

# THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

A MAGAZINE

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

VOL. VIII.—JANUARY, 1884.—No. 4.

## SERMONIC.

### SUPERNATURAL ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

By ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D. [Presbyterian], PHILADELPHIA.

*This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.—Ps. xxxiv: 6, 7.*

Is prayer a positive power in man's relations with God? This question is, in some respects, the most vital, practical question, touching the religious life of our day. The age of miracles may be past; supernatural signs may be no longer wrought in the forms in which they once astonished mankind; there may be no more need of public and popular attestation and authentication of Christianity, such as was demanded at the outset for the perpetual establishment of its august claims. But every human soul may have personal communion and contact with an unseen spiritual God; if blessings and benefits may be obtained directly from the Heavenly Father, which no effort of our own can secure, and no mediation of our fellow-men can procure; if we can, unmistakably, discern divine in-

terposition in the affairs of my own life, and recognize the invisible hand by unerring tokens of God's guarding, guiding, governing presence—then I have a perpetual miracle in my own life—a permanent proof of the supernatural, which convinces and overwhelms my own mind. To others, my experience may not bring conviction, but it satisfies me; and as every praying soul may have the same essential testimony, there can be no excuse for abiding in the darkness.

The most dangerous doctrine concerning prayer is that current philosophy of the matter which presents a half truth only; allowing the subjective value, but denying all objective efficacy to prayer—i.e., admitting a benefit, as attached to a devout habit, but limiting the benefit to the working of natural results entirely within the suppliant.

For example, here is a man who becomes conscious of vicious tendencies, through his bodily appetites, toward intemperance and gluttony; through his carnal lusts, greed of gain or ambition; through his temper and disposition, being naturally impatient or irascible, mean or malicious. Feeling the

The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every effort 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.]