



THE HOMILETIC REVIEW

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of
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and Discussion of Practical Issues.

EDITORS

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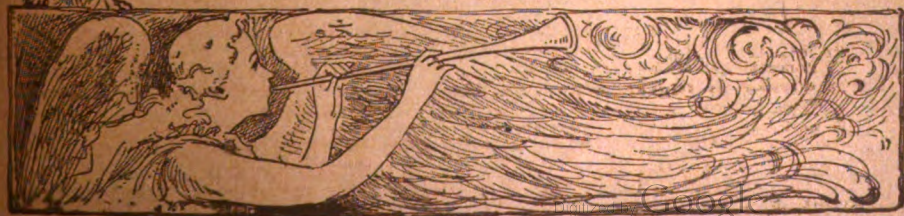
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REVIEW SECTION.

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

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

2.—THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE.

II. *The Preaching of the Law.*—The message of the preacher should most assuredly embrace both the Law and the Gospel—the Law of God and man's lost condition under it, and the Gospel as the divine provision for salvation. It must go without saying, among evangelical Christians, that the preacher's message, in both its matter and authority, rests back on the word of God. It behooves him to inquire diligently and first of all: "What has the divine word to say on this all-important subject of the way of salvation?"

The pages of the Bible obviously abound in incidental presentations, literal and figurative, of the nature and method of salvation. But, as this is the one all-important subject of revelation, it is not left to mere incidental illustration. In the Old Testament it is the heart of the whole sacrificial and priestly system and ritual, on which the religion of Judaism rested or of which it mainly consisted. In the New Testament three of the principal epistles of Paul are devoted to the doctrine of salvation, with the purpose of exhibiting the truth on that subject, and of guarding against the three errors into which Jew, Greek and Roman—the world-races of that age and the representative and typical men of all time—were peculiarly liable to fall. In the Epistle to the Galatians, it is shown for the Jew, the representative of religious forms and ceremonies, that man is not to be saved by the observance of the ceremonial law, in which he was inclined to trust; but by faith in Christ and "circumcision of the heart." In the Epistles to the Corinthians, it is made clear to the Greek, the representative of reason and philosophy, that salvation is not to be obtained by human wisdom, on which he was accustomed to rest his faith; but by faith in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," "who

living God but for the majestic souls that have agonized in the dungeons, groaned on the rack, and given their poor bodies to the martyr's fires? Men must witness for the truth; for the truth is of God, and is for the salvation of the human race. Men must die for the truth; for kings and princes, hierarchs and priests, potentate and populace, in wicked ambition and heartless strife, seem set to crush the truth. But as William Cullen Byrant says:

Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers.

THE MANY GATES OF HELL.

BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D.
[PRESBYTERIAN], BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—Matt. xvi. 18.

ENTRANCED, until we could endure no more of the splendor, we have often gazed at the shining gates, the gates of pearl, the gates of heaven. But we are for a while to look in the opposite direction, and see, swinging open and shut, the gates of hell.

I remember, when the Franco-German war was going on, that I stood one day in Paris looking at the gates of the Tuileries, and I was so absorbed in the sculpturing at the top of the gates—the masonry and the bronze—that I forgot myself. But we shall not stand looking at the outside of the gates of hell. In this sermon I shall tell you of both sides, and I shall tell you what those gates are made of. With the hammer of God's truth I shall pound on the brazen panels, and with the lantern of God's truth I shall flash a light upon the shining hinges.

I. GATE THE FIRST: IMPURE LITERATURE.—Anthony Comstock seized twenty tons of bad books, plates, and letterpress, and, when our Professor Cochran of the Polytechnic Institute poured the destructive acids on those plates, they smoked in the righteous annihilation. And yet a great deal of the bad literature of the day is not gripped

of the law. It is strewn in your parlors, it is in your libraries. Some of your children read it at night after they have retired, the gas-burner swung as near as possible to their pillow. Much of this literature is under the title of scientific information. Then there is all the novelette literature of the day flung over the land by the million. No one—mark this—no one systematically reads the average novelette of this day and keeps either integrity or virtue. Oh! this is the wide gate of hell. A million men and women in the United States to-day reading themselves into hell! I want you to understand that impure literature is one of the broadest, highest, mightiest gates of the lost.

II. GATE THE SECOND: THE DISSOLUTE DANCE.—You shall not divert me to the general subject of dancing. Whatever you may think of the parlor dance or the methodic motion of the body to sounds of music in the family or social circle, I am not now discussing that question. I want you to unite with me this hour in recognizing the fact that there is a dissolute dance. You know of what I speak. It is seen not only in the low haunts of death, but in elegant mansions. It is the first step to eternal ruin for a great multitude of both sexes. You know, my friends, what postures, and attitudes, and figures are suggested of the devil. They who glide into the dissolute dance glide over an inclined plane, and the dance is swifter and swifter, wilder and wilder, until, with the speed of lightning, they whirl off the edges of a decent life into a fiery future. This gate of hell swings across the Axminster of many a fine parlor, and across the ballroom of the summer watering-place. You have no right, my brother, my sister—you have no right to take any attitude to the sound of music which would be unbecoming in the absence of music. No Chattering grand of city parlor or fiddle of mountain picnic can consecrate that which God hath cursed.

III. GATE THE THIRD: INDISCREET APPAREL.—The attire of woman for the last few years has been beautiful and graceful beyond anything I have known; but there are those who will always carry that which is right into the extraordinary and indiscreet. I charge Christian women, neither by style of dress nor adjustment of apparel to become administrative of evil. Perhaps none else will dare to tell you, so I will tell you, that there are multitudes of men who owe their eternal damnation to what has been at different times the boldness of womanly attire. Show me the fashion plates of any age between this and the time of Louis XVI. of France, and Henry VIII. of England, and I will tell you the type of morals or immorals of that age or that year. No exception to it. Modest apparel means a righteous people. Immodest apparel always means a contaminated and depraved society.

