

# THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

DEVOTED TO HOMILETICS, BIBLICAL LITERATURE,  
DISCUSSION OF LIVING ISSUES, AND  
APPLIED CHRISTIANITY.

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## SERMONIC.

### JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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*And this is the record of John, etc.—John  
i: 19-34.*

LAST SUNDAY we spoke of the darkest hours in the life of a servant of God as exemplified in the man brought before us by the Gospel of the day. It was John the Baptist in prison, enveloped, not externally only in the gloom of his cell, but inwardly also, in the dark clouds of troubled thoughts, of anxious care for the kingdom of God, of painful doubt regarding the Messianic mission of Him on whom he had set all his hopes.

How different are the outward circumstances and inner disposition in which on this occasion we find this remarkable man of God. Here he stands in the height of his power, amid the fire of his activity; in his soul burns the bright flame of inspired zeal for the cause of his Lord; from his mouth streams the joyous testimony to Him of whom the Spirit had revealed to him: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh

away the sin of the world!" On his brow glows the confident assurance: The kingdom of God is at hand; after me comes One mightier than I, who will gloriously complete, as Lord and Master, what I only prepare the way for, as His servant and forerunner.

These are the high, exultant hours of a servant of God, granted him in the midst of the trouble and toil of his calling, to recompense him for many a dreary hour of external opposition and inner conflict. These are the bright spots and lofty summits of life, as they are now and again vouchsafed, even today, to a servant of God, to a handmaid of the Lord, even if the place whereon we stand be far humbler, the sphere in which we act far narrower, and the trust over which we watch far smaller than that of this great forerunner of the Lord.

Let the Baptist then, whom we lately contemplated in his dark cell, be today in his blessed field of labor a stimulating example while we learn of him:

WHAT ARE THE JOYOUS HOURS IN THE LIFE  
OF A TRUE SERVANT OF GOD?

They are:

1. When he can testify of Him of whom his heart is full.

\*Translated from the German by Rev. Thos. Macadam, Strathroy, Canada.

[Many of the full sermons and condensations published in this MONTHLY are printed from the authors' manuscripts; others are specially reported for this publication. Great care is taken to make these reports correct. The condensations are carefully made under our editorial supervision. All the sermons of the "International Sunday-School Service" are written expressly for THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.—ED.]

eral Assembly. Dr. William Adams was a model preacher in his use of history. His discourses sprang from a hearty appreciation of Scripture, even of its subtlest verities, but poured along like majestic rivers, gleaming with illustrations from all the centuries, fascinating and refreshing the thirsty minds of his hearers.

To reach men we must know men; and to know them we must read them, and read about them, at whatever sacrifice of other studies.

II. While reading much history, the preacher should do it with eye *trained to note* the phases of truth, the biblical doctrines and precepts, and the characteristics of human nature which its pages illustrate. It must be careful professional reading, and not for mere pastime or general culture. It should be as the painter gathers his lessons in color and form, from sky and fields and faces.

One will be surprised to find how rapidly the fund of good illustrations will grow. A few years will put him beyond the necessity of preaching a dry sermon on any subject, or a sermon that must be made interesting by the glamour of his mere rhetorical unction.

He will also find out in this way many new phases of human weakness and strength, which he would not discover by common observation or self-examination. He will be impressed that the Bible is indeed all men's book; that no age or place has been beyond its ken; that, like the Master, it knows "what is in man." Some of the best points of a sermon are often suggested by an actual occurrence, which would never have been brought out by logical analysis.

III. Besides tact in discerning the application of historical incidents, the preacher should have a *system of arranging* his illustrations under a full analysis of subjects. An impressive scene or event should never be dismissed until it has been securely pigeon-holed in the memory, or written index. The latter most students find to be a necessity. Memory is not sufficiently re-

tentive; or, if retentive, is not sufficiently sensitive to respond to the subtle analogy which would make the matter it holds useful. Dr. Alexander used to say that it was even better to have your library at your fingers' end than at your tongue's end. Those reputed as the readiest men, with especial bumps of pertinence, will be found to be rather the most patient men, who have put away their honey in paper cells.

One of the most useful devices would be a file, such as is used in assorting business letters. Into this, under their proper subjects, should be dropped hastily written descriptions, narrations, etc., prepared while the rhetoric is glowing with the heat of fresh discovery. A commonplace index should accompany this, in which to register pages where valuable matter may be found, and hints and catch-words of all kinds. This should be always at hand to catch the fair birds of valuable suggestion as soon as they touch the snare of your alert mind. A revolving bookcase, a Tapley's file, and a Todd's Index Rerum at your elbow, will do more for your sermon than double the time spent in wringing out an already study-dried brain.

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## PASTORAL AND SERMONIC HABITS.

### Personal Experiences of Distinguished Clergymen.\*

#### No. III.

T. L. CUTLER, D.D. [PRESBYTERIAN].  
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I BEGIN work on my sermons on Tuesday, and I am so engaged, off and on, until the end of the week. Mondays I use for miscellaneous work. I never wrote but one sermon in my life on Monday. I do not think I ever wrote one, or prepared for one—that is, in the regular course of my ministerial work—on Saturday. While I am outside of an insane asylum, I never expect to do it. When Saturday comes, I have made it my rule to be clear for the Sabbath. I begin early in the week,

\* In interviews for THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

so as to be free from any pressure and anxiety in the matter, and, in that way, can make allowance for interruptions.

The evening is a bad time in which to work, and yet many clergymen prepare their sermons at that time. All the sermonic work I have done at night in thirty-eight years would not amount, all told, to two discourses.

