

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW

An International Monthly Magazine  
of  
Religious Thought, Sermonic Literature  
and Discussion of Practical Issues.

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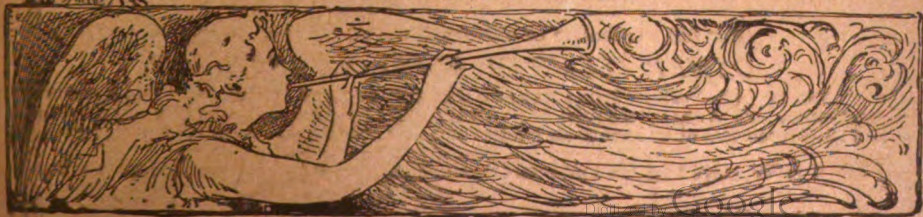
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# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE PREACHER AND THE PREACHING FOR THE PRESENT CRISIS.

BY D. S. GREGORY, D.D., EX-PRESIDENT OF LAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY, AND LATE MANAGING EDITOR OF THE STANDARD DICTIONARY.

#### 2.—THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE.

I. *The Relations of Preaching to Reform.*—What, in view of the present pressing requirement of his commission, is to be the preacher's message? What must it be in view of the great crisis of the hour? We answer:

*Bible Christianity as a saving power for the sinner and for the world.*

The preacher's one essential message, under his commission, is the message of *salvation*: "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Christianity is essentially distinguished from all other religions by being the religion of *salvation*. It has undoubtedly furnished the source and inspiration of all that is highest and best in character and conduct, art and literature, culture and civilization, but all that has been merely incidental and secondary to its main purpose of saving men. The angel said to Joseph: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Christ defined His own mission when He said: "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." Paul expressed it when he wrote: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The cry of a human soul, when brought to a sense of its true condition, is voiced in the anxious and despairing question of the jailer of Philippi: "What must I do to be saved?" The Bible everywhere bases the whole Gospel system on the lost and helpless condition of the race—sometimes assuming or presupposing it; sometimes emphatically and dogmatically proclaiming it, and again proceeding with irresistible logic to demonstrate it. In short, sin and death, salvation and life, constitute the marrow of Bible divinity; and, outside of and apart from these the Scriptures have no message that has any great and paramount interest for a human soul. The

Pandora's box in the history of thought, that from it sprung bigotry, prejudice, superstition, and innumerable other evils of the mind. That is not Christianity; that is men's perversion of it. Christianity is the mother of free thought and must be, for Christ comes to reveal God and God's truth directly to every man; to set every man face to face with the whole length, and breadth, and height, and depth of divine revelation, and that means death to priestly power, for every man is his own priest; it means death to despotic authority over mind and conscience, for every man is the recipient of the divine revelation; it means death to the arrogance of traditionalism, for you and I are just as able to continue in Christ's Word, to be His disciples, taught of Him, as was Augustine or Aquinas, Luther or Calvin, the Council of Trent or the Westminster Assembly. The living Word of Christ to the individual soul is the palladium of mental liberty, and "the truth shall make you free" is our glorious promise, not of mental pride, but of mental independence.

III. But there is something worse than political slavery, worse than mental slavery; it is the enslavement of the soul, the bond service to sin. No man is free, whatever his political privileges, however large his intellectual attainments, so long as he is the slave of his own passions. The most pitiable sight on the face of God's earth, worse than the galley-slave whipped to his dungeon, worse than the bond-servant sold at the auction-block, is the man sold under the power and the dominion of sin, fettered by evil habits, bound to base passions, crying: "I would, but I cannot! Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" But even to that man Christ comes and says, "The truth shall make you free." What truth? Don't torture me with high-sounding theories about the elevation of mind, the purification of environment, or the efficacy of some new chemical antidote. What is the

"truth that makes me free"? "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "The truth that frees from sin is the truth revealed in Christ's sonship, the truth that God in love and forgiveness claims us as His children." How does that help me? Think what we are saying—the revelation of the Father's will that we be not slaves, but sons. And can we doubt the fulfilment of the Father's will as He worketh in us? The sacrifice of Christ is God's claiming us as His own; the sending of the Spirit is God's keeping us as His own. When a man sees that truth, does he not see the road to his liberty, the liberty of the sons of God?

