

# THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

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

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## SERMONIC.

### MIND-CURE.

By C. A. BARTOL, D.D., IN WEST CHURCH,  
BOSTON, MASS.

*And Asa \* \* in his disease sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers.*—2 Chron. xvi: 12, 13.

THAT sickness is twin-born with sin is the oldest tradition in the world. The Genesis of Moses has its echo in Milton's *Paradise Lost*; our maladies arise from something finer than the germs any microscope can detect; and if all disease have its origin in the ill-disposed spirit, in a different well-disposed spirit it may have its cure. So Jesus sent forth His disciples both to preach and heal. But the apostles were no college of doctors. They set up no medical school. Their skill was not a scheme, but a communication of life. Any plan to continue their function without this vital condition will fail, and do harm by diverting attention from regular practitioners to irregulars of every sort. There are pretenders enough already who are graduates with diplomas in their hands; and all the formulas for the new methods have not been devised; however, in their adopters the words *mind, faith, prayer* and *will* play

divers, and sometimes contradictory, parts. Confidence in drugs abates, and cannot be restored. *Spit it out, my child!* So our poet-doctor tells us mother-nature bids every one do with the potions and pills. Specifics in our pharmacy do not multiply; and people get well without doses, little or large. The shadow of Peter, it was thought, would restore; but, under any practice or influence, the list of diseases does not lessen. New names are added, hard to understand. Since the time of the French Molière, the whole profession of medicine is ridiculed as not diminishing the number of epitaphs, or postponing the date of graves. Dr. John Ware, fifty years ago, expressed a doubt if medicine had been a benefit to the world. There can be no doubt that a mind morbid or in health affects the body. Some persons, by their presence and air, make us sick or well.

Temperance is a virtue before it is a bodily trait; and in varying health, says Emerson, we have a searching preacher of self-control. There is an indulgence no license-law or prohibition can reach, and it is more baneful than the vine or the still. All vice digs a mine of ruin which no physician can

[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.]

distinct from and other than himself. It is not the poet who brings forth the poem, but the poem that begets the poet; it makes him, educates him, creates in him the poetic faculty. Those whom we call great men, the heroes of history, are but the organs of great crises and opportunities: as Emerson has said, they are the most indebted men. In themselves they are not great; there is no ratio between their achievements and them. Our judgment is misled; we do not discriminate between the divine purpose and the human instrument. When we listen to Napoleon fretting his soul away at Elba, or to Carlyle wrangling with his wife at Chelsea, we are shocked at the discrepancy between the lofty public performance and the petty domestic shortcoming. Yet we do wrong to blame them; the nature of which they are examples is the same nature that is shared also by the publican and the sinner. The only character whose savor is always sweet, is his who heartily and unaffectedly abjures any renown or exaltation which he and the publican and the sinner may not enjoy in strict community, and which, therefore, he can feel sure is derived from no transaction personal to himself, but from the miraculous emanation of the Divinity, which is undergoing voluntary imprisonment and crucifixion within our universal nature, and is slowly, but surely, bringing us to a realization of the immortal work of redemption perfecting there.

Instead, therefore, of saying that art should be moral, we should rather say that all true morality is art—that art is the test of morality. To attempt to make this heavenly Pegasus draw the sordid plough of our selfish moralistic prejudices is a grotesque subversion of true order. Why should the novelist make believe that the wicked are punished and the good are rewarded in this world? Does he not know, on the contrary, that whatsoever is basest in our common life tends irresistibly to the highest places—rises like scum to the surface, and passes off with compara-

tive harmlessness in offices of public dignity and use? Or shall he presume to find fault with God, because He has thus put the selfish or diabolic element in our nature on the side of public order? At the present stage of our spiritual progress, indeed, evil is a far more vivacious servitor of God (because an interested one) than good has ever been; and the novelist who makes this appear will do a far greater and more lasting benefit to humanity than he who follows the cut-and-dried artificial programme of bestowing crowns on the saint and whips of scorpions on the sinner.

As a matter of fact, I repeat, the best influences of the best literature have never been didactic, and there is no reason to believe they ever will be. The only semblance of didacticism which can enter into literature is that which conveys such lessons as may be learned from sea and sky, mountain and valley, wood and stream, bird and beast; and from the broad human life of races, nations, and firesides; a lesson that is not obvious and superficial, but so profoundly hidden in the creative depths as to emerge only to an apprehension equally profound. For the chatter and affectation of sense disturb and offend that inward spiritual ear which, in the silent recesses of meditation, hears the prophetic murmur of the vast ocean of human nature that flows within us and around us all.

