

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

Vol. XIV.—JULY, 1887.—No. 1.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—HOW CAN THE PULPIT BEST COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SKEPTICISM?

NO. V.

BY JESSE B. THOMAS, D.D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THE limitations of the question are too conspicuous to be wisely ignored. It confines itself to a particular phase of skepticism—the modern—and to the possibilities of a particular agency in its counteraction—the Pulpit. It suggests a problem of expediency solely. It asks not whether the Pulpit ought to attempt the work indicated, for that is assumed—but only how it may best accomplish it.

To this as the best antidote to skepticism it is obvious to suggest “holy living.” “His words were thunder, his life lightning,” said Basil’s epitaph. We believe in the efficacy of lightning and instinctively turn to it as the normal extinguisher of evil. But the answer is scarcely legitimate; for holy living, however powerful in itself and however certainly the duty of the preacher, is not the function of the Pulpit at all.

Nor is it much more helpful to suggest the “preaching of the Gospel” simply as the desired expedient; for that is the only function of the Pulpit; relinquishing which it would no longer be a Pulpit. There used to be a regular Saturday advertisement concerning a certain church in one of our cities stating that “the pastor” would “preach in the morning,” and that there would be “a *Gospel* service in the evening”—the seeming antithesis contributing much to the merriment of the profane. It is, of course, true that the “preaching of the Gospel” is the divinely appointed antidote not only for modern but for all skepticism, and for all other forms of evil as well. But the phrase is too comprehensive and flexible to meet an inquiry so specific as that here propounded. We still ask *how* to “preach the Gospel” so as best to reach the end indicated. “The Gospel according to Matthew” differs materially from the

of it put him squarely on his legs in less than a fortnight. The Bishop declares that *the great need of Africa at the present time is a thousand men who have the muscular development and skill of a good, practical training in farming and gardening, who will, for the love of Christ and his blood-bought millions in Africa, devote five or six hours per day to this work in African Missions.* This would seem essential to the work of educating the heathen men and boys, who consider manual toil suited only to slave women, and too undignified for gentlemen. "It requires missionaries of superior moral courage, as well as physical force and executive ability, to fill this bill," says Bishop Taylor; but, though in his forty-four years' active ministry he has had neither time nor occasion for this sort of work, he has instantly turned to it in Africa at the call of the King. He does not say to his men "Go," but, with spade or hoe, he takes the first row, and his men follow. This is the first chapter of a story that will shine out brightly in the future record of the regeneration of the dark continent.

Papal Europe.—Once all Europe was *Papal*, except that which held to the *Greek* church. Now in the *West*, the *Center*, and the *North*, is a power hostile to Pope. In the very pride of Romish supremacy, a revolution severed, from Papal dominion, England and Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, and parts of Germany and Switzerland. Since the Reformation no nation renounced Papal allegiance. But no *Protestant* country has become *Papal*, and there is a great change relatively. "In the age succeeding Council of Trent, Papal Europe meant only all the most ancient, splendid, powerful monarchies of Europe: *Italy*, with Papal throne—*historical and ecclesiastical* center; German Empire, or 'Holy Roman Empire,' political and military center: France, intellectual and social

center; Spain and Portugal—center of force for expansion beyond the seas; Poland—reckoned able to win back heretical Sweden, and to subdue schismatical Russia. Outside *this circle* there was no imposing nation." Sweden and England, compared with Papal Europe, were of small account. Every great historical city on the Continent was Papal; every ancient university; every influential center of art, letters, culture; the old polished languages, etc.

Now—*France*, humbled by Protestant Prussia, seems about to become Protestant; *Spain and Portugal* are in their decadence; *Italy*—decrepid, until unified by foreign aid; *Austria*—shorn of strength; *Poland*—no more.

England, Prussia, Russia dominate Europe.

Rome is the capital of united and free Italy!

