISFACTORY? IF NOT, HOW MAY THEY BE IMPROVED?

NO. VI.

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THE prosperity of the Church and the progress of Christianity are, to some degree, directly dependent on a right training of the ministry. The process which prepares the leaders of Christian thought and work becomes thus a matter of unspeakable importance. It marks the point at which, peculiarly, the true power and efficiency of the Church are insured or lost, and the practical success or failure of Christian work is determined. It is, therefore, a question of vital moment, whether we have adopted the best possible of ministerial training, or are operating the plan with its full efficiency.

This high office has always been felt to require some special education. It must not be given into incompetent hands. It stands for a service that affects the spiritual life of every man, woman and child in the Church, and the best welfare of general society. All the holiest and dearest interests of the Redeemer's kingdom and of human life, call for a competent, strong, and efficient ministry.

The discussion of this question thus far shows agreement on one point: that, taken altogether, the prevalent general method by which the training of ministers is accomplished through theological seminaries is the right method for our times and the present exigencies of Christian work. Whatever good results were secured through the earlier plans of training—through self-education, or tuition given by pastors—such methods belong to the past. They would be absurdly inadequate to the task of supplying either the amount or the quality of education demanded in our day. With the present advance in

go out of her arms; clings to the cherished form, happy, swings it in her circuit, until for it and for herself shall come the hour of the great awakening.

As the earth is holy through the real, though invisible connection between earth and heaven, so is it even more through the distinction which awaits it, and in which this connection will be more fully disclosed. The spot where a king will appear to receive the homage of his subjects, to distribute penalty and reward, is especially dignified in their esteem. And will not our heavenly King, who once walked the earth among men in the form of a servant, appear here in righteousness? Will He not send His angels as reapers to gather the ripened harvests, and to separate the wheat from the chaff? Will He not then summon from the earth man's lifeless but sacred dust, and reunite it again to the spirit which once animated it? Will not all that are in their graves hear His voice and come forth—they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation? Will not here sound forth the victory-songs of the Conqueror, and the wail of the lost? Will not this material heaven and this earth be burned with fire, after these great events have transpired? And will not they be constituted new heavens and the new earth? And do I not know, do I not feel, do I not anticipate, that I shall walk these earthly places? Deny Jesus on the spot where He is to appear? Sin on the spot where He is to judge me? Tremble because of death on the spot from whence my body will arise? Grasp eagerly the earthly things which will be destroyed by flames?

O God! perfectly holy are the heavens where Thou dwellest; where no sin ever can enter; nothing impure ever can come; where is cherished by the holy throngs that worship Thee no purpose which is unworthy of Thy presence! It is otherwise upon the earth around its whole surface. Though it should be a holy temple, according to Thy thought, a dwelling-place of innocence and purity, it is profaned by the wickedness

of the wicked. But Thou, O God, hast never left it without a witness; and the more clearly we recognize the marks of Thy presence, the more deeply must we grieve over this profanation. We would check this as far as it is in our power. We would be holy, that through us the earth may be holy. Give us the power for this, O God! and, through the merits of Thy Son, blot out the profaning influence of our past lives. Extend Thy kingdom over the earth. May Thy Church win the nations which do not know Thee, till there shall be not one on the earth which does not call upon the name of Jesus! Let all the members of the Church be true to their calling: to be holy, as Thou Thyself art holy. Let our own nation emulate all other nations in the effort to be devoted to Thee; to render Thee the honor which is Thy pleasure. Sanctify to Thyself, through Thy blessing in temporal and spiritual things, the whole course of our future lives. Holy be the day of our death, through Thy grace and our own faith; and may the spot where our mortal part shall rest at last be made holy by a blessed resurrection! Amen.

#### THE EVENING AND THE MORNING.

A SUMMER EVENING MEDITATION IN THE  
WOODLAND CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,  
BY LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.

*And the evening and the morning were the first day.*—Gen. i: 5.