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## THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

### Views of Leading Clergymen.

[THE following questions were proposed by us to some leading divines, with the request that we be at liberty to give their answers in THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

1. Do you find among the laity an increasing skepticism touching the doctrine of eternal punishment?

2. Do you find that this skepticism makes it more difficult to awaken and sustain an interest in religion among the masses?

We submit the following responses.—EDITOR.]  
FROM REV. C. H. SPURGEON, LONDON,  
ENGLAND.

I do not meet with this form of un-

belief so often as I did; but, from the strain of current literature, I should suppose it to be on the increase. I cannot but believe that doubts upon endless punishment aid, with other things, to render men less concerned about their future state; but I conceive that, if they were not hardened by this, they would come under some other form of deadening influence. Where the Spirit of God works upon men's hearts with almighty power, they are awakened, and come to Jesus; but apart from this, they slumber upon one pillow or another.

I am amazed that, after the continual efforts to introduce modern views, so very few of our earnest Christian people have been removed from the old faith. I know some who embraced the new views, but soon left them, as they found themselves hindered in their work among the degraded. If some men were as anxious to save souls as they are to make us think lightly of their ruin, it would be better for themselves.

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FROM SAMUEL P. SPRECHER, D.D., SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

There is a change taking place in the form in which the doctrine of eternal punishment is held. There is no doubt a growing belief among the laity in a probation after death for some, but also a growing conviction that there is such a thing as being "guilty of an eternal sin," and that eternal punishment will accompany eternal sin as its natural and necessary consequence. Let the preacher take for his text before a popular assembly those words of our Savior, and he will find that no truth of Christianity meets with more general assent and conviction.

I cannot perceive that it is more difficult to awaken and sustain religious interest among the masses than in former years. Here in California it is generally remarked that the churches are attended better, and the additions on profession of faith are larger within the last five or six years than ever before in the history of the state. The

membership of our churches is increasing much more rapidly than the population.

Twenty years ago, there was but one church member to every one hundred and twenty-five of the population; now there is one Protestant church member to every twenty-nine of the population. Membership in our Protestant churches has increased in the last twenty years four times as fast as the population.

Our mission schools are more flourishing every year, and I have never known so many laymen, in proportion to church membership, engaged in Christian work.

There is a change in the tone or manifestations of religious interest among the masses. We cannot produce the old-time excitements, but the results in conversions and additions to our churches are, at least in California, greater than ever.

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FROM WM. M. TAYLOR, D.D., NEW YORK.

In answer to the two questions which you have put to me, I have to say that, among the laymen with whom I have had the privilege of coming into contact, I have not found skepticism on the doctrine of everlasting punishment. There is a change among many in the way in which the doctrine is held, as compared with the manner in which it was taught and maintained in former generations. Thus it is now generally recognized that the "fire" is a material figure of a spiritual reality, and more prominence is given to the idea of natural consequence than to that of judicial infliction in the matter of the punishment. But I do not meet with many who deny or disbelieve the doctrine. This being the case, I cannot answer your second question. Personally, I find few subjects as to which my people are more responsive than the duty of working for the evangelization of the occupants of our tenement houses, the education and christianization of the freedmen, and the making of provision for the religious instruction of the immigrants who are

filling up so rapidly, our Western States and Territories.

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FROM MOSES D. HOGE, D.D., RICHMOND, VA.

With regard to your two inquiries I would say: 1. At one time there were indications of a growing incredulity among our people as to the truth of the doctrine in question. This was occasioned by the publication of the sermons of some celebrated divines in England and the United States, and by certain magazine articles assailing the doctrine of eternal punishment in an incisive and popular manner. But these were successfully answered, and the tendency, "to increasing skepticism" very evidently checked, if not arrested.

There is generally a drift in public sentiment in that direction; but just now there are indications of a reaction against the tendency in question.

The attempt has frequently been made to establish a Universalist Church in Richmond, but it has always failed.

2. The irreligion of our people is rather the irreligion of inconsideration, or of mere worldliness, than of infidelity, or of any defined system of unbelief.

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FROM ROBERT PATTERSON, D.D., SAN FRANCISCO.

In reply to your favor of the 22d instant, I do not observe an increase of skepticism among the laity of my acquaintance touching the doctrine of eternal punishment; nor do I believe that there is here, in San Francisco, a widespread skepticism upon the subject among the masses.

I have two reasons for this belief: The first is, the decay of the Unitarian and Universalist congregations here and in Oakland. One has been obliged to curtail its expenses; another was not long ago sold for debt; and none are crowded. The most unpolished Irish priest who lifts a wooden crucifix before his hearers on Good Friday will have a larger audience than the most cultured Universalist preacher. Or, if you judge by the common talk of the crowds along the wharves, and at the depots, you will not be allowed to for-

get the existence of hell and damnation.