#### Civil Liberty a Trust.

By C. H. PARKHURST, D.D., [PRESBYTERIAN], NEW YORK.

*I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.—John iv. 38.*

TO-DAY'S blossom is yesterday's seed moved a single step toward fructification. We are heirs of the results wrought out by the faithful generations that have preceded us. We are the children of God and of the old years. We are what we are because of what the past has done for us, and because of what it has made us. It takes a thousand years to make a man. The nineteenth century flows with all the sap that has been accumulating since history began.

We have been born into freedom; our freedom is an inheritance. We have inherited it from men and from generations who earned it, who paid for it by their sufferings and their life. The price of it was blood, and you that know history know that I am speaking by the book. History, in all its earlier chapters, has been one prolonged war of emancipation. We are free, not because we made ourselves free, but because of ancestry who fought the battle out to the death, achieved vic-

tory, and bequeathed liberty to us who are their heirs. That is the animus with which we want to read those gory old chapters. That is what history means—coffined passion for freedom, like the divine Lord of life in the sepulcher bursting the bonds of death, because He could not be holden of them. Cross over from that to the matter of our religious liberty—all paid for, and we didn't pay for it. So much liberty in one arm of the scale, and so much torture and concentrated agony in the other arm of the scale! And we are entered into the fruition of the legacy bequeathed to us.

If we had earned our liberty ourselves, then the discipline acquired in earning it would insure all the necessary vigor to our sword-arm to be put forth in its defense. We did not earn it, and we have not had the discipline of earning it. That exactly is our peril. The enjoyment of inherited prerogatives is inherently debilitating. We require to be on our guard, and all the more so for the reason that the process of being dispossessed of familiar prerogative is such an unconscious one. It is a matter of unutterable amazement how much in the way of despotism a man whose civil liberty is only an inherited liberty will put up with before he begins to get out his armor and gird on his sword.

Now, here is the situation of peril in which we are placed. Our fathers paid for civil liberty with their blood and treasure, and left it in bequest to us. We were born in a condition of civil affluence. Our arms have not been so trained by fighting for liberty as to have much civic muscle wherewith to maintain our liberty and pass it on to the generations still unborn; nor have our hearts been so trained by fighting for liberty as to have learned how unspeakably precious liberty is, and how solemn, therefore, the obligations pressing upon us to see that it is passed on to generations still unborn.

Now that, mark you, is exactly the condition upon which autocrats and

dictators feed, and our American life is full of them. It is the beginning of slavery not to feel that you are becoming enslaved. Those who have any intense appreciation of what civil liberty means will not consider this the cry of an alarmist, and I don't care whether the rest of the people consider it or not.

We are debtors to the past, and bound to be creditors to the future. It is a shame before God and history to receive a blood-earned legacy from our fathers, and then to hand it down, reduced in quantity and tarnished in quality, to the generations coming.

There is a holy pride which, as Christian citizens, we are bound to experience in this matter, not simply to preserve intact the bequest that has come from the past, but to pass it on, enlarged by fresh increments of beauty and wealth, so that fifty years hence to be an American shall not only mean all that it meant fifty or a hundred years ago, but mean all of that, with a tremendous access of meaning—Christian citizenship be inlaid with more of individual personal kingliness, and the devices and liberty-subverting intrigues of petty tyrants and political ruffians be more difficult—yea, more impossible.

The appeal is to that in you which is best as Christians, best as men, best as lovers of mankind. God help us to forget the instant and to get out of the perversity of view which regard for the mere instant is certain to induce. God save us from being stung by small irritations or perverted by paltry considerations. The world is big, and it is for us to help make the world. The times are long, and it is for us to help shape the times and give determination to the future. God bless our future. God bless our State. God bless our town, and His Spirit reign in us.

God's smiting of His people is entirely a different thing from His smiting of their enemies. It is moderate in degree, and is not mortal in result.—*Coles.*