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# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—HOW BEST TO PRESENT THE LIFE OF CHRIST FROM THE PULPIT.

BY REV. F. W. FARRAR, D.D., D.C.L., DEAN OF CANTERBURY,  
DEANERY, CANTERBURY, ENGLAND.

No subject could be more important than the one which is here assigned to me. It is capable of being treated in manifold ways; but what I mainly desire is to indicate ways of presenting Christ, and the meaning of His life and work which represent the truth as it stands—plain and unsophisticated by human traditions—in His own divine words, and in the teaching of the gospels. Those methods of regarding the Lord of Glory seem to me all the more important because they differ widely from modes of presentation which are not only widely current, but are, in some churches, all but universal.

When, in the Gospel of St. John, our Lord askt the poor blind man whom He had healed, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" the persecuted outcast answered and said: "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Many in their bewilderment might ask the same question; and many, amid the multiplicity of widely varying views, might find it none too easy to answer the question which Jesus put to the Pharisees: "What think ye of the Christ?" There are prevalent, it seems to me, many ways of presenting Christ in the pulpit which are altogether erroneous, and still more which are unfortunately partial and incomplete.

No one, indeed, has ever been able to answer that question perfectly. Our finite can not measure Christ's infinite, nor can our onesidedness reflect more than a single ray or two of His many-sided glory. The lamp which He carried in His hand has seven openings, and each is of different shape. The differences of human modes of apprehension are inevitable, but the light of the seven spirits of God before His throne

NOTE.—This periodical adopts the Orthography of the following Rule, recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and the Philological Society of England:—Change d or ed final to t when so pronounced, except when the e affects a preceding sound.—PUBLISHERS.

## SERMONIC SECTION.

### REPRESENTATIVE SERMONS.

#### RECONCILIATION BY DEATH— SALVATION BY LIFE.

BY R. Q. MALLARD, D.D., PASTOR OF NAPOLEON-AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS, LA., EDITOR OF "THE SOUTHWESTERN PRESBYTERIAN," AND MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH [SOUTH].

*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*—Rom. v. 10.

To die for another is the highest possible achievement of love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Damon and Pythias of classic story contended which should die for the other, until the tyrant bade both live; the soldier has with his body shielded his general from shot or shell; the courtier his king from assassin's dagger; mothers die to save their babes. But in all such cases, death was quick, easy, and honorable; and the last feature threw around the deed the glamour of heroism. But in all history we read of but one, who died a cruel, lingering, disgraceful death for His foes; and it is He of whom the text and context treat. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." We have in these words the twin thoughts:

#### I. Reconciliation by death;

#### II. Salvation by life.

I. Reconciliation by death. "For, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

1. We were once God's enemies. Proof of this is available both from Scripture and Christian experience. This is what the Bible, in its wonderful habit of condensing while generalizing, has to say: "The carnal mind (which is nature as unaltered by grace) is enmity against God." Christian experience, too, is in evidence. What believer, brought to God in mature years, but recalls aversion to his Maker, ranging from cold dislike to positive hatred, mirrored in his former sentiments toward all things representing or reminding of God? As the populace show their hate of an old dynasty not only by welcoming with huzzas the new king, but by wreaking vengeance on the effigies of the old, so, as God can not be the direct object of overt hostility, we take it out in showing it toward His images, His people, His book, His day. As a stream flows smoothly on until it encounters a rocky barrier partly barring its channel, and then chafes and swells into billows around it, so this hostility to God in the unrenewed heart is sometimes unsuspected until human will is thwarted by divine will. Some of the most blatant rebels against their Maker have been amiable women, who over the dead face of a babe have indulged in railing accusations against heaven. In greater or less degree we were enemies to God.

2. Once God was our enemy. Startling thought! let it be immediately explained. Suppose our nation engaged in an unjust quarrel with a weaker neighbor, attempting by force of arms to wrest from him coveted territory; the name enemy applied to that opponent would be an appellation

of honor; it would be a disgrace for him to be aught else. So God was our enemy because we were in most inexcusable controversy with Him and defrauding Him of His sovereign rights. He was our enemy as judge on the bench is to criminal at the bar, or as a king in arms is the enemy of subjects in revolt. Two reconciliations are necessary to bring about a lasting and honorable peace: man must be reconciled to God, and God to man.

