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THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

A MAGAZINE

DEVOTED TO THE PUBLICATION OF SERMONS AND OTHER
MATTER OF HOMILETIC INTEREST.

VOL. VII.——OCTOBER, 1882.——No. I.

SERMONIC.

RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE.

BY REV. JOSEPH S. VAN DYKE, IN PRESBY-
TERIAN CHURCH, CRANBERRY, N. J.

“And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king, etc.”—Esther vii: 7-10.

I INVITE you to contemplate with me a changeless decree, coming forth from eternity and issuing into eternity—the law of retribution. The stateliness with which it moves along the pathway of the centuries is well fitted to impress us with awe. Its wide sweep, embracing the universe, is adapted to remind us of man's insignificance. Bearing the impress of eternity and holding the balances of equity, it produces the irresistible conviction that resistance is futile. On its brow is written, “*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*” With omnipotence as an attendant, naught can prevent the enforcement of merited penalties.

A connection indestructible exists between the violation of divine law and consequent suffering. A disregard to the conditions of health entails sick-

ness; perhaps premature death. Poisons destroy human life. Bodies if unsupported, fall, no matter what man may desire, nor what he may determine. He who thrusts his hand into the flame invites suffering; nor can subsequent conduct, though inspired by intensest remorse, exempt him from an endurance of the consequences of his own act. That there are certain physical laws under which man is placed, certainly needs no protracted illustration; and yet are there not laws of this nature whose very existence man is disposed to ignore, and whose tireless operation he disregards, though the legitimate consequences are inevitable? He refuses to bring himself into harmony with his environment. Why is this? It is because the inexorableness of Heaven-ordained laws is a truth belonging to that class of truths, which, because accepted by all, loses its potency with many?

A like measure of changelessness marks the operations of moral law. Transgression is followed by suffering. Remorse is entailed by doing what one knows to be wrong. A sense of humiliation succeeds an unreasonable outburst of anger. Loss of happiness, of

[The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.]

is given a sum to invest, invests it badly, and is a bankrupt. This is the idea of the talents. Men are sent into this world for a purpose, and furnished with talents.

Men have committed to them bodily organs and mental faculties. Then many have a good name and fame which descend to them from their parents. These are all important helps to life; and how often they are squandered. And if once dissipated cannot whistle back again, cannot repair it.

Then, a price is put into the hands of the young in our time in the matter of education—so much knowledge as shall enable them to become their own schoolmaster. Then the opportunity of mixing with men in life and so gaining experience, of reading the noblest books that have been written, of actual participation in human affairs. So if a man has a heart for knowledge, an ambition to acquire it, if he is quick to discern, the ear, the eye, every sense becomes a minister of education to him. Alas! how many care nothing for it. And if they squander in youth, they squander, in a great measure, the whole of life. The overweening conceit that they can get along without it, is the vice of our nation. When conceit takes the place of study and practice, it is to be deplored. The failure to improve the opportunities for obtaining knowledge is their ruin and uses them up before middle-age. Their experience is not backed by knowledge.

Closely connected with this is the capital of bodily health—a great endowment. There is the opportunity of obtaining a knowledge of how to run this bodily machine. Good health is a wonderful help to morality, nobility of character, to calmness and decision of judgment and action.

Next is the capacity for industry. Every person has that in him by which he can win a moderate success in life by simply doing day after day the right things, no matter how humble a sphere he may be in. If young men grow up poor, it is because they choose un-

wisely, or act unwisely after they have chosen.

To many also have been given the invaluable qualities of integrity, honor and fidelity—see how valuable these are from a commercial point of view, as recited in the third chapter of Proverbs.

Look upon life as a very solemn thing. Dying is not much after a good life. One of the most terrible passages in the Old Testament is the description of the beginning and end of life. It is the description of men that forfeit all moral qualities in this life, of the state in which they are left at the later period of their life when the fruits of their wickedness begin to develop themselves and they in vain desire to get back again. (Prov. i: 20-33.)

HEALTHY RELIGION.

BY T. DEWITT TALMAGE, D.D. [PRES.],
IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

With long life will I satisfy him.—Ps.
ix: 17.

