

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—HISTORICAL STUDIES: THEIR HOMILETIC VALUE.

BY PROF. J. O. MURRAY, D.D., DEAN OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

IN the preface to Jonathan Edwards's treatise on the "Work of Redemption," we are told that he "had planned a body of divinity in a new method, and in the form of a history, in which he was first to show how the most remarkable events in all ages from the fall to the present times, recorded in sacred and profane history, were adapted to promote the work of redemption. . . . His heart was so much set on executing this plan that he was considerably averse to accept the presidentship of Princeton College, lest the duties of that office should put it out of his power." That he did not live to carry out his plan must always be a matter of profound regret, his so-called "History of Redemption" being only the outlines of what he had in mind. The purpose itself shows how closely a knowledge of what is called *profane* history stood related in Edwards's mind to any just understanding of the kingdom of God on earth, and by implication the testimony of this eminent preacher and theologian to the value of this study for ministers. We have on the one hand *bodies of divinity* in abundance, and on the other hand *histories of the church* or *histories of doctrine*. But "a body of divinity in a new method and in the form of a history," is a scheme original with Edwards and as yet unrealized.

In all our theological seminaries church history is taught as essential to the thorough equipment of the clergy for their functions. Far be it from us to question its value. And yet if we were compelled to say which would be most useful to any minister, an accurate knowledge of all the early heresies, or a full knowledge of the Renaissance, leading up as it did to the Reformation, we should unhesitatingly say, the latter. After all, the distinction between sacred and profane history is somewhat shadowy, not to say arbitrary, much of sacred history being somewhat profane, and some at least of profane history being sacred in its

great city was taken by two men into a carriage and driven away. Search was made long and far after that boy. Trace after trace was discovered, but every clue followed out ended like a little path on the prairie. That boy has never been found. The whole country, indeed the whole world became interested in the story of that father and mother trying to find their boy Charlie. To-day, whether he lives or not, whether the boy is trained in the companionship of criminals, is not known. But it is known that he never came back. His father could never find him. We may well think that he wanted to come back. We may well think of the first nights that he spent in his strange surroundings, of the tears he shed in crying himself to sleep. His father wanted to find him, and the boy wanted to be found, but neither ever found the other. And yet, thanks be to his name, God never searches for a lost child, a lost child that wants to be found, but that he does find him and bring him back to his home. May each of us, my friends, be found of our God and return to him, and live with him in reverence and love and peace. Let us pray.

Thou art better unto us than we are to ourselves. Thou hast not caused us to be lost, but we have lost ourselves, and thou art searching and trying to find us. We pray thee, that if we are like the sheep that was gone away, we may be willingly put upon our Shepherd's shoulder. If we are like the prodigal son, may we even arise and go unto our father, assured of his welcome. May this remembrance ever keep us in the great home of our great Father, and ever turn and bring us back to this home, if from its doorways we have ever wandered. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### A GLORIFIED CHRIST.

BY J. R. MILLER, D.D. [PRESBYTERIAN], PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*—Rev. i. 6.

It is to Jesus Christ that this ascription is given. I desire to speak of Christ glorified. We are familiar with the story of the earthly life of Jesus as it is told in the Gospels. We know Jesus as the lowly one, the man of sorrows, the gentle friend, the great teacher, the sufferer of Gethsemane and Calvary. In him then, however, there was no manifested glory. He was not different from other men in his appearance. The people were not awed by his presence. The children were not afraid to have him take them in his arms. No glory blazed out from his face. We are familiar with the Jesus of the Gospels, and when we think of Christ it is in this lowly aspect that he appears to our minds.

But those days of humiliation are forever past. We shall never see him as John and Mary saw him. He is in glory now and is glorified. It is of the Christ as he now is that I would speak. I confess that I shrink from the treatment of this theme as one too glorious and too sacred for human lips. I have seen a miner, with blackened hand, pluck a pure white lily, staining and spoiling the flower in touching it. It seemed almost a desecration of the spotless beauty which God's hand had made. But how much more unfit and unworthy am I, with my stained hands, to touch a theme so holy as that of the glory of the risen and exalted Christ! I do it with shrinking and trembling, and yet I believe our Lord wants us to think of him, not only as he was in the days of his flesh, but as he now is, in the brightness of his glorified state.

