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THE PREACHER AND HIS SERMON

A TREATISE ON HOMILETICS

BY REV. JOHN W. ETTER, D. D.

DAYTON, OHIO
UNITED BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE
1888

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INTRODUCTORY TESTIMONIALS.

"I have examined in manuscript a proposed work on Homiletics by the Rev. J. W. Etter. The arrangement of the book is philosophical, and its style clear and animated. It is full of happy suggestions, calculated to elevate a student's views of the sacred ministry, and at the same time stimulate and instruct him I cheerfully and heartily commend the work to students of theology, and to active pastors who desire to know more perfectly how to 'divide the word of truth.'"

REV. S. F. UPHAM, D. D.,
Professor of Practical Theology, Drew Theological Seminary.

"It affords me pleasure to indorse the favorable judgment of Dr. Upham on Rev. J. W. Etter's proposed book on Homiletics. In freshness and vigor of style, and in the thorough grasp of the whole subject, it will no doubt take its place among the standard works of the time, and will command a reading not only by students and ministers, but also by intelligent laymen. It can not fail to increase the effectiveness of our rising ministry."

REV HENRY A. BUTTZ, D. D.,
President, and Professor of New Testament Exegesis, Drew Theological Seminary.

"I have carefully looked over your proposed book on Homiletics, especially the introductory part on the use of a text, and am very much pleased with its direct and simple clearness. I hope you will complete it, as I think it will make a valuable text-book."

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"The outline plan and a number of chapters of the new work on Homiletics, 'The Preacher and His Sermon,' have been before me I have read them with interest. The arrangement is methodical, yet natural and simple, and it will be serviceable to students, ministers, and laymen. The author shows familiarity with the literature of this subject, which is voluminous, and he brings to us the most valuable conclusions from it. The style is clear You are never left in doubt as to what the author means, and withal there is freshness of statement. It is the most suitable text-book that has yet appeared, and I doubt not will be used in this Seminary.

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"Having examined with care the outlines and several written chapters of Rev. J. W. Etter's proposed work on Homiletics, or, 'The Preacher and His Sermon,' I can honestly say, that numerous as are works on this subject, this one promises to be the best of those that are adapted for use as a text-book in the class-room. What is taken from other books is wisely chosen and presented with skill and freshness. What is original, entirely new matter, is a valuable addition to the science of Homiletics."

REV WILLIAM H HORNBLOWER, D. D.,
Late Professor of Sacred Rhetoric, Western Theological Seminary.

Introductory Testimonials.

"I have read your chapter on 'Sermons to Children,' with great interest. It is plain, practical, suggestive, and calculated to be eminently useful. I am very glad you have written it, and if it shall, as I trust it may, lead many of our brethren in the ministry to give their earnest and hearty attention to this most important part of our work for Christ, you will have done that which must greatly tend to promote the glory of God, and the best welfare of his church."

REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D. D.,
Author of "Sermons to Children," etc.

"I have read the manuscript of your forthcoming book on Homiletics with much interest, and take pleasure in giving it my unqualified approval. It gives us the best thoughts of the best writers on this valuable science, which, with your own thoughts, fresh and vigorous, makes it a book adapted not only to the ministry of our own Church, but to all who may wish the better to prepare themselves for extended usefulness in the ministerial vocation. It ought to be in the hands of all our preachers, especially the younger, and will, I predict, at an early day, become a text-book in the theological seminaries of the country."

REV. J. DICKSON, D. D.,
Bishop in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

"I have examined the manuscript which you did me the honor to submit to my criticism; this I have done with some care. I am glad to say that I can give you my judgment in favor of its publication. The field of Homiletics as a science is a well-gleaned field. It is almost hopeless to think to say anything new. All we can do is to give in a fresh and convenient form principles and rules which the wisdom of generations has evolved. I think you have been able to do this, and your book will prove a readable and helpful work. I have been specially pleased with the part on Expository Preaching. What you say is well put, and timely."

REV. C. A. STORK, D. D.,
President, and Professor of Homiletics, Gettysburg Theological Seminary.

"It has been my privilege to examine the general plan, and to read in manuscript several written chapters, of a new work on Homiletics, to be styled 'The Preacher and His Sermon,' by Rev. J. W. Etter. The division of the subject is natural and systematic. The discussion shows a full understanding of the theme. The thoughts are presented with clearness, beauty, and force, and in plain, concise, and vigorous language. I believe the book to be well adapted to the better preparing of our ministry, so that the man of God may be 'thoroughly furnished unto every good work' It will be a valuable acquisition to the library of every intelligent layman, as well as an excellent text-book for the theological student. The author will do the church and the public a great favor by speedily preparing it for the press."

REV. H. A. THOMPSON, D. D.,
President of Otterbein University.

"I have examined the original manuscript on Homiletics with great satisfaction. Being somewhat acquainted with excellent treatises on this subject, I felt that little remained to be said, and that a new author in this field of literature would experience more than the ordinary perils of authorship; but I am now persuaded that you are not simply offering one book more to the market, but that you have made a valuable contribution to ecclesiastical literature Two features of the work appear to me to be especially meritorious: (1) The *successful* ministers of the past and present are made to speak freely upon all the subjects treated, and their words scintillate from every side of the question, suggesting the rich and manifold character of truth. (2.) The treatise shows that the field of Homiletics is more extensive than has heretofore been explored, and new and valuable territory has been opened up. This alone is sufficient to entitle the volume to a hearty welcome on the part of those who are interested in ministerial duties and qualifications."

REV. D. D. DELONG, A. M.,
President of Lebanon Valley College.

PREFACE.

In presenting a new work upon the subject of preaching, the author is aware that the literature of Homiletics is already quite voluminous. In addition to the many older treatises in various languages, a number of books of great merit have recently been published. But, numerous as are the existing works on Homiletics, and able as many of them are in the treatment of the topics considered, no treatise upon this subject has yet appeared which meets the wants of our times in its range of subjects.

In the present work, while not refusing to follow the old beaten track, I have given special attention to recent demands of the pulpit, and to modern developments in Homiletics, believing that the bringing together of the old and new material into one treatise would justify the addition of another work to the already extensive literature of this branch of theology. In this new department may be mentioned, especially, Preaching to Children, Revival Sermons, Out-door Sermons, Funeral Sermons, Illustrated Sermons, Lay Preaching, and Bible-readings, some of which have heretofore received only a passing notice, while others have been entirely forgotten by our homiletical writers. If I have handled the old topics too summarily, and the new ones too elaborately, it is because the former are old, and the latter new. Part I. has many new features, while Part IV. will suggest new methods of preaching.

In the preparation of this work, the literature of the subject has been carefully examined, and its best teachings

have been adopted, and presented in a new form. In the composition of new material I have been compelled to originate my own method.

The book is not the publication of a course of lectures on preaching, but every chapter has been especially prepared for this work, except Chapter II. in Part I., which appeared in a series of articles in the "Religious Telescope" a few years ago, and is here reproduced with alterations and additions.

In the arrangement of subjects, I have tried, as far as possible, to follow the most natural order. In the actual construction of a sermon the order is: (1.) Selection of a text. (2.) Interpretation of the text. (3.) Generalizing it into a theme. (4.) Framing of proposition. (5.) Composition, including invention and disposition. (6.) Delivery. But in a scientific treatise this order can not be followed consecutively, for there are other subjects connected with the sermon, not included in the contents of this order, which require independent discussion. Yet the systematic need not *interfere* with the natural; scientifically, as well as homiletically, the most general order would suggest that the Preparatory should precede the Theoretical, the Theoretical the Practical, and the Practical the Concomitant. After giving a general view of the *Preacher* and his *Sermon*, I introduce the Text; between this and the Composition of the sermon I pause to consider the different species and varieties of sermons, one of which the sermonizer must always choose before actually beginning to compose. The Composition of Introduction, Discussion, and Conclusion, or the actual construction of the entire sermon, seems to be a special department in Theoretical Homiletics. In the Practical department are discussed the subjects belonging to the delivery of sermons. In this way the subjects follow in natural sequence, and in suitable form for the instruction of the learner.

The work is chiefly designed for a text-book in the classroom, for junior preachers, and active pastors; but the introduction of many topics of general interest, and the mode of

discussion, will, no doubt, also make it instructive to laymen, especially to Sunday-school superintendents and teachers, class-leaders, lay preachers, and all public speakers.

I desire to make honorable mention of Dr. C. A. Stork, President and Professor of Homiletics in the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa.; Dr. William H. Hornblower, late Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in Western Theological Seminary; Dr. Henry A. Buttz, President of Drew Theological Seminary; Dr. S. F. Upham, Professor of Practical Theology in Drew Theological Seminary; Dr. James Strong, member of the Bible-revision Committee; Dr. Richard Newton, of Philadelphia; Rev. D. D. DeLong, A. M., President of Lebanon Valley College; Bishop J. Dickson, D. D.; Dr. H. A. Thompson, President of Otterbein University, and Dr. G. A. Funkhouser, Professor of Homiletics in Union Biblical Seminary, who have rendered me valuable service in the examination of different parts of my manuscript, and greatly encouraged me in the preparation of this work.

The Table of Contents, and Index, have been prepared by Rev. W. A. Shuey, A. M., who has also performed excellent service in the work of issuing the book from the press.

With a full sense of imperfection, and the responsibility of my task, I now submit this book to the church, and to Him who can use the weakest instrument for his glory.

MOUNT JOY, PA., August 1, 1883.

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Part I

THE PREACHER AND HIS SERMON.

PART I.

PREPARATORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PREACHER.

The Title Defined — Dignity of the Preacher's Office — Preaching, his Chief Duty — His Theme, Christ — His Relation to Scientific and Popular Skepticism.

§ I. THE TITLE DEFINED.

The preacher and his sermon, — not the pastor and his parish. These two phrases, while they together compose the work and office of the Christian ministry, yet divide it into two portions clearly distinct from each other. The minister is both a preacher and a pastor; he constructs sermons and builds up parishes; but the nature, qualifications, and duties of the one are so different from those of the other, that the pastor and preacher often appears more like two men than like one man, when the quality and efficiency of his preaching and parochial abilities are viewed and compared. Herein is an anomaly, that the same man should be one thing in the pulpit and another in the parish; and yet it is an acknowledged fact that not every good preacher is also a good pastor, and *vice versa.* To be equally successful in the pulpit and in the parish is the exception rather than the rule. It is not our purpose

here to account for this inequality, but merely to state a fact, and thus limit our subject to one hemisphere of the Christian ministry—*preaching*,[1] leaving the other half of the work for some future task.

The preacher and his sermon,—not *a* preacher and his sermon. There are preachers many and sermons many, ranging over every degree of quality from the most incoherent postil of a mere novice in the profession to the most perfect discourse of a pulpit champion. *A* preacher, *a* sermon, may stand for any possible or imaginable kind, like the algebraic expression of an unknown quantity. It is, however, the province of homiletics to describe *the* preacher, *the* sermon; to hold up a *model*, constructed out of the best of the miscellaneous material and examples which the pulpit has produced, and present it as a standard of excellence to be imitated by all ministers. It is therefore more ideal than real, as every scientific treatise must necessarily be which gives the rules and principles of an art.

Again, the preacher and *his* sermon suggests a resemblance between the two. The sermon is much like the preacher because it is *his*, the product of his own brain, the offspring of his own character.

There is a difference between possessing a thing by procreation and by appropriation. In the former case, there is a *resemblance* between the creature and its creator, but none whatever in the latter case.

The artist paints a picture from his own mental conception. It is his in the proper sense, and can never be transferred or deeded to another, for it bears the semblance of its author. The child is like its parent; the book is like its author. It is a universal law of generation, that each shall produce "after its kind."

---

1 *Preaching*, which is an abbreviated form of the title of this treatise.

But the material wealth which a man possesses is his in a much inferior sense. He has it by assignment, and becomes its manager rather than its owner. It is no part of himself, and therefore bears no likeness to its possessor. Nothing is really ours except the propagation of our own mind, the offspring of our own individual self, which resembles the *ego* of its origin. The picture, the book, the invention, the slave, the mansion, in the higher sense, can never become the real property of another by purchase, because we can not buy the artist, the author, the inventor, the parent, the architect, who produced it, and whose image it bears, and whose equal we could not produce. Hence it becomes ours in a secondary sense by appropriation, and not in the primary sense by procreation. Possession by personal creation is the basis on which rests the proposition that the sermon resembles the preacher. It is an emanation of his soul developed into a thing of form, proportion, and almost life itself, and becomes akin to him as soon as he breathes into it the breath of his life.

The sermon resembles its author, first, and chiefly, in *the mode and character of its thought.* The individuality of his intellect, the depth or superficiality of his reasoning, the peculiarities of his doctrine, and the degree of his convictions, are all transmitted to his sermon. The method of his thinking and inventing will also be seen in its plan and arrangement. It is a mental photograph of its author, and made after the pattern of his mind, or, in the language of the phrenologist, an exact impression of his head.

It resembles its author, secondly, in the *language.* There are certain modes of expression and idiom, a style of diction, and fullness or scantiness of vocabulary, which distinguish each speaker's conversation and composition. This character of language, when added to that of thought, makes the resemblance between the sermon and the preach-

er more intimate. It is in this way that many anonymous letters and documents can be traced to their true authors; and upon this kind of internal evidence is the epistle to the Hebrews ascribed to Paul, because its style of thought and language possesses a Pauline character.

It resembles its author, in the third place, in its *moral tone.* There are degrees of piety as well as degrees of intelligence. Not all preachers are equally holy, devoted, and consecrated to the truth. Who would say that this does not have a marked influence upon the discourse, infusing it with the most evangelical and saving truth, or giving it a formal, scientific, or even secular tone, according to the spiritual temperature of the sermonizer? A man's religious *status* will be stamped upon his sermon.

Lastly, we might add that it resembles its author in its *manner of delivery.* As a religious discourse can not be a sermon until it is spoken, as will be stated hereafter,[1] its delivery is part of its general composition, and will partake of the vocal capacity, force, earnestness, and emotions of the speaker.

From these points of analogy, we see that the most natural and easy thing is to preach sermons which are like ourselves; and that the most unnatural and difficult thing is to preach another man's sermon without detection that it is not our own; for its kind of thought, language, and unction will betray our plagiarism, and reveal the fact that it resembles some one else more than ourselves. So intimate and intermingled is the resemblance between the preacher and *his* sermon that in a treatise on preaching we can scarcely speak of the one without also speaking of the other, since both are blended in the subject of homiletics. It is a kind of bi-unity. Hence the title: *The* PREACHER *and his* SERMON.

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[1] Part II., Chapter I., § I.

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fertility, a superior character, which in almost every case makes the preacher greater than his sermon.[1]

There being, then, a separation as well as an affinity between a sermon and its author, somewhat similar to that between the science and the art of preaching, for which homiletics is the technical term, we prefer to choose the title, *The Preacher and His Sermon*, as the most concrete description of a treatise on the theory and practice of preaching.

But in this initial chapter we wish to speak more particularly of the preacher; especially as he stands related to some of the more important duties of his office.

He is Christ's embassador. "Now then we are embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (II. Cor. v. 20.) Here he is clearly set forth as the representative of the great King, who is to carry forward the work which he here began by his own personal ministry while in the flesh. The interests he is authorized to represent and promote are divine. Hence he is properly called "a divine," "a man of God," "reverend," etc., which indicate the source of his high authority and appointment. In one sense every Christian should be a preacher for Christ; but the right of an embassador, acting in Christ's stead, is an honor conferred upon the select few chosen from among men by the great Sovereign himself. God might have converted the world through the preaching of Christ, or appointed an angelic and sinless apostleship to take up the work where Christ left it and carry it on to its completion; but there seems to be a divine fitness in prosecuting the redemption of the world through human instrumentality. "A human intellect, human sensi-

1 "The man is felt to be greater than what he says. It is a part of which he is the whole; and his personality is behind his speech."—John Hall in *Yale Lectures.*

bilities, a human .voice, are chosen before the trump of archangels."

The preacher is to fill a wonderful sphere of influence. Were the pulpit silenced, and no one left to proclaim the gospel, the world would soon lapse into heathenism; but ministers become guardians of public virtue and propagators of the true spirit of progress. It has been observed that nearly all our colleges were originated by ministers, and that many of our cities and towns were founded by them in the wilderness.[1] They stimulate thoughtfulness, morality, manliness, Christianity, and all the virtues of a community which are the forerunners of its advancement. They elevate society and radiate an influence that lives the longest and deepest in the hearts of its recipients. Every one born into the kingdom of God and kept there through their labors is a lasting monument of their efforts, living to perpetuate the greatness of their work not only to the third and fourth generation, but through the eternal ages.

The pulpit is destined to be a perpetual agency. Nothing can supersede its necessity or take its place. "The long line of preachers extends in unbroken succession from Christ himself to the present hour. A line, did I say? More than a line, a pyramid, of which he is the apex, which each succeeding year rises in altitude and widens its base—and will rise and will widen until it covers all lands, and the living preacher shall be seen and heard by every child of Adam and Eve on the globe."[2]

§ II. PREACHING, THE CHIEF DUTY OF THE PREACHER.

Every professional office is essentially an office of one idea. That of the physician is the understanding of dis-

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1 "New Haven, by John Davenport; Hartford, by Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone; Providence, by Roger Williams; Salem, by Francis Higginson; Cambridge and Dorchester by John Warham."—Hoppin's *Homiletics*, page 30.

2 Bishop M. Simpson's *Yale Lectures*.

ease; that of the lawyer, the law; that of the painter, the picture; that of the preacher, the sermon. Preaching is his first and most important work. We would not underrate the value and importance of his pastoral duties, which are necessary adjuncts to preaching in order to success in the ministerial office, and which too often are slighted or very imperfectly performed. But by asserting that preaching is his chief duty, we make it the fundamental and central work of the Christian minister, deserving the concentration of the sum total of his efforts. Every other duty of his office is subordinate and auxiliary to it. Even the whole round of parochial duties is performed for the purpose of learning how to adapt his preaching to his hearers, or as a supplement to the Sunday sermon. Indeed, everything that deserves to engage his efforts is made to contribute to his power in preaching the word; and nothing extraneous, such as authorship, lecturing, or teaching, must interfere with or usurp the place and supremacy of the sermon.

Preaching is the appointed means of saving the world; and the oft-repeated scriptural injunction is, "Preach the word." "He charged us to preach unto the people." "He sent them forth to preach." "Christ sent me to preach." And even our great Example, Christ himself, was "anointed to preach." The most successful way of awakening men to a knowledge of sin, of leading them to repentance and faith in Christ, and of building up the church in all her doctrines and influence, is by preaching. True, the prayer-meeting, class-meeting, Sunday-school, Young Men's Christian Association, etc., are indispensable institutions of Christianity; but these are all moved by the pulpit, which becomes the mainspring in the whole working machinery of church-enterprise, and therefore becomes the principal lever and source of power to the minister.

In this busy age of the world, when there exist so many departments and divisions of labor, each demanding the best skill, men must become specialists, and devote their best endeavors to the perfection of their special art. "Life is so short, and man's powers so limited, that he can do but one thing well, and the preacher should therefore not expect to do aught else but preach."[1] He can afford to neglect many things in order that he may become proficient in one thing. "In the secular sphere, it is conceded that the powerful minds are those who rigorously confine themselves to one department of thought. Newton cultivated science, and neglected literature. Kant wrought in the quicksilver mines of metaphysics for fifty years, and was happy and mighty in his one work. These men made epochs, because they did not career over the whole encyclopedia."[2] And if preachers wish to increase the efficiency of their great office, they must centralize their efforts more vigorously,—not by contracting the circle of their study and activity, but by bringing the result of their study and activity in a focus of power upon the pulpit. They will find enough, and more than enough, to do to make themselves "able ministers of the word."

§ III. CHRIST, THE PREACHER'S THEME.

In secular oratory, themes are continually changing with times and circumstances. In preaching, the theme is one. The ministry of the gospel is essentially a ministry of *one text* only—"Jesus Christ the Lord."

The "gospel" which we are commanded to preach, in its truest sense, embraces the life, work, character, and kingdom of the great Messiah. Says Hoppin, "Let it be remembered that the gospel is Christ. It is wholly and entirely Christ." And in another place he continues, "As Christ is

1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, page 265.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, page 247.

the life and center of divine truth, and thus must be the end of all preaching, how can he be really absent from any true sermon?" Vinet remarks, "In every sermon we must either start from Christ, or come to him." And Murphy, in his "Pastoral Theology," adds, "A sermon which does not in some way contain the salvation of Christ, can not with any propriety be called a gospel sermon." There is not wanting an abundance of eminent testimony agreeing in these statements.

But how shall the minister understand and apply the oft-repeated appeal to "preach Christ?" Must every text mention or directly refer to him? Or should every sermon devote a portion to this great theme, whatever the text may be? Evidently not. To learn how to preach him we must study him as presented in the Bible.

That book tells us only one grand story; and that is the story of Jesus. God has given us a brief history of his Son,—not in the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, for therein is found only a sketch of his *incarnation.* One must read the whole Bible to know who Christ was. The main object of the whole canon of inspiration was to bring out in bold relief, and place upon the foreground, the life and work of Christ. If there are other incidents and characters woven into the fabric of our gospel-theme, they are only incidentals,—the foliage around and upon the Tree of Life, the root and stem of which is the Son of David. Christ is the subject and hero of the Bible. We read, it may be often unconsciously, about him from Genesis to Revelation. In the Pentateuch, in the major and minor prophets, in the Psalms and the Canticles, in the Gospels and in the Epistles, and in Revelation, throughout he is wrapped up or disguised in a multitude of types, shadows, prophecies, and parables; and he must be a dull reader and a superficial observer who does not

see Christ shining out of every page and gleaming forth from every chapter of the sacred Scriptures. The entire book is a unit upon the theme of a great, bleeding Redeemer. The Old Testament is but a preface to the New. It introduces to the world "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." And our Lord himself, after his resurrection, taught his disciples how to interpret the Word when, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning himself.*" The biblical record is a closely connected history of our one theme. Take him out of the Bible and you would have an empty cage, a hollow shell; rob it of its hero and you have a palace without a prince, an organ without a sound. Blot out this great luminary and humanity would be a failure, the world a dark, dreary wilderness, and eternity a vast horror. To preach Christ, then, is to preach in the spirit, tone, life, and substance of scriptural truth as it relates to the person, work, and infinite blessings of Christ. The whole body of sacred truth, in its form of history, poetry, experience, and philosophy, must be stripped of its external drapery and made to reveal the doctrine of the cross, "the truth as it is in Jesus." Thus nearly every passage of Sacred Writ has something of this theme. "Don't you know," said a Welsh minister, "that from every town and village and hamlet in England there is a road to London? So from every text in scripture there is a road to the great metropolis of the Scriptures, that is, Christ." "I never yet found a text that had not a road to Christ," said Spurgeon. As the sun in our solar system holds and guides all the planets and satellites, so Christ is the center of our Christian system—a system of grace and doctrine; and without him our holy religion would be shattered to atoms and torn into shreds. Our antagonists, Strauss, Renan, Paulus, Schenkel,

Baur, and others, understood this, and their stoutest blows were directed against the person of Christ. Why? Because he is the Rock upon which the Church is built, and if they had succeeded in shaking our faith in the divine Son of Mary, down would have toppled the whole structure of our Christianity. To declare the fullness and freeness of Christ's salvation, redemption, faith in him, regeneration, sanctification, and everlasting happiness through him, must be the great burden of true gospel preaching. In this spirit the apostles "went everywhere preaching the word;" and Paul, the representative apostle, says, "We preach Christ crucified;" "I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ;" "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Here we have his theme: 1. *Jesus;* 2. *Christ;* 3. *The Lord;* Jesus being his human name, given him by his foster-father; Christ, meaning *anointed*, his divine title; and Lord (*adonai*, the old plural form for the Greek κύριος) being the Jewish name for Jehovah. Paul preached the humanity, divinity, and trinity of Christ. This was his whole system of theology, of which he "determined to know nothing else." To him Jesus Christ himself was the gospel. The man was the doctrine; the doctrine was the man. To him the first, last, and essential was, objectively, Christ himself, and, subjectively, faith in him.

And the same kind of preaching needed in Paul's day is needed in our day. Though we live in other times, have new customs and modes of preaching, we have no new gospel; and the preacher, to be true to the charge committed to him, must, in the midst of a changing world and vacillating creeds, be an unerring compass upon the ship of Zion, always pointing, like a John the Baptist, to the Pole-Star of our faith, no matter what way the wind blows, how high the waves dash, or which way the ship turns.

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§ IV. HIS RELATION TO SCIENTIFIC AND POPULAR SKEPTICISM.

The gospel always was opposed or ridiculed by false philosophies and hostile heresies. The apostles had to contend with Stoic and Epicurean infidelity which denounced the gospel as "foolishness." Soon came Celsus, Julian, and Lucian, pouring out a flood of satire against Christianity and its founder; and not long ago Strauss and Renan assailed the divinity of Christ. But the present stands unprecedented in the opposition which the Bible receives from scientific investigation or speculation; and the breach between revelation and scientific culture has never been wider and deeper than now. Such a state of unfriendliness to the Bible demands a consideration of the question, What has the preacher to do in this scientific conflict?

One thing is certain. The preacher must not ignore this scientific babel of confusion as a matter of no interest to him. Instead of becoming alarmed, with serious forebodings as to the result of this cultured opposition to Christianity, he should welcome the revival and progress of scientific knowledge; for "the truth of revelation can not be imperiled by the progress of true science. * * * * The labors of some modern scientists are like the strokes of giants guided by a higher intelligence than their own, so that they build better than they know. But in spite of the atheistic intent impelling their activity, * * * * they are none the less the authors of spiritual light."[1] Nothing can be feared from the investigation of facts, for facts are unchangeable and permanent; only theories concerning them are changeable and evanescent.

This religio-scientific contest will undoubtedly terminate in a more valuable contribution to the efficiency of

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1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, page 472.

the pulpit; and the Christian teacher may injure his influence or the cause he desires to promote, by a willful ignorance of the position of scientific inquiry in this day and the results of its investigation. An acquaintance with every new development of truth is important to the preacher in order to sustain his reputation as a member of one of the learned professions, and an educated member of society; for the theology which he preaches claims to be the highest and noblest science, to which every other science is tributary and auxiliary. It also throws light upon scripture interpretation, modifying within certain limits our modern philosophy and exegesis, which must always yield to new developments in the advancement of truth. "The only change that can improve theology comes from improvement in the interpretation of the language of the Scriptures, of which theology is the systematic expression."[1]

One of the leading Christian scientists, Dr. Dawson, has well said, "Above all, those who aim to be Christian teachers should be fully armed to contend for the truth, and should have a clear and intelligent appreciation of the weapons and tactics which may be employed against it. They should also comprehend the habits of thought of specialists in science, and their followers, and the aspects in which religious truth may present itself to their minds. Further, they should be prepared to take broad views of the relations between spiritual and natural things, and should have their minds attuned to the harmonies which exist in God's revelation of himself in nature and in his Word; otherwise they may fail to attain the highest usefulness, or to be worthy expounders of a revelation from him who is at once the God of nature and of grace." But in urging a study of scientific investigation we do not

1 *Princeton Review*, January, 1879.

mean that the preacher should become an original investigator and scientific specialist, but by a kind of eclecticism make himself master of the results of the investigation of specialists whose lives are devoted to scientific research. Let him keep his eye upon the scientific bulletin-board, and especially acquaint himself with the critiques which these theories have called forth from orthodox scholars.

But the main question of interest is, how shall the preacher in the pulpit deal with the scientific skepticism of the day? In the first place, let him not attempt to reply to any such skepticism in his preaching; for this work properly belongs to the press and the platform, and not to the duties of the ministerial office. Besides, it is not to be expected that the average preacher, whose strength and vocation lie in another sphere, should be able, upon their own ground, to cope with eminent scientists who have devoted their whole life and labor in these special departments of work. What folly it would be, while engaged in preaching, to attack the categories of Kant and Hegel, to discuss the fallacies of Herbert Spencer, or to follow Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, and Häckel into the *minutiæ* of their teachings. Such may be the mission of our scholarly laymen, who should buckle on the armor for battle with the enemy, and go forth to slay these scientific Goliaths who defy the armies of the living God. But if a physician, however skilled in his profession of medicine, should venture to discuss the principles of jurisprudence with a jurist, he would likely be worsted if not defeated. So the pulpit, by laying aside its own function and going into other fields to wrestle with champions of error, may share a similar fate, and return with broken lance and bruised limb. "One should be sure before he raises the devil that he is able to slay him."

But even if a minister should make controversy with

scientific skepticism a specialty, and could fully meet all its arguments, a course of scientific disputation in the *pulpit* would not be judicious; for the very opponents against whom he directs his blows are not usually his hearers, and will not so much as learn that anything was ever said in reply by the preacher. The hearers of the gospel are generally believers in the Christian faith, and know little about the real objections of cultured skepticism. One of the weak points in Albert Barnes' preaching was that argument against infidelity was "poured out in profusion, often when, probably, not a hearer was present who could be directly benefited by it."[1]

Sometimes the popular audience may be harmed and the truth weakened by reviewing infidelity in their presence. "When a great deal of time is taken to confute imputations and answer objections, the impression is made that the cause, if not exactly a weak one, is nevertheless vulnerable. The feeling is awakened in many minds that the truth of Christianity is, after all, a matter very much litigated; that there are arguments on either hand; and such as distrust their power to hold the balance are, in a degree, bewildered and thrown into uncertainty."[2] The pulpit may thus, with the best motive to the contrary, seduce men into disbelief of every kind.

But although the preacher in the pulpit should abstain from open war against cultured skepticism by the use of counter-arguments, his sermon, nevertheless, has *something* to do with a system that comes in such vital contact and conflict with the doctrine he preaches. Many to whom he ministers are under skeptical influences, and are made to believe that the Christian faith is the dogma of unlearned bigots, and that science—falsely so called—has outgrown the

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1 Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, p. 449.

2 *Princeton Review*, January, 1878

Bible. In reference to this blatant skepticism, the preacher, instead of direct reply to the arguments of skepticism, *should show as much skill in establishing and defending the doctrines of scripture as those doubters do in assailing them.* Let him teach the opposite of scientific heresy; let him drive an additional spike into the fortress of truth for every charge from the enemy's camp, instead of returning shot. "He who is building up health is thereby conquering disease. He who is preaching truth is thereby confuting error." The men who most successfully fight skepticism are always the positive, not the negative men; not the ones who pelt error, but who make faith. Incidentally he may give side-blows with good effect, as he engages in the inculcation of positive truth; but as a rule, he should follow the instruction of Paul, which is especially applicable to our times,—"Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

By emphasizing the opposite of skeptical doctrine he gains two advantages,—he avoids needless controversy with error, which often engenders unbelief by putting his hearers in possession of objections which they never knew before; and he forearms the believer with arguments in favor of the disputed points of scriptural doctrine, which will save him from perplexity in case he may subsequently, from other sources than the pulpit, hear of the objection of infidelity. It is better to forestall infidelity than to state or define it. But such a treatment of learned doubt requires a knowledge of the doubter's position in order to state and enforce its anteposition.

The pulpit should assert its dignity by maintaining that the doctrines of the gospel we preach rank as highest in the scale of science and philosophy; that while indirectly it has to do with every aggressive science, it nevertheless

should not compromise its dignity by stooping to contend with every antagonistic theory that rises and falls in the ever-shifting tide of scientific opinion. As long as the pulpit believes in the divine inspiration of scripture, it must, in order to be consistent, hold it as infallible; and "the assumption that the Scriptures stand upon a common level with the teachings of science, and are to be called in question as any other subject of human thought, can not for a moment be admitted by the gospel preacher." We have at command a power against which no skepticism is proof. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." If any think that Christianity is a weak system, whose advocates have contributed little to the advancement of knowledge, we can mention such renowned thinkers as Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, Newton, Pascal, Butler, Chalmers, Morse, Dana, Agassiz, McCosh, and a host of others, whose scholarly defense of Christian truth has never been shaken by the best of Bible opponents. "The gospel preacher should maintain the dignity of the science which he represents, and resent the arrogance of any science that would ignore this highest of all sciences. While he should not ignore, but keep abreast with, the advanced science and learning of his age, and be able to warn the people against imposture, yet, speaking officially in the name of Christ from the pulpit, he should, like the apostle, know nothing among his flock 'save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' The church of God relies not upon the pulpit for the discussion of questions of science and philosophy with unbelievers. For that, she has not lacked in time past, nor at this day, faithful sons filling other positions, able to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."[1]

But there is a kind of *popular* skepticism, to which the preacher also stands related, which is one in source, and

1 *Princeton Review*, January, 1879.

really one in character, with the skepticism of the schools and of the scholars. It does not consist in the disbelief of Bible doctrine, but is a common-place phenomenon of doubt, arising from the conflict of life with faith, of theory with practice, or the discrepancies between real Christianity and current Christianity. This milder form of skepticism is becoming so prevalent in our day, inside as well as outside the church, that the pulpit must in some way arrest its growing tendency. How shall the preacher grapple with *this* antichrist?