THE early fathers of New England, who sought in the letter of the holy Scriptures an explicit warrant for every act of their lives, used to insist on the order of these words as having a serious significance in their bearing on personal duty. The evening and the morning, they said, were the first day—not the morning and the evening. The evening and the morning were the second day, and the third: and the evening and the morning—not the morning and the evening—are the seventh day, which is the Sabbath of the Lord our God. Thus they reasoned, and (being men of a high strain, with whom conviction and action always go together) thus they acted. If there are any old

men here, or even men not so very old, who were boys in the country in New England, they will remember well how, as the Saturday afternoon shadows began to lengthen, the plow or the scythe were laid aside, no matter how pressing work might be, and the last cares of housekeeping were dispatched, and before the rim of the sun's disc had disappeared below the horizon, the Sabbath quiet had settled down over farm and village. Perhaps they will have a more distinct remembrance still of how, as soon as the Sunday evening twilight had begun, it was understood that the Sabbath day was over, and the boys rushed out to base-ball, and the women got out their knitting; and the talk of the old folks was no longer all of sermons and doctrines, but began to revolve upon crops and prices and other worldly themes again. This old Puritan usage of "keeping Saturday evening" as the beginning of Sunday, grew out of the primeval and Oriental division of time indicated here and elsewhere in the Scriptures; the evening and the morning make the day. I am not sorry that the old custom has gone out. I believe that we have come all the nearer to the spirit of the Scriptures for having departed from the letter of them, and conformed to the usage of modern language in the division of time. But none the less, I love to turn back to this ancient phrase, "the evening and the morning were the day," and see how much it has to teach us still.

I. We look first at these *creative days*, which were as a thousand years, or as many thousand, and we learn better how to reckon them. The divine chronology does not begin to reckon from the creative word, Let there be light. That was the morning. But the night, also, is the Lord's. The chaos which was in the beginning, the brooding darkness over the weltering deep, these were His no less than the outburst of the light; for to Him the night shineth as the day. The Spirit of God was there above the formless and the void, and hovered upon the face of the deep. It was then that the first day began, far

back in the original darkness, or ever the light was. There the outgoings of the morning were prepared, in the bosom of the night, and the darkness was the beginning of the day.

And as it was in the beginning, so it continued, as the goings of creation went on in their stately but interrupted march. The ancient record sheds light on God's later revelation in human science. The evening and the morning—not the morning and the evening—are the second day, and the third. It is not written that upon each day's work came down the night, each successive period of creation being extinguished in darkness; but that each was completed and summed in the glory of the light; that when a wintry darkness followed, this was no part nor failure of what had gone before, but the brooding-time for the brighter day, the nobler and higher work of creation that was to follow. And when God's highest earthly work was completed in His own image, then the twilight that fell upon the earth was the evening of a new day—the Sabbath of God's rest and of His work of grace. The evenings all "look forward, and not back."

II. We have observed the Scriptural method of reckoning the periods of creation. Let us reflect on what is God's way of estimating the *periods of history*.

I do no unjust disparagement to the common way of recording the course of human history, when I say that it takes the form of a record of failures and catastrophes coming down upon splendid beginnings of empire. It is the morning and the evening that make the day; not the evening and the morning. For one Motley to tell the story of the Rise, there be many Gibbons to narrate the Decline and Fall. History, as told in literature, is a tragedy, and ends with a death. And what wonder, that to the imagination of men it should be so? The strata of the earth are not more filled with the relics of extinct species of animals, than its surface is strewn with the monuments of dead civilizations. They surround us—these relics of human disappointment and failure

—at the high festivals of our modern civilization, like the mummies of their ancestors about the revellers at an Egyptian banquet. We bring over the obelisk from the land of a departed empire, prouder than our own, and set it up in the metropolis for a *memento mori*. On whatever high triumph we are riding, the history of the dead nations steps up beside us, like the slave behind the triumphal chariot, and whispers, Remember, thou art mortal!

"The path of glory leads but to the grave."

So human history is ever looking backward; and the morning and the evening make the day.

But it is not so that God writes history. The annals of mankind in the Holy Book begin in the darkness of apostasy: but the darkness is shot through with gleams of hope, the first rays of the dawn. The sentence of death is illuminated with the promise of a Savior: and the evening and the morning are the first day.

There is night again when the flood comes down and the civilization and the wickedness of the primeval world are whelmed beneath it. But the flood clears off with a rainbow, and it is proved to have been the clearing of the earth for a better progress, for the rearing of a godly race, of whom by and by the Christ shall come according to the flesh: and the evening and the morning are the second day.

And again the darkness falls upon the chosen race. They have ceased from off the land of promise. They are to be traced through a marvelous series of events down into the dark, where we dimly recognize the descendants of heroic Abraham and princely Joseph in the gangs and coffles of slaves, wearing themselves out in the brick-yards of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. And this—is this the despairing evening of so bright a patriarchal age as that gone by? No, no! it is so that men reckon, but not God. This is the evening, not of yesterday, but of to-morrow. The elements of a new civilization are brooding there in that miserable abode of slavery: of a civilization

that shall take 'the learning of the Egyptians' and infuse into it the spirit of a high and fraternal morality, that shall take its religious pomps and rituals and cleanse them of falsehoods and idolatries and inform them with the spiritual worship of the one invisible God. The holy and priestly civilization of David and Solomon, of the sons of Asaph and the sons of Korah, is to come forth out of that dark chaos of Egyptian slavery. And the evening and the morning shall be the fourth day.