But how shall we learn what he is like on his throne? These dim eyes cannot pierce the skies and the clouds to see him. Men look through their

telescopes at the stars, and mere sparkling points of light prove to be burning suns. But no telescopes can reveal to us Christ on his throne. Some day we shall see him as he is, but now no eye can behold him. He is veiled from our sight while the flesh enfolds us. Yet human eyes have seen him in vision since he went back to his glory, and those who saw him have told us what they saw. The beloved disciple had a vision of his glory. It was on Patmos. One writes of this place: "Silent lay the little isle before me in the morning twilight. Here and there an olive tree breaks the monotony of the rocky waste. The sea was still as a grave. Patmos reposed in it like a dead saint." The vision that John saw in his lonely exile he has described for us. It is photographed for us on the Scripture page. Let us with reverence and trusting love study it for a little while. I shall mark but a few of the many features of the vision.

1. He appears as a glorified Lord. He is no more in the form of a servant, no more the weary and way-worn pilgrim resting at noonday on the well-curb, falling asleep on the boat in the rising storm, walking about unrecognized among men, dragged to a cross among criminals. Very wonderful is the contrast between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ of the Revelation. Yet they both are one. In the lowly Jesus of the incarnation all the divine glory was enshrined. Men did not see its outflashings, but the splendor was there. Once only, for a little time, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the radiance streamed out and human eyes saw the majesty. But now in heaven there is no longer any concealing or hiding of his glory. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; his eyes were as a flame of fire; his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters; and his coun-

tenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." It was a vision like this which Paul had at the time of his conversion. The glorified Jesus appeared to him, in radiance surpassing the brightness of the Syrian noon-day sun. So overpowering was the splendor that Paul was blinded by it and struck down to the ground. The effect was the same, too, on the beloved disciple. He tells us that when he saw the dazzling, glorious vision, he fell at Christ's feet as dead.

In our Lord's intercessory prayer at the Last Supper he prayed, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This prayer was answered. "He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God," says Mark. Not only was he received into the place of glory, but he was seated on the throne of glory. "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth," said the ascending Lord. Peter says, "He is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." There is a wonderful passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, in which the exaltation of Christ is described. The Father "raised him from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church."

In this vision of the revelator we see all this in picture. The Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and all angels and all redeemed beings and all the powers of nature fall before him and worship him. He is described too as "the ruler of the kings of the earth." That last night of his earthly life, when he was in the power of his enemies, heathen soldiers, in bitter

mockery, played the farce of coronation and royalty before him. They wove a circlet of thorns, which they put upon his head for a crown. They put an old purple robe upon him for a royal garment. They put a reed in his hand for a scepter. Then they bowed down before him and said, "Hail, King!" But it was only a little while till there was another coronation, inside the gates of God's holy place. There was no mockery then. God the Father put upon his head the crown of heavenly glory, while all the redeemed and all the angelic hosts bowed down in adoring worship, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive the power and honor and glory." "To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever."

2. We must not fail to notice that it is as man—God-man—that Jesus Christ is glorified. John saw in vision "one like unto a son of man" in the midst of the golden candlesticks. That is, he bore there in the glory the form of our humanity. I am not sure that we realize this part of the truth in our Lord's exaltation. We think of his ascending as God, and of his divine nature being exalted to the throne of all power and glory. But we lose thus the most precious part of the blessed truth. The Son of God came to earth and became flesh. He did not cease to be God. All the glory of deity was veiled in that lowly form that slept in Mary's bosom, and wept in Bethany, and died on Calvary. There was a real bodily resurrection, for we remember how careful Jesus was to prove to all his disciples that he was truly risen and was not a mere spirit. Now that same body which died and rose again ascended to heaven. It was that same body on whose bosom John leaned, whose feet Mary bathed with her ointment, which had lain in the grave, and in which Thomas saw the wounds—it was that same body that was taken up into heaven and seated at the