Since the infection is of a practical rather than a literary character, the method of meeting it must not be an *argument*, but a *man*, a character, an illustration of divine truth embodied in the individual believer. Hence in proportion as the preacher's life corresponds with the Model Example of his faith, and as he succeeds in making the disciple more or less like the Master, may he hope to overcome the tide of popular skepticism.

And here, again, as in every moral disease, we find the only antidote to consist in the faithful presentation of Christ, brought to the lives of men as the only true type of faith and practice; and the only sure way of meeting the popular perplexity arising from the inconsistency of doctrine and life is, instead of defining doctrine, to show man a God, a Christ. Says Phillips Brooks: "If there be a revival which is needed to make Christianity strong against the enemies which beset it, and clear the sight of the multitude who are bewildered about it, it certainly must be the re-coronation of its personal idea, the re-assertion of the fact that Christ is Christianity, and that not to hold that this or that concerning him is true, but to follow him with love and with that degree of knowledge of him which has been given us, is to be a Christian. * * * * Make known the real to man, by every means you can command, the personal Christ,—not doctrine about him, but *him*."

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§ I. A PROPER CONCEPTION OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

Perhaps the best antecedent qualification for the office of the Christian ministry is a proper conception of its nature and purpose. Robert Hall, who did so much to adorn his holy profession and raise the pulpit to its true dignity and importance, said, "The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the Christian ministry, our right arm is withered, and nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains." The reason that the ministry—this royal court of the Lord—is crowded with so many inefficient occupants, who fail to give full proof of their ministry, is because they have failed to apprehend the dignified and lofty character of their mission. The preacher's preparation for and effort in the ministry will be according to his appreciation of the importance of his work. If he considers it only tantamount to that of the legal or medical profession, he will put forth no greater efforts than if he were to be a lawyer or a doctor. The preacher's work demands the best talent, and the best culture that industry and discipline can give that talent. His is a higher calling, graver in its responsibilities, and infinitely wider in its influence than any other. When the already gifted Solomon assumed the kingship of God's people, he asked for wisdom to qualify him for his responsible office. But a more tremendous responsibility is imposed upon the humblest minister of Christ than Solomon was called to assume. He is charged with a higher trust, and for the due discharge of it needs especially, and in a larger measure, the gift of practical wisdom. No human language can describe the supereminence of that work which once engaged a Savior's heart, and still inspires his soul, and which made Paul exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Paul was successful as a preacher because he magnified

his office. To magnify our office is not to have exaggerated views of it, but to see it as it is in its true importance and requirements. The microscope does not enlarge an object, but only our view of it, and presents it to us in its real aspect, adding nothing to our gaze which is not found in the object, but rather leaving it partially veiled to our sense-perception. We too often look at the ministry as the astronomer looks through a telescope at an orb so far away from him that he can see it only in miniature form. In the constellation of human professions the ministry is a star of the first magnitude. All others are secondary, and come within the range of its influence. The minister's work has to do with everybody. He is to preach the gospel to "every creature," of whatever rank or profession, of whatever name or nation. The scholar and the ignoramus, the millionaire and the pauper, the aristocrat and the plebeian, the holy Christian and the vile sinner, all, from the mightiest king down to the poorest wretch of human kind, are the subjects of his ministry. He is to wield such a power over them all, in presenting the claims of God upon their souls, as to dash to the ground all their proud and empty hopes, and make them forget sublunary things in view of their dreadful responsibility to God. To do this requires no ordinary preacher. What, then, ought to be the sanctity of his conduct and the elevation of his character? Not every man is qualified. The preacher must be vigorous, a king among men, fitted to rule by force of mind and weight of character, yet at the same time must habitually bow in lowliness before the cross of the Lord Jesus. He may belong to no earthly dynasty, but he belongs to the royalty of heaven—an embassador from another world, of greater pomp than this nether earth, commissioned by the King of kings to carry his message of salvation to wrecked and ruined humanity, and in-

trusted, not with the wealth of nations, but with the immortal souls of living men.

1. The true nature of the Christian ministry is essentially contained in one idea. It is a ministry of *truth*, eternal, immutable, triumphant truth. The difference between the gospel and all forms of scientific intelligence is that the one is a revelation of divine truth, the other a school of uncertain knowledge; or, the former is God-thought, the latter man-thought; and like their respective authors, the one is perfect, the other imperfect. Hence, all human investigation is stamped with error; but the "Word is truth,"—*absolute* truth. There is a chasm between the human and the divine mind which nothing can bridge but a revelation from heaven.

Then, all human knowledge is subordinate to the gospel. Finite reason must submit to infinite. We must not go to our knowledge to correct the gospel, but must in every case correct our knowledge by the gospel; or, as Claudius expresses it, "To improve religion by means of reason appears to me just as if I were to try to set the sun by my old wooden clock."

On the one side we have truth; on the other, uncertain knowledge. The one is eternal, the other transitory; the one immutable, the other changeable; the one triumphant, the other disastrous. Amid the mutations of human systems and the revolutions of human thought, divine truth, as a grand illustration of the survival of the fittest, has stood unmoved amid all literary epochs, and is to-day just what it was a thousand years ago, and will be a thousand years hence.

Abstract philosophy is an ever-changing Proteus. It has arrived at no positive results. From Thales and Pythagoras to Schopenhauer and Hartmann, one system has taken the place of another, while criticism has demolished

the old schools of philosophy. Men have become wiser in tearing down than in building up. Their results required correction by experience, and the test of time has laid them open to ridicule and contempt.[1] Theories of philosophy and science are reeds shaken by the wind. They may attract notice for a time, but will pass away as the morning cloud when truth's "eternal years of God" shall come. Mr. Huxley may draw audiences for a time to hear his exposition of physical life; but what chance of endurance can it have? Like the tiny plant whose roots have no deepness of earth but which is scorched by the rays of the sun, such theories can have but a short and fitful existence, and will wither away beneath the blaze of eternal truth.

Dr. Shedd says, "Other species of literature may decline in interest and value as the redemption of the human race advances, but this species [that is, the sermon] will steadily tend to its culmination. Like the Christian grace of charity, which will outlive prophecy and knowledge and tongues, sacred eloquence will outlive, or rather transform into its own likeness, all other forms of literature. Whether there be poetry, it may fail; whether there be philosophy, it may cease; whether there be literature, it may vanish away; but the word of God liveth forever."

This truth is technically called *divinity*, which is a "doctrine treating of the nature, attributes, and works of the great God, as he stands related to rational creatures, and the way how rational creatures may serve, worship, and enjoy him. And if so, is not the subject of it the greatest, and the design and business of it the noblest, in the world, as being no less than to direct an immortal soul to its endless and eternal felicity? * * * * And now, can we think that a doctrine of that depth, that height, and that

1 For example, Hegel believed that he had philosophically proved that there could be not more than eleven planets. Since his time, however, more exact astronomical investigation has added many more to this number.

vast compass, grasping within it all the perfections and dimensions of human science, does not worthily claim all the preparations whereby the wit and industry of man can fit him for it? All other sciences are but handmaids to divinity; and shall the handmaid be richer adorned and better clothed and set off than her mistress?"[1]

2. Another important function of the ministry consists in the inculcation of *duty*. It aims at the development of practical Christianity—not only the teaching of creed, but also the formation of character. Its office is twofold: truth and duty, or, truth in thought and truth in action, truth in the mind and truth in the life. "The one is creed, the other conduct; the first is belief, the second is obedience; the one faith, the other works. Without the truth, duty will be fruitless and empty,—the first, steam without cylinder or piston; the second, an engine without force."

The mission of duty is the noblest, grandest ideal of life, beyond which nothing can be desired or hoped for in the realm of human achievements. Its rewards are its own benedictions, which are peace, happiness, a good conscience, and the absence of all that troubles human breasts. It is, therefore, the height of human excellence. Living or dying, it is man's greatest boon. It is the foundation of *character*. We are not measured by our reputation, intelligence, or any acquired distinction, but by our discharge of moral obligation. We *are* not what we *seem*, but what we *do*. The ministry of the gospel which engages in the unselfish and benevolent work of educating men in the sublime art of fulfilling duty toward humanity and Deity, is doing more for the world than any other business or profession on earth; for it produces true *characters*,

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1 South's *Sermons*, Phil. ed., Vol. II., p. 79; quoted by Hoppin in *Homiletics*, pp. xxii. xxiii.

without which the world and all its business is demoralized.

Duty results in *perfection.* To meet all the demands of human obligation and discharge them cheerfully to the extent of our ability is duty; and this duty, indeed, is the only kind of perfection possible for finite beings. The sphere of knowledge and goodness is not circumscribed or circumscribable, but that of *doing* has a limit, and its acme is clearly defined by the word duty. Hence, acts of supererogation are impossible, because they imply an excess of perfection. Within the range of human possibility men can aspire to nothing higher than duty, since it leaves nothing really necessary undone; and he whose epitaph can be truthfully inscribed over his last resting-place, "I have done my whole duty," is a perfect man. Whatever else men may have done, this they do not wish left undone. That, then, must be the most princely office which interests itself in leading men to the acquisition of such royal greatness in morals and such magnanimity of character, whose excellence can be compared with nothing less than that of angels. *Duty* and *truth*, then, are the fundamental subjects of pulpit teaching which include all other subjects, and which furnish the preacher with such charming materials for his eloquence.

3. Our idea of the ministry is elevated when we remember the *purpose* for which it was instituted. All truth is in a certain sense divine, because God is its author; but the truth which especially forms the basis of the ministry is not only eternal, unchangeable, and triumphant, but spiritual, and as such most momentous in its effects. Duty, which is truth practiced and obeyed, is the *summum bonum*, and leads to the highest development of man—his salvation and eternal advancement in knowledge and happiness. This is the supreme object of the ministry as the appointed

instrument and agency of God. Every minister, in the highest sense, is a "merchantman seeking goodly pearls," —not gems of earthly glitter or kingly worth, but souls, the grandest jewels on this side the pearly gates of heaven, and each one beyond the value of the Kohinoor, the Orlow, or the Regent.

Many who have formed correct ideas of the ministry have spoken of its importance in the most fitting words. Mr. Gunn says, "The work of the ministry is the most momentous and excellent in which a mortal can engage, and one in which no man who has a just impression of its nature and consequences will lightly think of entering." Mr. Law says, "The pulpit is the battle-field where we win triumphs or sustain defeat. The angels have no such throne." Mr. Whitefield says, "The greatest preferment under heaven is to be an able, painful, weeping, successful, suffering, cast-out minister of the New Testament." Cowper says,

> "The pulpit (in the sober use
> Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
> Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
> The most important and effectual guard,
> Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause."

A proper conception of the object of a preacher's profession has made many enthusiastic in soul-saving. Payson had a continual passion for men's souls. Rutherford affirmed that they were the object of his tears, cares, fears, and daily prayer, and said, "My witness is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me." John Welsh had such a sense of the worth of men's souls that often in the coldest winter night he was found weeping and wrestling with the Lord on account of his people; and in answer to his wife's inquiry as to this solicitude he said, "I have the

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A ruler's awe, a watchman's wakefulness,
A father's patience, and a laborer's toil,
A guide's dexterity to disembroil,
A prophet's inspiration from above,
A teacher's knowledge, and a Savior's love."

Cowper, the sweet poet of Olney, says,—

"Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."[1]

§ II. PHYSICAL PREPARATION.

We have spoken of the nature of the Christian ministry as a basis upon which to predicate the several qualifications for the office of preaching. Of course, we must omit treating of many particulars, such as official and social qualifications, which belong to the pastor rather than to the preacher, for we purpose speaking only of a minister's qualification for the pulpit, and not for the parish. He who comprehends and feels the weight of his responsibility, and the demands of the ministry, will not fail to lay under tribute and bring into requisition every attainable power whereby he may accomplish the grandest results in this one great business of his life.

First, then, there should be a *physical* fitness. "Another observation is founded on the fact that the duties of the

1 *Task*, Book II.

constituted preacher are arduous and constant. It is that he must have a good physical organization. He must be able to bear frequent and copious draughts upon his nervous energy. * * * * We have every reason to believe that prophets and apostles and evangelists of the Old Testament and the New were men of strong physical structure, or, at least, of sound health. We think of Moses climbing the cliffs of Sinai, Samuel hewing Agag in pieces, Jeremiah trudging off to the Euphrates and back twice for a single lesson to Judah, Elijah traversing the wilderness, the apostles journeying into all lands, as men of muscle and sound physical organs."[1]

Extreme bodily weakness is a disqualification for effective preaching. A full development of physical force is needed for intellectual and spiritual power; for generally the men who have achieved great results in the cause of God were those who have preserved the *mentem sanam in corpore sano.* It is not necesssary here to show the subtle relation between physiology and psychology. Experience has taught us that those special faculties which are most needed in public speaking—namely, judgment, will, memory, imagination, and the power of rapidly originating and combining thought,—depend most eminently on vital force, the health of athletic soundness, and an Herculean body. These quicken our mental activity and sharpen our comprehension of the various relations of truth. This in turn reacts upon our spirituality. A sluggish, phlegmatic spirit is often the result of a morbid physical condition.

Our affections and feelings rise and fall with the tide of physical and mental power. It was for this reason Paul said, "I keep under my body;" and to give this saying the right sense, we are to keep under the body as a ship keeps the water beneath it. So keep the body in constant

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1 Dr. Howard Crosby's *Yale Lectures*, pp. 20–22.

subjection to the mind, that the whole intellectual force may securely rise and rest upon it. It should be the support and servant of the mind; and when strong and hale, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will propel the mind forward with wonderful alacrity.

There are some cases where a feeble and sickly state of body has exhibited power in a particular direction. The mind will sometimes show abnormal activity when the brain is in anything but a healthful condition. The emotional nature may be especially excitable, but its power of propagating emotion in others is not in like manner increased when the body is suffering from a diseased sensibility. In such a state the preacher may be sympathetic, but it is generally with the shadows that are in the world. He can not enter into the sentiment of those more joyful and stirring themes of the gospel with a spirit that blossoms like Aaron's rod. Force, buoyancy, elasticity, vigor, come to the mind from the sound and energetic physical force which underlies and sustains it.

Dr. Howard Crosby, in speaking of the close connection that often exists between bodily weakness and erroneous doctrine, says, "We do not say that a man's liver might cause him to reject the atonement, or his neuralgia might make him a Swedenborgian. We do not attribute to any degree of physical disease a destruction of the biblical system of doctrine in the subject of disease, but we are confident that the *coloring* of a preacher's teaching is largely affected by his morbosity. Gloomy views of the Christian life, a false estimate of the relations which Christians should sustain toward the moving world around them, and ascetic admixture with the duties of religion, a lack of practical sympathy with the varieties of disposition found in a congregation of a thousand souls, and a failure to feel and exhibit the just inter-proportions of scriptural

doctrine, are natural results of an enfeebled constitution, where the wheels of physical life work jarringly and painfully."

Again, great physical vigor is necessary for impressive delivery. The narrow chest, feeble voice, diseased throat, and nervous temperament, which produce a "kind of mental paralysis in the presence of an audience, that makes a public appearance a kind of martyrdom," do not indicate a man formed for public speech.

When we think of eloquence, we naturally call to mind such massive men as Webster, Punshon, and Whitefield,—speakers of large bodily capacity, whose overwhelming rhetoric pressed every thought upon men's minds with the immense current of their physical energy. They were full of force, like a fountain, and flowed over at the eye, at the lip, at the heart, and all the time, with every species of action and demonstration. Physical power was a fire under their mental machinery. There is a peculiar physical adaptation to powerful oratory which every minister may covet.

But not every minister is endowed by nature with such a *physique*, nor can he create it for himself; and yet every one, by training, may correct many natural defects and improve many valuable gifts. A man called of God to preach is as morally bound to cultivate his physical organs as he is to educate his mental faculties and give them the capacity which his vocation demands. The penman, the painter, the sculptor, will train his hand and muscle by long processes for the execution of graceful lines and delicate touches. Not any hand can produce a Madonna or an Angelo's Moses. The athlete and gymnast, the man who is to swing upon the trapeze, develops each muscle and gives each nerve its proper training for the feats he accomplishes, until the results are simply amazing. Remember the pains men take to train themselves in other

and lower departments of effort; and let us be ashamed if we are not willing to give to this grandest office on earth the discipline which is so much needed for success in it. Hence the importance of improving the voice by subjecting ourselves to a course of elocutionary drill and vocal culture; of enlarging the chest; of increasing muscular strength and facilitating gesture by proper athletic exercise; of increasing and preserving vigorous health by attention to diet, sleep, exercise; of applying ourselves faithfully to those processes which give vitality and recuperative force to the explosive power by which we can the better be able to thrust the truth out upon the hearts and consciences of men. "What may be done where the mind is resolutely bent on accomplishing it, for supplying the deficiencies and correcting faults in elocution, Demosthenes has taught us; and were half or a tenth part of the pains taken by us to obtain a powerful and effective method of pulpit address which were submitted to by this prince of orators to become an effective speaker, * * * * we too should become orators, and that in a yet better cause than his."[1]

Plutarch tells us that by unwearied perseverance Demosthenes surmounted all the disadvantages that arose from his person and address. The stammering of his tongue he corrected by practicing speech with pebbles in his mouth; he strengthened his voice by declaiming by the sea-shore; he practiced at home with a naked sword hanging over his shoulder, that he might check an ungraceful movement to which he was subject; ran up a hill pronouncing some passage in a poem during the difficulty of breathing which that caused. Surely, if his country's cause "prompted the Athenian orator to such studies and such efforts for self-improvement, ought not the love of souls, zeal for God, and the interests of eternity to prompt us to similar

[1] James' *Earnest Ministry*, page 126.

endeavor?" It can not be that the parliament and the forum alone demand such oratorical drill.

Again, a minister ought to improve bodily fitness by abandoning and abstaining from those habits which prostrate the physical system. No minister has a right to desecrate and injure that body which God gave him to be wholly consecrated to the service of the gospel; and if by any indulgence he violates the laws of nature so as to cripple his bodily vigor, he becomes not only a sufferer, but a sinner. Formerly, preachers, in order to stimulate mental activity, used alcoholic liquors to the damage of their health, and not unfrequently to their shame and the scandal of the church. "In many churches both wine and brandy are kept in the vestry for the use of the minister both before and after preaching. On my first visit to the old countries, the kind sextons seemed to be as much astonished that I would not accept them as I was amazed at their being offered. I have known some young ministers who used a few drops of paregoric, or a small quantity of opium, to give them temporary strength in the pulpit. I am glad to say that I have known but few such cases; but I must add that these were led in the end to either physical or moral ruin."[1] At present nearly all use coffee and tea. "The effect of these stimulants is unquestionably to give greater strength to the system for the time; but all such artificial strength is a draft which must be repaid with interest. The unnatural excitement will be followed by subsequent depression."[2] And since the use of alcohol has been denounced, many have adopted the use of tobacco, in some form, to the ruin of their health, the utter prostration of their nervous system and their memory, and the demoralization of their manliness. "There may be a few cases where persons are very phleg-

1 Bishop M. Simpson's *Yale Lectures.* 2 *Ibid.*

matic and inclined to corpulency, where a small amount of tobacco may be of service medicinally. So, too, in certain stages of bronchial difficulty, a temporary use may be of some relief; but for persons of nervous organization, as ministers usually are, it is an unmixed evil. It gives temporary tension, to produce ultimate relaxation. Not a few cases have I known of most promising and talented young men who have been by it hastened to an untimely grave."[1] Not a few ministers resort to some stimulant or narcotic, with the delusive idea that the temporary excitement is a source of strength. The result is, dyspepsia, nervousness, and general debility, and at last, like the robust Barrow, on account of his excessive use of tobacco,—the only shadow upon his reputation,—they die at a premature age. "God does not require us to use artificial strength in the pulpit. We must give ourselves in our best vigor and culture to his service, but we should so give ourselves that the service of one hour shall not destroy our power for subsequent usefulness. I believe one reason why so many ministers complain of 'blue Monday' is that they have keyed up their system by extra efforts beyond its natural tension, and the excitement passing away leaves them depressed."[2]

Every minister, before entering the sacred office, for the sake of efficiency in the cause of his Master, should first slay every giant habit that is preying upon his vital forces. Let him before entering upon the ministry, and during his continuance in it, give attention to physical culture and habits. He needs all the power he can command to preach a life-giving and life-preserving gospel.

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[1] Bishop M. Simpson's *Yale Lectures.* [2] *Ibid.*

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of commerce, which may be acquired by human effort, and disposed of for pecuniary gain. * * * * The plea that a minister must devote much time in making preparation for the pulpit seems to us a singular idea."[1] Was it "a singular idea" that Paul, after his conversion and call to the ministry, should spend three years in Arabia in preparation for his great work? With all his previous scholarship, acquired in the school of Hillel, from the great teacher Gamaliel, he would not rush into the arena of his public ministry unarmored and unaccustomed to the weapons. Was it "a singular idea" that Christ, a greater than Paul, spent thirty years at his home in Nazareth in making preparation for the three crowning years of his life? "If I were sure of living ten years, I should spend nine of them in preparing to preach during the tenth," said an able preacher.

Jackson's idea of mental preparation is so low an estimate of the minister's office as to amount almost to desecration. It regards the lower and secular interests of life with greater thoughtfulness than the higher and eternal interests of men. Who would think now of becoming a mechanic, or of entering the ranks of the medical or legal profession, without previous training? No one could do it without depreciating the worth of the office in which he serves, and thereby rendering it less efficient and effectual according to the number of unworthy representatives that crowd its ranks. Every unqualified preacher in the ministerial office, instead of counting *plus*, will sadly be a *minus* in the value of its efficiency. If, according to Jackson, God has no need of our learning, he can have still less need of our ignorance.

Some entirely ignore all manner of preparation for the pulpit, both general and special, and look for immediate

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1 John Jackson's *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry.*

inspiration, such as was promised to men under extraordinary circumstances, to whom Christ said, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." The passage forbids undue anxiety; but no more forbids human forethought and human means than the other direction, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? * * * * for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," forbids us to provide for our food and clothing. Both commands seem to imply God's assistance whenever needed, but no promise that he will do for us anything which we can do ourselves.

We sometimes hear it said that the apostles were unlearned men. True, they never passed through a course of training such as is now provided for our young men; but they were far from being unlearned in theology. Their professional training was extensive, and even extraordinary. They enjoyed for three years the personal instruction of the world's great Teacher. He taught them the deep things of God, stimulated thought, awakened inquiry, startled them with wonders of the gospel. They did not sit at ease while he taught them. They worked upon his great ideas. They tasked themselves to grasp his meaning, and to become filled with his spirit. Moreover, the apostles were divinely inspired to preach the kingdom of God, to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils." (Matt. x. 7, 8.) What modern preacher can boast of such an instructor, or enjoy so divine an endowment? The best and most talented man of to-day, after having passed through a thorough curriculum of theological study, in the presence of our apostolic brethren would have to feel that he is far their inferior in preparation for the ministry.

There is no ground for believing that in our day Christ will communicate the necessary learning to his ministers. At the commencement of the church inspiration was necessary to show that Christianity had its origin not in the wisdom of schools, that it derived its authority not from the researches and deductions of the learned, but from the immediate inspiration and will of God. No such necessity now exists, and therefore extraordinary gifts are no longer imparted; not that the office requires less fitness now than formerly, but because there are now other means provided for our preparation that must, in a measure, take the place of inspiration.

Hence, we find that the most successful ministers since the days of the apostles have been men of learning and study. Among the church-fathers, Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius, Chrysostom, and Augustine, all gave evidence of extensive learning. In the days of the Reformation, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin were all school-men. The French pulpit can boast of such profoundly educated preachers as Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fenelon, Claude, Massillon, and Saurin. To think of the leading English preachers is to think of learning and power. Jeremy Taylor, who is justly called the "Shakespeare of the pulpit," was a graduate of Cambridge, and for a time held the vice-chancellorship of Trinity College, Dublin. Barrow's early attainments were wonderful. He was made fellow of Trinity at nineteen, with the king's remark, "I have given it to the best scholar in England." He also held the chair of mathematics at Cambridge, and afterward resigned his chair to his pupil, Sir Isaac Newton. South received his education at Westminster and his degree at Oxford. Passing by many others of note, we remember that the pious non-conformists, Owen, Bates, Flavel, Howe, Doddridge, etc., were

all college-bred men. Scotland has been electrified with the eloquent preaching of the learned Knox, Bruce, Guthrie, Livingstone, and Blair. More recently, we mention as examples of learning and eloquence Chalmers, Monod, Vaughan, Newman Hall, Coquerel, Bersier, M. de Pressense, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Finney, and Otterbein. All these are preachers who have given formation to Christian and national character, and stamped their age with the spirit of their teaching. Even to-day the nations of the world owe far more to the faithful ministers of the church than to the ministers of the state.

A classical and theological education is almost an indispensable preparation, and should be acquired at the college and seminary; but when this is impracticable or impossible, the course as usually prescribed by such schools, or its equivalent, should be studied and mastered by the junior preacher.

We are not pleading so much for a collegiate and professional course as for *thorough mental culture*, wherever and by whatever means it may be acquired. The formality of graduation can never take the place of true scholarship, for "graduated" and "educated" are not always synonymous either theoretically or practically. In whatever way this solid education be imparted, whether in or out of the schools, it will always be an advantage to supplement it with a few months or years of travel, especially in Bible-countries, where our theological knowledge may be compared, corrected, confirmed, and in many ways enriched for the pulpit.

"Scholarly culture is also valuable, because it tends *to make one intellectually humble.* Earnest study keeps down self-conceit, since it causes a man to see how little he knows, and what are the limitations of human knowledge, and what is truth's vastness. To know these things is really

the philosophical foundation of Christianity, which is the realization of human nothingness, and its need of higher enlightenment. True theology is humble, because it has gained some conception of the incomprehensibility of the infinite. A man who studies any branch of science sees what a life-long toil it requires to make himself proficient in it, to say nothing of mastering it. By study in any direction, in any department of knowledge, one is brought to so many doors leading into entirely new kingdoms of knowledge, which he can have no hope ever to explore, that he grows less self-confident every step he takes."[1]

One good reason for a highly educated ministry is that truth may be made clear and simple. It requires no little learning to be plain. It is the half-educated men who confound their audiences with great puffings of vanity and exhibitions of bombast. The thoroughly educated preacher is lucid, simple, and intelligible, because his words are well chosen, his plans well digested, his logic correct. Learning is not to veil truth, but to bring it to light. It makes us plain and powerful preachers, fitted for appreciation by the learned and the ignorant. We see this fact illustrated in secular literature. Shakespeare is the poet of the masses, as well as of the "laureate fraternity," because his vivid images flow from a thorough comprehension and perfect knowledge of men and nature. Lord Bacon's understanding addressed both peasant and philosopher, because it grasped firmly and saw entirely through what it looked at. In each of these cases there was much learning in the sense of clear and thorough knowledge. In no sphere is there greater need of this learned plainness than in preaching. To illuminate the darkened understanding and to dispel the mist from doubting minds is the crowning work of preaching.

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1 Hoppin's *Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, pp. 437, 438.

A little learning is dangerous. It not only perverts doctrine by misconception, but clouds simple truth with obscurity. It is a mistake to suppose that the common people can not understand a profoundly deep preacher. If the water is clear, the depth is easily seen; cloudy water obscures even shallow bottom. When Bourdaloue, than whom France never had a more learned divine, preached in the small village churches, it is said that the people were astonished at his simplicity, and said, "Is this the great Paris preacher? Why, we understood all he said." The same thing is said of the learned Archibald Alexander, Tillotson, and others. True knowledge reduces the Bible to a few simple but weighty doctrines. Leigh Richmond used to say that two great subjects pervade the Bible, sin and salvation from sin, and that these ought to form the basis of the Christian ministry. Said a dying theologian, "My theology is now reduced to these two points—that I am a guilty sinner, and that the blood of Christ expiates human guilt."

"If we examine the preaching of the great and evangelistic divines of the church in all ages, we find but one general strain and tone. Everything is tinged with sin and redemption. The fall and recovery of the human soul, paradise lost and paradise regained, are the substance of their sermonizing. Like some of the great painters, they are monochromatic; they employ only one principal color."[1]

Again, our age especially demands a highly educated ministry. Within a few years a great change has been produced in the intellectual level of all our communities. How much easier it was to prepare a sermon up to the level of an ordinary congregation fifty years ago than it is to produce one to-day that will satisfy the people. Our schools are

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1 Discourse delivered by Dr. W. G. T. Shedd on *Clerical Education* before the American Education Society, May 28th, 1855.

every year sending out a large class of men and women who become gospel auditors. The minister is to be their instructor. How can he instruct unless he keeps himself intellectually in advance of them? Besides, good preaching has become so abundant that people will no longer listen to a common-place sermon.

"The people of America, of whatever class, are free to hear whom they choose, or not to hear at all, unless addressed in a manner adapted to please or profit them. Corresponding to this state of things, the preachers of all churches, together with errorists of every description, are in active competition for the ears and hearts of the masses. The people, too, having great advantages for education, and no reverence for prescriptive authority, demand the best forms of Christian address, and such appeals to their reason and their emotion as challenge their respect."[1]

This is a restless, critical, fastidious age; and to prove equal to the present demands, the minister of to-day must be a man of greater ability than his predecessor. So also the existing conflict with educated skepticism calls for a learned ministry. Not that the preacher should waste his time in combating, in the pulpit, the present scientific heresies, but he should show as much ability in his vocation, and establish the doctrine of the Bible with as masterly a hand, as do those literary skeptics in advocating their theories. The time is coming, and is now, when the interests of the church will require a far broader and fuller education in the ministry than now exists.

§ IV. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION.

We come now to speak of that most important preparation, without which no man is fit for the pulpit, whatever his other abilities may be. This third is the bond

1 McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Art. Homiletics.

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as well as the Spirit of God, to the truth of his conversion, give instruction and counsel to inquiring souls? Like Otterbein at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, advice will be "scarce."

A second spiritual qualification for a true preacher is a large share of the spirit of the great Master. Christ is our model. What was the secret of his power? He had the eloquence of angels, and spoke as never man spake; possessed all knowledge, and could unfold all mysteries. But it was not this that made him the triumphant preacher. It was *love*, the deepest, highest, broadest, and grandest the world has ever seen. It knew no bounds save those of the human race; and like the sun, his light shone upon the good and the evil. Here, then, is the true philosopher's stone, the alchemy of heaven, that converts all the baser passions of men into the golden, heavenly loveliness of Christ's image. Neptune's trident and Moses' rod wielded no such influence over man and nature as did the love of Christ over the hearts of men. This is our "*in hoc signo vinces.*" To be furnished with Christ's great spirit of love is to move through the world with the silent, potent power of gravitation, that can carry the masses and communities of men in steady orbits around the cross of Christ.

John Wesley, that holy man, who dwelt upon the mount of communion with God, whence he came down, like Moses to the people, radiant with the glory on which he was gazing, drew the multitude around him by the magnet of his broad, unselfish love, not as his worshipers, but as his satellites, moving with him around the same great Sun. No palisade around his home, no sectional wall of ecclesiastical caste, could prevent the outgo and overflow of his world-wide love; and it was that spirit of full-orbed benevolence and broad philanthropy that made him exclaim, "The world is my parish." We must be baptized with His Spirit and transfigured with His love if

we would become good Samaritans, or lovers of the universal brotherhood; and we must be lovers of men if we would win them to Christ. The Lord is seeking for a character—a peculiar temper or spirit that is found like unto his own glorious Spirit.

