



THE HOMILETIC REVIEW

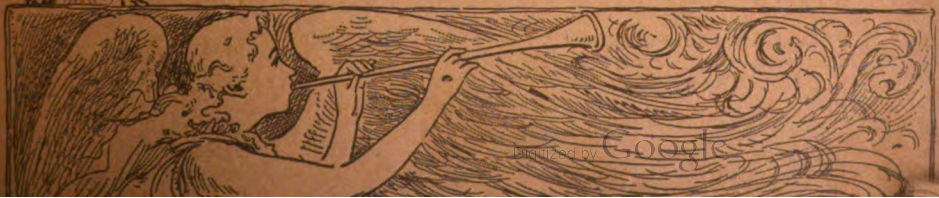
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THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THREE WAYS OF STUDYING A BIBLICAL NARRATIVE.

By WILLIS J. BEECHER, D.D., PROFESSOR OF HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AUBURN, N. Y.

THE student of the Bible may learn something from perusing Mr. Sven Hedin's book of travel, "Through Asia," now before the public. In the great inland basin of Lop-nor, which has no outlet to the ocean, the old Chinese geographers locate a large lake of salt water, in which the immense rivers that flow down from the tremendous glaciers of the region lose themselves. In 1876 the traveler Przhevalsky discovered what seemed to be the great drainage-lake of the Lop-nor, but it was of fresh water, and was a degree farther south than the location given by the Chinese geographers. This southern lake was afterward visited by other travelers, and the matter gave rise to heated controversy. On the one side was the testimony to the existence of this vast fresh-water lake, having no outlet, within certain degrees of latitude and longitude. On the other side was the testimony, ordinarily trustworthy, of the Chinese geographers; and, in addition, the accepted geographical principle that a lake without an outlet must necessarily be salt, inasmuch as it is constantly receiving mineral matter in solution in the water of its affluents, and retains this matter when the water passes away by evaporation.

Mr. Hedin's solution of the problem consisted in the discovery that the testimony of these apparently conflicting witnesses was correct on both sides, even down to very minute details. The basin is a vast, level bed of easily shifting sand or soil. The glacier-fed streams rush into it during parts of the year in tremendous freshets, the water loaded with sediment; but the streams run dry during other parts of the year. Further, it is a region of furious winds and sand-storms, which

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.

and some day we will sing, after we have seen our foes, like Pharaoh, sink as lead in the depths of the sea, and our enemies lie dead upon the shore—we will sing praises unto our God for all His keeping and using, His sufficient grace and transforming fellowship, and will rejoice in the blessed experience: “Thy right hand, O God, is glorious in power. Thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth the enemy in pieces. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Through Thee, through Thee, through Thee, we have triumphed gloriously, and shall reign with Thee forever and forever.

**THE GREATEST CHANGE: A
FUNERAL SERMON.**

BY REV. OWEN UMSTED, LONGTON,
KANS.

*If a man die, shall he live again? All
the days of my appointed time will
I wait, till my change come.—Job
xiv. 14.*

I. A Change of Body.—Leaving a poor body full of weakness and disease for a spiritual life full of vigor, health, happiness, joy, and peace.

II. A Change of Garments.—Exchanging the woolen for a robe of righteousness of transcendent beauty, whiter than snow.

III. A Change of House.—Moving out of a building erected by the hands of mortal man to the house of many mansions, “whose builder and maker is God,” the material of transparent gold.

IV. A Change of Food.—Gladly giving up the imperfect fruit and impure water for the fruit from the tree of life and a refreshing draught from the stream that flows from beneath the throne, “clear as crystal.”

V. A Change of Life.—Freed from the allurements of sin, all forms of temptation forever past, nothing now to retard the soul’s full and rapid development. How the soul springs into the new life with delight! Like the

bird that is liberated from the cage, it mounts heavenward with a new song.

VI. A Change of Thought.—All the mistaken ideas now rectified. All the perplexing questions settled in the light of the throne on high.

VII. A Change of Companions.—Leaving earth and earthly friends for the companionship of the Triune God, angels, archangels, cherubim, dominions, thrones, powers—all the redeemed of all the ages and all worlds—world without end. Amen.

**STANDARDS FOR THE MEASURE-
MENT OF LIFE: A NEW YEAR’S
SERMON.**

BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE,
D.D. [PRESBYTERIAN], WASHING-
TON, D. C.

How old art thou?—Gen. xvii. 8.

I SIMPLY want, this morning, to see by what rod it is we are measuring our earthly existence. There is a right way and a wrong way of measuring a door, or a wall, or an arch, or a tower, and so there is a right way and a wrong way of measuring our earthly existence. It is with reference to this higher meaning that I confront you this morning with the stupendous question of the text, and ask: “How old art thou?”

I. There are many who estimate their life by mere worldly gratification. When Lord Dundas was wisht a happy New Year, he said: “It will have to be a happier year than the past, for I hadn’t one happy moment in all the twelve months that have gone.” But that has not been the experience of most of us. We have found that tho the world is blasted with sin it is a very bright and beautiful place to reside in. We have had joys innumerable. Joy! Joy! Joy! If there is any one who has a right to the enjoyments of the world, it is the Christian, for God has given him a lease of everything in the promise, “All are yours.” But I have to tell you that a man who estimates his life on earth by mere

worldly gratification is a most unwise man. Our life is not to be a game of chess. It is the first step on a ladder that mounts into the skies, or the first step on a road that plunges into a horrible abyss. "How old art thou?" Toward what destiny are you tending and how fast are you getting on toward it?