right hand of the Father. It was that same body which Stephen saw when he looked up into heaven and beheld the glory of God, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. It was that same body, with whose lowly form we are so familiar in the Gospels, that John saw in his vision. The kingly robes flowing to the feet and the golden girdle clasped about the breast are in place of the seamless coat and the other garments for which the soldiers gambled beneath his cross. That head white as white wool—as white as snow—in its blaze of glory, is the same that wore the crown of thorns and bowed on the cross in death. The eyes, like a flame of fire, are the same that were bent so often with compassion upon the sinning and sorrowing; that were filled with tears at Bethany and on Olive's brow, and that looked upon Peter that night with such grieved tenderness after his denial. Those feet, glowing like burnished brass that had been refined in a furnace, are the same that a sinful woman bathed with tears and covered with warm kisses, and that were nailed to the cross. That right hand which held the clustered stars is the same that was laid so gently on the heads of little children, that touched the blind eyes and opened them, that broke the bread at the Last Supper, and that was held up with the nail-wounds to convince Thomas of the resurrection. That countenance whose radiance was like the splendors of the noon sun is the same on which Judas put his traitorous kiss.

Let us not lose out of our conception of the glorified Christ this truth, that he is actually human still. His body is changed, glorified, as our bodies shall be changed, glorified in our resurrection; yet it is still the same body which he had on the earth. His humanity was carried up to heaven. As he never for a moment ceased to be God while here on the earth in lowly flesh, so he has

never for a moment ceased to be man since ascending into the heavenly places. The Godhead and the humanity are forever inseparable. The tender compassion of the Jesus of the Gospels was not lost when he went up out of our sight and was exalted to the throne. Our King has a human heart, with human affections, sympathies and feelings. Our Lord, to whom we pray, on whose arm we lean in weakness, to whose mercy we flee when we have sinned, to whom we turn for help in weakness and comfort in sorrow, is our brother, with a nature like ours. How near it brings him to us to think of him as really human still, in his eternal glory! How it exalts our thought of the dignity of humanity to remember that one of our race is on the throne of thrones!

3. Another feature of the glorified Christ, as he appeared in vision to John, was his complete victoriousness. We must never forget that his exaltation was *won*. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that because of the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honor. In the Epistle to the Philippians St. Paul draws a wondrous picture of the humiliation of Christ when, being in the form of God, he condescended to wear the likeness of men and to die on the cross. Then he adds, "Wherefore"—because of his humiliation and death—"God also highly exalted him and gave unto him the name which is above every name." He won that name above every name in his sufferings and death. Celsus, an ancient enemy of the gospel, once described Christ's sufferings, crowned with thorns, nailed to the rough wood, and then exclaimed in a bitter sneer, "In the name of wonder, why on this occasion, at least, does he not act the God and hurl some signal vengeance on the authors of this insult and anguish?" But this bitter taunt loses its force when we remember the true meaning of Christ's dy-

ing. Surely he could have hurled vengeance on the authors of his sufferings; but then his mission would have failed of its glorious end. His humiliation was the way to his glory. God exalted him because he had obeyed unto death. He was crowned with glory and honor for the sufferings of death.

Especially does he appear in John's vision as victor over death. John saw him as the firstborn of the dead. The expression is remarkable—"the firstborn of the dead." He was the first who was ever born from death. You say, "There were others that rose from the dead before Christ arose. Even in the times of the Old Testament persons were called back from death. Then did not the ruler's daughter and the widow's son and Lazarus come from death at Christ's own call?" Yes, but none of these were really born from death. They did not escape death's power finally and forever, and enter into full and immortal life. Christ's was the first resurrection from the dead that this earth has ever seen. He was the first of all earth's millions that have gone down into death's gloom, who has come again into life to stay forever in its brightness and blessedness. Those who were raised up before him were only brought back to a few more years of the old life of struggle, pain and sinning. They had but a temporary release from death's prison, but a brief respite from death's bondage. They were still under death's power, and had to die again. But Christ was born from death into life—not the old life of pain, infirmity, struggle, tears and mortality, but into life—full, rich, blessed, immortal.