Christ loved all men for the sake of their souls; and we must be in earnest sympathy with him in his great enterprise of redemption. We must travail for souls in tears and prayers; have a deep sense of the misery and desert of sin; realize the value of a soul saved from death, and labor earnestly with Him to rescue the temple of fallen humanity from the curse of a broken law; must be willing, like Moses, to lead a life of sacrifice and self-denial, and to turn away from the allurements of wealth and influence, feeling that the humble path we have chosen has rewards greater than those of Egypt. The preacher must be humble in spirit, cheerfully laying all his acquirements at the feet of Jesus; and though weak and unworthy, he will trust in that grace which is all-sufficient. He must be a man of deep piety and loving spirit, and possess a reputation and a character "above suspicion," which have upon them no tarnish of anything that is evil. In brief, he must be a *good* man. Whatever his intelligence, he must be of strong faith, true spirituality, and deep earnestness; a man like Stephen, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." If, as the ancient rhetoricians taught, the orator must be a good man, how necessary that the preacher should be a holy man in order to be eloquent. Give us muscular, healthy, intellectual men; but above all, give us holy men to preach the gospel. "Give us," in the language of Dr. Spring, "abler, better, and more spiritual preachers, even if they must be fewer." What the church wants is not more ministers, but better ones. Says one of much experience, "I have heard hundreds of preachers on both sides of the

Atlantic, the past twenty-five years, and am convinced that our great lack is not in the matter of originality, but in *consecration of heart and brain and voice and style* to the one aim of exalting CHRIST before the eyes of men."

Thus far we have spoken of a proper idea of the Christian ministry, and of a physical, mental, and religious preparation, as adaptations or qualifications for the sacred office of preaching; but were we to stop here, we should omit the first and greatest indispensable fitness. Important as are all these, they yet are only secondary. The primary and all-important qualification is a *divine call* to the work of preaching. Without it, no one, however otherwise well adapted, will intrude on this "holy ground" or venture to minister from the sacred desk; with it, he possesses the highest credential fitness, whether he be learned or ignorant, strong or weak, male or female. God does sometimes choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" but he does not call them to remain "foolish" and "weak." Self-help and divine aid must co-operate to make such ones "mighty in word and deed." In this respect there has been many a Bunyan.

Though in our list of qualifications we mention a divine call last, yet this really is the first in the order of a preacher's preparation. Having once obtained this fundamental requisite, it is his duty to become all that is possible in body, mind, and heart. But what we now insist on is that he must be sure of a call from God to preach his gospel. Of the ministry of to-day it may be said, as it was of the ancient priesthood, "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb. v. 4.) No doubt many have mistaken their calling, and after serving for a time in the ministry have discovered their mistake and gone to some other business.

Francis Wayland, in his excellent "Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel," says of such, "A sort of medium course is taken. Hence, to-day all sorts of places are filled with ministers. Colleges, academies, schools, derive their instructors, in a large proportion, from men who have been educated for the ministry. Agents for colleges, solicitors for their funds, and for the funds of all our benevolent associations, are taken from our educated clergy. Editors of religious newspapers, and a large part of the staff of such an establishment, are taken from the same class. The circulation of religious books is done by ministers."

Have all ministers who are thus engaged mistaken their calling? When God calls a man to the ministry, is that call life-long, and the regular work never to be abandoned under any circumstances? We believe that an answer to these questions must admit exceptions; for many ministers, such as Melanchthon, Witsius, Witherspoon, Dwight, and Graham, have served Christ as faithfully in the school-room or university as in the pulpit. Yet it is, nevertheless, true that many who have exchanged the pulpit for other and lower pursuits never had a call from God to the work of preaching; at least their conviction of duty while in the ministry has not been strong enough to hold them to their post.

What are the evidences of a true call to the ministry? These are various, and are generally internal and mediate, rather than external and immediate. No one now must expect God to speak to him in audible tones from heaven, or wait for an extraordinary and miraculous call. The Lord employs means. These are:

First. A strong desire to preach. This desire must be a disinterested one. No worldly consideration, such as intellectual taste, literary ease, opportunity for popularity, or any of the secondary aspects, must ever become a *desidera-*

tum in our choice of the ministry. Our motive for the work must be the salvation of souls. This desire must be abiding. No young man at the beginning can know experimentally all the difficulties and temptations that may in after years make him regret his choice; but having at the outset estimated everything at its right figure, his desire to preach continues with him when tempting offers of wealth or comfort come in to try him, and even grows more intense under the test of trial and by the lapse of years until it becomes a yearning.

Second. A deep conviction of duty. Let no one preach unless inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost. "Do not enter the ministry if you can help it," was the wise counsel of a divine to one who sought his judgment; and our great reason for entering the ministry and abiding there through life is this deep, settled feeling: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Against such a call it is dangerous to offer resistance. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." (Isaiah xlv. 9.) Remember Jonah. "Even in its faintest form there is this distinction between a call to the ministry and a choice of other professions: a young man may *wish* to be a physician; he may *desire* to enter the army; he would *like* to be a farmer; but he feels he *ought* to be a minister. It is this feeling of OUGHT, or obligation, which, in its feeblest form, indicates the divine call. It is not in the aptitude, taste, or desire, but in the conscience, that its root is found. It is God's voice to the human conscience, saying, 'You ought to preach.'"[1]

Third. The judgment and approval of God's people. (See Acts vi. 1-6.) Yet this approval is not final. The maxim, "*Vox populi vox Dei*," is neither infallible nor safe, and only to be estimated in proportion to the intelligence and piety

[1] Simpson's *Yale Lectures*, p. 46.

of those consulted. In the act of setting apart a man to the sacred office of the ministry, both candidate and people must have convictions of the most solemn responsibility. Here, again, I quote Dr. Wayland: "If the candidate declares out of mere form that he is inwardly moved to preach; if those who give him their sanction do it without inquiry, examination, or satisfactory knowledge of his qualifications, then both are guilty of lying to the Holy Ghost. If both parties act as it becomes men under such responsibilities, there will be no great danger of mistake. A fallible being will fail somewhere; but there is here as little liability to failure as falls to men in any of the ordinary affairs of life."[1]

These three motives we consider the main evidences of a divine call. There are, it is true, other minor considerations that enter into the list of evidences, such as a high estimate of the ministry, and some physical and mental adaptation. With these marks, any man who is honest with himself in applying these tests in his self-examination will have no occasion to err in solving this important problem. Let him ask himself the question, "Why do I wish to preach?" And if he can get the candid response from within, "Because God and the church demand it, and my own passion for souls will give me no rest until I yield to this request," then let him no longer question his divine appointment, but at once begin the work of special preparation and consecration so necessary to success in his new calling.

§ V. COMMON SENSE.

This is not a thing common to all, but on the other hand is a somewhat rare gift. It is the master-talent, inasmuch as it tempers and regulates all the other ministerial qualifications so that they appear seemly and beautiful in

1 *Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel*, p. 35.

the possessor, neither offending others by their abuse nor distinguishing himself by eccentricities. Theremin, who founds eloquence in virtue, says that the moral action is also good sense, since ethics includes the whole conduct of man, and must therefore furnish the *means* requisite to attain rational ends.[1]

Common sense, according to Shedd, "is that innate sagacity of the understanding which detects truth by a sort of instinct." Prof. Stowe, of Andover, used to define it as "the ability to see things as they are, and the knack of doing things as they ought to be done." Another preacher of clear discrimination says, "We may describe it as an intuitive perception of the fitness of things, so that he who is endowed with it will always do that which is appropriate to the circumstances. It is different from caution, or what is generally known as prudence; inasmuch as that is the result of calculation, while common sense is rather an immediate perception. * * * * He who lacks this quality has no right to be a minister, for he turns the most sacred things into a laughing-stock, and makes a burlesque of the office itself. * * * * Common sense can not be acquired. Yet in those who have it, it may be cultivated and increased."[2]

The utter lack of common sense on the part of a preacher is a serious and incurable defect. Nothing can take its place or lead to its attainment. It is an original endowment, and its absence is an evidence of unfitness for preaching.

Whenever a student commenced his course of study in a certain Presbyterian school, the president was accustomed to address him thus: "Young man, if you want learning, we are here to give it you; if you want grace, we can tell

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1 Cf. *Systematic Rhetoric*, pp. 86, 87.

2 W. M. Taylor's *Yale Lectures*, pp. 75, 76.

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CHAPTER III.

SPECIAL PREPARATION.

Theoretical Homiletics—Practical Homiletics—Gathering of Homiletical Material.

The preacher needs not only a general preparation for the ministry, but also a special preparation in his own art. "It is not enough that he be acquainted with those leading departments in which every educated, and especially every professional man, is interested; he must also be master of that specific art and department, upon which the clerical profession is more immediately founded."[1]

A good theologian may be a poor preacher. A healthy, pious man, with all the requirements that go to make up the pulpit orator, may be no orator at all. He needs a special culture. The student of every literary profession needs a general adaptation for his calling, as a foundation for success therein, but by far the most important requisitiou is the study and mastery of his own special art. Hence, a brief outline of theoretical and practical homiletics, together with a cursory survey of the field from which most homiletical material is derived, is the object of this chapter.

§ I. THEORETICAL HOMILETICS.

This treats of preaching as a *science*, based upon fundamental principles in the application of rhetoric to homiletics.

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1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 52.

A systematic classification might be arranged into four departments; namely, *Historical* Homiletics, which consists in a history of preaching in all times and countries;[1] *Definitive* Homiletics, to which belongs all that pertains to the principle, nature, object, and variety of the sermon; *Constructive* Homiletics, or the actual composition of the sermon; and *Operative* Homiletics, which includes all that is connected with the delivery of sermons. All these subjects are more or less discussed in every systematic treatise on preaching.

Dr. Dale, in his "Yale Lectures," advises young ministers to read every book on preaching that they can buy or borrow, whether it is old or new, Catholic or Protestant, English, French, or German; but as their number is too great to justify any preacher in reading them all, we will mention only such as deserve careful perusal.

1. "*Concerning the Priesthood*" (*Περὶ Ἱερωσύνη*) by Chrysostom, is a celebrated treatise on the priesthood, written at an early period of his ministry, in which he treats of the dignity and elevation of the Christian priesthood in words that set one's spirit aglow. Nothing can exceed the earnestness with which he urges the importance of spiritual, moral, and intellectual qualification for an office the highest that can be filled by man. It has been translated by B. H. Cowper.

2. "*Concerning Christian Teaching*" (*De Doctrina Christiana*), by Augustine. The first three books of this work are on invention, the fourth on utterance. It is an admirable treatise, combining good sense and burning feeling. Its translation into English may be found in the "Biblical Repository," I., p. 569.

3. "*Dialogues on Eloquence, and particularly that of the*

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1 This subject is so extensive in its matter that it should be treated in a work by itself.

Pulpit," by M. de Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray. This work is a classic, and was, no doubt, suggested by Cicero's dialogues on oratory; but they have been admired throughout the Protestant and Catholic worlds. They were translated from the French in 1722, and are to be found in a volume entitled, "Preacher and Pastor."

4. "*Eloquence a Virtue,*" by Dr. Francis Theremin, was translated from the German into English in 1859. This work proceeds on the principle of the highest ethical character of all true eloquence; that its basis is virtue. Theremin was the first who fully unfolded and illustrated the idea of the ancients, that the orator must be a good man, and this is the vitalizing principle of the whole subject of his Systematic Rhetoric. The introduction, by the translator, Dr. Shedd, is excellent.

5. "*Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching,*" by Henry Ware, jr., is a brief but able and valuable treatise on the subject of its title. It is now printed in Ripley's "Sacred Rhetoric." M. Bautain's "Art of Extempore Speaking" may be read in connection with Ware with great profit.

6. "*Lectures on Homiletics and Preaching, and on Public Prayer,*" by Ebenezer Porter, D. D., was the first systematic work on homiletics written in America, and was published just before the author's death. It is an instructive and valuable discussion on the subject of preaching and prayer. Though out of print in this country, it has been republished in England.

7. "*Ecclesiastes Anglicanus; a Treatise on Preaching, as adapted to a Church of England Congregation,*" by W. Gresley, has many points of merit to ministers of all countries and denominations.

8. "*Homiletics; or, The Theory of Preaching,*" by Alex. Vinet, D. D., is a posthumous work consisting of notes taken by students of the addresses of the author. Though

incomplete in its range of subjects, it is a book of rare merit, and is extensively used by the clergy even in our day. It was ably translated by Thomas H. Skinner, D.D., in 1853.

9. "*An Earnest Ministry the Want of the Times,*" by J. Angell James, of Birmingham. This work is an enlarged edition of a sermon preached by him at the anniversary celebration of Cheshunt College. It is devoted to the enforcement of earnestness in the matter, manner, delivery, and means of preaching, and is marked by that distinctness, point, and fervor for which the author was so eminently distinguished.

10. "*Delivery of Sermons,*" by A. Monod, is a lecture delivered while the author was professor in the French Protestant Theological School at Montauban. It is full of good and practical advice on the subject. It is published in Fish's "Select Discourses."

11. "*Thoughts on Preaching,*" by Daniel Moore, is catholic in spirit, sensible and scholarly in its treatment.

12. "*Thoughts on Preaching,*" by J. W. Alexander, D.D. This is a posthumous publication. The author was in the habit of jotting down from time to time whatever occurred to him on the subject of preaching. These notes, with a series of letters to young ministers, and several articles published in the "Princeton Review," constitute the present volume. It is fragmentary and poorly arranged, but brimful of fresh, vivid, practical, and eminently useful thoughts.

13. "*Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel,*" by Francis Wayland. This is a small book, containing many excellent hints for the preacher.

14. "*The Duty and the Discipline of Extemporaneous Preaching,*" by F. B. Zincke, contains much of the author's own experience in acquiring an extemporaneous

style of preaching, with some remarks on the composition of sermons, and the aims and subjects of sermons.

15. "*Treatise on Homiletics,*" by Daniel P. Kidder, D. D., late of Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J., was written while the author was professor in the Biblical Institute at Evanston, Ill. (Methodist), and revised in 1868. The work is well adapted for a text-book, covers a wide range of subjects containing much valuable instruction, and presents the most complete list of homiletical literature of any work extant, although the author's idea of a sermon is somewhat complicated, and lacks simplicity in form.

16. "*Homiletics and Pastoral Theology,*" by W. G. T. Shedd, D. D. The first part, on homiletics proper, is not by any means complete in its range of topics, but every subject, under his skillful hand, is fully and vigorously discussed in a scholarly and earnest Christian manner, which makes it the best treatment to be found on the subjects considered. It is the union of the philosophy and practice of homiletics that gives it a stamp of great merit.

17. "*A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons,*" by John A. Broadus, D. D., LL. D. This is undoubtedly the best text-book on homiletics for the use of students and junior preachers that has yet been issued. It touches on nearly all topics of interest to the preacher, many of which are treated in a very able and practical manner. The author is fully acquainted with the literature on the subject, and his valuable treatise is the result of much investigation and reflection.

18. "*For the Work of the Ministry,*" by W. G. Blaikie, D. D., LL. D. This is a manual of homiletical and pastoral theology, most of which was delivered by the author to the students of the New College, Edinburgh, in his "Course of Ecclesiastical and Pastoral Theology." The part on homiletics is admirable.

19. "*The Theory of Preaching,*" by Austin Phelps, D. D., late professor of Sacred Rhetoric in Andover Theological Seminary. This is an elaborate discussion on the "Text, Explanation, Introduction, Proposition, Divisions, Development, and Conclusion of the Sermon," which constitutes the entire bulk of the work. These lectures are constructed on the practical method. Nine tenths of the book, we are told, consists of answers to inquiries of students. It is readable, and contains much worth noting, but is too limited in its range of subjects for a complete "Theory of Preaching." It contains a valuable appendix on homiletical and pastoral studies.

20. "*Homiletics,*" by J. M. Hoppin, of Yale College. This late work is an enlarged and revised edition of his former work on "The Office and Work of the Christian Ministry," issued in 1869, and this the author intends to follow with another, upon pastoral theology. The part on "History of Preaching" is very extensive, covering two hundred and thirty pages, and is a valuable addition to his former treatise on the subject.

To this list of homiletical literature we might add the several series of lectures on preaching, delivered in the Lyman Beecher Lectureship of the Theological Department in Yale College, during the last decade, by the following preachers: Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, 1872-1874; Rev. John Hall, D. D., 1875; Rev. W. M. Taylor, D. D., 1876; Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D., 1877; Rev. R. W. Dale, D. D., 1878; Bishop M. Simpson, D. D., 1879; Rev. Howard Crosby, D. D., 1880; Rev. Joseph Duryea, D. D., 1881.[1]

Every preacher should read Spurgeon's "Lectures to my Students," delivered to the students of the Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle, London.[2]

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1 Dr. Duryea failed after his first lecture in consequence of ill health.

2 The second series of these lectures has never been published in this country except in the *Homiletic Monthly*, published by Funk & Wagnalls, N. Y.

The student might read with much profit several excellent articles on various subjects of homiletics in some of the leading reviews and quarterlies, such as: in "Bibliotheca Sacra," "Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. II.; "American Pulpit," Vol. III.; "Reinhardt's Sermons," Vol. VI.; "The Three Fundamental Methods of Preaching," 1871; and "Power in the Pulpit," Vol. III. In "Princeton Review," "Textual and Topical Preaching," 1875; "The Pulpit and Skeptical Culture," 1879; "Materialism and the Pulpit," 1878. In "Edinburgh Review," "Whitefield and Froude," Vol. LXVIII. In "North British Review," "Modern Preaching," Vol. XXIV. In "British and Foreign Evangelical Review," "The Preaching for the Age," Vol. III.

Of course, the preacher will not overlook the principal magazines, devoted to homiletics which are now published in America and Europe.[1]

On historical homiletics we would recommend: Moule's "Christian Oratory during the First Five Centuries;" Neale's "Medieval Preachers and Preaching;" Broadus' "History of Preaching;" Paniel's "Pragmatische Geschichte der Christlichen Beredsamkeit;" and Lentz' "Geschichte der Christlichen Homiletik."

But as homiletics is based upon rhetoric, we should also be acquainted with the best authors on rhetoric, first among whom stands Aristotle. His rules of rhetoric apply to every sort of composition. They are founded on human nature, and must remain the same, therefore, as long as human nature continues unchanged. The subjects of *Proof* (*Πίστις*), *Elocution* (*Λέξις*), and *Disposition* (*Τάξις*), constitute the most general arrangement of his work. Books I. and II. treat of the first, and Book III. of the second and third. Cicero's *De Oratore* abounds with

1 Among the principal magazines of this class we mention *The Homiletic Monthly*, New York; *The Homiletic Quarterly*, (now magazine) London and New York; *The Homilist*, London; *The World Pulpit*, London; and *The Lay Preacher*, London.

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As a preacher, he was earnest, practical, and eminently scriptural and eloquent. The union of the natural, pathetic, and grand made him the greatest orator of the primitive church. "The people were often completely carried away by his eloquence, and acted like drunken persons; they pressed up to the pulpit where he spoke, so as not to lose a single word; they said, when he was about to be banished, 'Better that the sun should cease to shine than that our Chrysostom's mouth should be stopped;' even the cold Gibbon praises his golden eloquence, and another has said, 'His tongue flowed like the stream of the Nile.'"[1] His sermons, extant, over six hundred in number, though destitute of plan or method, are plain and clear in style, full of vivid illustrations, and expository in mode of treatment. It is especially in this last respect that they are worthy models of imitation, even in our time.

His best sermons are those on Lazarus, images, repentance, the parable of the debtor, forgiveness, and almsgiving. One might spend a whole year in studying these expository discourses, which contain nearly every variety of pulpit excellency.

2. *Martin Luther.* He rescued preaching from the low, secular, and formal state into which it had sunk during the corruption of the church, and restored it to its true evangelical and scriptural character; and it was chiefly through his stirring sermons that the Reformation was inaugurated and prosecuted.

His pulpit discourses are largely doctrinal, with a controversial drift against the pope and the Roman hierarchy, but exhibit a deep Christian experience and faith, great convictions and feelings, and an earnestness of which Melanchthon said, "Luther's words were born, not on his lips, but in his soul."

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1 J. M. Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 101.

As to their simplicity, Luther himself says, "When I preach, I regard neither doctors nor masters, of which there are in the church about forty. But I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants. I preach to them."

3. *Jeremy Taylor*, "The Poet Preacher," was the greatest ornament of the English pulpit up to the middle of the eighteenth century. His sermons exhibit a variety of style ranging from the best to the worst. He is pre-eminently distinguished for his poetic imagination and classic erudition. No imagination ever made loftier and more adventurous voyages into gorgeous, cloudy regions than that of Jeremy Taylor. His affluence of elegant diction and charming imagery is absolutely unparalleled. "Along with all this there is poured out upon us a profusion of learning as from a golden horn of plenty."[1] But his sermons also have many defects. The copiousness of his diction often terminates in pleonasm and bombast, his sentences usually are long and circuitous, and his language is profusely studded with classical allusions and quotations; but all in all, he was, nevertheless, the most brilliant, if not the most evangelical, preacher of his time.[2] The study of his sermons will be profitable for their richness of thought and copiousness of language; and one whose style is naturally dry and sluggish should daily read one of Taylor's sermons as a stimulant to warmer effusions of thought and language.

4. *Isaac Barrow.* Here we have at once a philologist, a mathematician, and a preacher. His intellect was of the highest order, and his sermons are noted for argumentation and exhaustiveness; and on this account Charles II. called him "an unfair preacher, because he exhausted every sub-

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1 *Princeton Review*, Vol. XXVI., July, 1854.

2 Cf. Hoppin's *Homiletics*.

ject and left nothing for others to say after him." He was also an original thinker. His discourses are store-houses of fresh, vigorous thought, and are read by a multitude of speakers and thinkers. Even the great Chatham took him for a model, reading over some of his sermons as often as twenty times. From a desire to spread the whole subject before his hearers, he often became prolix and redundant; but his lengthy discussions are characterized by massive strength rather than by diffuseness of style. "Read Jeremy Taylor to enrich the fancy, but Barrow to enrich the intellect, and to show how the greatest copiousness may unite with great compactness and great energy of movement."[1]

5. *Robert South.* His sermons are excellent models of the sermonic art. We are speaking only of his style, without recommending the spirit of many of his sermons; for "he is greater as a sermon-maker than as a genuine preacher of the gospel. He had more grit than grace."[2] He is witty and sarcastic, his bitterest ridicule being chiefly directed against the Puritans; but in point of style, he furnishes the best model of pulpit eloquence. Few can equal him in vigor of language, especially in his command of Saxon-English style. In his delineation of human nature he is the peer of Shakespeare. He is clear, strong, incisive, and practical; and he does not indulge in classicism, as do his eminent contemporaries. We know of no better model for the orator, and "his sermons are well worthy of frequent perusal by every young preacher."

6. *Bourdaloue,* "The Prince of French Preachers." In the triumvirate of the great Roman Catholic preachers,—Bourdaloue, Bossuet, and Massillon,—Bourdaloue is the greatest, and affords the best model. He has been called "the founder of modern pulpit eloquence among the

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1 Broadus' *History of Preaching*, p. 216.

2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 191.

French." He had every physical and mental qualification required for an orator; possessed what is a rare combination,—solid reasoning-force, together with a lively imagination. His sermons are a study for logicians as well as orators. They appeal to the intellect and the conscience, and are full of interest and spiritual power, giving his utterances the impress of a strong and earnest faith in the spiritual life. He despised the empty rhetoric of his predecessors, and labored to bring back the merely ornamental style of French preaching to its pristine soberness and vigor. He did not utterly ignore elegant expressions, but uttered real and rousing thought in pleasing forms of diction, which gives strength and beauty to all his sermons.

7. *Saurin.* Saurin was a great thinker and a true orator. In the French Protestant Church no preacher equals him in solid thought and evangelical spirit. He possessed an energetic nature which swelled into passionate earnestness during the delivery of his sermons. They are full of eloquent thought, aimed chiefly at the edification of the hearer, and comprise in the range of subjects an entire system of theology. His discourses are modeled after the plan of the classic oration; and for this reason some think that he is too much of a declaimer, dealing too much in abstract and general thoughts, and neglecting to apply truth to the practical duties of daily life. But as a faithful preacher, strong reasoner, and accomplished orator, he deserves careful study. Among the many able French divines, we should select for our reading, mainly, Bourdaloue and Saurin.

8. *John Wesley.* The great founder of Methodism did much to revive the true evangelical spirit of preaching in the eighteenth century. "He preached, with the earnestness of intense conviction, the full, free, and sovereign grace of God in the salvation of every soul that would

trust itself to it for eternal life. He blew again the gospel trumpet and rallied the hosts of God to hope and faith and a new life. His style of preaching was clear and flowing, and more calm and orderly than that of Whitefield. He was a man of logical and literary culture, and did not despise learning. His agreeable manners, unassuming dignity and authority, and his saintly simplicity of life aided his power as a preacher. * * * * Wesley's sermons are short, pithy, clearly-arranged, pointed, and very plain in style."[1]

9. *Robert Hall* was one of the greatest of extemporaneous preachers. His sermons which we have to-day were taken down either by short-hand reporters, or were written out by himself after delivery. He was a scholar, but especially a model preacher; and as an orator, he ranks with Bourdaloue and Saurin. He was one of the most evenly-balanced men that the English pulpit ever had, possessing an admirable proportion and harmony of mental powers. Perhaps too abstract in the matter of his sermons, his style of expression is unique and perfect. Dugald Stewart says, "Whoever wishes to see the English language in its perfection must read the writings of Rev. Robert Hall. He combines the beauties of Johnson, Addison, and Burke without their imperfections." He should be studied for his excellent style.

10. *Thomas Chalmers.* No student of divinity should fail to read Chalmers' sermons, especially his "Astronomical Discourses." He possessed a wide scientific knowledge, and was endowed with a powerful imagination. "The 'body of divinity,' or ethics, which in the hands of other analysts became a skeleton of rattling bones, by his plastic touch was transformed into an image of living, breathing beauty, warm and bright with a glorious life. The abstractions of

1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 209.

colder and more logical minds were to him concrete, embodied realities."[1] He is especially remarkable for his great energy, and quantity of affection, which, in the act of preaching, "carried all before him as a river that inundates and sweeps its banks." Another distinguishing feature of his preaching is his rotary mode of discussion. His sermons usually consist of one idea, which is developed from one common center, and unfolded in convolutions, rather than by progression in a straight line; and hence, Robert Hall said of his sermons that their movement was on hinges, not on wheels. For beauty of amplitude, Chalmers is, indeed, an excellent model.

11. *F. W. Robertson.* He was another extemporaneous preacher, who seldom used larger memorandum-notes in the pulpit than could be penciled on an ordinary-sized visiting-card. His style of sermonizing commends itself as a specimen of excellent rhetorical skill in both matter and manner of treatment. He extracts his material from the very heart of the text, going down beneath the letter to the vital roots and life of the passage. His plan is simple, consisting mostly of only two main divisions, and rarely of more than three; and these leading thoughts lie deeply imbedded in the inspired Word, and yet stand out in bold relief before the general hearer. The truth he preached was deeply felt in his own soul, and presented in a practical way, making Christ the great theme of his charming eloquence.

12. *C. H. Spurgeon.* It must be acknowledged by all that Spurgeon's success as a preacher is without a parallel in the history of the pulpit since the days of the apostles. He is king of preachers, and to-day reigns without a rival; and every young preacher should study both the man and his sermons.

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1 Moore, quoted in McClintock & Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Art. Chalmers.

The secret of Spurgeon's power consists in a commingling of three popular qualities, which are usually prominent in every great preacher:

(1.) *His scriptural and practical variety.* Like Robertson, the text forms the germ from which every discourse receives its development and peculiar flavor; and this is really the source of his inexhaustible variety and richness of material, which for the past twenty-five years have found no end. But it is his intensely practical method, suited to every want of human life, that gains that sympathy and magnetic power which seems to unite speaker and hearer during the delivery of his sermons.

(2.) *His simplicity of thought and language.* The sublimest truths are skillfully brought down to the comprehension of the most ordinary minds, and his style is the purest idiomatic Anglo-Saxon—the style of Bunyan, Matthew Henry, and the best of the Puritans.

(3.) *His command of voice.* "As soon as he begins to speak, tones of the richest melody are heard. A voice full, sweet, and musical falls on every ear, and awakens agreeable emotions in every soul in which there is sympathy for sounds. That most excellent voice is under perfect control, and can whisper or thunder at the wish of its possessor. * * * * When to these we add the influence of thrilling description, touching anecdote, sparkling wit, startling episode, striking simile, all used to illustrate and enforce the deep, earnest, home-truths of the Bible, we surely have a combination of elements which must make up a preacher of wonderful attraction and of marvelous power."[1]

It is this combination of popular qualities which attracts, delights, and edifies cabinet ministers, lords, and scholars as much as it does the common people of London, and its visitors.

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1 Yarrow's *Life and Work of Chas. H. Spurgeon*, pp. 39, 40.

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rich Schleiermacher, F. A. G. Tholuck, J. Müller, Bossuet, Massillon, Alex. Vinet, John Howe, Timothy Dwight, Richard Baxter, Nathanael Emmons, Horace Bushnell, Samuel Davies, Robert Leighton, Archibald Alexander, J. H. Newman, J. M. Mason, Phillips Brooks, T. De Witt Talmage, and Joseph Parker.

But no one can expect to read all these sermons. Let the preacher, therefore, select from them the best, and study them as he would any other text-book. In the annals of sermonic art are found a few masterpieces of eloquence which criticism has pronounced the ablest sermons that have ever been preached. Let no preacher fail to read and re-read them again and again. We give a list of their titles:

1. "The Sermon on the Mount." By Christ.
2. "The Small Number of the Saved." By Massillon.
3. "Passion of Christ." By Bourdaloue.
4. "Funeral Oration on Turenne." By Bossuet.
5. "The Nature and Control of the Passions." By Saurin.
6. "The Crucifixion of Christ." By Barrow.
7. "The Image of God in Man." By South.
8. "The Foolish Exchange" and "The Marriage Ring." By Jer. Taylor.
9. "The Redeemer's Tears." By John Howe.
10. "Modern Infidelity." By Robert Hall.
11. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." By J. Edwards.
12. "Expulsive Power of a New Affection." By Chalmers.
13. "The Compassion of Christ to Weak Believers." By S. Davies.
14. "The Gospel for the Poor." By J. M. Mason.
15. "The Great Assize." By Wesley.
16. "God is Love." By A. Monod.
17. "And there shall be no Night There." By Melville.
18. "Glorying in the Cross." By McLaurin.[1]

Before leaving the subject of practical homiletics, we will add a remark upon the manner of reading other men's sermons. Of course, we should not read them in

1 A very interesting and useful history of these master-sermons might be written.

search of material or suggestive thought, out of which to manufacture our sermons, but for the sake of discovering and comparing the principles upon which the great preachers of all times and denominations constructed their discourses. This will be a discipline in the art of planning and composing sermons by studying and combining the various excellencies of successful preaching; and by placing before our minds great ideals and great models of the art, it will inspire and elevate our own endeavors as well as afford opportunity to appropriate whatever is good in any or in all. This is not imitating great men, but unconsciously imbibing their spirit, or learning how to direct and use our own original powers. "We less resemble models the more we wish to resemble them."[1] The proper way to read other men's sermons is to notice the preacher, the text selected, the plan, development, style, and any qualities which are striking or peculiar to their author. Analyze methods, compare models, observing the different ways in which different ministers treat the same subject, as well as your own way. In this way will you preserve your own individuality, keep fresh your inventive genius, and at the same time be a student of and receive benefit from other men's thoughts.

Good instruction may be derived from the reading of select ministerial biography, and from a careful examination of our own preaching.

§ III. GATHERING OF HOMILETICAL MATERIAL.

A knowledge of the rules and practice of homiletics is not the only specific preparation needed for the pulpit. There is a fund of sermonic material that must be accumulated, and stored away as so much capital in the business of preaching, before we are prepared to compose sermons.

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1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 48.

I. *Sources from Which to Gather Homiletical Material.*

1. THE BIBLE. The preacher must essentially be a *homo unius libri.* Whatever else he studies is only auxiliary to help him to understand the Holy Scriptures and to turn them to homiletical uses. As a *verbi divini minister,* it would be a shame for him not to be thoroughly conversant with his subject; and while there may be an apology for a minister not being familiar with all standard works on theology, there is none for a willful neglect of God's Word. "No man ever did or ever can become truly eloquent, without being a constant reader of the Bible, and an admirer of its purity and sublimity."[1] Says Dr. J. W. Alexander: "Constant perusal and re-perusal of the Scriptures is the great preparation for preaching. You get good even when you know it not."

There are three books that should be a preacher's constant study: the book of nature, the book of humanity, and the book of divine revelation. In the first two we learn much theology from the handwriting of God. But the last is the *Urim* and *Thummim* in which we see the mind of the Lord with all clearness; and this pre-eminently is the preacher's *sanctum sanctorum.* And what a store-house of material is imbedded in this golden mine of God's volume—full of divine gems in spiritual truth, as the book of nature is full of them in physical matter! What age could ever exhaust the fertility of the mineral earth? So the Bible is a world of many undiscovered treasures; and no preacher, nor age of preachers, can ever bring all to light, even though they should make it their daily and nightly study.