My second reason for asserting that the masses are not Universalists is, that the most popular public speakers who ever visited this coast were E. P. Hammond and D. L. Moody. Their audiences were only limited by the capacity of the buildings. The crowds continued, night after night, to the last. Mr. Hammond had a hundred nights; and Mr. Moody would have had as many, could he have stayed. All know that these men's preaching is full of warnings to flee from the wrath to come.

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FROM B. M. PALMER, D.D., NEW ORLEANS.

You propose to me a double question: whether I "discover in the laity an increasing skepticism touching the question of eternal punishment," and whether "this skepticism makes it more difficult to awaken and sustain an interest in religion among the masses?"

In reply, I would say, within the range of my individual observation, I do not find speculative doubts as to the eternal duration of future punishment cherished to any extent. The sense of justice in the human soul, answering to the justice that is in God, demands the vindication of the divine law through the infliction of the penalty. There would be little theoretic difficulty on this subject among the masses if they were only left undisturbed by the unlicensed speculations of flighty theologians. Some of these, like John Foster, through a morbid sentiment, shrink from the contemplation of what is unspeakably painful; others seek personal popularity, by adjusting religion to the weaknesses and vices of men; whilst others still are unconsciously led, by over-refinements of criticism, to eliminate from the Scriptures what has always been deemed essential to the integrity of the Christian faith. But as respects the masses of men, their robust morality easily accepts the penalty as a necessary feature of the law.

There is, however, great practical insensibility to this awful truth, even

where little speculative denial of it exists. It is a part of the religion which men are seeking to construct for themselves to hope that the imperfection of their works will be overlooked through the clemency of the Judge; and that some mode of deliverance will be discovered at the last, by which to escape the full pressure of divine wrath. This latent unbelief of the carnal heart is not the skepticism named in these questions. It prevaricates with truth, rather than openly denies it. It is more the expression of dread than the consciousness of security. It is the indulgence of a vague and aimless hope, rather than a well-reasoned and clearly formulated conviction of the judgment. Fearful as this insensibility to the evil of sin may be, it does not so completely debauch the conscience as the consolidated skepticism which overturns all law and explodes the very conception of justice.

FROM JOSEPH COOK, BOSTON.

I should answer both questions with a decided affirmative. My engagements are such that I cannot possibly prepare a longer paper on the subject.

### **LAY CRITICISM ON THE MINISTRY AND THE METHODS OF CHURCH WORK.**

No. V.

VIEWS OF PROF. THEODORE W. DWIGHT,  
OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL,  
NEW YORK.

"How can the service of the Christian ministry be made more effective than it is to-day?" is a very broad question. It involves two points: how to secure the best men, and how to make their work most effective. We must rely upon the literary colleges to procure us the best men. It is true that that class of men cannot at present very largely be obtained. I think one of the principal reasons is that there is a great want of inducement for them to go into the ministry, as compared with other professions. There is an element of weakness in the voluntary system in the United States as compared with a State Church as we see it in England.

The State Church holds out prizes for men of ability, advancing them to deaneries, bishoprics, archbishoprics, etc. These give them a wide scope for their ability, and promote the social standing of themselves and their families.

In the voluntary system, on the other hand, the clergyman depends largely for his success on his continuous power to please, attract, and fill the church. This remark includes not only the thoughtful persons in the community, but also the less educated classes; and, when his power to please is lost, his work is substantially at an end, notwithstanding that his ability to instruct remains. Accordingly a great many men are shelved in middle life, although their capacity in other respects, beyond the power to attract and please, is unimpaired.

On the other hand, in the legal profession the business of an able practitioner will continue in many instances to great age, since the question of success there is not merely the power to please, but capacity in doing business and in winning causes. Young men in determining what profession they will follow, naturally consider these points, and, having a conviction that they can be as useful in the legal and the medical professions, or in the walks of business, as in the ministry, naturally select an employment which will give scope to their capacities to the end of life. It is not easy to determine exactly how to meet this difficulty. The churches, however, should, by way of reducing its dimensions, provide some system of endorsements, or life insurance, that would secure a pastor a support in later life, or make it certain that his family will be properly sustained on his death.

Some may think that these suggestions are based on too low and commercial a view of the motives that prevail when men select the Christian ministry as a means of usefulness and conscientious service in the Church. It is, however, impossible to ignore it. The candidates for this sacred calling are young and immature. They are at school or