IV. GATE THE FOURTH: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.—Oh! the wine-cup is the pattern of impurity. The officers of the law tell us that nearly all the men who go into the shambles of death go in intoxicated, the mental and the spiritual abolished, that the brute may triumph. Tell me that a young man drinks, and I know the whole story. If he becomes a captive of the wine-cup, he will become a captive of all other vices; only give him time. No one ever runs drunkenness alone. There is not a place of any kind of sin in the United States to-day that does not find its chief abettor in the chalice of inebriacy. There is either a drinking bar before, or one behind, or one above, or one underneath. These people escape legal penalty because they are all licensed to sell liquor. The courts that license the sale of strong drink license gambling-houses, license libertinism, license disease, license death, license all suffering, all crimes, all despoliations, all disasters, all murders, all woe. It is the courts and the Legislatures that are swinging wide open this grinding, creaky, stupendous gate of the lost.

But you say, "You have described these gates of hell and shown us how they swing in to allow the entrance of the doomed. Will you not, please, before you get through the sermon, tell us how these gates of hell may swing out to allow the escape of the penitent?" I reply, but very few escape. Of the thousand that go in, nine hundred and ninety-nine perish. Suppose one of these wanderers should knock at your door, would you admit her? Suppose you knew where she came from, would you ask her to sit down at your dining table? Would you ask her to become the governess of your children? Would you introduce her among your acquaintanceships? Would you take the responsibility of pulling on the outside of the gate of hell while the pusher on the inside of the gate is trying to get out? You would not; not one of a thousand of you would dare to do so. You would write beautiful poetry over her sorrows, and weep over her misfortunes, but give her practical help you never will.

But you say, "Are there no ways by which the wanderer may escape?" Oh, yes; three or four.

One way is the sewing-girl's garret—dingy, cold, hunger-blasted.

Another way is the street that leads to the river, at midnight, the end of the city dock, the moon shining down on the water making it look so smooth she wonders if it is deep enough. It is. No boatman near enough to hear the plunge! No watchman near enough to pick her out before she sinks the third time!

No other way? Yes. By the curve of the railroad at the point where the engineer of the lightning express train cannot see a hundred yards ahead to the form that lies across the track. He may whistle "Down brakes!" but not soon enough to disappoint the one who seeks her death.

But you say, "Isn't God good, and won't He forgive?" Yes; but man will not, woman will not, society will not. The Church of God says it will,

but it will not. Our work, then, must be prevention, rather than cure.

Those gates of hell are to be prostrated just as certainly as God and the Bible are true, but it will not be done until Christian men and women, quitting their prudery and squeamishness in this matter, rally the whole Christian sentiment of the church and assail these great evils of society.

THE REVIVED INTEREST IN RELIGION.*

BY PRESIDENT E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS, D.D., LL.D. [BAPTIST], PROVIDENCE, R. I.

I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.—Psa. xxvii. 18.

MEN cannot hold up against the woes of probation unless they believe the world somehow to constitute a divine order. Quite the most significant of contemporary facts is the wide reawakening, among intellectual leaders, of regard for religion. A new age of faith awaits civilized countries. The pendulum which had swung so far out toward the extreme of unbelief, and seemed somehow to be arrested there and destined never to return, is traveling back upon its track and bids fair soon to reach the other extreme.

EVIDENCE OF REVIVED INTEREST AND REASON FOR IT.—A century ago it was fashionable to speak of religion with ridicule, little effort being made to distinguish between true religion and its caricatures. The rise of the evolutionary theory, however, brought a change and the thought became more or less prevalent of considering belief in these supernatural realities as marking a stage in man's upward progress suitable to influence the race when not yet far removed from its brute origin. Darwinian unbelievers, with the more radical infidels preceding, scorned religious conviction as un-

worthy of the modern mind. With modern thinkers, all this is changed, and, to-day, not a recognized leader in science, or an evolutionist of repute, longer stigmatizes religion as a delusion. The assumptions of naturalism absolutely contradict not only our spontaneous moral beliefs and promptings, but also moral convictions that are of vital moment to society, if progress instead of retrogression is to mark its future. Naturalism can give no reason why any sentimental impulse, or conviction, which is of advantage to the race, should be preferred to any other as more worthy of consideration.

If naturalism is the truth, morality is but a haphazard catalog of prudential regulations; beauty is unsubstantial, and even reason is nothing else but a habit, by which our thoughts chance to take one course rather than another. All that gives dignity to life, all that gives value to effort, shrinks and fades under the pitiless glare of a creed like this. It is not simply abstention from wrong that human beings need in order to live well on our earth to-day. It is enthusiasm for righteousness; it is mighty self-denial and heroic sacrifice; not innocence, but nobility; not maintenance upon present moral levels, but inspiration and power to soar to the heights; and it is absolutely certain that naturalism furnishes no motives adequate for these attainments.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS RECENTLY EMPHASIZED.—Of two truths now specially emphasized, one is the office of religion in promoting civilization and progress; and the other, the fact that in obeying this mighty impulse toward advance, men have, without full consciousness, been guided by a profoundly rational insight. The first of these lessons is nobly set forth by Mr. Kidd; the second by Mr. Balfour. Religion has been a leading, if not almost the sole efficient factor in social evolution. Modern science carries the biological law of the survival of the fittest, of development through strife and stress,

* Baccalaureate sermon to the graduating class of Brown University, June 16, 1895.