The preacher should study his Bible exegetically, historically, doctrinally, and prayerfully.

First. *Exegetically.* The etymology of the term exegesis

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1 Fisher Ames.

(ἐξηγέομαι) implies a leading-out into clearer light. Its province is to bring forth the true idea which lies concealed in language, and it is a fruitful source of homiletical material. Indeed, it forms the basis of all biblical theology, whether historical, doctrinal, or practical. Such a study of the Bible, however, requires a knowledge of the sacred languages, such as Hebrew, Chaldee, and Hellenistic Greek, with Syriac and Arabic as cognate and auxiliary. The biblical exegete who devotes no small part of his time to a study of the original will have fresh thought for all his sermons. There is an abundance of good help in the exposition of all parts of the Bible; but an ability to examine the original for one's self is more valuable than any commentary in our libraries.

Second. *Historically.* The Bible is the oldest and best history, and most abundant in facts. It is the interpreter of all history, showing the long-waging struggle between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, and its ultimate result. The preacher should avail himself of whatever help he can get to an understanding of the scripture narrative.[1] He should, also, acquaint himself with the biography of its characters, especially that of Christ, who is the hero of the Bible, the fundamental in Christianity, and against whom anti-Christian writers have directed their stoutest blows. Let him be thoroughly familiar with the life and character of Him who is the great theme of the ministry. The books on this subject are abundant, important among which we mention Neander's "Life of Christ," Pressense's "Life of Christ," Ellicott's "Life of Christ," and Farrar's "Life of Christ." He should not be ignorant of the writings of antagonists on the rationalistic side which have attracted the most popular attention,—namely, Strauss' "Life of Jesus," and Renan's "*Vie de*

1 Dr. Smith's histories of the Old and New Testament are very valuable aids

Jesus," and should study the reply to these works by Harless, Hoffman, Neander, Ullman, Tholuck, etc. Christology is becoming an important study in our time, and divides itself into three parts,—Christology of the Bible, Christology of the Church, and Christological Heresies, such as Gnosticism, Arianism, Nestorianism, Socinianism, Unitarianism, etc., all of which the preacher should study.

Third. *Doctrinally.* The Bible is not a manual of classified knowledge, but a book of heterogeneous and isolated facts relating to human happiness. Scripture was given in fragments, at intervals during a period of sixteen hundred years; for God "by divers portions and in divers manners" revealed truth to different persons, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Hence, externally it is a miscellany, but internally it is a unity. To collect and arrange into logical and scientific form the doctrines contained sporadically throughout the Scriptures is the work of systematic theology.

The advantages of such a study of revelation are,—

1st. Facility in collecting matter for sermonizing by having the Bible topically arranged.

2d. Force of confirmation, by enabling one to give a *reason* of the hope that is within him.

The minister should never cease studying his Bible topically. Let him always have on file some topic in theology and compile all the passages that relate to and prove the doctrine under consideration. Let him read and meditate upon it until he is full and running over. Better spend a year on one topic and master it, than spend a whole life-time in a rambling, superficial reading of scripture that is without method or efficiency. Most successful preachers are close systematic Bible-students. Especially should the preacher be versed in the doctrines of his own church.

Fourth. *Prayerfully.* The Bible is a revelation of God's thoughts through human agencies adapted to our capacities and understanding; but, no doubt, much lies beyond the ken of human reason which the unassisted intellect can not discover. True, Origen was seeking for too much in his "spiritual interpretation," and Swedenborg carried out this view to the extreme in his doctrine of correspondence, when he gave to every word of scripture a spiritual and mystical meaning which he claimed was revealed to him by the angels; but it is, nevertheless, true that there are undiscovered treasures lying concealed in other depths of this sacred revelation which exegesis and history and systemization can not penetrate. A man may be able, like Chrysostom, to repeat the entire Bible from memory, read it in a dozen different languages, and explain every doctrine, and yet be a stranger to that which is "the mind of the Spirit" underlying the mere phraseology. The intellectual eye often can not pry into the lower and deeper strata of its meaning. Hence the necessity of reading our Bible upon our knees as did John Knox.

Not only should the preacher implore divine assistance to illuminate the written page and keep him from error and misconception of the Holy Oracle, but he should also pray for a clearer insight into the hidden things of God which are kept from the wise and prudent and revealed to the prayerful and the pious. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;" and prayer is the key that unlocks the vault of inspired truth, and opens up a new vein of thought at once inspiring and original. If we should search books for truth, why not also seek it from Him who is "*the Truth.*"

The one who studies and prays over his Bible will bring out of the treasury of the Lord things both new and old.

We will now speak of those materials which are unin-

spired. These are more abundant but less important than the kind just now considered.

2. HISTORY. All history, in a certain sense, is divine. Lamartine says, "Providence conceals itself in the details of human affairs, but becomes unveiled in the generalities of history." Cervantes says, "History is a sacred kind of writing, because truth is essential to it; and where truth is, there God is, so far as truth is concerned." And Kossuth says, "History is the revelation of Providence."

The value of this kind of study consists in the wide field of illustration which it affords. In religious history we have a development of the religious spirit of mankind in all the varied forms in which it has appeared since the world began. It embraces a history of all religions, idolatrous, mythological, and Christian. Church-history commences with the birth of Christ, and is an unfolding of the religious organization that proceeded from him. On early Christianity the best books are Neander's "Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles," and Schaff's "History of the Apostolic Church." Dr. Hurst's "Outlines of Church-History" should be used as preliminary, or in connection with the study of general church-history.

The minister should also be acquainted with secular history, both fabulous and authentic. Among the most important are Philip Smith's "History of the World," Rawlinson's "Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World," Dean Milman's "History of the Jews," Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews," Schiller's "Thirty Years' War," Liddell's "Rome," C. C. Felton's "Greece, Ancient and Modern," Hallam's "Middle Ages," Macaulay's or Froude's "History of England," Hildreth's "United States," D'Aubigne's "Reformation," Motley's "Dutch Republic." The preacher's library should also contain some of the best

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the earth; botany reveals Him in the floral and vegetable kingdom; physics, in the laws and operations of the material world; physiology, in the wonderful mechanism of the human body; astronomy, in the "Heavens that declare the glory of God, and the firmament that showeth his handiwork." Every pebble, every leaf and blade of grass, every dew-drop that sparkles in the morning light, every prismatic color of the rainbow, afford thoughts and themes for the preacher. All the objects and phenomena in the material world around us and in the heavens are manifestations of the thoughts of God, and are, therefore, so many illustrations, when properly interpreted, of the Bible. Kepler, the astronomer, in his investigation of science, truly said, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee!"

Bishop Butler, in his "Analogy of Religion," and Joseph Cook, in his "scientific method," have shown us how much religious thought may be derived from this source. Galileo said, "To despise science is to despise the Scriptures, which teach the greatness and glory of Almighty God."

4. Philosophy. Here we have a department co-extensive with that of science. The material we find here is precisely the same as that of the empirical sciences, and differs from it only in its form, method, and results. They "derive their material directly from experience; they find it at hand and take it up just as they find it. Philosophy, on the other hand, is never satisfied with receiving that which is given simply as it is given, but rather follows it out to its ultimate grounds; it examines each individual thing in its relations to a final principle, and considers it as one element of a complete system of knowledge. In this way philosophy removes from the particulars of experience their immediate, individual, and accidental character; from the sea of empirical individu-

alities it brings out the universal, and subordinates the infinite and orderless mass of contingencies to necessary laws. In short, philosophy deals with the *totality* of experience under the form of an *organic system* in harmony with the laws of thought."[1] Hence, it is the province of philosophy to generalize and from the individual facts of our knowledge discover universal truths. It bears the same relation to general scientific knowledge that systematic theology bears to the written revelation, and will be of similar service to the preacher, only that its matter is not so akin to the sacred discourse, since its inductions rest mainly on physical science, while those of theology rest on the written Word.

The fund of homiletical material to be derived from this department is extensive. Speculative philosophy ranges from the day of Thales to the present time. Here is much that is worthless and much that is valuable. The preacher can afford to pass by the whole pre-Socratic period, but he should not fail to acquaint himself with intellectual Athens, the great philosophical museum where Paul, the Christian philosopher, stood in contact with heathen philosophy and declared unto them the living God whom they ignorantly worshiped. The philosophies of "The Garden," "The Porch," "The Lyceum," and "The Academy" are worth careful study, especially the last two. Ueberweg's "History of Philosophy" is a very desirable work. Mental and moral philosophy demand the preacher's special attention. In Christian philosophy, such works as Christlieb's "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," Bowne's "Studies in Theism," "Philosophy of Natural Theology" by Dr. Jackson, of England, and "Seneca and Kant"[2] by Dr. W. T. Jackson, are all good.

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1 Schwegler's *History of Philosophy*, translated by Seelye, edition of 1880, pp. 15, 16.

2 A brief but admirable discussion of stoic and rationalistic ethics, with a comparison and criticism of the two systems.

5. General Literature. This is a great *thesaurus* of miscellaneous information, and we must go through it in the same way that a magnet would sweep through a pile of mingled dirt and iron-filings, drawing to itself nothing but the filings. We should read only the solids, not the gases, in literature.

Mr. Allibone says, "It has been estimated that of the six hundred and fifty thousand volumes in the English language about fifty thousand would pay a perusal;" but it does not pay the minister to peruse a one hundredth part of even that number.

Helvetius, though an immoral man, used to say, "In our day the secret of being learned is heroically to determine to be ignorant of many things in which men take pride." "Keep," says Fenelon, "the pruning-knife in hand to cut away all that is needless."

Bacon's quaint remark is of great practical use to the theological student: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and *some few* to be chewed and digested." According to this rule we may venture to mention a few books that may constitute a source of useful information for material in sermonizing. Among those to be "tasted" in your leisure hours, but never in your hours set apart for earnest, solid study, and to be taken as a dessert after dinner, we may mention: *First.* Some books of fiction, as "Æsop's Fables," "Don Quixote," "Schönberg Cotta Family," Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" and "Marble Faun," Longfellow's "Hyperion." *Second.* Some books in poetry, as Goethe's "Faust," Shakespeare's "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Othello," "Tempest," "Henry VIII.," "Romeo and Juliet." *Third.* Some of devotional reading, as Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," Thomas a Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," Bishop Huntington's "Christian Believing and Living," Bowen's "Daily Meditations,"

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when Watson, and Calvin, and Edwards have ceased to be recognized as authorities, "the theology they taught, changed from the abstract to the concrete, will be studied and accepted in the simple adventures of Christian and family, in the deeds of Faithful and the experience of Hopeful, and in the wonderful sight of the Delectable Mountains."[1]

(2.) *Milton's "Paradise Lost."* John Milton, the great epic poet of Christianity, was perhaps the most learned man that ever lived; at least, the only one of whom it was said, "He possessed all the knowledge of his day." Like Rabelais, Milton may be said to have traversed every region in the world of knowledge. No species of literature, no language, no book, no art or science seems to have escaped his notice or the patience of his industry. His "Paradise Lost" may be considered as "a vast arsenal of ideas drawn from every region of human speculation, and either themselves the condensed quintessence of knowledge and wisdom, or dressing and adorning the fairest and most majestic conceptions."[2] The first book is probably the most splendid and perfect of human composition, while throughout the whole this Christian "Iliad" is aglow with thoughts that breathe and words that burn. A tide of gorgeous eloquence rolls on from beginning to end, like a river of molten gold, out-blazing everything of the kind in any other poetry.

(3.) *Dante's "Divine Comedy."* Dante Alighieri is the literary embodiment of medieval Christianity, and one of the most monarchal figures in literary history. The treasures of classical learning, the dialectics of Aristotle and the schools, and the literature of the church were his own property. From the dim light which truth cast upon his

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1 John P. Gulliver, D. D.

2 Shaw's *Outlines of English Literature*, p. 168.

age, we should not expect him always to be free from error; and to judge him by the light of *our* day would be unfair. Suffice it that he was very far in advance of his contemporaries, as well as of his predecessors. His delighted countrymen almost regard him as one of the "old prophets risen again;" and his titles, "*Il Divino*," "*Il Teologo*," testify their reverence.

Milton and Dante resemble each other in intellectual features, as well as in Christian life. Both were deeply versed in the subtleties of theology; both were animated by a stern and intense religious enthusiasm; but they differ from each other in their manner of writing. Dante is intensely earnest in his creations, while the blind English bard is idealizing the phantoms of imagination. Dante is more like Tasso, while Milton is Homeric. The one creates after a concrete kind, the other soars into abstractions. This can easily be seen by comparing the "Divine Comedy" with "Paradise Lost."

These three works should be the great fountains of thought in general literature, at which the preacher should drink deeply and frequently. They are all eminently Christian in character, and to be recommended,—the first for its simplicity of Bible-language and imagery, the second for sublimity of thought and grandeur of diction, and the third for its intense speculative and theological character.

To the classes of literature already spoken of, we may add others that are indispensable as homiletical material. The literature of Christian missions should engage the preacher's earnest attention, for his work is essentially missionary in character. Let him read the history of missions, and become acquainted with the operations of the various missionary associations, both of his own and of sister churches, so as to be able to present to his

congregation the progress of the church in this enterprise, as well as the pressing want and demands of the world upon Christian people. Books of travel—especially those relating to Bible countries—and sketches of heathen lands, written by missionaries, are very valuable. Benefit will be derived from the reading of such works as Robinson's "Researches," Thomson's "The Land and the Book," Dean Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," G. Williams' "Holy City," and Dr. Wilson's "The Lands of the Bible Visited and Described." Of course, the minister will take some of the leading reviews and periodicals which will inform him of the current of present events and thoughts.

6. Surroundings of Daily Life. Books are not the only source of homiletical material. Let the preacher remember, that no amount of antiquarian, historical, scientific, or literary lore will make a pulpit orator, without intimate acquaintance with the ways of the world about him, with the tastes, sentiments, passions, and modes of thought of the men and women of the age in which he lives, whose minds it is his business to sway. He who depends entirely and exclusively upon his library for material for preaching will be insipid and uninteresting, and will fail to edify his hearers, who are struggling, not with books, but with life,—life that is real and earnest, and not what solitary book-worms would make it appear. The preacher must not lock himself in his study from Monday morning until Saturday evening, like a sedentary monk in his cell. Let him walk out into the wide, wide world, full of objects, men, toils, conflicts, joys, sorrows, incidents, customs, illustrations. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, day, night, the ground on which we tread, the faces we meet, the pastoral calls we make, the sick-beds we visit, all are full of material for the most powerful and eloquent sermons. The wide-awake and practical preacher transmutes everything he sees

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should be everywhere,—in the house, in the street, in the fields, in the busy haunts of men, and among children.

7. THE MIND. After pointing out, in the realm of books and in the world of daily life, the various fields from which to gather material for sermonizing, and which together furnish a vast fund of matter not belonging to ourselves, but from which we may borrow, we must, lastly, name the great mint where all thought is coined—*the deep, exhaustless mind.* Here is man's most valuable capital, which he inherited from his Creator, and of which he is made the owner. What comes from this source is strictly his own, or original, and should be sought for as men seek for diamonds. God has made the human mind a depository of intellectual wealth, though we may be as "unconscious of its worth as the mine is of its ore," and he who turns to his mental resources in quest of thought will find out that the more he gives from his own creations the more he will have to give; for thought is self-propagating—one idea begetting another and another, *ad infinitum.* This searching for treasures in the deep of our own minds will repay all the labor it costs. How one exults at the discovery of a new thought; and with what eloquence he will deliver it!

The intuitive faculty furnishes us with primitive truths. Advancing from these, by induction or deduction, we arrive at new conclusions. But of all the mental faculties, the imagination is the most fertile in material. It is an originating and constructive faculty, and is most prominent in the work of invention. "Imagination does not create thought; but it organizes thought into forms as new as the equestrian statue of bronze is unlike the metallic ores when they lay in the mine. * * * * 'Historical imagination,' in reproducing the past, is one of the favorite ideas of our

day. * * * * And not only as to the past. Imagination is requisite if we are justly to conceive and vividly to realize the scripture revelations concerning the unseen world and the eternal future."[1] The use of the imagination in the poetical and ethical sphere is a power in the pulpit which no preacher should neglect to cultivate.

II. *How to Gather Material from these Sources.*

We have taken a general survey of the field of knowledge so far as it relates to the preacher's sermons; but how shall he obtain and appropriate this material that lies unquarried in its golden bed?

1. By a System of Reading and Study. The preacher must be a hard, life-long student. No collegiate or theological preparation, however protracted and thorough, must excuse him from observing regular and systematic hours of study as long as he lives. In the midst of his parochial and domestic duties he can find much time for gathering information by adopting a system of study and by utilizing the spare moments, which, if carefully garnered and improved each day as they pass, will bring him a store of valuable knowledge which otherwise would be lost.[2]

> "Who uses minutes, has hours to use;
> Who loses minutes, whole years must lose."

The Savior's command to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," is a good rule when applied to the economizing of time in ministerial labor. "I have lost ten minutes forever," was uttered in deep regret by John Wesley, after waiting at the door for his chaise which had been delayed; and when we remem-

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1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 398, 399, 400.

2 Elihu Burritt, while earning his living as a blacksmith, learned eighteen languages and twenty-two dialects, by simply improving his odd moments. Kirk White, also learned Greek while walking to and from a lawyer's office; and Jonathan Edwards meditated his profound work on the *Will* as he walked in the shades of a glorious elm, at Northampton.

ber the many volumes which he published, the five thousand miles which he yearly traveled, the thousand discourses which he annually delivered, the thousand sick-beds he yearly visited, and perhaps thrice that number of letters he yearly wrote, we see the worth of his motto: "Never be unemployed."

Besides, every minister should set apart the entire forenoon of each week-day for hard, faithful study, devoting not the whole time to sermonizing, but at least one half to study or reading in his library. He should commence at an early hour and continue until the bell calls the dinner hour. We sleep too much and too late, and therefore miss the golden morning hour that enriches the early worker. Gibbon was in his study every morning, summer and winter, at six o'clock. Bowditch said: "Before nine o'clock in the morning I learned all my mathematics." The successful Burnet and Jewell commenced their studies every morning at four o'clock. Dr. Doddridge said: "Whatever I have accomplished in the way of commentary on the Scriptures is to be traced to the fact of rising at four in the morning." More has been accomplished in literary acquisition between the hours of four and ten in the morning than the world dreams of; and ministers of the gospel would greatly profit and improve their efficiency in the pulpit by imitating the example of these literary toilers in their respective fields of usefulness.

These hours of systematic study should be sacred, and preserved from interruptions or intrusions.[1]

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1 "I waited upon the Rev. Matthew Wilks, of London," said an American minister, "and was received with courtesy. We entered into conversation, which was briskly kept up until the most important religious intelligence in possession of each had been imparted. Suddenly, there was a pause. It was broken by Mr. Wilks, who inquired, 'Have you anything more to communicate?' 'No; nothing of special interest.' 'Any further inquiries to make?' 'None.' 'Then you must leave me. I have my Master's business to attend to.'" Richard Baxter was once called upon by a young man who had no particular reason for making the visit. Baxter, after a few moments, became uneasy. "Perhaps I trouble you," remarked the young man. "Of course you do," decidedly yet kindly replied Baxter.

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ninety per cent of all they ever learned. Memory is imperfect, and, like a leaking vessel, will lose much that is valuable. Hence, every minister should adopt some method by which he may hold and preserve in some convenient form the results of his past study, reading and reflection. Many different plans have been used for this purpose, for the same plan will not always adapt itself to all; but the following may be suggestive:

Prepare a blank book for jottings, in which to record whatever has been suggested, or heard, or read where it could not again be accessible. These notes should be entered miscellaneously in the order in which they come to our knowledge, without regard to either subjects or classification, but only numbered for reference; and the jotting-books labeled A, B, C, etc.

Begin, also, a series of scrap-books, A, B, C, etc., in which to place clippings, in the same manner as items are entered in the jotting-books.

In addition, arrange, as you read, an index to your library, as a memorandum of whatever you consider valuable for future use and to which you might not be able to refer, in a moment, when needed. Enter subject and reference in the same manner as in the others, except the numbering, which is to be omitted.

Lastly, procure a blank-paged Bible, and opposite each passage make references to whatever may throw light on the passage.[1]

But to complete this system of literary mnemonics there s required a general *index rerum*, to be used as a ledger, to which to carry, or post, under alphabetically-arranged heads, everything which is contained in the jottings, scraps, library, or even Bible. Thus, in the *index rerum*, for exam-

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1 Bagster's blank-leaved Bible, which contains a long list of subjects, alphabetically arranged, in the back part, with blank leaves opposite for references, is the best.

ple, under heading, *Atonement*, J., A, 125; S., B, 12; L., 1176; Matt. vi. 24, would refer to jotting-book labeled A, number of jotting, 125; scrap-book labeled B, number of scrap, 12; library index, page 1176; blank-paged Bible, under Matthew vi. 24.

In this way a vast amount of useful information may be systematically arranged and condensed into small space in the *index rerum*, which will place at your command all your acquired knowledge, and permit a reference to everything which you have ever read, heard, or thought upon a given subject. Pope wisely said,—

> "Though index-learning turn no student pale,
> It holds the eel of science by the tail."

And that *hold* will enable one to secure the entire fish.

By the use of a system somewhat like the above we form, at once, a growing cyclopedia, which will increase in value with time and study, and which, in course of time will be the most useful volume in the library. It will save much time, which, without it, would be spent in hunting up partially-remembered items of reading, and will preserve such items as otherwise would be irrecoverably lost. Prof. Olmsted, of Yale College, used to tell his students how quickly he prepared a certain lecture, but that he had been gathering material for twenty years. Small savings lead to wealth in study as in business. Especially should such a professional man as the preacher, who is forever drawing from his treasure-house, be always engaged in gathering, storing, and saving everything which comes under his notice that can be turned to homiletical use.

III. *How to Appropriate and Use in the Sermon the Gathered Material.*

Having selected a certain theme, then commences the work of invention, selection, separation, and extraction,—probing the intellectual resources for suitable material;

first, the biblical, then historical, scientific, and general, whatever he can recall of his former study, reading, observation, and reflection, should be carefully compiled for the sermon after taxing his powers to the utmost in the work of original invention. But the sermonizer must by no means use everything that comes within his reach on a given subject. Let him learn the art of rejecting. Not everything that *could* be said *ought* to be said on a given theme; nor should he use a fact because it is pretty, interesting, or novel. Nothing but the most salient points and pertinent facts, the cream and quintessence of his information, should be incorporated in the sermon. "Bring nothing but the beaten oil into the sanctuary," says Dr. Humphrey. The preacher may learn an instructive lesson from the bee which passes by the common herbage, goes only to the *flowers*, and from them extracts only the *honey*.

But the material selected, from whatever source, must be fashioned into its homiletic use, just as a stone quarried from the mountains is not placed in a building in its rude, native state, but cut to suit its place and purpose. Historical facts are often needed, but must not be inserted in the sermon in the same form in which they are found in the original record, else the discourse might be a history of an event, person, or place instead of a sermon. The homiletical use of science is to illustrate scripture. It is one thing to employ it as Chalmers did in his "Astronomical Discourses;" it is another, to make the pulpit a scientific platform. If the preacher occasionally refers to philosophical theories by way of illustration, he does not undertake to teach philosophy in his sermon. He may, like Christ, transmute the facts of the world into religious instruction. "He may range over all fields, like the bee, if he only makes his gleanings subservient to the one great object of edifying souls, and brings sweetness and attract-

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previously must have existed as eternal archetypes in the divine Mind, and are therefore derived from a source not ourselves. In our time such originality is almost a hopeless thing; for, as John Stuart Mill has said, "nearly all the thoughts which can be reached by mere strength of original faculties, have long since been arrived at," and what we consider original in this high sense at the time of discovery may have been discovered long before by some one unknown to or unheard of by us. "The ancients have stolen all our best ideas," quotes Broadus. Were all our sermons to consist of nothing but such a kind of originality, they would indeed be like "angels' visits—few and far between."

But the originality which enters most largely into our sermons is third-handed, and consists of our own, or other men's ideas, appropriated to ourselves by a process of mental digestion and assimilation, and expressed in words and methods of our own. This does not forbid, but encourages, the reading of other men's thoughts.

The labors of our ancestors have left a legacy of valuable material that is calculated to benefit the world to-day. We are the heirs of all ages, and are permitted to gather around the festal-board of accumulated knowledge that is spread out sumptuously before the modern thinker. Not only have we a right, but our highest efficiency and usefulness demand that we avail ourselves of the truths that have been revealed to the world, whether from God or man, and which were not intended to be only ornaments of admiration, but creatures of activity and utility for all ages. If the ideas acquired through reading and study have been assimilated as by a chemical combination into our own mental constitution, thus forming part of our own intellectual self, they are ours as truly as the bread we eat, becoming identified with our flesh and blood and bone, thus constituting a part of our bodily self, is ours.

This is all that modern human originality can claim or aspire to; and the best productions are of this kind. Malone tells us that many of the ideas in Shakespeare can be found in previous authors, and Emerson says that investigation hardly leaves a single drama of his (Shakespeare's) absolute invention. The plot of "Paradise Lost" was in great part derived from various sources. Byron was largely indebted to Goethe for his "Manfred." Spenser borrowed from the models of Geoffrey. Emerson also remarks: "Plato, like every other great man, consumes his own times. * * * When we are praising Plato, it seems that we are praising quotations from Solon, and Sophron, and Philolaus." Spurgeon freely confesses that he is indebted for many of his sermons to others. Indeed, many of the thoughts in the parables and sayings of our Savior have been traced to various currents of previous thinking and sayings which had come down to his day. These thinkers had constructed their new productions, in part, out of thoughts gathered from various writers, who, in turn, had gathered them from their predecessors. Thus, nearly all our present thoughtful works could be traced to other sources. But they are original, because the thoughts were freshly conceived, differently combined, and newly expressed, thus stamping them with their authors' individuality, when perhaps no one else would have thought of constructing and expressing the same thoughts in that way. This originality is, nevertheless, a kind of quotation in the sense in which Emerson, no doubt, used the word when he said, "Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of all forests and mines and stone-quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors."

Plagiarism consists in using the "thoughts, words, and method of another, without, in some way, giving due credit for them. The violation consists not in using another's

thoughts, * * * but in not candidly acknowledging their source."[1] This is literary theft, and to be guilty of it is highly dishonorable and dishonest. Conviction and exposure of such an ignoble deed would greatly injure a minister's usefulness. Plagiarism may be committed,—

1st. By appropriating *verbatim* entire sermons. In rare cases, another man's sermon of unusual merit and adaptation to your hearers might be read to them from print at a prayer-meeting; but to copy them from books, to exchange with other preachers, or to buy prepared manuscripts for the pulpit and offer them as your own, is notorious plagiarism.

2d. By using the plans of sermons. Too much can not be said in condemnation of the many books filled with "sketches" and "outlines" for the use of preachers. They are a public nuisance, and should be banished from every preacher's library.

3d. By incorporating quotations and extracts from authors without proper acknowledgment. The Word of God, being the basis of instruction which we are commanded to preach, and nearly every passage of which must be already familiar to the hearer without indicating its source, is an exception; but all literal interpolations used from other sources, except what has become common property, must be accredited to their lawful authors.

4th. By imitating other preachers, either in thought, style, or manner. "How ridiculous it would look, if a goose should attempt to soar like the eagle or sing like the nightingale. So each man, and especially each preacher, should be himself. * * * * The parrot-man can not be true to his own convictions."

In seeking originality and avoiding plagiarism two errors are to be avoided. The one is, such independenec of thought

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1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 680.

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a noteworthy fact, that in the early church the term λόγος, *oration*, was applied to all kinds of oratory which were not religious in character, in much the same sense in which the term lecture or speech is now used in our country.

The sermon, then, is characteristic of Christianity, and a specialty of the Christian ministry,[1]—for without it the church would lose its aggressive power and relinquish its keenest sword of evangelization. Vinet defines a sermon thus: "It is a discourse incorporated with public worship, and designed, concurrently or alternately, to conduct to Christian truth one who has not yet believed in it, and to explain and apply it to those who admit it."[2] Phelps, in his recent work on "The Theory of Preaching," says, "A sermon is an oral address to the popular mind, upon religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated *with a view to persuasion.*"[3]

From these definitions we perceive that a sermon differs from an essay or a book by the *presence and expression of a living speaker.* Thought in written form may be invigorating, but it is laid out in material substance, and in stiff, formal, hypostatic types of ideas, which are nothing in themselves but the representatives of ideas. It is like a Webster transferred to canvas or carved into marble—a true transcript of the man, indeed, yet how different from the man that stood pleading in the Senate! Thought expressing itself through a living organism, beaming from the eye, ringing in the voice, and gushing forth from a spirit stimulated by contact with spirit, is not only invigorating, but inspiring. It animates the written page,—a

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1 "No false religion has ever provided for the regular and frequent assembling of the masses of men to hear religious instruction and exhortation."—Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 17.

2 *Homiletics*, p. 28.

3 P. 21. This idea, in his book, is developed at length from p. 1 to p. 28.

dead carcass of ideas; makes thought to breathe and words to glow. "When a man who is apt in teaching, whose soul is on fire with the truth which he trusts has saved him and hopes will save others, speaks to his fellow-men, face to face, eye to eye, and electric sympathies flash to and fro between him and his hearers, till they lift each other up, higher and higher, into the intensest thought, and the most impassioned emotion—higher and yet higher, till they are borne as on chariots of fire above the world,—there is a power to move men, to influence character, life, destiny, such as no printed page can ever possess."[1] Why do people go to a theater to hear Hamlet performed upon the stage, rather than to a library to read the same from a printed page? There is certainly an additional force in the incarnate, personated presence of an idea; and it was mainly for this reason that the "Word was made flesh," and that afterward a living ministry was instituted as a supplement and complement to the written Revelation, in order that the gospel might be addressed to living men in a *living* way. Communication through human lips gives to divine truth freshness of spirit. "As the water that issues from a fountain comes originally from the clouds, but in its passage through the earth acquires the sharpness and sparkle of spring-water; so divine truth, coming first from above, but passing through the soul of the preacher, acquires that element of freshness on which, under God, its efficiency depends."[2]

The sermon, then, is the vitalizing instrument of truth—a living *logos*, instead of a written composition, permeated with the divine Spirit and power as it issues forth fresh and warm from human lips. It is the word addressed objectively to the understanding of men, and enforced sub-

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1 Broadus' *Prep. and Del. of Sermons*, p. 18.

2 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 96

jectively in the heart by the Spirit of Christ. Without vocal expression it may be a religious essay, poem, or tract; but a sermon it can not be until it is spoken, or transmuted into the bread of life. What are called printed sermons are only the fossil remains of what were once real sermons. They may give us some idea of what they were in respect to material and form, but they lack the living voice, the beating heart, the glowing fire. They are dead bodies without souls. The original sermon lived only during the period of its delivery, and its mission was accomplished during that brief life-time, though its influence and impression may linger in the hearer's mind, like the memories of departed love, long after the preacher's voice is silent, and though its body may be embalmed in printed form, and preserved as a relic of what we call preaching. No one could print Whitefield's sermons. No one can read sermons. We must *hear* them to know what they are. They are to be found only in pulpits,—never in books.

Another distinguishing feature of the sermon is, that it differs from the oration, or any other oral address, by being *based upon the Word of God, and aimed principally at the salvation of the hearer.* In secular and civil eloquence, the highest object is to please, to instruct, or to incite to civic measures, and its arguments may rest upon any *data*, premise, or authority whatever within the range of human knowledge. Not so in sacred eloquence. The sermon, so far as material is concerned, is exclusively an interpretation of the Scriptures,[1]—an elucidation of the divine will; and a man's homiletical skill consists in communicating their true sense to the minds of the hearers in the clearest and strongest light. It must not contain everything interesting in science, exciting in politics, beautiful in art, or pleasing in literature, except as aids in illustrating or unfolding the

1 Cf. Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, pp. 1–7.

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fidelity to its divine authority; nor could it be called a sermon without this end in view as the ruling motive. Any literary production, whether written or spoken, may be the outgrowth of scripture, but its primary object is always a secondary or insignificant matter in comparison with that of the sermon, which addresses itself to the dearest and highest interest of man as its object; and for this reason the sermon has the largest audience. The largest circulation of the best book outside the Bible is only a few millions, while three hundred millions go every Sunday to listen to a sermon. Nothing in science, art, literature, or commerce,—in fine, no species of human enterprise can have such claim upon the attention of mankind; for nothing can be grander in its purpose than that which constituted the mission of Christ himself. Herein lies the secret of the preacher's inspiration and eloquence. If a proper conception of the value and eternal destiny of immortal souls can not inspire the speaker with rhetorical power, he will not likely succeed in any other and inferior field of oratory.