II. Again, I remark that there are many who estimate their life on earth by their sorrows and misfortunes. Through a great many of your lives the plowshare hath gone very deep, turning up a terrible furrow. You have been betrayed, and misrepresented, and set upon, and slapt of impertinence, and pounded of misfortune. The brightest life must have its shadows, and the smoothest path its thorns.

And yet it is unfair to measure a man's life by his misfortunes, because where there is one stalk of nightshade there are fifty marigolds and harebells; where there is one cloud thunder-charged there are hundreds that stray across the heavens the glory of land and sky asleep in their bosom. Alas! that is an unwise man, an ungrateful man, and most of all an unchristian man who measures his life on earth by groans, and tears, and dyspeptic fit, and abuse, and scorn, and terror, and neuralgic thrust.

III. Again, I remark that there are many people who estimate their life on earth by the amount of money they have accumulated. They say, "The year 1866, or 1870, or 1898 was wasted." Why? "Made no money." Now, it is all cant and insincerity to talk against money as tho it had no value. It may represent refinement, and education, and ten thousand blessed surroundings. It is simply hypocrisy this tirade in pulpit and lecture-hall against money.

But while all this is so, he who uses money or thinks of money as anything but a means to an end will find out his mistake when the glittering treasures slip out of his nerveless grasp,

and he goes out of this world without a shilling of money or a certificate of stock. He might better have been the Christian porter that opened his gate, or the begrimed workman who last night heaved the coal into his cellar. Bonds and mortgages and leases have their use, but they make a poor yardstick with which to measure life.

IV. But I remark there are many—I wish there were more—who estimate their life by their moral and spiritual development.

It is not sinful egotism for a Christian man to say: "I am purer than I used to be. I am more consecrated to Christ than I used to be. I have got over a great many of the bad habits in which I used to indulge. I am a great deal better man than I used to be." And there is no sinful egotism when a Christian man, fighting the battles of the Lord, or, if you will have it, voyaging toward a haven of eternal rest, says: "I know more about spiritual tactics and about voyaging toward heaven than I used to."

Why, there are those in this presence who have measured lances with many a foe and unhorst it. There are Christian men here who have become swarthy by hammering at the forge of calamity. They stand on an entirely different plane of character from that which they once occupied. They are measuring their life on earth by golden-gated Sabbaths, by pentecostal prayer-meeting, by communion-tables, by baptismal fonts, by halleluiahs in the temple. They are only waiting for the gate to open and the chains to fall off and the glory to begin.

V. I remark again: there are many—and I wish there were more—who are estimating life by the good they can do.

John Bradford said he counted that day nothing at all in which he had not, by pen or tongue, done some good. There have been men who have given their whole life in the right direction, concentrating all their wit and ingenuity and mental acumen and physical force and enthusiasm for Christ.

They felt in the thrill of every nerve, in the motion of every muscle, in every throb of their heart, in every respiration of their lungs, the magnificent truth: "No man liveth unto himself." They went, through cold and through heat, foot-blistered, cheek-smitten, back-scourged, tempest-lashed, to do their whole duty. That is the way they measured life—by the amount of good they could do.

Do you want to know how old Luther was; how old Richard Baxter was; how old Philip Doddridge was? Why, you can not calculate the length of their lives by any human arithmetic. Add to their lives ten thousand times ten thousand years, and you have not expressed it—what they have lived or will live. Oh, what a standard that is to measure a man's life by! There are those in this house who think they have only lived thirty years. They will have lived a thousand—they have lived a thousand. There are those who think they are eighty years of age. They have not even entered upon their infancy, for one must become a babe in Christ to begin at all.

This is a good day in which to begin a new style of measurement. "How old art thou?" You see the Christian way of measuring life and the worldly way of measuring it. I leave it to you to say which is the wisest and best way.

CHRIST AND HIS CROSS THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE.

BY ALEXANDER McLAREN, D.D.
[BAPTIST], MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, . . . the things which are now reported unto you, . . . which things the angels desire to look into.—1 Peter i. 10-12.

I HAVE detached these three clauses from their surroundings, not because I desire to treat them fragmentarily, but because we thereby throw into stronger relief the writer's purpose to bring out the identity of the Old and the New Revelation, the fact that Christ and His

sufferings are the center of the world's history, to which all that went before points, from which all that follows after flows.

My purpose this morning is just to try to bring before you the magnificent unity into which these texts bind all ages and all worlds, planting Jesus Christ and His cross in the center of them all. There are four aspects here in which the writer teaches us to regard this unity.

I. First, Christ and His cross, the substance of prophecy.

There must be these two things conserved which Peter here emphasizes—the real inspiration of the prophetic order, and its function to point onward to Jesus. But if, in the eagerness of the chase after the literary facts of the origin of the Old Testament, we forget that it is a unity, that it is a divine unity, that it is a progressive revelation, and that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," then I venture to say that the most uncritical, old-fashioned reader of the Old Testament that found Jesus Christ in the Song of Solomon, and in the details of the tabernacle, and in all the minutiae of worship and sacrifice was nearer to the living heart of the thing than the most learned scholar that has been so absorbed in the inquiries as to how and when this, that, and the other bit of the book was written that he fails to see the one august figure that shines out, now more and now less dimly, and gives unity to the whole. "To him gave all the prophets witness." The Old and the New are a unity, and Christ and His cross are the substance and the center of both.

II. Note here Christ and His cross, the theme of Gospel preaching.

The apostle speaks of the things which the prophets foretold as being the same as "those which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." I should like to point out, as the basis of one or two things that I wish to