St. Paul, speaking of the resurrection of Christ, says: "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him." We have the same truth in John's vision. When the beloved disciple had fallen down as dead before the glorified Christ, there was

laid on him a gentle hand, the hand of the exalted One, and a voice of matchless sweetness spoke, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." The words are very wonderful. He was the One who had died; the same whom Jesus had seen on the cross; the same that gentle hands had taken down and laid away in the rock tomb among the spring flowers. But now he was past death, away beyond it; and what had death done to him? It had extinguished no life, marred no beauty, chilled no tenderness. He appeared now as the Living One; that is, the only one who really lives. This that we call life is not life; it is but a poor, broken, shattered, imperfect fragment of life. Christ alone truly lives. He has been born from death into life. His victory is complete. He is alive for evermore, because he met death and was victorious over it. He is immortal now. Death can never touch him more. That glorious life is beyond death forever.

And that is not all. "I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." We have seen Jesus with the basin, and the thought of the picture is very beautiful. It tells us of his condescension when he became a servant. He is still serving us. Then it tells us also of his great atoning work for us; he comes with the basin to wash us. But here is another picture which we ought to hang up alongside of Jesus with the basin—Jesus with the keys. Keys are symbols of power and authority. Because Jesus was himself victorious over death the keys of death were put into his hands, just as in ancient times the keys of a conquered city were given to the conqueror in token of submission. Christ has power, therefore, over all the realm of death. He can unlock our graves and call us to life when he will. Death is no longer an enemy as it was to Christ. He took the enmity from it and it

became a friend. It has no power to harm us, for it lost its venomous sting when Jesus conquered it.

You need not fear to put your Christian loved ones out of your sight into the grave, since Christ holds in his pierced right hand the keys of death and Hades. The spirit passes unharmed at once through death into his immediate presence; then the body that sleeps he will some day call up out of death into life. Not only was Christ the first-born from death but he was also the first fruits of resurrection—the pledge of the whole glorious harvest. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

4. The vision of the glorified Christ shows him deeply interested and active in our behalf in heaven. So far we have considered only the state of Christ himself in his exaltation; let us look at his work there for us. In a certain sense he saved us by his obedience, sufferings and death. As he bowed his head on the cross he cried, "It is finished." Redemption's price was all paid. The sacrifice was all made. The atonement was complete. His work of humiliation was ended. From all ages men's eyes turn to the cross and to the death of Christ for hope. The new song of the redeemed in glory is, "Unto him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his blood." "Worthy art thou to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe." To all eternity every redeemed soul will remember the cross of Christ.

But we must not think that Christ's active work on our behalf ceased when he finished his sacrifice and went inside the veil. He is active for us still in his heavenly glory. In John's vision the risen Lord appears in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The golden candlesticks are the churches of the Redeemer in this

world. The vision then represents Christ as in the midst of his churches, always with his people. While his human body must have a place and is not everywhere present, his deity is omnipresent. Did he not promise that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name he would be in the midst of them? Did he not say to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always"? He walks amid the golden candlesticks. He cares for his churches. He watches over his people. He is still the good shepherd.

The same truth is taught in another part of the same vision. "He had in his right hand seven stars." The stars we are told are the churches of the redeemed. The symbol is very beautiful. Christ's churches are stars in this dark world. It is their mission to shine, to pour a little light upon earth's gloom and sorrow. But notice, also, that he held the stars in his right hand, the hand of strength and honor, so he holds his churches in his right hand. The picture suggests guidance, security, help. Oh friends, Christ is not dead. His power has not ceased its sway in this world. He has not withdrawn his hand from the affairs of earth. Let no faith fail, if for a time the world flaunts its banners, and utters its sneers, and predicts the failure of Christianity. Christianity cannot fail while the all-conquering Christ holds the churches in his right hand.