The mission of the sermon is to apply religious truth wisely and forcibly to the present and eternal welfare of man. Man is ruined; society is to be regenerated; the depraved condition of wrecked humanity is to be improved. The preacher in this respect is a Phidias, who is to conceive, and, from rude stones taken rough out of the quarry, to fashion, forms of superhuman dignity and beauty. His sermon is to aim at the reformation of our universal brotherhood, and give it a character far superior to that of More's "Utopia," or Plato's "Republic." He is to be inspired by no intellectual ideality, but the reality of a most blessed reign of peace, that will be displayed in the coming Millennium.

But the great purpose of the sermon is to educate men

for *eternity*, and it is destined to exert an influence that will be felt when earth and time shall have passed away. What should more engage our efforts than the salvation of an immortal soul? He who wins a kingdom may astonish the world, but he who wins a soul to Christ sends a thrill through heaven. Consider the awful circumstances in which the preacher delivers his message. He stands in the presence of the Almighty, whose minister he is; he appeals to man, whose destiny may hang on the decision of an hour—heaven glittering from above, hell rumbling from beneath, sinners hesitating, and the time for decision coming to a close. Under such solemn moments, when so much is at stake, can any stop to think of self—of his reputation, or of the applause which his musical sentences and fine intonations are to secure? No one who understands and feels the high object of his preaching will make his sermon either a play or a display. His "joy and his crown" will be the conversion of souls. Such it will appear to have been when the joys of the redeemed and the torments of the lost shall be felt in their everlasting weight, and when the magnitude of God's redemption and the wondrous results that flow from it shall be unfolded. Do we believe what we preach—that the conversion of a soul is of more consequence than the creation of a world; that our voices will be echoed through the eternal ages as instrumental in the fixed destinies of many immortal beings? Then will we tremble, and preach as Apelles painted—for eternity.

According, then, to the foregoing definition and description, the sermon is the noblest and strongest instrumentality in the world. In its composition are included all of the preacher's personality in character, experience, and intellect, and the personality of the divine Mind as revealed in the Scriptures, all for the supreme purpose of persuad-

ing men to become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. "The Spirit of God and the spirit of man are in it and wield it." It is the combination of human and divine agencies in the work of saving souls.

§ II. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SERMON.

In the early history of the church the sermon was called homily. Originally, the homily was a familiar interlocutory address, conducted between speaker and hearer, without regard to much system. The pseudo-Clementine homilies are supposed to be the talks and disputations of Peter with Simon Magus. The preaching of Christ was properly the initiatory and model Christian sermon. In the first and second centuries it was simple and artless, consisting, perhaps, in running commentary on scripture or answers to questions. Sometimes it was really eloquent and somewhat systematic, when produced by the more educated and pious; while in the third and fourth centuries it assumed a more rhetorical structure, "bringing in all the helps to be derived from learning and eloquence," and thus gradually reached a rhetorical structure, having unity and order. Origen was, perhaps, one of the first to construct the *formal* homily, built somewhat on the rules of Greek eloquence, and to give it an expository character; though scripture exegesis or interpretation was no essential characteristic of the homily, as Vinet incorrectly supposes. After the sixth century began a tendency to mere artistic skill and self-display, which continued to sink the sermon lower and lower until the Reformation.

In the early period of the Church of Rome, when few priests were capable of preaching, discourses were framed from the Fathers, to be read from the pulpit. In the medieval age, *homilaria*, or collections of homilies, were used, the most celebrated of which was that known as

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evangelical character. The reformers unfurled the true banner, and Luther preached the gospel of Christ in words that "were half-battles."

The *German* sermon, though retaining something of the fire of the reformers, has, however, not sustained the fame of Luther's and Melanchthon's preaching. The mataphysical and philosophical cast so characteristic of the German mind is seen in the sermons of Schleiermacher and Tholuck. Since the recovery of that philosophical land from the withering blight of rationalism, there has been a revival of evangelical preaching, which, among its leading preachers, has not yet been extinguished by learning and thought.

The *French* sermon, as a rule, was brilliant, especially in the time of Louis XIV., which was the golden age of French pulpit eloquence. Among the Protestant preachers, Du Moulin, Faucheur, Du Bosc, Claude, and Saurin were the principal representatives. Among the Roman Catholics, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon were eloquent and elaborate, and addressed mostly courtiers and the *elite* circles of society, who would listen to nothing but what was faultless in style and diction. Among the more recent French preachers—Vinet, D'Aubigne, Malan, Monod, Lacordaire, the elder Coquerel, Father Hyacinthe, Bersier, and M. De Pressense,—we find many specimens of true Christian eloquence.

The *English, or British* sermon has never been so systematic in structure and finish as the French, but excels every other in variety of style, and especially in masterpieces of pulpit eloquence. The non-conformists were noted for fullness of doctrinal statement and evangelical intensity, while the churchmen addressed themselves to the practical ethics of daily life. "They had a great faculty of planning and arranging, often a remarkable breadth of

view, embracing all the aspects of their subject, and a great power of clear, correct, and forcible expression." The British pulpit can boast of such names as Howe, Owen, Baxter, Bishop Hall, South, Barrow, Jeremy Taylor, Doddridge, Whitefield, Wesley, Robert Hall, Jay, Chalmers, Robertson, Guthrie, McCheyne, Spurgeon, and a host of other famous preachers, whose sermons will never cease to be admired and studied as models of pulpit eloquence.

The *American* sermon, in the early history of our country, was biblical in form, but scholarly and dogmatic in spirit, owing greatly to the fact that the educational work of the country was confined to the ministerial class. Afterward it combined deep spiritual earnestness with metaphysical thought, which found an exponent in the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, who may be called the champion of the American pulpit, at least for the last century and a half. During the past forty years it has been literary and argumentative, aiming, perhaps, too much at a philosophical systemization of divine truth. At this time the sermon is, perhaps, no less systematical, but more biblical and searching. Henry Ward Beecher, T. DeWitt Talmage, John Hall, T. L. Cuyler, Chas. F. Deems, J. P. Newman, and Phillips Brooks bring the gospel truth into vital contact with the human heart, touch its feelings, and transfix it with the arrow of conviction.

§ III. RELATION OF THE SERMON TO HOMILETICS.

It is now agreed by nearly all homilists that the relation of homiletics to rhetoric is that of species to genus; but no such relation exists between the sermon and homiletics. Homiletics is the science which treats of the principles, theories, and rules belonging to preaching. Preaching is the art which consists in the practice and application of the principles, theories, and rules of homiletics in actual

speaking; and the sermon is the result of both theory and and practice. Homiletics, then, is the instrument, and the sermon the product; and as the fabric is greater than the tools used in its construction, so the sermon is superior to homiletics.

Matter is more important than form. The science of preaching has to do with the manipulating of material,—selecting, arranging, and expressing ideas. It can not originate or create thought; it can not give unction and eloquence; it simply fabricates the sermonic material. Method and form are important; but piety, knowledge, and the blessing of God are essential. Without these the best form can not produce a good sermon.

"Rules are the summary, the generalization of particular experiences."[1] All that homiletics can do is to reduce the result of experience of the most successful preaching into a science, or rules, for the guidance of the inexperienced. It simply tells how one does preach when he preaches successfully. But it can no more *make* a successful preacher than the doctrines of Christianity can make a Christian. Yet rules have their important use. "They aid our views, they keep us from false views; they shorten the time and the uncertainty of walking in the dark."[2] And herein consists their value. But they have exhausted their purpose as soon as skill in their use has been acquired. Like the law, they are a "school-master."

Homiletics was made for the sermon, and not the sermon for homiletics. Homiletics must be regarded as a means to an end. When writers on homiletics give rules and precepts for sermonizing, they do not put an iron harness upon the preacher, under whose gritty yoke he must work out every sermon, no matter how galling it may be. The ministry might well languish under the reign of such

1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 47. 2 *Ibid.*

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thing,—suffer shame and martyrdom and death. Religious controversies are the sharpest. Religious wars are the fiercest. Men will employ every resource of human power and skill for the defense of a religious opinion. But of all religious thoughts none are so powerful as *Christian* thoughts—thoughts about Christ and his doctrines. For over eighteen hundred years Christianity has molded society; crowded libraries with numberless books, pamphlets, and periodicals upon Christian themes that stir men's blood; reared the finest specimens of architectural beauty; girdled the earth with songs of praise, and filled heaven with redeemed saints. Here, then, is the power of the pulpit—the wielding of *religious, Christian thought.* The preacher does not deal with the small atomic forces of life, but with themes of mammoth proportions, whose roots are the deepest and broadest in philosophy, whose questions touch the greatest problems of our being and the most tender affections of our nature. A preacher that will handle such subjects in cold blood can have but little experimental knowledge of the power of gospel truth.

Again, the sermon ought to be good, not only on account of the intrinsic worth of its subject-matter, but because it is the product of all the preacher's previous study and experience. Behind every sermon is the sum total of the preacher's life, with all its weight of culture, learning, reflection, piety, and toil. The actual preparation of the sermon may be performed in a few days, yet it is the result of a man's whole past life, extracted from the best resources of his accumulated strength, and put into one effort of eloquence. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted a small cabinet picture in five days, for which he charged what seemed to the purchaser to be an extravagant price. "Why charge so much for a work that cost you only five days' labor?" asked the purchaser. "Five days!" said Reynolds. "Why,

sir, I have expended the work of thirty-five years upon it." What was true of the painter's picture is also true of the preacher's sermon. It represents all the years of his professional toil. Dr. Lyman Beecher preached his celebrated sermon on the "Government of God" during a powerful revival in Philadelphia. He was asked by one of the astonished hearers, "Doctor, how long did it take you to prepare that sermon?" To which he promptly replied, "About forty years." Such sermons are not the growth of a momentary inspiration; they do not spring up in a day, like the mushroom, but develop like the oak.

The true model sermon should aim high in its purposes and results. A man's supreme effort, which contains the whole force of his life, expended upon the most inspiring, religious, Christian thought, should accomplish no little amount of good upon the hearer. It should aim at a radical change of character and life, should inspire men with the purest motives, make their life the best and noblest possible, and the fittest preparation for the life to come. Some of the hearers have come from sick-beds, fierce conflicts, sore bereavements and losses, and will return to them again; others have come to seek spiritual food for their hunger, relief from doubt, and counsel to direct them in their penitence. Some are there for the first time, some for the last time. The preacher speaks in every sermon to men whom he may never address again. How much depends upon the issue of that one sermon! If men would always perceive and feel the responsibility and magnitude of their situation as they stand appealing to men, by divine commission, their words would not fall so lightly upon men's ears. Every sermon should awaken consciences, soften hearts, transport minds to the great future, and show them things to come. It ought to mold human destiny, send people home weeping over sin, and "make every one go away

silent and grave, and hastening to be alone, to meditate and pray the matter over in secret." How different in effect is such a sermon from one that awakens only applause or admiration for the preacher and his eloquence. The true preacher hides himself behind the cross, and asks men not to look at him, but at Christ. In his sermon is a higher aim than mere success—than ambition to produce great sermons that will be admired and praised by men.

But a sermon's usefulness does not terminate with the hour of service. It is destined to follow men through coming years, and to be a silent power with them during every hour of their lives. In hours of toil and in hours of rest, in times of adversity and in times of prosperity, in the family and in the store, it should be a solace in the Christian pilgrimage,—slumbering, perhaps, while life flows smoothly, but awakening in the day of trial, and comforting the soul in the hour of death. In short, it should be a sermon that will be cherished in time, and remembered by many in eternity. In achieving these results "we need more of Baxter's determination 'to get within men and to bring each truth to the quick;' more of St. Jerome's endeavor, 'not to draw applause, but rather sighs and groans from the people, and let their tears praise you;' more of holy Herbert's conviction, that 'sermons are dangerous things—no one goes out of church as he came in, but either better or worse;' more of that holy violence that comes from a burdening belief that there is an infinite weight of weal or woe in every sermon for every present soul, and that the preacher and congregation shall be judged by it at the great and terrible day."[1]

It is well for a young preacher to keep habitually before his mind a very high ideal of what a sermon ought to be. He should frequently listen to the ablest preachers, and

1 *Church Review*, January, 1860.

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First. *Our times demand a better quality of preaching than was formerly demanded.* The masses have advanced more rapidly during the last half century than the literary and professional circles, so that to-day our lay congregations are not so far behind the clergy in general knowledge as they were a century ago. Sermons are so numerous now that the ordinary one of fifty years ago will scarcely get a respectful hearing in our modern churches. The age is critical, fastidious, and not satisfied with that which is only mediocre. It is, therefore, necessary to occupy higher grounds if we would elevate the pulpit to the same relative position which it occupied in the past.

Second. The sermon of to-day ought to be superior *because of the improved facilities of preaching which this age affords.* Among the many advantages, we mention the professional schools for the study of theology and preaching, which are now accessible to nearly all. The time was when the privilege of acquiring a theological education in the seminary was, with the student, a question of pecuniary ability. Now, with the many beneficiary funds and endowments for the aid of indigent students, it is only a question of adaptation and of a divine call to the ministry on the part of the applicant, as to whether or not he can acquire a thorough preparation.[1] With a little economy and perseverance, the poorest of the poor may now become educated in the schools, and in preaching-ability rise to a level with, if not pre-eminence above, the most opulent.

Another facility for the production of a superior sermon is furnished in the abundance of our homiletical literature. We are in possession of all that the wisdom of the past has gathered for our instruction and profit. The present number of printed sermons, from the ablest and best of

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1 We do not say that such assistance is always a help to a young man. We only refer to the advantage it affords when properly used.

preachers of all times, is legion, affording an almost infinite variety of style, plan, and method, by the study of which our preaching may be greatly improved. Books and cyclopedias of illustrations are at command to enrich the sermon with attractive examples of fact and incident. Commentary and Bible biography yield their increase and drop their fatness into the preacher's study; and, *par excellence*, the most valuable aid is found in the many able treatises on homiletics which now crowd our libraries, the best of which have appeared during the last few decades. America, at present, stands unrivaled in the production of the most excellent text-books on preaching. In point of systematic treatment and practical merit, our modern authors on homiletics stand unsurpassed by anything that the past has evolved. Never before were there so many lecture courses on preaching, so many discussions of the subject in our reviews and periodicals, by our ablest teachers and preachers, solving the vexed problems of the pulpit and throwing light along the preacher's pathway. Hence, to-day, no one need lack knowledge of the best method of addressing the gospel to the hearts and minds of men. This, indeed, is the golden age of homiletical literature; and with such rich resources of material and implement we ought surely to see marked effects in an improved order of the sermon and a higher efficiency in the pulpit.

Third. Another reason why our modern sermon should excel, is because we possess to-day an *improved system of theology*. Theology can not be improved or changed in its essential doctrines and truths. These are as immutable as God himself. But in the progress of study and investigation, these truths of the gospel may be more accurately defined and more clearly presented. There may be great improvement in stating, explaining, guarding, applying, and defending them. Apparent difficulties may be cleared

away, objections obviated, and doctrinal proof strengthened. In these respects our theology is greatly in advance of that of the ancient and medieval church, and will still advance in time to come. Much improvement comes to theology from investigations in science and archæology, such as the researches of the geologist, the opening of the tombs of the Pharaohs and the ruins of many ancient cities, and the explorations in Bible lands. Egypt, the Sinaitic Peninsula, Palestine, and Assyria have been traversed and examined, and the discoveries have been published to the world. Hieroglyphics and cuneiform inscriptions are no longer unsolved problems. Cyprus, Ephesus, Troy, and Mycenæ have unfolded many rich treasures of archæology. Even in Rome we have only by recent investigation acquired a full knowledge of the palace of the Cæsars, the Forum, the Coliseum, and the Catacombs. From the many researches in the Holy Land, Palestine has not improperly been called by Renan "the fifth gospel."

Now an improvement in theology should effect a corresponding improvement in the sermon, for it is the exponent and offspring of theology. Our preaching ought to be clearer in statement, simpler in form, more positive in assertion, more convincing in proof, in order to be expressive of our modern theology. It ought to carry along with it the weight of authority, and all the prestige which time, scholarship, and piety can give it.

Because of these facilities for improvement in preaching, and many others that might be enumerated, such as the late Bible revision, rapid multiplication of theological works, etc., we have a right to demand a better quality of sermon; and from these indications of progress we may predict a continuous advancement of pulpit eloquence while these facilities increase, without ever reaching the ideal, or *ne plus ultra*, of excellence.

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it chiefly in one word—"love." "Speaking the truth in love." This does not imply the excessive use of endearing epithets, or the opposite of manliness, nor does it forbid the utterance of painful truth with holy indignation; but it requires a spirit of solemnity, meekness, affectionateness, and sympathy, in the application of every gospel truth. "This tone is especially to be cultivated when disagreeable truth has to be spoken, or where a spirit of opposition has to be overcome; for the preacher is one who is to win souls, and there is no way of winning without love. The preacher is the representative of the great Father, whose great power for winning men back to himself is love. 'I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.' (Hosea xi. 4.) The gospel of which he has charge is the gospel of infinite love,"[1] and is most evangelical when proclaimed in the spirit of the Master, the author of evangelical truth. To give this character to the discourse, the preacher needs vital piety and the pure motive of glorifying God and edifying the hearer. The most evangelical truth uttered by profane or ungodly lips, no matter how learned the speaker or how eloquent the discourse, would not be an evangelical sermon, for it needs the spirit as well as the form of Christian thought. Whatever relation the ordinary sermon may sustain to the services of the sanctuary, such a sermon, drawn from the true wells of salvation, is worship as truly as is singing and praying, or any other devotional exercise which is calculated to draw souls heavenward in holy meditation and praise.

2. It must be *instructive.* "Moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still *taught* the people knowledge." (Ecc. xii. 9.) This was the example of Solomon. And Paul described the preacher as one "apt to teach."

Instruction is a fundamental design of preaching, and

1 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 104.

requires not only that the minister be a perpetual student of Revelation, but that he acquire the facility of imparting instruction to others out of the treasury of the Lord in things both new and old. With such an inexhaustible wealth and depth of discovered and undiscovered knowledge as is contained in the Scriptures, the pulpit should never cease to be a fountain of religious knowledge for both mind and heart. It should not, however, become an academical chair of instruction, dealing out dry technicalities in a scholastic, formal manner. It should transmute all kinds of theology into a *sermon*, which means, reducing it into fragments and adapting it to the wants of daily life. It should turn knowledge into life. The difference between a lecture on theology and a sermon is that the former is a scientific discussion for scholarly minds, while the latter is spiritual food for the common people. We must keep the intellectualism of the lecture ever separate from the instructiveness of the sermon by broad and distinct lines of demarkation. Our theological seminaries may map out the field of theological learning, and deal out general biblical knowledge, so to speak, by the wholesale method; but the preacher must give out knowledge by retail, and prepare it as a spiritual refreshment for all classes of hearers.[1]

With this discrimination, then, we remark that a pulpit discourse upon every evangelical topic must give knowledge to the understanding, and nutriment to the soul. It must give both light and heat, must both instruct and affect, convince and persuade. These two properties are essential to sacred oratory. There may be a great preponderance of the one element over the other, but neither should be wanting in any perfect model of sermon. In physics, the

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1 He "breaks the bread of life now into smaller, now into larger pieces; if need be, he reduces it to crumbs."—Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 21.

momentum of a body is found by multiplying its weight by its velocity; and the same rule is good in sacred discourse. The one that has the most weight of matter and most activity of feeling is the greatest sermon. It should make the hearer not only better, but also wiser, informing him of the real import of the subject discussed, suggesting to his mind new lines of thought, and telling him how best to improve his privileges, practice his duties, and obey the teachings of God's Word. A discourse that consists of nothing but exhortation or uninstructive address will not do much to enlighten and convict the sinner, or to build up the faith of the Christian.

3. It must be *interesting*. It is not enough that a sermon be evangelical and instructive, it must also be interesting. The first property renders it official and legal by giving it the divine signet, the second makes it useful by adapting it to human wants, and the third makes it popular by engaging the attention of the hearer. The first two contribute much to the composition of the third, or rather are among its most essential constituents, for interest is the result of a variety of properties and faculties.

It must possess adaptation to the audience, and earnestness of delivery, and be addressed to the various faculties of the mind. Logic and feeling must be mingled together. Cold reasoning alone, like that of Butler's "Analogy," would be utterly unbecoming and uninteresting in a popular sermon; and excited emotions can not long survive unless sustained occasionally by fresh logical thought. The imagination, as the handmaid of logic, may often be engaged to add freshness, originality, and beauty to the sermon by casting old ideas into new forms. Address to the conscience, also, will arouse attention. Thus, by engaging the different faculties and feelings of the soul, we produce a variety of pleasant sensations, and avoid monotony of feeling, which is so fatal to the interest of a discourse.

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a poor sinner I am! How wicked I am!" A sermon is to be praised not for the noise it makes, the entertainment it affords, but for the good it does; and however orthodox, instructive, eloquent, learned, and flowery it may be, if it does not lift the hearer nearer to God it is scarcely worth the name of a sermon.

The true object of preaching is stated by Paul, in Ephesians iv. 12, 13. It is to build up the soul in righteousness and true holiness. The immediate aim of preaching is soul-enlightenment and soul-conversion; but the ultimate object of all true preaching is soul-edification — the formation of a true manhood in Christ.

In order to render each sermon edifying, it is necessary to have a definite aim in view, and to bend all efforts to its accomplishment. "As you sit down to prepare your discourse, let your question be, What is my purpose in this sermon? and do not move a step until you have shaped out before your mind a definite answer to that inquiry. * * * * The way to walk in a straight line over a trackless field, is to fix the eye, and keep it fixed, on some object that is stationary and sufficiently elevated, and then to move towards that."[1] In the Yale lectureship John Hall, also, says, "Direct your arrows at objects without being personal; come near your hearers. Letters dropped into the post-office without address go to the dead-letter office, and are of no use to anybody." Having fixed your gaze upon some object, preach with the expectation of seeing its fruits, and resolve not to receive as a commendation of your efforts any favorable opinion of the hearers, except such as report real spiritual benefit received from your sermon.

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1 W. M. Taylor, in *Yale Lectures*, p. 111.

§ VII. LENGTH OF THE SERMON.

As to the length of the sermon, no fixed rule can be given. In the early church the Latins did not usually occupy more than half an hour,—often not more than ten minutes. The Greek fathers were, however, always more lengthy.[1] St. Ambrose usually preached about half an hour. Chrysostom's sermon on Lazarus must have occupied nearly an hour in delivery. William Jay said, "I never surpassed forty-five minutes, at *most*." Mullois says that seven minutes are long enough for a sermon in France, and remarks, "Believe me, and I speak from experience, the more you say the less will the hearers retain; the less you say the more will they profit." This, of course, is the opinion of a French author on homiletics. In ritualistic churches the sermons are usually very short.

The Puritans, on communion occasions, often preached sermons of no less than two hours in length. Paul preached at Troas all night, with only a short intermission to restore a dead man to life and to break bread. Cecil advises young preachers to preach only thirty minutes if they read their sermons, and not to exceed forty minutes if they do not.[2]

It would be unwise to limit the discussion in every sermon to a certain number of minutes, for there are occasions

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1 Cf. Moule's *Oratory*, p. 56.

2 "Sermons in early times seem to have been comparatively short. Some of these extant by the Latin fathers would not occupy, as they stand, more than ten minutes, or quarter of an hour; many of Bede's consist only of a very few lines. Therefore, we are not safe in resting upon such data—as these are evidently short-hand notes. Long sermons were the product of the post-reformation, especially of Puritan times. Yet some of the earlier divines were lengthy. Bishop Alcock preached at St. Mary's, Cambridge, 'a good and pleasant sermon,' which lasted from one o'clock to half-past three. Sometimes the audiences in olden times, in England, scraped their feet, and thus compelled the preacher to desist. * * * * Bishop Alderson, however, was strongly opposed to long sermons; when once asked his opinion as to the proper length of a discourse, he answered, 'Twenty minutes, with a leaning to the side of mercy.' Isaac Barrow's Spital sermon was three hours and a half long. Edward Irving, in later days, also preached a sermon of three hours and a half in length for the London Missionary Society, in Tottenham Court Road Chapel. He paused thrice, and the devout and patient congregation sang hymns in the interval, but they never forgave him that sermon."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, February, 1869, quoted by Hoppin.

and subjects that require an extended discourse, and can be made very interesting for one hour, while other topics and times would not warrant an interesting attention for more than twenty or thirty minutes. The apparent length of a sermon depends much on the manner of its treatment. A long discourse full of interesting thought may seem short, and a dull one, however short, may seem long.

It is to be observed, however, that in this age of rapid thought and short methods the sermon should be shorter than formerly. "Audiences a century ago would patiently listen to discourses of two hours in length, and would follow the sermonizer through a series of divisions and subdivisions that would be intolerable to a modern hearer. * * * Mental operations are on straight lines, like the railroad and telegraph, and are far more rapid than they once were. The public audience now craves a short method, a distinct, sharp statement, and a rapid and accelerating movement, upon the part of its teachers."[1] Lamont thinks that nothing can justify a long sermon. If it be a good one it need not be long, and if it be a bad one it ought not to be long. Luther would not have preachers torment their hearers with long and tedious preaching; and Whitefield thinks that no one will be converted after the first half hour. In our day of multiplied sermons it certainly would be better to make a sermon intensive rather than extensive, and to measure its worth by its depth rather than by its length. Its average length will vary from thirty minutes to forty-five, sometimes more, sometimes less; for its time will vary with the grandeur of the theme and the circumstances of time, place, and people. "As a general rule, *short sermons*, short sermons. One subject, one thought, one duty, fully handled, fully illustrated, fully brought home to the conscience and heart, is enough for one ser-

1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, pp. 55, 56.

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when it has been prepared for a class of persons who were not present at its first delivery; when it was carefully prepared, but, the weather being unfavorable, there were at first but few present; when unexpected calls upon the minister's time render a new preparation utterly impossible; when, being very carefully prepared, new circumstances in the congregation promise great good from its repetition; when judicious persons in the church earnestly request that it should be preached again;"[1] to which we may add two other rules, viz.: when pastors exchange pulpits with each other; when they are appointed by conference to a new charge.

Let us, however, caution the young minister never to repeat a sermon through indolence, with no other motive in view than to avoid the labor of preparing a new one. A progressive preacher will not depend on his stock of old sermons, but will continually compose new and better ones, as his mind develops by study and experience, and will never use the fruit of his past labor unless he can improve it, or render it a second time with great profit to himself and his hearers.

The following plea for not destroying old sermons, from "a friend of old sermons" whose name is unknown, we give entire:

Is it well to burn old sermons? This question has been largely discussed recently, and opinion is greatly divided upon it. I have seen nothing more to the point on the negative side than the following story, which I quote in substance from one of my exchanges:

Near the buildings of a farm lay a pile of wood. Some of it was decaying, but there were many sound sticks in it. They had already served a purpose, and were awaiting another use. One day its owner said to a workman: "Here, Pompey, I want you to burn up this pile of wood." "Burn up dat pile of wood, Massa!" echoed the colored man in astonishment. "Dar lots of good wood in dar. It'll be of sarv-

1 *Pastoral Theology*, pp. 221, 222.

ice some day or 'nodher. If yer burn it all up, den when yer want a stick it won't be dar." "No matter," was the reply, "burn it all. This is old and has been used once. We can get new and strong sticks from the woods; new wood is better than old any time. Burn up every stick," said the farmer; "a pile of wood around makes me lazy." The colored man obeyed, muttering as he did so, "Massa's a good man, but somefin's de matter wid him once in awhile. 'Tain't lazy, dough. Wood-pile around make a man lazy! Pshaw! Not if he want to work. If he don't want to work, you can't make him by burnin' his wood-pile."

Shortly after the pile was burned, a neighbor's heavily-loaded wagon became mired in the road near the farmer's house. The teamster shouted for help, and asked them to bring a rail from the wood-pile. "No rails there," replied the farmer. "Pile is all burned; but I'll go to the woods and cut a stick." While the farmer was gone Pompey appeared and told the story of the burning of the wood-pile. "Lazy!" ejaculated the man. "Crazy, you mean. If he had left it, see how he might have helped me now!" The teamster and Pompey had succeeded in getting the wagon out just as the farmer was coming from the woods with a stick.

There were other occasions when he needed aid from the wood-pile. One day, when asked why he burned the pile, he said, "It seemed heroic." "Heroic!" said the inquirer. "Not a bit of heroism in that. To have left it standing, and then gone by it to get your timber from the woods, might have been heroic; but your act proves you to be something else than heroic, and something less."

Some sermons had better be burned. It would have been well if they had never been written; but sermons which are the result of years of thought — sermons which were prepared under a special inspiration, and which have been consecrated by the Holy Ghost by usefulness, ought not to be burned, but sacredly preserved and used when circumstances indicate their adaptation to the people. The greatest and most useful ministers of Christendom have kept and repeated their sermons.

It is urged that a stock of sermons promotes laziness; but the want of it may also. Some in a few hours prepare what, for charity's sake, may be called a sermon. This laziness is not hidden by their empty fluency. Talk of heroism in burning sermons! It is much more like cowardice. If a man's conscience and will are not strong enough to keep him to his duty in the presence of a pile of sermons, he will fail in greater trials.

§ IX. SERIES OF SERMONS.

A succession of sermons on one general subject is sometimes desirable,—first, when a theme is too fertile or comprehensive to be clearly and fairly treated in the time usually allotted for one sermon; second, when one wishes to take time to fully investigate an important subject.

The series may consist of one sermon upon each of the various phases or divisions of a subject. The subject may be such as the Old Testament Christology, biblical emblems of Christ, Messianic psalms, biblical descriptions of heaven and hell, revivals recorded in the Scriptures, biblical doctrine of the millennium, or the representative characters of the Old and New Testaments; or, it may consist of consecutive passages of scripture relating to one subject, such as the ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, a parable, or a miracle. The various phases or divisions, upon each of which a sermon is to be constructed, may be selected from different portions of the Scriptures which relate to the theme in hand.

If a series is lengthy, extending over a course of six, ten, or more sermons, it is often better to preach one of the sermons every week or fortnight than to deliver them consecutively. By interspersing the serial with an occasional discourse on another subject, a congregation's relish for variety will be satisfied.

§ X. ONE OR TWO SERMONS A SABBATH?

This question, of course, has reference to stations where the custom prevails of preaching two sermons each Lord's-day to the same congregation. In favor of such a custom it may be said that it doubtless prevailed in the primitive church, and is founded on the example of the apostles. Basil commonly preached twice on the Christian Sabbath.

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tion. To convince men of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come, to prove the doctrines of Christianity as a system, to impress the tremendous and engaging truths of religion upon men, requires that the preacher compass the earth and heavens, yea, scour the universe, for arguments. He is to compel into his service, first, revelation; then, nature, art, philosophy, poetry, logic, illustration, times, men, realities, and fancies,—anything and everything within the range of gospel propriety, to woo and win the sinner from ruin to righteousness. Every minister needs, at least, three hours each day for the study of these subjects. If he neglects this work of acquiring fresh knowledge he will soon exhaust his mental resources, or become threadbare and uninteresting. He must be a feeder, else a dwarf. Where there is an outlet there must also be an inlet, or the stream will soon become shallow or entirely dried up. You can take no more out of an acre than you put into it, is a rule of agriculture and of literary professions. Few ministers will prepare two good sermons each week, besides attending to all their other pastoral and official duties, and then have much time left for general improvement. Two sermons a Sabbath, together with one or two Sabbath-school sessions, and perhaps a Bible-service or other religious meeting thrown in between, not only inflict an injustice on ministers, by necessitating, for the due discharge of all their duties, an amount of preparation which is oppressive, but also affect disadvantageously the quality of pulpit services, and consequently exert reflexly a deteriorating influence on the spiritual life of the church.