3. The death of the Son of God is the means of that double reconciliation. We describe that method by a Bible term which is strikingly significant: atonement—at-one-ment; the reduction of hostile elements to unity. Sin is the one *casus belli*, which God on His part pledged from the beginning of human history to punish, and the sinner on his part is loath to give up. For this twofold difficulty God in His mercy has made ample provision in the incarnation and sacrificial death of His Son and proclamation of pardon through faith in Him. Here is described the whole process, so far as the quarrel is made up from God's side, and divested of technical and theological language: "He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." A scientific term, however unpopular in some quarters, exactly expresses it all: imputation—imputation of sin, and imputation of righteousness. Then the quarrel is made up from man's side by realization of God's amazing love in the death of His Son, changing hostility to devotion. "And that he might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile—the race] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Oh, wondrous death of Christ! the only-begotten Son of God, by which our debts were cancelled in tears and blood, and our Father's loving arms and heavenly home opened to us! Oh, wondrous cross, a believing sight of which, as we each whisper "Christ gave Himself for me," transmutes a foe into a friend!

II. Salvation by life. "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

1. We are saved by the life of His Son; because the risen life of Christ is the pledge of the acceptance of His vicarious and atoning death. See how the inspired writers link the resurrection-life with the reconciling death. Peter: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and with wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God raised up from the dead, having loosed the pains of death; because it was impossible that he should have been holden of it." Paul, in the fifteenth of 1 Corinthians, putting in the forefront a dying, atoning Savior: "For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also have received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," asseverates, that without the living Savior, all else would have been vain. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Therefore the broken seal, the thwarted guard, are to us tokens of an accepted atonement; it was impossible the tomb prison should keep Him, when His sentence had been served out for us.

2. Salvation is by life because Jesus lives to carry on and finish His new creation. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is His own marvelous declaration. As a public person He died and as a public person He rose from the dead; as a public person He, the Theanthropos, lives in heaven. He is there as our "forerunner"—as our attorney, "making seizure," taking possession in our name of the purchased inheritance; as our forerunner, preparing it for us, "I go to prepare a place for you"; as our forerunner, exercising in His state of exaltation, as He did in His state of humiliation, the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king; by His Word and Spirit illuminating the minds and guiding the consciences of

His people; presenting perpetually in their behalf in His everlasting priesthood the fragrance of His one perfect offering for sin; and completing by outward defense and inward mastery, and molding their fitness for the society of heaven.

Thus we see that our theme not only contains twin thoughts, but the "twain made one"; and "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Without a crucified Christ, no pardon for us; without a risen Christ, no purity for us; without a dying Christ, hell's doors yawn for us; without a living Christ, the gates of pearl are fast locked against us.

1. In conclusion, let us learn the logic of Christian assurance.

I had the privilege of hearing the opening sermon of our beloved and venerated Dr. Palmer, at the organization of the Southern General Assembly at Augusta, Georgia, in 1861. He preached from a manuscript (unusual with him), but it was no hindrance to the majestic flow of his all but inspired oratory. His theme was Christ's Headship over the Church, and his text the closing paragraph of the first chapter of Ephesians. I remember that in his masterly introduction he described Paul's reasoning as logic on fire—fired by the intensity of emotion and rapidity of thought. Paul indeed reasons with the clearness of the head, but always with the warmth given forth by a big and loving heart. We have an illustration of this in our text. It is syllogism on fire. The terminology of the schools is not used, or the argument cast in technical form, but it is reasoning from less to greater: the premise is reconciliation with God through the atoning death of His Son; the conclusion, absolutely sure salvation through the life of His Son. Indeed, it is a double syllogism. What so helpless as a dead man; what so powerful as a living man? If a dying Savior could do so much for us, what can limit the capacities of a living Savior? A friend has stronger claims on us than a

foe. If when we were His foes He reconciled us to Himself, now that we are friends He will assuredly save. The "much more" of the Apostle is the *a fortiori* of the logician. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