I lay aside memoranda to be used in preparing sermons, but I have no particular system about preserving it. I once tried the habit of jotting down thoughts for future use, but did not find that it worked successfully. But as to keeping a commonplace book, I think it is an admirable idea; and I would advise young clergymen to try the plan of writing down their best thoughts and pasting in such scraps as may be useful at some future time.

I do not think I have ever declined half a dozen requests coming from outside my parish to attend a funeral, and then only on the ground of previous engagements. Though my parish is large, it has been my rule not to decline to attend a funeral unless an imperative engagement prevented my doing so. There are cases where it is unreasonable to ask the pastor of a large church to do it; but, on the whole, I endeavor to be as accommodating as possible to the outside public. As to whether a fee should be received for such service, I have expressed myself before on that subject as follows:

"If a fee is offered, let it be received, except from the very poor, and used for a good object. To decline it, in most cases, would give offence. A service for those outside of the pastor's congregation often involves much extra labor; and a fee, under such circumstances, may often be proper."

I use as much of the five afternoons of the week as I can for pastoral work. Saturday I do not employ in that way. To tell the truth, I suppose, in proportion to the size of my congregation, that I have made more pastoral visits during the last thirty-one years, in New York and Brooklyn, than, may be, any other minister in those two cities. I have

gone to the extreme in that direction, and some say I have spoiled my people. This custom has cost me a great sacrifice of minister's ordinary recreations—especially in the way of literary recreations and enjoyments; but I have made that sacrifice from a pretty high ideal I have had before me as to pastoral work. Perhaps I have gone to the extreme in that direction. I cannot say that I would recommend all young ministers to do as I have done.

But my health is good, and I do not care for physical recreations. I never lost but two Sundays in my life on account of sickness. And I am a good sleeper. I have found that the key to a man's success as a minister lies in securing sleep. The word "sleep" covers half the battle, because ministers break down through the nervous system. The one restorative for the nervous system, and the only one, is sleep. As long as a minister can sleep, he will keep his congregation wide-awake; the moment he loses his sleep they will fall to nodding.

One of the fundamental methods of developing and keeping up an interest in the prayer-meeting, is in having laymen to lead it. In my church, the prayer-meetings are always led by the officers of the church, in alphabetical order; never by myself. Thus there is no temptation to the minister to absorb the meeting. Mr. Beecher, you will remember, lately lamented that his prayer meeting had run into a lecture service. Then, we have a rule in our church, that nobody is ever called upon to take part. That throws the responsibility back on the people, in the sense that every man is expected to do his part; then you make it a people's meeting. The question always is: Is it a minister's meeting, or a people's meeting? Another point is, the topic for the meeting is announced beforehand, on the Sabbath, so that people will know what to think, speak and pray about. That gives a certain unity to the meeting. In revival times you do not need that, because then the revival itself is the topic.

As to preventing the intrusion of callers at unseasonable hours, I would say that my study is in my church, and my mornings are my study hours; in the afternoons I am out making calls. While in my study I have this card pinned on the door:

.....  
 VERY BUSY.  
 .....

But people knock, nevertheless. If they want some paper signed, or some matter attended to, I quickly dispose of them at the entrance, without inviting them in to sit down. Most persons apologize, and say, "I see you are very busy," and leave at once. A little tact will be sufficient in all cases. Many of the callers, "bores," you might say—book agents, and so forth—go to my house, where, of course, I am seldom to be found during the day.

But a minister, I think, should remember that, while he is the servant of his people, he belongs, to a certain extent, to the public. It will not do for him to get the reputation of being unapproachable. A person may call in the morning on some spiritual errand: and I have always said that no sermon is so important as dealing with a soul. A minister had better let his sermon fly out of the window than get the reputation of being an inaccessible man.

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### A SYMPOSIUM ON EVOLUTION.

IS THE DARWINIAN THEORY OF EVOLUTION RECONCILABLE WITH THE BIBLE? IF SO, WITH WHAT LIMITATIONS?

No. VIII.

By J. M. BUCKLEY, D.D.

THIS is a deep problem, on which it is easy to darken counsel by words without knowledge, and not easy to write anything which will elucidate the subject. Perhaps the concentrated rays of this symposium may either reveal the white line of truth, or (which is the best remaining service to the mind which does not discern the truth) they may show clearly where the truth is

not. No less than six factors may be involved in the problem.

What is the *Darwinian* theory of evolution?

Does the Bible contain a theory of evolution?

If not, does it reveal a process covering the causes of the same phenomena with which the *Darwinian* theory of evolution deals?

If either of these be found to be the case, do the Bible and the *Darwinian* theories agree?

If they disagree, is the disagreement fundamental?

If it be not fundamental, what modifications must be made in the *Darwinian* theory to harmonize it with the Biblical?

If the writer doubted the truth of the Bible, and had no doubt of the truth of the *Darwinian* theory, he would expound the latter first and make it the standard of comparison; but as he is an avowed believer in the Bible and writes for such, the first question to be examined is this: Does the Bible contain a theory of evolution or of a process covering the causes of the same phenomena?

Some preliminary observations are necessary.

Many think it not a difficult task to dispose of this question. They affirm that the narrative in Genesis is plain and straightforward. It teaches, they say, that the work of creation was divided into six days of *twenty-four hours each*. A few still linger who date the beginning of the universe from the beginning of the six days. Most assume a period of indefinite extent between the beginning of the first of those days and the event described in the first verse. They do this without hesitation, though it could never have been derived from the face of the narrative, unless an external pressure had driven the interpreter to seek relief. Most Biblical scholars now expand the days into six periods of vast but indeterminate length, utterly scouting the idea that only days of twenty-four hours are meant. This they do in direct opposition to the face of the ac-