Another advantage, to the preacher, of the one-sermon system is that it enables him to prepare more fully for the pulpit. This benefit will accrue naturally from the general improvement in preaching which the system affords, but

especially from the double amount of time allowed for the preparation of each discourse. The weekly time usually allotted to sermon-preparation can be best utilized by devoting it to the study of one theme. It is better for the minister to concentrate his thoughts into one impressive sermon than to spread them over two, when the last, perhaps, is only half-remembered and imperfectly digested and improved. One good sermon a week, driven home to the consciences of men, will do more good than half a dozen ordinary ones hastily prepared under the pressure of too much work. What we need to-day is not less *preaching*, but a decrease in its quantity, and an increase in its quality; condensation and pungency rather than expansion and dullness. Our motto should be, not how much, but how well. A dollar in gold is as much money as a dollar in copper. The only difference consists in the relative proportion of their bulk. The one-sermon *regime* would not produce less preaching, but sermons of greater value and efficiency.

2. *To the Worshiping Congregation.* One reason why so many hearers become restless under a sermon of ordinary length, and appreciate so little of what is really good, is because they must listen to too much preaching. The minister pours into their minds such frequent and abundant spiritual refreshments that they finally become overcharged and even disgusted with the good feast, and so fail to appreciate or profit by the food, on account of a debilitated digestion, caused by overfeeding. Would not a smaller quantity, but more substantial kind, of preaching improve the spiritual health of our congregations? Our religion, perhaps, is made to consist too much in the duty of becoming "hearers of the word," rather than "doers;" and hence we hear many defend their morality or religion on the plea that they "go to church." Vinet, nearly half

a century ago, said what is more applicable in our time than it was when it was penned. In speaking of preaching he says, "It is almost everything with us. * * * * The temple is an auditory. It seems to have no other purpose than to gather hearers around a man who speaks to them. Thus we say of the Catholic, he goes to *mass;* of the Protestant, he goes to *sermon.* We thus unconsciously give perhaps too exclusive predominance to preaching in Protestant worship."[1] Christian people need to do more than to listen to sermons. Unless the sermon produces actual fruit in the life and actions of the hearer, it becomes a mere form, and the congregation a mass of passive hearers.

People now need spiritual exercise more than religious instruction. Modern Christianity should be active, rather than receptive. To meet this condition we need more religious services in which the people can participate,—such as prayer, class, praise, or Bible meetings,—and an improved order instead of an increased number of sermons. Let the hour of the second preaching-service be devoted to such a general meeting, or to the cultivation of religious knowledge and piety in the home circle, or to some charitable or missionary work among the poor and degraded in the neighborhood. This kind of Christian activity, as the sequel of more earnest, vigorous preaching, would undoubtedly conduce to a more genuine and aggressive Christianity; while too much common-place preaching, to the exclusion of earnest Christian work, has put to sleep many a live church and produced dead and formal professors of religion.

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1 *Homiletics*, pp. 21, 22.

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manner of our times, as standing for the particular theme of the discourse, is ascribed to the Presbyter Musaeus of Marseilles, in the fifth century."[1] It was during the decline and corruption of the church in the Middle Ages, that quotations from uninspired literature, such as the dialectics of Aristotle, were often substituted for scriptural themes. The medieval preachers frequently discoursed without texts, while the Venerable Bede, and Peter of Cellae, selected their texts from Latin hymns. Protestant divines of that age, on some occasions, took texts from the catechisms.[2] However, the learned Keckermann[3] tells us that the evangelical churches of his time preferred the taking of scripture texts.[4]

To take passages from uninspired authors as texts, no matter how religious the sentiment, would be considered a desecration of the divine office of the ministry, which must base all its teachings upon the inspired, infallible word. "Preach the word," was Paul's advice to his spiritual son Timothy.

The root-origin of the word *text*[5] implies that it is something *given to us*, a fabric prepared, which we are to unravel, or draw out into a line of discourse. The Bible is the preacher's text-book, woven by divine inspiration, and handed down from heaven as the *fons et origo* of all preaching; and the "gospel net" (Matt. xiii. 47.) becomes available to him only so far as used according to

1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 289.

2 See J. M. Neale's *Medieval Preachers and Preaching*, xliii. 54. Riddle, in his *Christian Antiquities*, p. 448, describes a religious service in which the text for the sermon was from Theodore Parker.

3 *Rhetorica Ecclesiasticae*, Chapter I.

4 Voltaire's familiar objection to the custom of using scripture texts has, no doubt, arisen from the abuse, rather than from the proper use, of texts. He says, "It were to be wished that Bourdaloue, in banishing from the pulpit the bad taste which disgraced it, had also banished the custom of preaching on a text. Indeed, to speak long on a quotation of a line or two, to exhaust one's self in subjecting a whole discourse to the control of this line, seems a trifling labor, little worthy of the dignity of the ministry. The text becomes a sort of motto, or rather enigma, which the discourse develops."

5 *Textum* is something woven—a web.

the direction of the Master, who said, "Preach the gospel." Hence we should select a text only from the received canon of inspiration. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."[1]

§ I. OBJECTIONS TO THE USE OF TEXTS.

There are still some preachers and authors of homiletics who speak disparagingly of the use of texts as the themes of sermons, for the following reasons:

1. They contract the range of discourse, confining one to too small a circle of ideas. "Experience also is a book," says Vinet; "experience also furnishes texts."

To this objection it may be replied that a contracted theme is better than an expanded one. It tends to thoroughness and depth of discussion, rather than to a rambling over the surface of an extended field. Every passage suited for pulpit discourse, however brief, is an exhaustless well of thought to him who will fathom its depth. Besides, the range of scripture-subjects is as wide as the range of human experience, and will furnish something for every individual case.

2. They are not adapted to topical discourse, because not every text possesses perfect unity.

But, however numerous the distinctive members of a text, and however capable of yielding a variety of different subjects, there is always a main idea underlying the text which forms the unifying center of a topical sermon. Even in textual discussions, the several text-divisions must all fall under one general head.

3. The use of texts stiffens the routine of the pulpit.

Not more than seed will introduce formality in vegetation. Texts are the necessary seed-thoughts that yield an

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1 Revised Version renders this passage, "If any man *speaketh*, *speaking* as it were oracles of God" (I. Peter iv. 11).

endless variety of fresh material. Instead of losing interest, every hearer will especially give close attention to the announcement of the text. It is upon this that everything centers. The custom of employing a text as the subject of a sermon is not peculiar to preaching; it is, in fact, characteristic of all public speaking. The Greek and Roman orators often spoke upon some definite proposition. Demosthenes generally spoke upon some indictment or specific statement; and in our day, legislative and forensic addresses are based upon resolutions, motions, bills, or legal forms of indictment. When Daniel Webster commenced his famous reply to Hayne, in the United States Senate, he said, "Mr. President, I call for the reading of the resolution before the Senate." Such direction of speech to some particular point or formal specification is equivalent to the use of a text of scripture in preaching.

§ II. REASONS FOR SELECTING A TEXT.

1. Because we thereby recognize and honor the authority of the divine Word. This gives weight and authority to our words and arguments, and at once demands the attention of all; for the preacher is not to indulge in speculative philosophy—setting up his own notions and fancies, or any other human *dictum;* but with an open Bible before him, he shows that he has a message from heaven as he announces the "Thus saith the Lord." Here is a valid basis of instruction which men will honor and respect. Besides, one great purpose in preaching is to unfold some idea of inspiration. If this be not our intention, we need no text at all,—we may as well take one from Bacon's "Essays." Without a text of scripture our discourse may be an oration, a speech, a lecture, an essay; but it can never be called a sermon.[1]

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1 Cf. F. Wayland's *Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel.*

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§ III. FROM WHAT PORTION OF THE BIBLE SHOULD THE TEXT BE SELECTED?

True, one book may be more evangelical and practical than another; the Old Testament may not be so rich in Christian tone as the New, for the latter is the flower of which the former is only the bud; yet every book, from Genesis to Revelation, contains something of CHRIST—the hero of the Bible, and the only great theme for preaching. "When we preach from the Old Testament, we should surely seek to find the New Testament in it—the testimony of Christ, the analogy of faith. Some one quaintly says that 'He who understands the art of distinguishing between Moses and Christ, may indeed be called a doctor.' The Old Testament is the New Testament in its germ, and therefore can not be neglected by the preachers of Christ; but we should choose our texts, and treat them in such a way as that they may all bear upon the 'truth as it is in Jesus.'"[1] Hence we may find texts flavored with the Christ sentiment in all portions of the Bible. The book of Psalms is full of such texts. In the New Testament we may find those of an historical character chiefly in the beginning; those of an experimental, chiefly in the middle; and those of a prophetical, chiefly in the end.

Some preachers hesitate to take texts from the books of Daniel, Ecclesiastes, II. Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation, because their canonical authority and authenticity have been controverted. In fact, every book of the Bible has been assailed at some time; but this is no reason why we should pass them over in selecting our texts. There is abundant evidence of the divine inspiration of the above named

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trials of life; and as its light was the first gleam of heaven that fell upon his soul, so peradventure, it is the last that gladdens and sustains him as he closes his sojourn, strikes his tent, and breasts the river."—Blaikie, p. 150.

1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, pp. 299, 300.

books, which alone is a valid basis for using them in preaching.

Here let us refer to the impropriety of preaching from passages which are *quotations* from profane writers,—for not "all that lies between the covers of the Bible is divine,"—such as, "We are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 28);[1] "Cretans are always liars, evil boasts, idle gluttons" (Titus i. 12, R. V.);[2] "Evil company doth corrupt good manners" (I. Cor. xv. 33, R. V.);[3] Jude 14, 15 is probably a quotation from the book of Enoch.[4] Many proverbs quoted by Christ, such as, "Physician, heal thyself" (Luke iv. 23), and "Strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel" (Matt. xxiii. 24, R. V.), which are supposed to be from the fables of Æsop, are less objectionable, but should not be used as texts so long as we can find other inspired passages that express the same idea.

Equally as much should we avoid the erroneous sayings of uninspired men, whose words are recorded in Scripture. "Many such sayings found in the Bible are in themselves utterly untrue, inspiration being responsible only for the fact that they were actually spoken. No one would think of treating as true the vaunting speech of Rabshakeh (II. Kings xviii), * * * * The well-known words of Gamaliel (Acts v. 38, 39) are very instructive as his saying under the circumstances, but the principle laid down is not true without qualification. In the book of Job, many of the things said by those friends are quite erroneous."[5] Saul

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1 This is a quotation from the *Phenomena*, an astronomical poem by the Greek poet Aratus. Cleanthus also expresses the same sentiment in his writings.

2 From Epimenides of Crete, a philosophical poet who lived in the sixth century B. C. By Plato he is called "a divinely-inspired man;" by Plutarch, a man dear to the Gods."

3 From the Greek poet Menander in his play called *Thais*. The same sentiment is found in Æschylus, *Seven Against Thebes*, ver. 605. "In every matter there is nothing more deleterious than evil communications." Also, in Diodorus Siculus, Lib. xvi, cap. 54, "With these evil communications he corrupts the morals of men."

4 See an article on the Book of Enoch, in McClintock anp Strong's *Cyclopedia*.

5 Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 49.

and Ahab are no authority for divine instruction. Many uninspired sentiments of the Bible contradict each other and usually contradict the teachings of the Holy Spirit They are untrue, and therefore unfit for texts of sacred discourse.

In order to avoid *spurious* and *interpolated* passages, let the preacher use the Revised Version of the Scriptures, from which all texts of doubtful genuineness, such as Acts viii. 37, ix. 6, xxviii. 29, I. John v. 7, etc., are omitted. No sacred discourse should be built on so fallible a foundation as human opinion.

From whatever portion of scripture the text may be selected, it must always be presented in its correct translation. The preacher should consult commentaries, translations, versions, and especially the original text, in order to arrive at its true meaning. Many erroneous doctrines and false opinions have been built up by texts which mean something quite different from the sense in which they were used. Thus, the passage, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," has often been used as a text for a sermon upon "Almost a Christian;" whereas a philological examination of the passage will show an almost opposite meaning. "For now we see through a glass darkly," signifies more than would appear by the rendering. A truer translation would be, "For now we see in a mirror, obscurely." It does not only imply an imperfect vision, but a mystery concealed behind an imperfect vision. "'I know nothing by myself,' is really, 'I am not conscious to myself of any guilt,' and yet I am not thereby justified; showing that even the unconsciousness of his sins can not justify the sinner—an important homiletical and practical sense."[1] The faithful preacher will always be careful to preach nothing but the unadulterated word of God.

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1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 301.

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gravitates at the time. "The right text is one which comes up of itself, during reading or meditating,—which accompanies you in your walks, goes to bed with you, and rises with you. On such a text thoughts swarm and cluster like bees upon a branch. The sermon ferments for hours and days, and at length, after patient waiting, and almost spontaneous working, the subject clarifies itself. * * * * Those texts which come up of themselves * * * * are the right ones, and are different from those which are sought out."[1] In this way the Holy Spirit often directs us to the proper theme when other methods of searching out a text fail us, or the text already selected is unsatisfactory or uninteresting. Whatever becomes the most interesting text at the time of choosing is to us a "Palace Beautiful," through which we can go weeping, singing, and rejoicing. We should not omit seeking divine guidance in the selection of our subjects. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally." Yet no one should rely exclusively on such help, but should also use the means placed at his own hands for self-help.

RULE 2. Seek for great themes. We do not mean abstruse or philosophically profound, but religiously great themes, —themes that constitute the great pyramids of the Scriptures. We again quote the excellent words of J. W. Alexander, on what he calls "The great themes:" "They are such as move the feelings, the great questions which have agitated the world, which agitate our own bosom, which we would like to have settled before we die, which we would ask an apostle, if he were here. These are to general scripture-truth what great mountains are in geography. Some, anxious to avoid hackneyed topics, omit the greatest, just as if we should describe Switzerland and omit the Alps. Some ministers preach twenty years, and

1 J. W. Alexander's *Thoughts on Preaching*, pp. 38, 39.

yet never preach on the judgment, hell, the crucifixion, nor on those great themes which in all ages affect children and affect the common mind."

RULE 3. Avoid themes that are petty, odd, and frivolous. In the dark ages such questions were discussed as, "Whether Abel was slain with a club, and of what species of wood;" "From what sort of tree was Moses' rod taken?" In the seventeenth century preachers took for their themes "The Four Seasons;" "The Seven Planets;" "The Secret of Roses and Flowers." A pastor of Wernigerode preached from Matthew x. 30, and deduced from it the subject, "Our Hair."[1] A writer in the last century tells of a time when homiletical instruction was given upon the subject of silk-worms. Some preacher discoursed upon the "Substitute for Tea and Coffee" at a time when those commodities were scarce; another preached upon the Christian mode of cultivating red-beets; another, upon the truly pious method of raising tobacco. Luther used to say that the time would come when men would preach on *blue ducks.*

Exceedingly unbecoming was the petty smartness of one of Dr. Philip Doddridge's students, who, on preaching a sermon in public before his venerable instructor, announced as his text, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

Even in our modern pulpits we hear of a great deal of eccentricity in the selection of texts. One preaches on "There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman;" another selects the word "grace," and preaches upon it alphabetically, making this division: great grace, rich grace, almighty, covenant, eternal grace.[2] In order to draw

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1 See Dr. Hurst's *History of Rationalism*, pp. 70,71; also, Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief.*

2 See Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 46, where many examples of odd subjects are given.

people to church through curiosity, sensational subjects are often announced in the Saturday papers; such as, "The Girl of the Period," "The Man in the Moon," "The Devil's Funeral Sermon," "The Greatest Liar in Town." Bishop Simpson speaks of one who advertised, "'Words that were Spoken by neither God, Man, nor Devil;' and when his wondering congregation came, his words were the utterauces of Balaam's ass." A preacher in New Jersey preached on the "Marriage of Adam;" another in Massachusetts, on the "Sin of Raising Apples for Cider."

"Where in this world is buffoonery so much out of place as in the pulpit? * * * * The origin of this sinful and absurd manner of entertaining an audience on the Lord's day most generally is in a desire to copy after some erratic, or possibly unprincipled, preacher, who, by his recklessness as to the way of handling the truth of God and by his genius, has risen to a temporary popularity."[1] A preacher who resorts to such illegitimate means of drawing the people will not succeed in making much religious impression upon his hearers. A trivial manner of using the sacred word in the pulpit is not only beneath the dignity of a serious minister, but is actually sinful.

> "'Tis pitiful
> To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
> To break a jest, when pity would inspire
> Pathetic exhortation; and to address
> The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
> When sent with God's commission to the heart!"[2]

RULE 4. Select a text that embraces a theme. In order to give some unity to a discourse, every text must embrace enough words to make complete sense or contain a truth.[3] "For sake of brevity a passage is sometimes mu-

1 Murphy's *Pastoral Theology*, pp. 205, 206.

2 Cowper, *The Task*, Book II.

3 We have heard of a preacher who selected for his text the word "One;" another "But;" another, "O;" another, "Zaphnath-paaneah."

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mutilating of the divine Word. As a rule, we should seek for such a passage as will alone express our theme; but if this can not be found, nothing forbids us legitimately to unite several passages to compose a text.[1] We may also invert the terms of a text, if this will conduce to clearness and unity.

RULE 5. Select a text from which a theme can be derived legitimately and naturally. There should be no incongruity between the text and the theme; for the sermon must not be a preface or supplement to, but a *development* of, the text. The text is the nucleus of the discourse; or, as Wayland has said, "The sermon must be the text expanded, and the text the sermon contracted." The one includes the other. "Let your sermon grow out of your text just as the boughs of an oak grow out of its trunk. The main thought of the text should furnish the trunk of the discourse; and every inference and every practical application should have an organic connection with the text. So close and vital should be the connection between your text and your discourse, that if you decapitate the discourse by cutting off the text and attempt to substitute another, it should be certain death to the sermon. What a monstrous caricature of preaching the word is that practice of writing a theological essay and then attaching a text to it, as a shop-keeper pins a label on his wares!"[2] "It is said of Latimer that in his advanced age he had a text which served for any subject—'Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.' An English preacher, at the Bishop of Lincoln's visitation, in 1818, chose for his text, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men;' and after his

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1 We may select several texts for a sermon, if no single one is sufficient to embrace our theme; as, for example, the duty of family worship, or the doctrine of the Trinity, requires different scripture-passages to establish the doctrine.

2 T. L. Cuyler, in *Homiletic Monthly*.

exordium proposed, as the subject of discourse, 'To examine the doctrines of Calvin, as laid down in his Institutes.'"[1]

The habit of adopting a passage merely as a motto, or starting-point, from which to arrive at irrelevant, independent, and isolated conclusions that have no organic, vital *nexus* with the true sense of the text, is to be condemned. A text which is chosen and then soon abandoned, is not a text, but a pretext.[2] Neither should a positive theme be deduced from a negative text, and *vice versa.* Every one can see the impropriety of preaching on Christian perseverance from such texts as, "Ye are fallen from grace;" or, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God;" or, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Just as much should we avoid preaching on final apostasy from such words as, "Be thou faithful unto death," "I have kept the faith," "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved," etc. The discourse must not point in one direction while the text points in another; neither should they intersect at intervals by oblique movements, converging and then diverging; but both must be co-extensive, and reach the same terminus. "If the text be in the shape of a declaration, a precept, a promise, a threatening, an invitation, an appeal, or an argument, something of the same form and character should be given to the sermon. Or, again, if the text be tender and compassionate, or indignant and menacing, admonitory, reproachful, conciliatory, or encouraging, something of the

1 E. Porter's *Lectures on Homiletics.*

2 "Ye shall be as gods," was used as a text by a divine to discuss the future glory of the Christian. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul," was the text for a sermon on election and reprobation; and the proposition was, "that among the multitude of thoughts there was a great thought of election and reprobation." The two pence in the parable of the "Good Samaritan" are sometimes taken as the text for a sermon on the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's-supper. Such texts are inappropriate for these subjects.

same spirit should be infused into the discourse."[1] Stick to the text, rather than follow Bourdaloue, who took a text merely to show how skillfully he could get rid of it.

RULE 6. As to language, choose those texts that are plain and simple, in preference to those that are obscure and grand. A high-sounding expression, polished with rhetorical or poetical ornament, when taken as a text, is generally prophetic of defeat; for the preacher, starting from so eloquent a strain, must evidently descend in comparative diction, instead of ascending toward a rhetorical climax. We should rather seek for great thoughts expressed in plain words—kings in simple clothing, rather than beggars in royal robes. However, pompous phraseology alone is no sufficient reason for rejection if the passage contains an important truth; but, as a rule, ornate language is no desirable quality for a text. So, also, a passage which is obscure, either in thought or language, and which would require a long, critical commentary in the introduction, to decide its meaning, should not be selected for a text. It is better suited for technical philosophy and exegesis than for public preaching. Let the minister wait until future investigation has cleared up the difficulty of the passage before he takes it for a text. Not that the preacher has no concern with such passages—for he ought to be a critical student of the sacred Word; but let him do this work in his study and not in his pulpit, which is the place for the delivery of undoubted and undisputed Bible doctrine, and not of controverted philosophy.[2]

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1 Gresley's *Treatise on Preaching*, p 250.

2 Passages of this kind are such as Christ's words in Mark ix. 49; or Paul's, in Romans vii. 9-25; or I. Peter iv 6, in which verse the meaning of the word νεκροῖς is the great subject of dispute; or the mysterious passage in II. Peter i. 20, 21; or the allegory of the "bond-woman" and the "free-woman," in Galatians iv. 21-31.

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time in hunting what he wants. The habit of searching through the Bible at random, in pursuit of a text, is too mechanical and aimless, and involves waste of time that should be more profitably employed.

The forms of a text-record are various, and must be adapted to each preacher's use. The following may serve to explain the idea of such a record. Procure a good-sized blank book, and arrange it into the different general heads of topics, such as *Doctrinal*, *Practical*, *Expository*, *Funeral*, *Revival*, *Children*, etc. Subdivide each of these generals into particulars; for example, *Doctrinal* might have a blank page devoted to each separate doctrine—Faith, Regeneration, Adoption, Resurrection, Immortality, and such doctrinal subjects as you wish to preach upon at some time. *Funeral* may have a place for texts suitable for the death of *Children*, *Adults*, *Unconverted*, *Unbelieving*, *Middle-aged*, *Aged*, *Pious*, as well as for miscellaneous circumstances — *Sudden Death*, *Death by Accident*, *by Lingering Disease*, *by Insanity*, *Intemperance*, etc. Under each of these sub-heads write in full the different texts suited for the subject or occasion, together with the book, chapter, and verse, so that at a glance you have the import of the passage and its place in the Bible. To this text-record a column may be added to record the time and place when the recorded text was used. This text-record, when used in conjunction with a general index,[1] is very helpful.

§ VII. INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT.

After a suitable text has been selected, the next important work is to ascertain the *true meaning* of the text. This requires a knowledge of that branch of theology technically called Hermeneutics, to which we refer the

1 See chapter on Special Preparation.

preacher for a more extended and systematic treatment.[1] However, since this branch of theology is so indispensable to sermonizing, and is so often neglected by the sermonizer, a treatise on preaching will necessarily be incomplete without giving it a passing notice, at least so far as its importance and use in preaching are concerned.

It is surprising to observe what license some preachers will take in giving *their own views* upon a text, as if any sense which they may choose to give it, or any use they may make of it for convenience or opinion's sake, were allowable. God's word means *something*, something definite and fixed,—not *anything*, subject to fluctuation and custom. To mean *anything* is to mean *nothing*. "A misinterpreted text is no part of the Bible." To misinterpret a text in preaching is, like idolatry, false worship. As our God is a jealous God, and will have no other gods before him, so he will have no other than his true word before his people. To discover what that word is, and how to understand it and explain it to the people, should be the great burden of the preacher's study.

The preacher is a teacher sent by God,—an *expounder* of the divine oracle, and he must not thoughtlessly misrepresent its Author or his message, but conscientiously *interpret* it as one on oath bound to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. An interpreter, in general, is a mediator between people who do not understand each other's speech. By his knowledge of both languages he translates the language of one person into that of the other in such a way that the thought shall lose nothing by the translation. If the matter to be interpreted be important, such as would

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1 The following works give valuable instruction on the subject: Horne's *Introduction;* Davidson's *Sacred Hermeneutics Developed* and *Applied;* Angus' *Bible Hand-Book;* Barrows' *Companion to the Bible;* Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual;* Elliott and Harsha's *Biblical Hermeneutics.* Broadus, in his *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons,* has a good chapter on the Interpretation of the Text.

involve life or death, the duty of the interpreter to faithfully perform his work becomes more serious and responsible. God's message to man in relation to his duty and eternal destiny, is the most important communication, of which the mind can conceive; and he who stands between God and man as its interpreter, must not expound the message at random, giving this, that, or the other meaning, according as it may appear to him at first sight, or as he wishes it might be, or as it would be acceptable to popular opinion, but must strive, by the aid of the Holy Spirit and such help as he may get from a knowledge of the best laws of interpretation, to discover what is "the mind of the Spirit," and to give the earnest, truth-seeking people the unadulterated truth, without the loss of any of its original divine spirit, or the addition of aught of human accretions, in passing through the medium of God's chosen interpreter.

I. *Difficulties of Interpretation.* There are some difficulties in the way of explaining a text that must not be overlooked:

1. Scripture was written in languages that are now dead; not only extinct, but not classically accurate.[1]

2. It was written in a period of time wholly unlike the present. The circumstances of writers, history, geography, customs, etc., must all be taken into consideration in explaining the text to a modern congregation.

3. The subjects expressed by the text are often novel, or supernatural, and are invariably divine. It is no easy matter to understand the phraseology of new doctrines that are beyond human conception.

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1 Luke employs the purest Greek of all the New Testament writers. Some think Matthew wrote his gospel, and Paul his Epistle to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew language. Whatever may be the linguistic character of these few books, nearly all the rest of the New Testament is in a modified dialect of Greek, which contains many Hebraisms and other idioms.

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things, will greatly assist in the explanation of any text on these subjects that might, when considered independently of all parallel passages, admit of various senses. Should the preacher have a text relating to the mooted question of the ultimate salvation of the heathen who die without a knowledge of the gospel, he must not inquire what *may* possibly be tortured out of the phraseology of the text, or what *ought* to be true, in his conception, if God is a Father, but rather, What is the general drift of all scripture-teachings on this subject?

But, however skilled in these requisites of Bible-knowledge, Bible-language, and Bible-history, without a patient spirit of research and an unbiased love for the truth, he may err, and use his very knowledge to pervert the meaning of a text. A calm judgment, together with a spiritual sympathy with the truth of the Scriptures, are the important requisites, and the best safeguards against misinterpretation.[1]

III. *Brief Rules of Interpretation.* The following canons of interpretation are condensed from McClintock and Strong's "Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Cyclopedia:"

1. The first and most essential process is to apply the natural and obvious principles of a careful and conscientious exegesis to the passage and all its terms. This requires diligent use of a good lexicon and grammar, and an intimate acquaintance with the archæology involved, including geography, chronology, and oriental usages. The *context* should be carefully consulted; and the general drift of the argument, as well as the author's special design in writing, must be kept in mind.

2. *Parallel and illustrative* passages must be attentively considered, on the principle that scripture is its own best

1 Henry's *Commentary*, for this reason, is good for homiletical purposes.

interpreter. This is pre-eminently true of types, metaphors, parables, prophetical symbols, and other figurative representations.

3. When various meanings are assignable to a given passage or word, that should be selected which is the *broadest* in its import and application; if possible, one that is *inclusive* of all or most of the others.

4. The *consensus* of the universal church, in past and present time, should have its due influence; not as being of absolute authority, but as an exponent of the aggregate and deliberate judgment of good and unprejudiced men. Creeds, confessions, articles of faith, and the study of exploded or living heresies, are useful, but more particularly a collation of the views of preceding commentators. The Word of God itself, however, is superior to them all, and it is not only possible, but certain, that in some points they have erred.

5. When different interpretations are possible, that must be selected which is most consistent with *common sense.*

6. It will sometimes become necessary to modify our conclusions as to particular passages in consequence of the discoveries and deductions of modern science. Instances in point are the theories respecting the creation and deluge, arising from the progress of astronomical and geological knowledge. All truth is consistent with itself; and there is no reason why the Bible should be so interpreted as to contradict the "elder scripture writ by God's own hand" in the volume of nature.

§ VIII. HOW TO OBTAIN A PROPER THEME FROM THE TEXT.

To select an excellent text and get the true meaning out of it, is the first and fundamental requisition in preparing a good sermon. This affords the assurance that the beginning, at least, is receiving divine sanction, and furnishes a

solid foundation upon which to build. If all the after-work be as much in keeping with the evangelical spirit of true scriptural preaching, we may hope to be "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." But in order to conserve the true idea of the text, care should be taken in deducing a proper *theme* therefrom. Sometimes the preacher clearly understands his text but fails in the work of generalization, in binding its thoughts together into a unit. The preacher must acquire a habit of grasping firmly the idea of the text, and after removing all the excrescences retaining only the pith and marrow.

1. Select the text before selecting the theme. There may be exceptions, as on special occasions when subjects are suggested by the character of the meeting; or when, as it may occasionally occur, the most interesting thoughts arise independently of any text; but the proper and most natural way for an expounder of the Word is not to decide on a theme or proposition until after the text has been selected and interpreted. This plan will conduce to a more consistent, correct, and biblical preaching than the other, inasmuch as a sermon will be the spontaneous outgrowth of a scripture-seed, instead of a discourse attached to a passage whose real meaning may not be in harmony with the subject.

2. Make the theme express the main substance of the text. There are side-issues, oblique branches, and subordinate considerations belonging to every scripture-passage, which include only fragmentary or related text-thoughts, and which must never constitute the main theme of discussion. We must try to get at the kernel or heart of the text. If we have this, we have all; if we have not this, we have nothing to the point. Here is where the preacher's skill is often put to task; for not a little discriminating insight is required to know where to find and touch the life-pulse of the text. The theme is the text described and

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CHAPTER III.

SPECIES OF SERMONS.

Sermons of Two Species—The Topical Sermon—The Textual Sermon.

§ I. SERMONS OF TWO SPECIES.

Every sermon should have a specific form or mode of discussion, clearly distinguishable, and determined by the special design of the discourse. Like leaves, no two sermons can be alike in every respect. But we must discard all minutely superficial distinctions, and seek to find broad, deep, underlying marks of classification, by curtailing logical comprehension and thereby widening the scope of extension. The most generic divisions of plants in the vegetable kingdom are the phenogamous, or flowering plants, and the cryptogamous, or flowerless plants. All other divisions radiate from these two centers. So every sermon is a product that finds its development either on the surface of the text or in the interior of the text-thought. Under these two modes of development are included all forms of sermons, either as clearly distinguished or as confused or modified forms of these two classes.

Many earlier authors on homiletics adopted a great number and variety of forms. Later ones begin to recognize only three,—textual, topical, and expository; but even these are one too many. Many confound the mode of division with the mode of treatment, and give that a place

in their classification of species which should be recognized as only a certain quality of the species. The various modes employed are so numerous that to enumerate them here, if not impossible, would be, at least, too tedious.

While there are many forms of treating a theme, the preacher should, however, accustom himself to only two general plans of sermonizing, known as the *topical* and the *textual.* When Broadus and Shedd speak of a third species—namely, the expository, they evidently mean an *expository mode* of treating a subject. These writers, though clear and discriminating in their views, on this point are scarcely able to show wherein the expository sermon differs from the textual. One[1] acknowledges—"We at once perceive that there is no broad line of division between expository preaching and the common methods, but that one may pass by almost *insensible gradations* from textual to expository sermons;" and in a foot-note to this confession adds, "Nearly all that has been said above upon text-sermons applies *directly* to expository preaching." Why then make any specific distinction? A sermon can not be expository without also being textual, but may be textual without being expository. Hence, expository is a *variety* included under the *species* textual, and by no means a coordinate species of the *genus* sermon. It is better not to confuse the mind with many unnecessary distinctions. All that has ever been said on the expository mode of preaching is not sufficient ground for making it a separate species of sermon. These two species—topical and textual—are all that are necessary.

However, to reduce them to only one species is to cause difficulty. Some texts are not adapted to topical discourse on account of a lack of perfect unity of thought, though all possess this quality in a measure. All such are suitable for

1 Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 303.

textual discourses. Vinet, requiring strict logical unity in all sermons, is obliged to speak against the necessity of using a text in every sermon, for the reason that "every text does not contain a subject."[1] No, not fully and legitimately; but there is no theme relating to man's salvation, or worthy of any pulpit discourse, that does not find expression in some passage or connected passages of scripture. But we distinguish between those passages of complete and those of partial unity, using the former in topical and the latter in textual discourses. We now speak of these two species of sermons.

§ II. THE TOPICAL SERMON.