2. Let us learn the importance of holding divine truth in its entirety and Scriptural proportions.

Not long since, in one of the great religious journals of the country, there was published with editorial commendation a sermon preached by the head of a seminary. The subject was "What to Preach, and How to Preach." Will it be credited that in this discourse address to future ministers of reconciliation there was no mention of the Crucified or of atonement in either technical or popular language? From several quarters of late the alarm has been sounded that from many of our pulpits the doctrine of Christ crucified has been banished. While perhaps not true in the sweeping extent in which the pessimist would express it, there seems to be sufficient basis for "great searchings of heart" among the American clergy. Some professing to be Christian scholars, and even preachers of the Word, hesitate not to announce with confidence that the atonement as taught in the creeds of Christendom is a survival of a literalistic and Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament, and to be laid aside in the fulness of the light of these later times, no more dominated by the slavery of the letter, but expatiating in the larger freedom of the spirit.

Now, a half-truth is worse than a lie. A lie has in it the seeds of death, but truth has its own immortality. "A lying tongue is but for a moment, but the lip of truth shall be established forever." A half-truth by so much as it is true is endued with vitality—and a truth exaggerated out of its Scriptural proportions is almost as deadly.

Much in our day is said of the living Christ and vital union with Him as everything, but some pulpits seem to have forgotten all about a dying Christ. Do they not remember that chapter after chapter in the four Gospels is devoted to a minute and circumstantial account of the events connected with our Lord's death and burial, and that leaving it to the angels to celebrate His birth, He binds but one commemorative ordinance upon His church, and that a sacrament in which He would, to His second coming and the end of time, be "evidently set forth crucified and slain?"

Nay, do they not overlook the facts that the red line is woven into the entire web of revealed truth from Genesis to Revelation, that it is announced as an immutable principle of Divine administration—"without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"—that one whole New Testament book is devoted to the exposition of the fulfillment of the Levitical law in the Gospel, its innumerable and inoperative animal sacrifices finding at once fulfillment and abolition in the one all-perfect offering of Christ? "For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!"

Have they read, or have they excluded from the sacred canon the last book of the Bible, which, if not the last written, records the unamended revelations of the survivor of the Apostolic college? Why, in its vast, unrolling panorama of pictures, none is more frequent than that of the Lamb (the Baptist's name for Messiah), or more vivid than of that "Lamb as it had been slain [the Christ with the healed but honorable scars of His passion still on Him], in the midst of the throne." And the song of the lonely exile on Patmos, "Unto him that loved us and

washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen," is caught up and multiplied a millionfold by the "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, standing before the Lamb, clothed with white robes [washed and made white in the blood], with palms in their hands," shouting as with the voices of sea and storm: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb." In fine, He who said the evening of His betrayal, "This do in remembrance of me," now wearing the "many crowns" of universal dominion, speaks the word which will not allow one of His loyal subjects to forget His death, and its relation to His mediatorial supremacy as "King of kings and Lord of lords": "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and am alive for evermore, amen, and have the keys of hell and of death!"

#### THE DEVIL'S SNEER.

BY REV. FREDERICK A. NOBLE,  
D. D., PASTOR OF THE UNION PARK  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CHICAGO,  
ILL., AUTHOR OF "DISCOURSES ON PHILIPPIANS," ETC.

*Doth Job fear God for naught?*—Job i. 9.

THERE is very much distrust abroad, and unfortunately too much warrant for distrust, touching the sincerity of people in general. The Devil has his fling at even one of the best of men here in this opening chapter of the drama of Job. It is of this sneering estimate which the Prince of the Power of the Air has chosen to put upon an ancient and immortal character that we are to have our morning conference.

As is readily seen, the implication in this question as to whether Job fears God for naught is that every man has his price. It is assumed that the basis