"Friends of the Heathen."—The following is a most touching reminiscence of the late Dr. Hodge and his sister, when they were children:

"A letter, yellow with age, lies on the table. It bears date June 23, 1833, and was sent to India in the care of Rev. Dr. James R. Eckard, then a missionary in that far-away land. It was written by a boy ten years old. That boy became a missionary himself—was a pastor in this country—and was esteemed the most eminent theologian of his day. Recently he heard the summons to a higher service; and 'was not, for God took him.' Subjoined is the child's note—suggestive of the impressions which youthful minds are capable of receiving:

"DEAR HEATHEN: The Lord Jesus Christ hath promised that the time shall come when all the ends of the earth shall be His Kingdom. And God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. And if this was promised by a Being who cannot lie, why do you not help it to come sooner, by reading the Bible, and attending to the words of your teachers; and loving God, and, renouncing your idols, take

Christianity into your temples? And soon there will not be a nation, no, not a space of ground as large as a footstep, that will want a missionary. My sister and myself have, by small self-denials, procured 2 dollars, which are enclosed in this letter to buy tracts and Bibles to teach you.

“ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER HODGE,
“MARY ELIZ. HODGE,
“*Friends of the Heathen.*”

Origin of Woman's Union Missionary Society.—Mrs. Ellen B. Mason, wife of Rev. Francis Mason, D.D., a Baptist missionary from Burma, stopped in Calcutta on her way to America, and learned the story of Mrs. Mullen's zenana slippers. Mrs. Mason, with two ladies still living, Mrs. J. D. Richardson and Mrs. H. C. Gould, visited influential families in Boston, and the first society, consisting of nine ladies, was formed in Boston, November, 1860, Miss M. V. Ball, President. In 1861 societies were formed in New York, Brooklyn and Philadelphia; and the New York society, by reason of its strength, became the general society. The early records were destroyed by fire, hence the general misunderstanding regarding the origin of the Society. These facts are not vital, only advantageous for accuracy. REV. L. A. GOULD.

Dr. Wm. Fleming Stevenson, while an enthusiast in Missions, said to his brethren: “We must not be oversanguine as to the reception given to the gospel in heathen communities, as in Japan. It is partly of an Athenian type, born of curiosity and love of novelty; and partly the result of proverbial politeness, giving courteous audience to a foreigner; and partly the fruit of a progressive, aggressive spirit, which especially in educated people takes to occidental civilization; and partly the movement of governmental policy. From motives of State, neutrality is exercised. The Sabbath is observed in Japan only in government offices where are many foreigners. The edict against Christianity is not repealed, and much real hostility hides behind the veil of indifference.”

MONTHLY BULLETIN.

CHINA.—Mr. Henry Martin, of Cincinnati, gives \$25,000 towards a Christian college in China.—Rev. N. R. Johnson and family, Oakland, Cal., give \$500 to mission work.

ITALY.—The agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society states that in 1885 there were sold in Italy more than 90,000 copies of the Bible, the New Testament, and single portions, such as the gospels and epistles. There is no book for which there is so large a demand in Italy as the Scriptures without note or comment.

JAPAN.—The third edition of Dr. Hepburn's Dictionary of the Japanese language is issued. It is the result of twenty-seven years of patient study, and will be an invaluable help to all who desire to master this most difficult tongue. The combination of the Chinese language with the Japanese makes it a laborious task to be able to speak or read the Japanese with any degree of ease or fluency.—A second edition of the Romanized New Testament is a joint issue of the three Bible Societies now working in this field. The introduction of the Roman characters is making considerable progress, and if generally adopted will be an unspeakable benefit to the country.—The Union Theological School at Tokio has nine professors and lecturers, two of whom, Messrs. Ibuka and Ogimi, are natives. Churches connected with the Presbyterian Union increased in membership eighty per cent. in two years. The number is over 4,000. In our home churches the average rate of increase in two years is six or seven per cent. In Japan the growth is, therefore, ten or twelve times as great as in the United States. The missions are elevating the position of women, though progress is slow, owing to the prejudices of the people. “The husband is compared to heaven, the wife to the dirt. The husband is the day, the wife the night. A woman may have every beauty, grace and virtue, still she is lower than the lowest man.”