The topical sermon is one in which the *subject* is divided according to its own nature. It generalizes the text and adopts one leading idea as its theme. The preacher, having defined and circumscribed his conception of the text as a whole, launches out into his theme, as into a sea, to explore its secret and inherent wealth, without any further regard to the words of the text. This kind of discourse, much like the regular oration, is characterized by unity and oratorical effect. Laying aside all minor and diverging considerations, it advances toward its object with a steady, undeviating, increasing momentum of argument and eloquence, and when completed resembles a ball that bears down heavily on one point. "Divide up the thunder into separate notes, and it becomes a lullaby for children; but pour it forth in one continuous peal, and its royal sound shall shake the heavens."[2]

Every minister should practice this kind of preaching. Though it requires more labor in its preparation than the textual, yet on account of its effectiveness and power

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1 *Homiletics*, p. 97.

2 Schiller.

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This is a statement of the particular truth arising out of the theme which the preacher wishes to establish. It is the ultimate conclusion which the sermon has in view.[1] Quintilian, in *De Institutione Oratoria*, Book Third, distinguishes the *causa* from the *quaestio*, and both from the *status causa*. So in pulpit oratory we have, first, a text—an announcement of a mere item of inspiration; second, a theme, which expresses the leading truth derived therefrom; and third, a proposition, that focalizes all its elements in one point. These three parts—text, theme, proposition,—sustain each a diminutive relation to the other, like a wheel within a wheel. The proposition is comprehended in the theme as the theme is comprehended in the text; but the proposition defines and circumscribes the discussion. It affects every part of it, and is a handle or lever that takes it all up together.

The advantage of the proposition is in the unity which it gives to the sermon. Without unity the sermon will likely be rambling, and end without accomplishing any definite object. The criticism passed upon preaching of this sort is too often true,—"he aimed at nothing in particular; and he hit it." Aristotle says, "It is absolutely necessary that a discourse should state something, and prove it." Performers on the tight-rope steady their whole body by fixing the eye intently on a point in the distance; so the sermonizer will save himself from a zigzag, rambling discussion by keeping his mind's eye steadily upon the point of his proposition.

However, unity of aim is not destroyed by variety of elements, provided they mutually unite in a unity of impression. Thus, when Bourdaloue preached on the "Severity and Mildness of Christian Law," the proposition was dual

1 The proposition in Paul's speech before Felix is given in Acts xxiv. 25. Bengel, with doubtful propriety, puts forward Psalms viii. 5-9 as the proposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

in form, but the two elements were complements to each other. Massillon's sermon on "The Death of the Sinner and the Death of the Righteous," was antithetic; and "A Comparison of St. John in the Isle of Patmos, and Napoleon at St. Helena," would be a comparison and contrast blending into one general object.

While the theme is stated in a rhetorical form, the proposition is usually put in a logical form. Thus, from the text, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," we may derive the theme in rhetorical form: Blessedness of a trust in God; and the logical proposition, Trust in God brings peace of mind. The proposition may be a species of which the theme is the genus.

Great care ought to be taken in stating the proposition. It should express in epitome the general contents of the entire sermon that is to follow, including, as far as possible, all the germ-thought to be developed, and excluding everything not appertaining to the proposed substance of the discourse. Propositional precision demands that the idea of the sermon be fully expressed, and that nothing more be included. The proposition "must be plain, clear, and precise, stating the subject, the whole subject, and nothing but the subject."[1] It is the key-note of the discussion, and must give no uncertain sound. Let it be framed into one brief sentence, carefully written out, firmly fixed in the memory as the rallying-point of the discussion, and kept in mind in the onward movement of the preacher's thought, as the mariner watches the needle of his compass.

Sometimes the words of the text will also be the words of the proposition; as, for example, Romans viii. 28: "All things work together for good to them that love God;" "God is love," etc.

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1 Potter's *Sacred Eloquence*, p. 147.

It will often be useful to state the proposition in several ways or forms of expression. As there may be occasion in some discussions to repeat the proposition frequently in the progress of the sermon, a different but equivalent phraseology of the idea will avoid tautology, and increase the hearer's interest in the subject.

It is always better, especially in the first announcement of the proposition, to put it in a positive form, though the text may be negative. Thus, Psalms xiv. 1: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," should have for proposition, "There is a God," though the entire effort may be a refutation of atheism. Such a refutation would really be the most effectual way of establishing the above proposition; for if the negative is proved to be false, its contradictory — the affirmative — must be true.

Not unfrequently the proposition is entirely suppressed; so evident is it from the drift of the whole discussion that everybody will know what it is without its formal expression. But without a proposition either expressed or implied, the sermon can not be a topical discourse. It need not necessarily be stated to the congregation at the beginning of the sermon, and where a repugnance to or prejudice against the subject exists on the part of the hearers, it is better to postpone the formal statement of the proposition until the close of the discussion. Or, a hearer's prejudice may be forestalled by a concealment of our ultimate object in the proposition. Professor Phelps, in his "Theory of Preaching," gives the following example: "Adopt the text, 'Are not my ways equal?' Announce as your proposition this, to consider some illustrations of the reasonableness of God's ways with men in certain things of which men often complain. This is a harmless statement, offensive to none, yet sufficiently definite to give to the intellect of hearers a center of attention and interest.

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fantastic form of statement, is too indefinite and ambiguous to be incorporated into a plain, simple proposition of discussion.

2. It should be *specific;* that is, the latitude of the discourse should be specific rather than generic, particular rather than general. A young preacher may think it an advantage to widen the scope of his theme so as to afford a greater abundance of material; but the adoption of such a plan will not discipline, but dwarf, his inventive and penetrative power. Restriction of subject will stimulate intensity and acuteness of thought, while amplitude tends to a superficial and hackneyed mode of treatment.[1] Depth of discussion is better than breadth. A pointed outline is more seemly than a bulky skeleton, which, like Bunyan's Apollyon, "straddles over the whole breadth of the way." "When different kinds of propositions offer themselves," says Hoppin, "then the more specific one is to be preferred."[2]

3. It should be *brief.* It should be put into a condensed expression, or terse sentence, which is full of meaning. All needless synonyms, epithets, disjunctives, or expanded, circuitous constructions, must be strictly avoided.

The proposition is generally introduced after the introduction, in a variety of modes; such as, "I propose to speak of;" "The text teaches;" "The discourse will be devoted," etc.; but it is a sign of egotism to announce the proposition boastingly, or daringly; as, "I shall convince you;" "I challenge contradiction;" "I ask you to listen to my important arguments."[3]

II. Divisions. Divisions are the several parts into which a subject is formally separated, and are used as an aid

1 A certain French critic said, "Genuine depth comes from concentrated ideas."

2 *Homiletics*, p. 378.

3 It is said of Luther, that he once flung his proposition upon an audience with these words: "I shall prove this doctrine so unanswerably that any one of you who does not believe it will be damned."

in presenting thoughts consecutively and methodically. Dividing a theme is the act of resolving it into its constituents, the general into the individual. Nearly every proposition is composite, and admits of a plan, or separation into its component parts. The proposition is the plan in the germ; the plan is the proposition unfolded. Hence, every division must be inherent in the proposition, and grow naturally out of it, as branches grow out of the tree, in order to develop the proposition.

The use of divisions is recommended for the following reasons:

First. They decompose the theme, and present it in all its essential parts. This affords facility for logical arrangement by mapping out the course to be pursued.

Second. They give to each of the elements of which the subject is composed its real importance.

Third. They promote variety in unity, and *vice versa.* The one theme is analyzed into a variety of aspects and members, as under a microscope; and yet all the members are bound together in one bond of unity,—a kind of *E pluribus unum*, one body with many members.

Fourth. Again, they promote clearness and progress in a discourse. We see things more clearly when we stop to examine them in detail, and only one at a time; and we are thus constantly and orderly advancing toward a completion as we step from one part to the other, leaving behind us a complete work, and looking and pressing forward toward the goal of our discussion.

Fifth. They promote permanence of impression. The three points of a sermon upon which the memory lays hold with its strongest and most enduring grasp are the text, proposition, and divisions. Divisions assist the memory of both speaker and hearer in holding the discourse in its details. Cicero says, "It is chiefly order that gives dis-

tinctness to memory. * * * * There is scarcely any one of so strong a memory as to retain the order of his language and thoughts without a previous arrangement and observation of heads."[1]

Some authors have spoken against the use of divisions; but they have been incited to this by observing, not their proper use, but their shameful abuse. When men break loose from one extreme they often swing to the opposite. Thus, Fenelon, in his second Dialogue on Eloquence, discards their use altogether; but it must be remembered that Fenelon lived at a time when the practice prevailed of multiplying divisions in such excessive measure that it became burdensome to the hearer. To divide and subdivide a subject down to its minutest point was considered a merit rather than a fault of the sermon. Hence, in shunning this abuse he naturally denounced the use of divisions altogether. J. W. Alexander, in his "Thoughts on Preaching," seconds the view of Fenelon on this subject; but this can be explained by the fact that these thoughts were written at the period of his life when he was exchanging his rigidly logical method of composition for the more natural and spontaneous. Formerly he had been a strong advocate of divisions, and used them in his preaching. Robert Hall, theoretically, was opposed to divisions, and yet generally employed them, only two or three of his published sermons appearing without them. The ancient orators did not discard them in the work of composing their orations, but concealed them in public delivery, lest the auditors, who then were always suspicious of the speaker's honest intentions, would fear deceit if they should discern a pre-arranged plan rather than a spontane-

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1 Dr. Lyman Beecher used to tell his hearers, at the close of a division, what was vital to his arguments, and what he wished them especially to remember, saying, "Nail that thought down;" "Don't let this slip away;" "Put a peg in there." This seemed to clinch it more securely upon their memories.

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Text.—"Know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else." I. Kings viii. 60.

Theme.—*The Perfection of God.*

Proposition.—God is pre-eminently perfect.

I. In relation to his eternity.

II. In relation to his omnipotence.

III. In relation to his omnipresence.

IV. In relation to his wisdom.[1]

4. We may treat the theme by comparison, or contrast. This method is often used in figurative passages, such as similes, metaphors, etc.:

Text.—"I am the bread of life." John vi. 35.

Theme.—*Christ our Bread.*

Proposition.—Christ is our spiritual food.

I. Christ, like bread—necessary to life.

II. Christ, like bread—only relished by the hungry.

III. Christ, unlike bread—instead of becoming assimilated to us, we become assimilated to him; the stronger absorbing the weaker.

5. We may, when the theme is a plain or admitted fact, generally treat it by illustration:

Text.—"Thy word is truth." John xvii. 17.

Theme.—*The Truthfulness of God's Word.*

Proposition.—God's word is true.

I. Illustrated from human history.

II. Illustrated from all established science.

III. Illustrated from its descriptions of character.

IV. Illustrated from its adaptation to the wants of men.[2]

6. We may present the various proofs of a subject:

Text.—"Be sure your sin will find you out." Numbers xxxii. 23.

Theme.—*Concealment of Sin no Security to the Sinner.*

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1 Cf. Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 211. 2 *Ibid.*

Proposition.—Secret sin will come to light.

I. By remorse of conscience.
II. By the power of natural law.
III. By the special working of divine Providence.
IV. By the awful revelations of the day of judgment.[1]

Which mode of division to adopt, must be determined by the kind of text and the object of discourse. Some passages of scripture are better adapted to one kind of division than to another; but even the most appropriate division must not be used for the sake of the form, but only as it promotes the special design of the sermon. Let it be borne in mind that the object to be accomplished is always the first consideration. Divisions are only helps,—a species of tactics for oratorical conquest; but the trained general knows best how to pitch a battle, or what method of attack to employ, in order to gain a victory. An examination of the different plans used by different preachers on the same theme or text, a knowledge of logic, and a heart anxious to impress the truth most forcibly and clearly upon human hearts, will help one to adopt the best method of division—best for himself, if not best for another; for each preacher has his own peculiar methods of work.

1. *Variety.*—However, a preacher should not accustom himself to only one mode of treatment, and discard all others. Avoid stereotyped plans and pedantic mannerism; for much of the effectiveness of preaching is lost by following week after week, and year after year, the same old beaten track, until every member of the congregation can tell beforehand what will come first, second, and third. Some preachers are in the habit of casting every sermon into a tri-form mold,[2] or rigid external frame-work,

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1 Blaikie, p. 191.

2 "The subject of the first sermon is Sorrow for Sin, and the divisions are three; first, the duty is commanded; secondly, the neglect of it will be punished; thirdly, the performance of it will be rewarded. * * * * For the next sermon he selects a different

with a certain number of heads, each attended by a uniform train of satellites. This soon becomes wearisome to a congregation. Formality in preaching is as bad as formality in religion. "Men must be approached in various ways. One key will not unlock every door, but there must be a key to fit every lock."[1] If one Sunday the preacher uses the analytic method, let him use the synthetic, or simple illustrative, the next.

2. *Exhaustiveness.* — The treatment should be thorough and exhaustive; not in the sense that nothing must be omitted that pertains to the subject, but exhaustive in the sense that all that is necessary to the establishing of the proposition be treated, and that it adequately cover the end proposed. We should name all the species that make up the genus. Every division is a fractional part of the whole, and all the divisions taken together will equal it. To omit one part would invalidate the conclusion by leaving out an important, component argument. Thus, in the proposition, Academical honors are useless, we may reach such a sort of conclusion from the considerations: 1st. They are not needed by those who have a taste for study. 2d. They have no effect on the idle. Here we assume that all students belong either to the diligent class or to the idle class; whereas we omit a large intermediate class who are not altogether hopelessly idle, nor habitually studious, and these may be influenced by collegiate honors. The divis-

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theme,— the Duty of Christian Cheerfulness, and advances the three positions: First, God has commanded the duty; secondly, will reward the performance of it; thirdly, will punish the neglect of it. * * * * For the third sermon the preacher, for the sake of variety, selects a third theme, as different as need be from the two preceding. He announces the subject, the Duty of Accepting the Gospel of Christ, but again calls in the rhetorician's charmed number of topics — 'three:' God has commanded the duty, will punish the neglect, reward the performance of it. Thus every sermon is laid down upon this standard triangle."—Prof. Park on Cast-iron Methods, quoted by Townsend in *Sword and Garment*, p. 151.

1 Beecher's *Yale Lectures.*

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est and best that can be obtained. An imperfect view of the subject will not do. The whole plan must have logical firmness and carry with it a weight of conviction. Every view of the subject that does not help to establish the proposition ought to be at once rejected. "At the conclusion of each head or division of proof the auditor should feel that the proposition has received an additional, and real support."[1] The sermonizer should ask, "in respect to each and every head or division, 'Does this proposed head really tend to prove the proposition, and does it afford a positively new item of proof, that is not contained in any other head?'"[2]

3. *Number of Divisions.*—In the scholastic period the sermon consisted of "excessively minute analysis, and multitudinous divisions, of which it has been wittily said that, like the bones in Ezekiel's valley of vision, 'there were very many—and they were very dry.'"[3] The ancient orators were accustomed to divide their themes into numerous heads (τόποι). Aristotle enumerates twenty-eight topics as belonging to demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial oratory. Claude gives twenty-seven to be used in the composition of a sermon; and even so late a writer as Gresley mentions sixteen. A Puritan preacher once reached his "seventy-sixthly."[4]

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1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 187. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

3 Dr. John Hall, in *Yale Lectures*, p. 147.

4 In one of Bishop Hall's sermons there are no less than eighty heads, principal and subordinate; in one of Baxter's, not less than one hundred and twenty, besides a formidable array of "improvements." Charnock's discourse on "The Being of God" has one hundred and two divisions. The most amusing examples of this abuse are those recorded in Robinson's notes to Claude's *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, in which it is said that a hundred years ago (from the time of its publication in 1853) most sermons had thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty particulars. "Mr. Drake's sermon has above one hundred and seventy parts, besides queries and resolutions; and yet the good man says he *passed sundry useful points, pitching only on that which comprehended the marrow and substance.*"—Rogers. "I remember once to have heard a preacher, on the text, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' announce in rapid succession twenty-four characteristics in which men might behold him. When he reached the twelfth there was a look of surprise, and at the sixteenth, of amazement; when he announced the twentieth, a broad smile; and

This is a breaking into fragments rather than a dividing. Regarding an idea as something like matter, that is composed of atoms and possessed of infinite divisibility, their great fault consisted in pulverizing the theme, and thereby greatly weakening its effect; for who would expect to accomplish much by throwing a handful of sand at a Goliath, who can be felled only with stones? The divisions should be as few as possible,—no more than are necessary to a complete treatment of the subject. No rule can be given as to the number to be employed. Five is a maximum, and two a minimum. As stated above, under the Proposition, sometimes the nature of the subject requires no division. Where division is essential, quality and not quantity is the rule. "Fertile arguments are few in number, but may be made to cover a wide extent of surface, and furnish a great amount of matter, for the body of the sermon."[1] The thorough preacher will construct his sermon out of a few granite bowlders of material rather than out of a mass of porous, spongy substance. He quarries his thoughts out of the imbedded rock with a masterly hand, and does not merely *pick* at it. "There are plans energetic and rich, which, applying the lever as deeply as possible, raise the entire mass of the subject; there are others which escape the deepest divisions of the

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when he reached the twenty-fourth, a suppressed titter through the whole congregation." —Bishop Simpson, in *Yale Lectures*, p. 141. "An ancient conceit of the pulpit was that of assigning to divisions some one of the so-called 'sacred' numbers,—five, seven, twelve, forty. The more frequent error of this class was one, relics of which remain to this day. It was that of a prescribed threefold division in honor of the Trinity. **** The medieval mind saw trinity in every thing, from the Mosaic record of creation down to a three-leaved clover. One of the developments of this fancy was that of the Trinitarian division of a sermon. No matter what the subject, or its mode of treatment, the sermon must be confined or stretched, with procrustean uniformity, to three parts, no more, and no less. *** I once heard a sermon before an association of clergymen approved for consisting of three general divisions, each of which had three subdivisions, each of these being developed with three leading thoughts, and all followed by three inferences in the conclusion, and ending with the Trinitarian Doxology. The preacher should have delivered it in a three-cornered hat. Such a discourse is a miserable piece of trichotomy."—Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, pp. 382, 383.

1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 190.

matter, and which raise, so to speak, only one layer of the subject."[1] It is not necessary to multiply arguments when one or two can be made to cover the entire scope of the sermon. This may be illustrated by the "Eighteen Reasons for Abuse," prepared by the mayor who, when the Prince of Condé passed through Beune, together with the public authorities went to meet him at the gates of the town, and after many high compliments said, "To display our joy we wished to receive you with the report of numerous artillery, but we have not been able for *eighteen reasons.* In the first place, we have none; secondly"—"My good friend," said the prince, "the first reason is so good, I will excuse the other seventeen."

4. *Arrangement of Divisions.*—The order of divisions is essential to the force of the discussion. The reason why truly logical speakers are able to make things plain even to the illiterate, is because they present clear thoughts in a proper order. What should this order be? Cicero's idea was, that the stronger arguments should be placed at the beginning and at the end, while the weaker ones should occupy an intermediate position, that in company with the others they may escape detection.[2] But this fashion is not to be recommended in pulpit oratory. The sacred character of a sermon will not allow weak or doubtful arguments in the body of the discourse, but every position taken ought to be worthy of intelligent assent. The best order is that which advances toward a climax. The weaker and less important points should be placed first. The preacher is supposed to have the attention of his audience at the outset; and to hold or intensify it, he must not continue on an even or descending plane, but rise in the grandeur and force of his argu-

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1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 276.

2 *De Oratore*, Lib. II., Cap. 77.

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of which produces the second, then the third, and so on even to the end, so that the last pages share the strength of all which precede them, and the weight of the whole discourse rests upon the last paragraph. The progress here is as the accelerated fall of heavy bodies,—not an arithmetical but a geometrical progression."[1]

5. *Subdivisions.*—As it is necessary to divide the theme, so also is it sometimes necessary to divide the divisions. The fewer the number of the main divisions the more need is there for subdivisions, in order to analyze and unfold the leading thought.[2] Usually, divisions should not extend beyond the second degree. A sermon might thus become divided and subdivided until it becomes a mere skeleton, without any meat on it. Whatever subordinate divisions are introduced, they should all bear on the general drift of the proposition. Not only, so to speak, should the wings of the cherubim point to one spot, but all that composes the wings must incline in the same direction.

6. *Transition.*—Transition, from the word *transeo*, to go over, is the act of passing from one division to another. It has been compared to the attachment of the several parts of a garment to one another, thus making a whole;[3] or, to the articulation of the members of the human body. Since transition has "two opposite purposes,—one to distinguish, the other to unite,"—it has also been compared to punctuation, in written discourse, which "serves at once to mark the intervals and relations of the thoughts to one another."[4] But from the derivation of the word, as well as from the function it performs in the sermon, we may call it the passage between the outlet and the inlet of two adjoining parts. It begins at the point of exit from one argument,

1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 296.

2 We have an example of this in the first example of sermon-outline, p. 189.

3 See Ripley's *Sacred Rhetoric*. p. 101.

4 Cf. Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 317.

or division, and ends at the entrance to another, and is not so much a door, as the act of passing through the door. Discoursing systematically upon a theme is very much like walking through a house, in which we examine only one room at a time, while every other part of the house is shut out of view by partition-walls, until we pass from one apartment to another. This act of passing from one part of discourse to another, is called transition.

Transition will be easy or difficult, according to the arrangement of the several parts. A perfect arrangement of ideas will require no connecting link. The ideas are like Cicero's "well-cut stones," that "are united without cement." A great defect is evident when the leading thoughts are so remote and isolated from each other that one must bridge chasms and tunnel mountains in passing from one to the other. It were better not to strain a connection between ideas so foreign to each other, for they are only echoes from different quarters, that can never be made to blend into harmony. The ideas to be connected should be as akin as possible. But as divisions are arranged in the ascending order, the transit will be a marked and sudden ascent, a stepping-stone, so to speak, from a lower to a higher flight. The point in the discussion where this occurs, claims attention.

The transition should be made between the points that most nearly approximate each other in the order of the climax. Thus, in the first chapter of Genesis, on the subject of Creation, we get the two divisions, Inorganic Substance and Organic Substance. The proper place of transit should be between the highest order of matter — namely, luminous,—and the lowest order of life,— namely, vegetable. The same rule should be applied to subdivisions. The transition between vegetable and animal life is from sea-plants to polyps. The inferior reaches up, the superior

reaches down, and transition steps across the interstice.[1] This method of transition will maintain a regularity of movement in a continuous ascent.

Transition should be,—

(1.) Natural. It should be created without effort or artifice. One division should grow spontaneously out of the other, and be its necessary sequence. When properly connected, the two will combine, like water on either side of a strait, and yet be distinct portions of the sermon.

(2.) Short. Sometimes a halt in delivery, or change of tone and position, will be sufficient to indicate a transition. Generally a sentence is used, which should be brief, and stated without being given prominence. Usually a connecting phrase, or word, is sufficient,—such as, in the next place, still, further, again, besides, moreover, firstly, secondly, finally, etc.

The object of transition is to "enhance the idea, or to indicate a new degree of intensity, or to extend the idea, or to confirm the preceding idea by that which follows it, or to distinguish, contrast, or subordinate two ideas, or introduce an objection, or, finally, to confess the insufficiency of an argument in a given case."[2]

7. *Should the Divisions be Stated Beforehand?*—Much has been said on this question *pro and con*, as in the sacred oration the divisions may be announced either before the discussion, during its progress, or at its close. Every thoughtful preacher must decide the question for himself. If the pre-announcement will be advantageous to the design of his discourse, he should make it; if not, he should omit it. Unless the subject be abstract and difficult, the divisions, as a rule, should not be stated. A better way

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1 Without the necessity of spontaneous or specific variation, in the evolution sense of Haeckel and others of that school.

2 Vinet's *Homiletics*, pp 319, 320.

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who was powerful in this style of preaching, used to say, "Here God speaks much and man little." Unquestionably the tendency of textual preaching is toward a closer and more implicit adherence to the *ipsissima verba* of the Sacred Oracle, and is, therefore, more strictly evangelical.

As to divisions, the same rules will apply, in general, as in the topical sermon, with the exception that the number of divisions will depend upon the kind of text and the mode of treatment. The proposition is rarely used in this form, especially in the expository mode.

Modes of Treating a Textual Discussion.—Since in the textual plan the matter lies in the language of the text, we must give some additional suggestions on disposition, or mode of treatment, as applying to the textual sermon.

As in the topical species every division is a topic for rhetorical discussion, and a fraction in the unity of the theme, so in this species. But in order to give the sermon a rhetorical character, several things must especially be observed:

(1.) The leading words or ideas of the text must possess unity.

(2.) These words or ideas must be arranged in correspondence to each other, and in the climactic order of thought.

(3.) The divisions must be expressed clearly and concisely.

The modes of division are as many and various as in the topical sermon. We here, also, give a few examples:

1. The divisions may be so evident and natural, that they are expressed in the words of the text:

Text.—"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." I. Cor. xiii. 13, R. V.

Theme.— The Three Graces.

I. Faith.
II. Hope.
III. Love.

Likewise, Bourdaloue has a sermon on "The Sterility of Prayer," from James iv. 2, 3, "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss," with the divisions: (1.) We have not because we ask not, (2.) We ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss. Robert S. Candlish preached on Exodus i. 6, with these evident divisions: (1.) Joseph died; (2.) And all his brethren; (3.) And all that generation.

2. It is often allowable to add to the strictly textual heads, one or more which may be implied in the text, or context, or even in some other kindred part of scripture.

Text.—"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Matthew vii. 17.

Theme.—*Good and Evil Trees.*

I. Trees that bring forth *good* fruit.
II. Trees that bring forth *no* fruit.
III. Trees that bring forth *evil* fruit.

This order might be inverted with equal effect. The object of the discourse will determine what order to use. If the preacher wishes to incite his hearers to a life of usefulness, he will first depict the sad life of the evil-doer; this will give, by contrast, additional charm to its opposite—a good life; second, the folly of a useless, misspent life, that has no fruit, will awaken a still stronger desire for usefulness; and these two will prepare the way for the last division, the blessedness of an earnest, fruitful life, which is the object of the sermon.

But on the contrary, if the preacher wishes to impress his auditors with the demerits of wickedness, let him adopt the opposite arrangement, as in the above form. Under this arrangement the drift of thought will be: if the *righteous* (good tree) after doing all he can, is nevertheless an "unprofitable servant," undeserving of heaven

and "scarcely saved," how must it be with the barren fig-tree, that has no fruit at all? The sermon reaches its climax in the last division, the wages of wickedness in the life of the evil-doer.

3. Sometimes the divisions are not formed from the words of the text, but consist of a series of observations upon it:

Text.—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. 4.

Theme.—*Saul's Awakening.*

I. It is the general character of unconverted men to be of a persecuting spirit.

II. Christ has his eye upon persecutors.

III. The kindness or injury done to His people he considers done to himself.

IV. The calls of Christ are earnest and particular,—"Saul, Saul."

V. Christ condescends to reason with Saul,—"*Why* persecutest thou me?"[1]

4. We may *emphasize* the important words as divisions:

Text.—"What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30.

Theme.—*The Great Question.*

I. "What *must* I do?"—not what would be expedient, convenient, etc., to do, but what *must* be done?

II. "What must *I* do?"—not some one else for me,—mother, sister, wife, pastor, etc.,—but what must *I myself* do?

III. "What must I *do*"—not merely think, feel, wish, talk about, and weakly resolve, but *do?*

IV. "*To be saved.*" Signification of salvation.

We may introduce a sermon containing such divisions by pressing the question, without answering it, and by insisting that one certain thing must be done; and con-

[1] Beddome.

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God. (5.) For whom? 'For us.' (6.) After what manner? 'An offering and a sacrifice.' (7.) Of what effect? Of 'a sweet-smelling savor.'"[1] Here the most important truths are so divided as not only to become weak, but ludicrous. Beware of the "muck-rake," that gathers only "the straws and little sticks," while the precious gems of truth are left concealed beneath the *debris* of so sad a text-catastrophe.

"A tact is needed in the preacher, to discover the hidden skeleton."[2] The preacher needs, also, "a talent to detect * * * * emphatic conceptions, * * * * or direct or indirect positions, in a passage of scripture. A preacher destitute of this talent will pass by many texts that, really, are full of the materials of textual sermonizing. He has no eye to discover the rich veins that lie concealed just under the dull and uninteresting surface. * * * * This talent, for detecting the significance of scripture, must be confined to the gist of it, — to the evident and complete substance of it."[3] Melville is a model in this tact.

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1 Schleiermacher calls superficial skeletonizing "spelling" the text.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 152. 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 153.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIETIES OF SERMONS.

Introductory, Farewell, and Political Sermons—Sermons for Special Occasions—Sermons to Special Classes of Hearers—Doctrinal Sermons—Historical or Biographical Preaching—Practical and Experimental Sermons—Illustrated Sermons—Funeral Sermons—Out-Door Sermons.

Variety of sermons differs essentially from *species* of sermons as presented in the preceding chapter. The difference is similar to that which exists between variety and species in ordinary scientific classification. Under the genus *sermon* we have found two species,—the topical and the textual; but under these two species there exists a vast variety of pulpit discourses peculiar to certain subjects, occasions, hearers, and objects of discussion, each of which may be classified under one or the other, or both, of these two broad species.

Variety is necessary if one wishes to maintain freshness in his preaching. Especially in this day of many sermons must we avoid monotony of methods, and present Bible truth in a variety of ways. It is an evil when preachers fall into "ruts," and produce, Sunday after Sunday, discourses remarkable for nothing but sameness. It is an indication of indifference and indolence.[1]

Variety, indeed, marks all the works of Divinity. Nature and man, as well as the Bible, are in themselves end-

1 Stereotyped preachers remind one of a certain minister, who, when asked by a waiter how he wished his meat cooked, replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The first two words threw him into the groove, and he had to go on to the end.

lessly diversified. "The wonderful flexibility of the gospel, its adaptation to the forms of society, to characters, positions, the most diverse mental tendencies, is no feeble indication of its divine origin;"[1] and preaching, which draws its inspiration and material from all these sources, to be true to nature and revelation, must also be diversified.

The same "old, old story" may thus be always made new. Our motto should be, "One theme, but many modes." The most original thinker can not create new gospel truth. The best he can do is to bring it to light in a multiplicity of ways. Never preach the same doctrine in the same way; but tax your inventiveness to the utmost to bring forth from the Lord's treasury "things both new and old."

We will now proceed to comment on some of the various kinds of sermons.

§ I. INTRODUCTORY, FAREWELL, AND POLITICAL SERMONS.

Introductory and *farewell* sermons of itinerants, preached at the beginning and termination of their pastorate on a charge, or at the eve of or return from a summer vacation, have become a fashion rather than a real necessity of the pulpit; yet they are admissible on the ground that they furnish occasions for variety in the presentation of truth.

While the first sermon on a new field of labor should be carefully prepared with reference to the propriety of the occasion, it should not aim at anything extraordinary in effort, lest the minister disappoint his congregation by promising them too much. Trial sermons have long since proved a failure; for the applicant, in a strong attempt "to do his best," will oftener either surpass himself or discount himself than *be* himself. The people should always be given an opportunity to estimate a new minister at par value.

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1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 95.

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and abusive, by the addition of holidays and services in memory of saints and martyrs; and the preaching on most of these memorial occasions was trivial and absurd. "And at the Easter season especially, preachers taxed their ingenuity to invent all kinds of folly and vulgar witticisms, to amuse the audience."[1] Such abuse of Christian festivals we need not here stop to reprove, as they would not be tolerated in our modern Protestant churches; but a proper observance of certain Christian holidays by preaching to the people is consistent with a becoming reverence for Christian institutions.

2. *Miscellaneous Occasions.* Anniversary, dedicatory, and memorial sermons, which are generally preached to crowded houses, have a common fault — they are too lengthy, and monopolize too much of the services of the hour. They should be solid and ponderous rather than porous and bulky.