Let us look a little more closely into the manner of Christ's activity in heaven for us. What does he do there on our behalf? Several things. Having all power in heaven and earth, he rules so that all things work together for good, not only for his church at large, through the ages, but for every individual believer who trusts him and follows him. We have seen already that he is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He is also Lord of providence. All the stars in their courses are under his government. The winds and the waves are subject to him. Not a spar-

row falls to the ground without his notice. Then in heaven angels are his messengers. All the universe is beneath the sceptre of the God-man whose throne is heaven, whose footstool this earth is. Shall we be afraid, amid enemies and storms and convulsions and conflicting providences, while the government of all things is in the hands that were pierced with the nails for our redemption?

Another form of the activity of the glorified Christ in heaven is his intercession for us. "I will pray the Father," was his promise, before he went away. St. Paul declares, in speaking of the risen Saviour, that he is at the right hand of God (to rule), and then that he also maketh intercession for us. In the Hebrews also it is given, as the reason why he can save all who trust in him, that he ever lives to intercede for believers. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." St. John tells us, too, that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." All these Scripture words teach us that the salvation of each believer is made a continual personal care with the Christ in heaven. The work of the ancient priest was twofold. First he offered the sacrifice on the altar, then he took the blood into the holy of holies, sprinkling it there on the mercy seat, while he prayed and made intercession for the people without. Christ made himself an offering on the cross, and now he has passed into the heavens, the true holy of holies, there to appear before God for us, presenting his own blood, the merits of his own sacrifice, and making intercession for us.

In just what manner he makes this intercession we cannot tell. Certain it is that he appears in heaven as a Lamb that has been slain—that is, bearing in some way in his glorified body the marks of his sacrificial

death. We know, at least, that we are never forgotten in our struggles, temptations, and dangers in this world, and that our great High Priest ever interposes his intercession between our souls and the enemy. Thus when Peter was in peril Jesus said to him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." On our Lord's last night on the earth he put up a prayer for his disciples, that they might be kept from the evil of the world. Evidently the burden of his continual intercession in heaven is that his believing ones may be preserved in the favor and love of God, and that they may gain the victory over all temptations and all the assaults of Satan. There is an eye whose glance we see not, but which is bent on us continually from the core of heaven's glory in loving watchfulness, and whenever danger is near intercession is made for us by one whom the Father heareth always. We are not left to struggle alone in the midst of enemies and dangers. Each one of us has an Advocate in heaven, one who cares for all our interests and by whom we are never forgotten for a moment.

There is one other form in which the glorified Christ shows his interest in his people on the earth. He not only turns his face toward his Father in intercession for them, but he reaches out his hand toward them in their earthly life in continual help and blessing. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the ascended Christ. The earth is full of his goodness. From his throne, with lavish hand, he scatters blessings of all kinds. If any are not blessed it is because their hearts are shut against the gifts of the enthroned Christ. Every gospel call to the impenitent is a loving word from him who sits in glory.

I am conscious how feebly, how imperfectly my hand has now done its work. If, however, I have said one word on this great theme to make the Christ seem more real or more glorious to any of you, I am content.

Surely we ought to be willing to trust ourselves in such hands for time and for eternity. We ought not to fear that things can go very wrong with us if our lives and all our affairs are watched over and cared for by this Living One who was dead but is alive for evermore. We ought not to be ashamed to be called disciples and friends of such a Lord and Master. The thought that we are loved by one so glorious should kindle in us enthusiastic love for him and devotion to his cause.

Then there is something else. We are going to see him—we shall see him as he is, and we shall be forever with him. Not in our present state, for the glory would consume us. But as we have learned, he is the first-born of the dead, in due time we too shall be born out of the dead. We shall be like him. He will change us, fashioning anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, and we shall, by his grace working in us, be fitted to share his glory and his exaltation. If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. Shall we not join to-day in the songs of adoring love which all heaven's hosts sing to him? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

#### THE SILENCE OF JESUS A REVELATION OF JOY.

BY REV. C. M. COBERN, PH.D.

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*If it were not so, I would have told you.*—John xiv. 2.

No one doubts that Jesus gave humanity a new hold on heaven by his words of certainty concerning the future life. But is not the text sufficient ground for affirming that not only the words of Jesus but his silences on this subject contain a revelation of joy to believers? That he, who knew all the secrets of the future life, and knew also all the hopes and longings and expectations that