THROUGH the mistake of its friends religion has been chiefly associated with sick-beds and graveyards. It is high time this thing were changed, and that religion, instead of being represented as a hearse to carry out the dead, should be represented as a chariot in which the living are to triumph. Religion, so far from subtracting from one's vitality, is a glorious addition. It is sanative, curative, hygienic. It is good for every part of man. David speaks of it as "the saving health of all nations," while God, in the text, promises longevity to the pious, saying, "With long life will I satisfy him." Religion has only just touched our world. Give it full power for a few centuries, and who can tell what will be the strength of man, and the beauty of woman, and the longevity of all! Practical religion is ever the friend of longevity.

I. IT MAKES THE CARE OF OUR HEALTH A POSITIVE CHRISTIAN DUTY. Whether we shall keep early or late hours, take food digestible or indigestible, etc., is often

deferred to the realm of whimsicality; but the Christian man lifts this whole problem of health into the accountable and the divine. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and to deface its altars, or mar its walls, or crumble its pillars, is a God-defying sacrilege.

II. IT IS A PROTEST AGAINST DISSIPATIONS WHICH INJURE AND DESTROY THE HEALTH. Bad men and women live very short lives. Their sins kill them. Professors of religion get dissipated. They throw away their morality before their religion. There are many aged ones who would have been dead twenty-five years ago but for the defenses and equipoise of religion.

III. IT TAKES THE WORRY OUT OF OUR TEMPORALITIES. It is not work but worry that kills men. When a man becomes a Christian he makes over to God not only his affections but his family, his business, his reputation, his body, his mind, his soul—everything. He gives God the management of his affairs. He is himself industrious; but if he gain that is best, and if he lose that is best. If the nervous and feverish people of the world would try this almighty sedative, they would live twenty-five years longer under its soothing power. It is not *chloral* or *morphine* that they want; it is more of the Gospel of Christ.

IV. IT REMOVES ALL CORRODING CARE ABOUT A FUTURE EXISTENCE. Every one wants to know what is to become of him. There are people who fret themselves to death for fear of dying. Do you want to make the experiment of going straight to glory whether you live good or bad? "No." Do you want to make the experiment of going to an intermediate state when you leave this world and there get converted and prepared for glory? "No." Do you want to make the experiment of testing whether there is a future world? "No." Well, then, accept the sacrifice that Christ made for you on Calvary, when He bore your sins, paid your penalty, and opened Heaven for all believers, and *quit worrying*. Take the tonic, the inspiration, the longevity of this truth. A quiet conscience and pleasant antici-

pations are hygienic. The Gospel offers you perfect peace now and hereafter. *What do you want in the future?* Tell me and you shall have it. Orchards? Water scenery? Music? Reunion? You shall have them all. This is the robust, healthy religion that will tend to make you live long in this world, and in the world to come give you eternal life.

CONCEALING THE WORDS OF GOD.

By REV. C. H. SPURGEON, IN THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE CHURCH, LONDON, ENGLAND.

"I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."—Job vi: 10.

Job's distress was aggravated by the remarks of his friends, but he turned the guns of the enemy upon themselves and extracted comfort from what was meant to grieve. He had not concealed the words of the Holy One; had taught his family the great sacrificial truth; was a most faithful witness for God, and made open confession of his own faith in the one Holy God. He evidently had great reverence for every word of God, or he would not have used the term "the Holy One."

I. HERE IS A SIN TO BE AVOIDED—CONCEALING THE WORDS OF THE HOLY ONE.

1. *We can conceal these words from ourselves.* We do this when we will not permit this word to search our own heart and ways—when we conceal the *Gospel* and go about to find out some way of our own for self-salvation. We should hide the *Gospel* in our heart, but not *from* our heart. We conceal it when we do not receive the *whole* of revelation, but pick and choose out portions of it; when we try to avoid the word of *command*; when we permit any word, by profits in business, position in life, or "respectability" to be covered over.

2. *We conceal these words from others* by not confessing the truth at all, or by a sinful silence after confession, or by concealing the words of the Lord by our own words, or by clouding the truth with error, or by an inconsistent life. We must shine as lights.