We need not trace the history of humanity and of the Church on through all its pages. We have only to carry the spirit of this ancient story forward into later times, and the dark places of history become irradiated, and lo! the night is light about us.

We behold "the decline and fall of the Roman Empire"—that awful convulsion of humanity; nation dashing against nation; civilization, with its monuments and records, its institutions and laws, going down out of sight, overwhelmed by an inrushing sea of barbaric invasion, and it looks to us, as we gaze, like nothing but destruction and the end, ruin and failure. So it seems to us at this distance: so it seemed to that great historian, Gibbon. But in the midst of the very wreck and crash of it sat that great believer, Augustine, and wrote volume after volume of the *Civitas Dei*—the "city of God," the "city that hath foundations," the "kingdom that cannot be moved." This awful catastrophe, he tells the terrified and quaking world, is not the end—it is the beginning. History does not end so. This is the way its chapters open.

The night was a long night, but it had an end: and now we look back and see how through all its dark and hopeless hours God was slowly grinding materials for the civilization of modern times. So long, so long it seemed: but the morning came at last. And the evening and the morning made the day.

And we, to-day, are only in the morning twilight, after just such another convulsion and obscuration of the world. It is not a hundred years since

our grandfathers and many and many of their contemporaries on the other side of the sea were feeling that the end had come; the foundations were destroyed, and what should the righteous do? This was in the midst of the disorder and carnage and terror, the unbelief and atheism of the French Revolution. Everything seemed to be gone—Church, State, Bible, faith, hope, all. The men are still living who are old enough to remember opening the newspaper and reading that “the Emperor” had resigned the imperial diadem into the hands of Napoleon; that the fair conception of a Christian civilization, as it had been cherished for a thousand years—the dream of poets, the scheme of statesmen, the prayer of saints—the conception of one Holy Roman Church in one Holy Roman Empire, dominating and filling the earth, was overthrown, abandoned, lost. It seemed as if this must be the end; but it was the beginning. They trembled, as they thought they heard through the darkness the tolling of the knell of order and polity and faith; but they were mistaken: what they heard was the bells that were ringing in the new morning that was about to dawn.

I have spoken to you now of this principle of the divine order, which begins the day with the evening, as illustrated, first in creation, and then in history; and now, can I safely leave it with you to make the more practical application of it—

III, to the course of human life? For this is where you most need to know and feel it, and where, I suspect, you most fail to see it. It has been such a common blunder, from the days of Job and his friends down to the days when Christ rebuked the Pharisees, and from those days again down to ours—the blunder of supposing that the evening goes with the day before, and not with the day after—that the dark times of human life are a punishment for what is past, instead of being, as they always are to them that love God, a discipline and preparation for what is coming. There are many and many

such eventides in life: times of enforced repose; hard times, when business stagnates or runs with adverse current; times of sickness, pain, seclusion; times of depression, sorrow, bereavement, fear. Such are the night-times of life; and blessed are they who at such times have learned to “look forward, and not back;” to say, not, What have I done, that this thing should befall me? but, rather, What is God preparing for me, and for what is He preparing me, that thus He should lovingly chasten and instruct me in the night season? O, what a different view it gives of life, and what a different view of death—this habit of “looking forward, and not back!” The eye grows dim, the bodily strength abates, the darkness begins to settle down, and men say, “This is the end. It has been a long, weary, toilsome day for him, but this is the end at last; for the night cometh.” Then lift your heads, ye saints, and answer: “No, no! this is not the end; this is the beginning. The evening is come, and the morning also cometh; and the evening and the morning are the day. Look! look at the glory of the evening sky. It shall be fair weather in the morning, for the sky is red.” So shall it “come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.”

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### THE GOD OF HOPE.

By R. S. STORRS, D.D., BROOKLYN.

*The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

—Rom. xv: 13.

To a much greater extent than we often recognize, Roman literature was composed of letters, carefully and elaborately written by distinguished men. Many of these remain, and by them we gain a better insight into the actual condition of society than from the philosophical essays and orations of those days, which we also have. Cicero, a most accomplished man, wrote many letters, and from these, rather than from his most illustrious orations, do we obtain a conception of his real temper and purpose. Seneca, a contempo-