Sermons before conventions, conferences, colleges, and various literary, secular, and religious associations, should be gospel sermons. Broadus' remarks on academic sermons are so fitting that we here quote them almost entire: "Sermons at institutions of learning, or on occasions of literary interest, are often managed in a very mistaken fashion. The preacher imagines that he must not give a regular gospel sermon, but must betake himself to matters highly erudite or metaphysical. It is really desirable on such occasions to preach upon eminently evangelical topics, the very heart of the gospel. Science and erudition are the every-day work of these professors and students; from you, to-day, they had much rather hear something else. * * * * Of course the sermon should have point, force, freshness; and the associations of the occasion may sometimes suggest slight peculiarities of allusion, illustration,

[1] Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 138.

and style; but it ought to be a sermon full of Christ, full of prayerful zeal to save souls. Ah! as one looks over those hundreds of intelligent young faces, and his heart goes out to them in sympathy and love,—as he thinks what a power they will be in the world for good or for evil, and how they are all there present before God, to hear his message, he must surely feel an unwonted emotion, a solemn sense of privilege and responsibility; and if never before, there ought to be true of him then, those words of Baxter,—

> 'I preached as never sure to preach again,
> And as a dying man to dying men.'"[1]

Many special providential occurrences, such as pestilence, flood, fire, and great public calamities or blessings, may be made the subjects of effective discourse. The preacher thus becomes an interpreter of Providence, and impresses the moral lessons which God is thus teaching in the events of the world. Goethe remarks that the earthquake at Lisbon continued for a long time to be a topic of interest. Great events, such as the wreck at Ashtabula, the sinking of the Villa du Havre, the conflagrations of Chicago and Boston, and the assassination of Garfield, have elicited, all over the land, a discussion of providence. Not only in pulpits and prayer-meetings, but in all the circles of society, discussions upon such startling events at a time when the occurrence is yet fresh in the minds of men, will aid greatly in the inculcation of religious doctrine and in the building up of a real life of piety.

§ III. SERMONS TO SPECIAL CLASSES OF HEARERS.

Every audience is an assembly of miscellaneous hearers, representing various conditions of life, occupations, and professions. The same gospel is intended for all

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1 *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 113, 114.

alike, as an *elixir vitæ*, possessing saving virtue for each, and offering a panacea for every variety of ills; but there are times when the gospel, like the *materia medica*, needs special application by prescription to individual cases. Many of our sermons which are for everybody in general, are for nobody in particular. They meet a universal want, but overlook the *propriam personam*. It would not be proper to preach an entire sermon to each special individual by sometimes addressing but a single person; but it is expedient occasionally to address groups of individuals whose experience is *sui generis*, and whose needs, in the main, are essentially the same.

The setting apart of a service for a special class in the community, and the devotion of a whole sermon to their benefit, will not only interest them and secure their presence in church, but call out an extra attendance of other interested hearers. Congregations are generally unusually large on such occasions. People are more interested in hearing a gospel sermon applied to a prescribed class than to a single person individually, or to all persons collectively. The preacher, of course, being acquainted with the community in which his church is located, will know what classes need such special preaching. Among the many, we mention a few, such as are found in every locality.

1. *The Young.* By the young we mean such as have passed the period of childhood, and are now entering upon the duties and responsibilities of life. Sermons to them will therefore differ materially from those addressed to children.

A sermon to the young should aim to give the best counsel, to inspire them with a high ideal of life, and to persuade them to a life of piety and faith in God. In their presence, vice should be painted in the blackest colors and virtue clothed in its most princely robes. If character is

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full of inspiring suggestions for the material of a discourse; while the barren fig-tree, aged in wickedness, should be admonished and strongly urged to immediate repentance, and improvement of the few remaining sands of life.

3. *The Sisters.* Since woman has distinguished herself, not only in literature, but in the temperance and missionary and various benevolent enterprises of the church, and has always been so prominent in the home influences, she demands special recognition by the pulpit. Christ, after bestowing his encomium upon the woman who, from an alabaster cruse, anointed his feet with costly spikenard, seems to have enjoined this duty when he said, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark xiv. 9.)

The pulpit owes a tribute of praise and words of encouragement especially to our mothers, whose province it is, amid tears and sorrows, to impart those early lessons of virtue and to implant those habits of uprightness on which the whole future of life depends, and which, by the blessing of God, when once received will never be forgotten. As the fountain is before the stream, the seed before the plant, so the family is before the state or the church; and here, we should teach her, is the reign of her silent, but powerful empire. If "she that rocks the cradle rules the world," then our mothers, in an important sense, are our rulers. Their boys will be our preachers, bishops, legislators, governors, and presidents; and these will be just what their mothers make them at home. What woman would not prefer the honor of Monica, or of the mothers of Washington and Wesley, to the glory of Queen Victoria!

4. *The Young Converts.* After a revival-season, and sometimes during its progress if of long continuance,

when perhaps many have commenced the new life in Christ, it is necessary that for some time they be faithfully instructed from the pulpit in things pertaining to their new relations. There is no period in a Christian's life when he needs so much advice, admonition, instruction, and patient nurture as at the commencement of his new experience. Everything is new to him, and perhaps he has little idea of the nature of Christian doctrines and duties. He lives as yet in the ideal of Christianity, and needs preparation for the actual reality of "fighting the good fight of faith" which is just now to begin. It is one thing to enlist recruits in an army, and another thing to train them for active service on the battle-field.

The nature of the instruction given to young converts is very important. Their Christian character through life will be largely molded by it, and it is almost impossible to change first impressions received immediately after their conversion. If the instruction be defective either in kind or degree, it will manifest itself all through their future lives; their character will be dwarfed and their piety will soon decline. "These are your periodical Christians, that are so apt to wake up in a time of revival, and bluster about as if they had the zeal of an angel, a few days, and then die away as dead and cold as a northern winter."[1]

A sermon to young converts, then, should nourish them first with "the spiritual milk" of the gospel (I. Peter ii. 2), as babes in Christ, without experience "in the word of righteousness," before feeding them upon the "solid food" of doctrine, which is for full-grown men, "even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. v. 13, 14.) It should set before them a high standard of Christian piety, directing them to look to Christ for their perfect model, instead of follow-

1 Finney's *Revival Lectures*, p. 408.

ing any false standard, or any human pattern. It should teach them in what true religion consists—urge them to become workers in the church, and to aim at duty and usefulness, rather than at the comforts and rewards which religion affords. It ought strongly to influence them to act from principle and not from emotion; to do right not because they feel like it, but because it is right. It should incite them to moral courage, so as never to be afraid or ashamed to do right under any circumstances, and to say "no" in the hour of temptation. It should exhort them to prayer and attendance upon the means of grace, and warn them as to their associations, conduct, and example.

Such preaching to young converts will lay a good foundation for the structure of a religious and permanent Christian character, that will stand the threefold test of one's faith; for when the "rains" of divine chastising from above descend, when the "floods" of earthly temptation from below come, and when the "winds" of Satan's fury blow and beat against that house, it will stand, because it is "founded upon a rock." Christ's Sermon on the Mount is the best for young soldiers of the cross.

5. *The Various Professions and Occupations.* In preaching to men of the different professions and occupations in life, such as lawyers, doctors, merchants, tradesmen, day-laborers, etc., we may adapt ourselves to them by addressing them in the thought or language peculiar to their respective pursuits,[1] provided the thought or language adopted be not excessive or ridiculous, but illustrative of the truth.

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1 Father Taylor, the sailor preacher, was particularly noted for such adaptation. On one occasion, while preaching to seamen, he was led at some length into certain philosophical discussion somewhat abstruse, when, suddenly stopping and looking up under his palm as if just discovering that he was drifting into the northern sea of metaphysical argument, he raised his strong hand, and in the tone of command called out, "Hard down the helm! I've lost my reckoning! We're in the region of icebergs. I think I know my way yet. I am going to make for the nearest point. I meant to have swept you around through other seas. But there is no time now; our miserable drift among

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by faith, regeneration, personal obligation, etc. These objective truths are doctrines, and these doctrines are the solid foundation of a true Christian life. The fuller and clearer our conceptions and convictions of these truths, the deeper will be our religious life, which is evident from the historical fact that every religious reformation has been first a reformation of doctrine, and then of religious experience. The heart is moved through the understanding. The more fully a truth is comprehended, the greater will be its influence upon the life. Hence, no preacher can expect to inculcate a deep-seated piety—such as will be proof against various temptations—without occasionally, and sometimes frequently, devoting a sermon to the thorough indoctrinating of his hearers in the fundamental truths of Christianity. A superficial religion is based solely upon emotions instead of upon great controlling doctrines. "The attempt to edify the church without doctrinal instruction, is like the attempt to build a house without foundation or frame-work. Let any in derision call doctrines 'bones,' if they will. What sort of a body would that be which was flesh and blood, without bones? If any present them in skeleton nakedness, divested of their vital relations to life and experience, this is the fault of those who do it, not of true and proper doctrinal preaching, which, on one of its sides, is practical and experimental. In fact, the two should never be torn asunder any more than the flesh and bones."[1]

As to the matter, some doctrines are too fertile to be embraced in one sermon, and should therefore be considered in several sermons, or in a series. Several texts may be necessary in treating even the various divisions of a doctrine. In apologetic[2] preaching, we should seek to

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1 J. W. Alexander's *Thoughts on Preaching.*

2 This is based on the evidences of Christianity, and is a defense against hostile attacks from without the church.

establish upon thorough principles the doctrines of the Bible, rather than to refute objections. On topics of Christian ethics,[1] we may preach frequently; but in polemic[2] preaching we should indulge rarely. "The proper controversy of the pulpit is controversy with sin, which is the great heresy. That of symbol with symbol, of church with church, is, in general, unseemly."[3] The staple substance of doctrinal preaching should be that of human redemption in all its wide-spread ramifications and relations as accomplished by Christ in his life, death, and resurrection.

As to the manner of doctrinal preaching, we know of no better advice than that given by Dr. J. W. Alexander: "Treat doctrine *practically*. Preach Bible doctrine *with passion*. Avoid abstractions. Intersperse anecdotes."

§ V. HISTORICAL OR BIOGRAPHICAL PREACHING.

Nearly all persons love to see truth in living forms; and the lessons from sacred history and biography are doubly interesting. "History is the written world—human nature in relief."[4] It is the method which God often employs to instruct the people, as is seen from biblical history, as well as from other records of both ancient and modern nations.[5]

"Nothing so interests us all as a person. No inanimate object, or general proposition, will make much impression upon mankind at large, unless it is personified or impersonated, or invested with some personal interest. The poet, delighting in nature, instinctively feels as if communing

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1 The discussion of the grounds and requirements of Christian duty.

2 Controversy within the church.

3 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 78.

4 Lamartine.

5 Walker, in many parts of his *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, illustrates Dionysius' saying that "history is philosophy teaching by example." There are also many other works showing the "Hand of God in History."

with a person. Even so abstract a thing as a system of philosophy, is usually remembered in connection with a personal teacher. A benevolent enterprise seldom takes much hold on the popular mind, unless it is associated with some honored man, its embodiment and representative. * * * * Now the Bible not only consists very largely of history, but the greater part of its history is really biography, the story of individual lives, exhibiting the most various and instructive examples of character, both good and bad, of both sexes, and of every condition in life."[1] The human heart demands something of that tangible illustration which attends the concerns of real life. The *Œdipus Tyrannus* and the *Antigone* have had more of molding influence upon the moral character of men than have Aristotle's or Hickok's Ethics. By changing the abstract into the concrete, or, which is the same thing, transforming precept into history, an idea is made simple and attractive. In what way do we form the most vivid conceptions of faith, repentance, devotion? Not by discoursing upon them with arguments and precepts, but by illustrating them in the examples of Abraham offering up Isaac, of Peter weeping bitterly over the denial of his Lord, of Daniel braving the terrors of the lions' den. Men would rather listen to the biography of a miser than to a discourse upon the subject of avarice.

The great object of biographical preaching is to analyze character and motive; to measure influence and estimate teaching and example. To do this, one must study the character of the age and surroundings in which the person lived, and the contemporary events and personages; must be acquainted with the history and customs of the country, and bring together all the relative scripture-information, in order that the description may be true to facts.

1 Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 106.

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In such a wide field of topics as is embraced under practical and experimental preaching, there need be no lack of subject-matter. The Scriptures, biographies, providential events, personal experiences, are all full of new, inspiring, exhaustless themes. A preacher's skill consists in selecting points of vital interest therefrom and molding them into an effective sermon. The pulpit has to do with the home, the work-shop, the store, the street, the market; and its grand mission is to denounce their corruptions and purify their morals. "We want a Christianity that is Christian across counters, over dinner-tables, behind the neighbor's back as in his face. * * * * We want fewer gossiping, slandering, gluttonous, peevish, conceited, bigoted Christians."[1]

In order that preaching may have a truly *practical* character, it should have reference to the various interests of the church in their most practical application of duty. A *missionary* sermon must be preached as often as a congregation becomes lax in its zeal and contributions for missions. The pulpit must develop a missionary spirit in the church, and through it "Christians be kept in an habitual and alarming sense of the fact" of the wretched, terrible state of the heathen, and of our ample ability and bounden and responsible duty to send them the gospel. All the benevolent activities of the church, and all questions of moral reform, such as temperance, secretism, etc., must be pressed proportionately to the importance of the subject. The *Sunday-school* (perhaps better called "Children's Bible-school,") is always an important theme for the preacher. Parents and members should be forcibly reminded of their duty in reference to this department of church-enterprise. Officers and teachers should be stimulated and guided in their efforts, the young and old should be presented with

1 Dr. F. D. Huntington, quoted by Hoppin, in *Homiletics*, p. 692.

motives and inducements to become workers among children, and the claims of the school upon the church and community should be frequently and variously discussed. The same degree of importance should be attached to the *educational* interests of the church. Some pastors never preach on this subject, never inform the people of its benefits to the church and the world, never urge the young to seek a sanctified education in a Christian college which is under the supervision of the church. Among the various agencies that encourage and foster a higher intelligence, the pulpit should by no means be the least.

Then there are many other Christian duties, such as alms-giving, visitation of the poor and the sick, proper observance of the Sabbath, love, forgiveness, gratitude, forbearance, etc., which should be practically presented in the spirit of the gospel.

Again, in order that preaching may be truly *experimental* in character, it should concern itself mainly with topics upon means of grace, and such phases of religious experience as are essential to spiritual growth, and assurance of the faith. Prayer, the importance of reading the Scriptures, attending prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and the public services, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's-supper, family worship, fasting, and secret prayer can all be made subjects of the most edifying sermons. A discourse on the grace of *giving* should not be preached when a collection is announced to be taken up, but rather at a time when the audience least expects it, lest any good impression made be weakened by the idea that the sermon was prompted by the occasion or some financial necessity, and that they have a right, therefore, to assume an attitude of defense or unfriendliness to the appeal. A better way is to indoctrinate the people regularly in the duty of contributing cheerfully of their means in response to every

worthy call, and then, when the opportunity of exercising this duty presents itself, to preach a soul-stirring sermon on some general topic of experimental religion that will arouse their affections and make them open to every behest of duty. This will be a strong *argumentum ad crumenam*, and the best preparation for a good collection.[1]

Items of experience from individual persons, whether living or dead, will enrich a discourse on such subjects as temptation, affliction, bereavement, perseverance, despondency, steadfastness, etc., provided we always make due allowance for the peculiarities of disposition, opinion, and education of the persons from whose history we select our facts. Our own experience may sometimes be briefly and modestly introduced, not as a criterion of other men's experiences,—for perhaps no two can be alike,—but as an illustration of some truth.

In order to be successful in preaching practical and experimental sermons, the preacher must study human nature, collectively and individually, interest himself in facts rather than in theory, watch the world's bulletin, be able to analyze human feelings, detect demoralizing influences, probe secret motives, and then bring the result of his observation and study to bear upon the hearts of men in a pungent and eloquent address.

§ VII. ILLUSTRATED SERMONS.

The illustrated sermon is a modern mode of preaching adopted by some ministers who use it occasionally for the sake of securing additional clearness to and interest in the sermon. It consists of pictorial representations of the discourse upon canvas, or blackboard, accompanied with suitable verbal explanation and comment. Many portions

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1 *God's Call for Christian Giving*, published by the Presbyterian Board, Philadelphia; *Gold and the Gospel*, published by the Methodist Book Concern, New York, are instructive books on the subject of giving.

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of illustrated exposition. Professor Hitchcock predicts that within twenty years from now pictorial illustration will be used in the pulpit as freely as manuscript now is.

Illustrated sermons also present truth in a form that can be understood and appreciated by all classes,—the children as well as the aged, the illiterate as well as the most learned. They therefore help to solve the question, How may we reach the many who never attend church? Why not use sanctified art as an aid to preaching the gospel? Theaters, which "have a protracted meeting that lasts all the year," attract large crowds of people through the use, or rather abuse, of scenic representation. If Satan uses the power of the eye, as he did with mother Eve, why should we not follow the example of Jesus, who turned the art of illustration to good account? Why should "the children of this world be in their generation wiser than the children of light"? The parlor is made inviting to the family and its guests by the attractions of expensive pictures upon the walls. "We have little illustrated four-paged monthly Sunday-school papers for children, and large illustrated weeklies for adults," to make gospel truth more interesting. Why not sometimes add a charm to the pulpit by giving our hearers an artistic view of Bible scenes and Bible facts? Often vivid effects are produced upon an audience by the use of visible illustrations. When Summerfield was pleading for the deaf and dumb, to a crowded house, in the presence of the children of the institution, at the close of the sermon he said, "But I transfer these children now to you. Behold them!" Dropping his handkerchief on the platform as a signal, instantly a crowd of silent and speechless ones arose! Then he pointed to them, and spoke of the eloquence of their dumb silence in such thrilling words, that not only were a thousand dollars thrown into the baskets, but gold rings were taken from

fingers, and a gold necklace torn from the neck, to offer for the cause.

However, illustrated discourses should not become theatric, like the notorious Passion Play, or run into the absurdities of Romanism, or be given for the sole object of entertainment, but chiefly and exclusively as aids to explanation and impression.[1]

A relic, natural object, or picture, may sometimes be used in any ordinary sermon with good effect.[2]

§ VIII. FUNERAL SERMONS.

Funeral occasions afford rare opportunities for making good religious impressions. People are never so ready to receive religious instruction as when sickness and death enter their households. Hearts are then tender and impressible. For once their vain hopes of earthly pleasures are diverted, and their thoughts can easily be directed to the spiritual. Besides, many non-church-going people never hear a sermon except at funerals. How important that the minister who presides on such occasions should utilize these rare opportunities for doing good!

His duties demand thoughtful preparation for speaking to those who will be his hearers. Usually he has a very short time in which to prepare a sermon. But if he is a student of human nature; has learned to fathom aching hearts under various conditions of sorrow and bereave-

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1 If the preacher is not skilled in the use of crayon or pencil so as to produce his own pictures, he may secure an artist to sketch from his own (the preacher's) conception, or procure a prepared specimen and treat it homiletically in his own way. Many publishers of our Sunday-school lessons now publish weekly cartoons of the lessons which are cheap, large, and well adapted for pulpit use. The outline can easily be filled out with colored crayon. Pulpit paintings, prepared by the Rev. E. M. Long, author of *Illustrated History of Hymns and their Authors*, *Talks to Children*, etc., can be rented at reasonable terms. Address the author at office, in charge of Arnold & Willyoung, 189 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

2 Alfred Cookman preached his last sermon, October 22, 1871. As he arose to announce his text he held in his hand a faded leaf, saying, "This is my text, 'We all do fade as a leaf.'" He preached until strength failed. Exhausted, he dropped into his seat with these concluding words: "The leaf and the preacher are alike—fading." The effect was wonderful.

ment; learned in his past experience or observation what spiritual medicament to prescribe for such bleeding wounds; and, moreover, if he has tried to acquaint himself as far as possible with the history of the deceased; if he has visited and conversed with him and the family during his last illness, he will be qualified to prepare a very suitable discourse at short notice

While there are various circumstances that must determine their character, yet in the majority of cases funeral sermons may be classified under three heads.

1. For the funeral of a *child.* Such sermons should be adapted mostly to the condition of the *parents.* For example: If the parents are Christians, the officiating clergyman should teach them cheerful submission to the divine will by recounting some of the many benefits that accrue from early deaths in childhood, and directing their minds from that which is sad and mysterious to that which is hopeful and consoling. If non-Christians, in addition to such thoughts, he should try with suitable words to win their hearts, not to himself, but to Him who deprived them of a dear one for some wise purpose. If many children are present, such as school-mates or class-mates, the preacher should address a considerable part of the discourse to them, in matter and manner which they can readily understand.

2. For the funeral of an *adult Christian.* On such an occasion the sermon ought to be mostly biographical. The review of a holy life before an assembly of friends who were well acquainted with the deceased, is not only interesting, but very inspiring and profitable. However, an honest portrayal of such character demands that the preacher neither exaggerate its virtues nor ignore its defects, remembering that no human life can be perfect. In case of a private or uneventful life, the sermon should be mainly textual; that is, devoted to such thoughts as may

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a wasted life, and a number of such kindred themes, will furnish thoughts for a profitable discourse, provided they be always intensely practical, rather than doctrinal. "Pains should be taken not to make much of death-bed conversions, which are proverbially uncertain, and the hope of which, as a last resort, is so often taken by the living as an encouragement to delay."[1] Prudence must decide as to the manner of addressing directly the family of the deceased, or particular members of it, whether at intervals during the discourse, at its close, or not at all.

On all funeral occasions the discourse should be short, largely consolatory in sentiment, and delivered in an easy, solemn, sympathetic tone of voice. Nothing is so ill-becoming the character of the service and the preacher — a son of consolation — as indifference in manner, or boisterousness of speech, during the solemn obsequies. When several ministers are to speak, each address should be very short, and embrace different phases of the subject. If the first speaker uses a text, the rest are not obliged to follow it. In the cities, where the funeral services are mostly held in the house of the deceased, it is not customary to use a text at all. "A prevailing fault of funeral discourses is the occupation of too much time with generalities or truths that have no special application to the existing circumstances. It is far better to confine such discourses to narrower limits, and to that particular range of thought which all will recognize to be pertinent."[2]

§ IX. OUT-DOOR SERMONS.

These do not differ essentially from other sermons, except that they are designed for a new class of hearers — principally non-church-going people, and are delivered in a new locality — the open air.

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1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 112, 113.

2 Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 280.

In favor of out-door preaching it may be said:

1st. That it was the early practice of the church. Enoch, Noah, and Moses, no doubt, delivered their stirring discourses under the open sky. Elijah uttered his challenge to the frantic multitude from Mount Carmel. Jonah lifted up his voice of warning in the streets of Nineveh, and Ezra expounded the Scriptures to the people who "gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate." And at the beginning of the Christian era, field-preaching had such notable examples as John the Baptist, who preached the gospel of repentance from the banks of the Jordan; Christ himself, who delivered most of his discourses in the open air,—on the mountain-side, by the sea-shore, and in the streets; and, afterward, the apostles and their immediate successors, who, according to Eusebius, went everywhere—preaching the gospel wherever people could be found.

2d. That it is often useful in modern times. It may be objected that in this day of multiplied church-houses and in-door conveniences, the necessity for open-air preaching has passed away; but so long as there are people who can not be brought into the pews of our chapels, the necessity of field-preaching will continue to exist. To become "fishers of men" we must imitate the fisherman, and go to the people if they will not come to us. To be "merchant-men seeking goodly pearls," we must, like traders, go to the markets and hunt business. Even many a town and city pastor who is every Sunday preaching his prosy sermons to empty pews, might soon have them filled by occasionally going out to preach in the "highways and hedges," and thereby compelling "them to come in, that my house may be full." Says Mr. Spurgeon, "No sort of defense is needed for preaching out of doors; but it would need very potent arguments to prove that a man had done

his duty who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting-house." When we think of the fruitful results of the field-preaching of Peter Cartwright, Lorenzo Dow, Jacob Gruber, John Welsh, and Robert Flockhart;[1] when we read of the five hundred who were converted under the preaching of John Livingstone in the yard of the Kirk of Shotts, though "it rained in torrents during a considerable part of the time;" and when, with grateful hearts, we remember the thousands who were converted under Whitefield's triumphant eloquence, when he addressed the multitudes that gathered around him in fields and plains, we are impressed with the fact that our "field is the world," and that perhaps our most fruitful parish is the moral desert where the voice of the preacher is seldom heard. Says John Wesley, "I am assured that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb, than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."

Out-door preaching will reach a class of people that otherwise would perhaps never hear a sermon. Some can not possibly be induced to enter a church, but will stand in a crowd to listen to the gospel, perhaps out of curiosity, but often not without benefit; while the character and condition of others would, out of delicacy, prevent their appearance in a place of public worship on Sunday on account of poor clothes or filthy habits; and on account of such circumstances our out-door ministry would secure Christ's approval, because "the poor have the gospel preached to them."

3d. That it is especially adapted to all kinds of missionary work. We have reference not only to foreign fields, where out-door preaching is often a real necessity,

1 For forty-three years he spoke in the streets of Edinburgh every Sunday, because, as he said, "Compassion to the souls of men drove me to the streets of my native city to plead with sinners."

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a place quite convenient to his church, to which the people could repair during rainy and inclement weather, or in which a prayer-meeting before or after preaching might be held. Half an hour's out-door singing and speaking before the preaching-hour will often fill an empty house. Camp-meetings, which are held annually in our country, when properly conducted, answer a useful purpose in reviving the declining zeal of many Christians, and in addressing numerous sermons and exhortations in the open air to all classes of hearers.

A few suggestions on out-door preaching:

1st. Let the speaker select a good position from which to address the people. To stand upon a box, bench, or temporary platform, and thus elevate himself somewhat above the level of the hearers, is a convenient method of getting command of an audience; but a better plan is to let the audience occupy the elevated position, while the preacher stands at the bottom of an amphitheater, or faces a rising ground. This affords an acoustic advantage to both hearer and speaker.

2d. Do not preach against the wind, or beneath trees which produce a hissing or rustling sound, or near a waterfall, or in any noisy place, lest the voice become inaudible in a position otherwise most favorable.

3d. Exercise prudence, self-possession, and common sense. Out-door preaching is exposed to all kinds of interruptions and annoyances. Sometimes drunkards, scoffers, skeptics, rioters, and disturbers of every sort, will be present to interrupt the services and thwart the preacher. Every kind of tact is needed to prevent disturbance. The preacher must possess himself calmly under the most exciting circumstances, be able to quickly baffle interferences, answer foolish questions, and by all lawful devices to preserve the sacredness of solemn worship. He should, how-

ever, never forget that the chief object is not to control mobs, but to save souls.

4th. We give the following select sentences of practical advice from Spurgeon's "Lectures to My Students," second series, on the topic of open-air preaching: "In the street a man must keep himself alive, and use many illustrations and anecdotes, and sprinkle a quaint remark here and there. To dwell long on a point will never do. Reasoning must be brief, clear, and soon done with." "Come to the point at once; and come there with all your might." "In a regular field-sermon, pauses are very efficient, and are useful in several ways both to speaker and listeners; but to a passing company who are not inclined to anything like worship, quick, short, sharp address is most adapted." "In the streets a man must from the beginning to the end be intense, and for that very reason he must be condensed and concentrated in his thoughts and utterance." "Have something to say, look them in the face, say what you mean, put it plainly, boldly, earnestly, courteously, and they will hear you." "The less you are like a parson the more likely you are to be heard; and if you are known to be a minister, the more you show yourself a man the better." "The *action* of the street preacher should be of the very best. It should be purely natural, and unconstrained." "All mannerism should be avoided." "It will be very desirable to speak so as to be heard, but there is no use in incessant bawling." "One constant rule is, to be always courteous and good-tempered; for if you become cross or angry, it is all over with you. Another rule is, to keep to your subject, and never be drawn into side-issues. Preach Christ or nothing; don't dispute or discuss except with your eye on the cross."

CHAPTER V.

REVIVAL SERMONS.

General Remarks—A Fundamental Requisite for Effective Revival Preaching—Character of Revival Preaching—Questions on Revival Preaching—Character of the Preaching of the Most Eminent Revivalists.

§ I. GENERAL REMARKS.

All preaching should be revival preaching, in the sense that every sermon ought to revive the Christian's faith, and reform the sinner. But there are special times when a special *course* of preaching, extending over a succession of weeks and even months, is required, in order to awaken the church on the subject of immediate action in religion. These times are whenever the church is in a state of inactivity, of spiritual declension and backsliding. Such alarming signs ought to be sufficient warning to a preacher to bestir himself in a *special effort* to promote a "revival of religion." Such necessities for revival efforts will come to nearly every congregation, at least once or twice a year. There is no reason why a church should not *always* be engaged in revivals, but there are many reasons why special agitation is needed. Finney says, "Many good men have supposed, and still suppose, that the best way to promote religion, is to go along *uniformly*, and gather in the ungodly gradually, and without excitement. But however sound such reasoning may appear in the abstract, *facts* demonstrate its futility. If the church were far enough advanced in knowledge, and had stability of prin-

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brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction!" A preacher who can see sinners heedlessly rushing to everlasting destruction, and not become pained and enthusiastically aroused over the sight, must indeed be dull in mind, and duller in heart.

Revivals are not *accidents*, nor exclusively *miracles*, but are the effect of adequate cause or effort. They come by being sought. They are the philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means, just as any other effect is the result of the application of right means. Finney says, "The connection between the right use of means for a revival and a revival is as philosophically sure as between the right use of means to raise grain and a crop of wheat. I believe there are fewer cases of failure in the moral than in the natural world." This implies the interworking of human and divine agencies; for in the production of a harvest, God and man must work together — a Paul to plant and an Apollos to water, but one mightier than either to "give the increase." Mere mechanical means, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, will not produce a revival. We are dependent upon the "Lord of the harvest" for a harvest, for it is his to give and his to withhold; but without prayer and the necessary preparation on our part in obedience to the command, and without faith in the promises of God, it is unreasonable to expect a gracious visitation of his blessing in the salvation of men. It is not our efforts that bring the blessing, but the power of God; but without our efforts the blessing will not come. This is the true philosophy of revival. A true revival of religion is a movement among the people, produced by the agency of God's people and the working of

God's Spirit, resulting in the quickening of his children and the conversion of sinners.

On the human side, this work should first begin with the *preacher;* then with his *people;* and thence extend through the community. In preparing the way, let the preacher begin by preaching on the nature, history, and importance of, and means of promoting, true revivals. Let him preach for a time upon such texts as, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" "Take up the stumbling-block out of the way;" "Where art thou?" "Wilt thou not revive us again?" "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;" "Break up your fallow-ground;" "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;" "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" "The people had a mind to work;" "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way," etc.; "Ye are my witnesses;" "He that winneth souls is wise;" "Aaron and Hurr," etc.

Among human agencies, *preaching* is the greatest factor in promoting revivals. God has ordained that men should be saved by the proclamation of the gospel. Hence, every pastor should cultivate a *talent* for revival preaching. A learned divine stated to a friend that although he had preached more than forty years he did not know of any conversions resulting from his efforts. This is, indeed, a sad experience. He evidently neglected this talent or wisdom of winning souls through preaching. A minister may be learned, but not wise; pious, but not wise; both learned and pious, yet not wise in the skill of winning souls; while others with less learning or piety are eminently successful as revival preachers. Such a talent for calling men to repentance consists in strong will-power, intense conviction and feeling that make one's preaching irresistible, power of *forcing* men to decide, power to slay them. "Sinners must sometimes be made to feel as though

he (the preacher) were God himself, searching their hearts and pricking their consciences until they quail before his penetrating glance."

§ II. A FUNDAMENTAL REQUISITE FOR EFFECTIVE REVIVAL PREACHING.

A fundamental requisite for effective revival preaching is a heart-felt yearning for the salvation of the people. It must not be an affected solicitude, but a painful, soul-travailing love for the work. Paul's intense anxiety for the salvation of Israel should be the ruling passion of his preaching,—"My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved;" "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren." Other men, not inspired, whose preaching melted human hearts like wax before the flame, have also had this consuming zeal for men's conversion. Alleine was "infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls; and to this end he poured out his very heart in prayer and preaching." Bunyan said, "In my preaching I could not be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work." Matthew Henry said, "I would count it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ, than mountains of silver and gold to myself." Doddridge wrote to a friend, "I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for anything besides. Methinks I could not only labor, but die for it with pleasure." Brainerd: "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardship I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things; and when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work." Whitefield: "Had I one thousand lives, gladly would I spend them all for the good of souls. Oh, for more bodies, more tongues, more lives to be employed in this work!" When a minister feels as did Dr. Lyman

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same as the severer terminology of a century and a half ago, except that the form of the message has been changed to meet present circumstances. Therefore, our sermons should point to the cross. Some one has well said that in our day conviction at Calvary is deeper than conviction at Sinai.[1]

We will consider the character of revival preaching,—

1. *As to the General Matter of the Sermon.*

Revival preaching is circumscribed in its range of topics. At other times we may give general instruction in religion, but during revivals we should bring the knowledge which men are supposed to possess to a definite purpose. "When a man is studying law in a lecture-room, he pursues one course; but when he stands before a jury, to win a case, all that he ever knew is concentrated for a definite purpose. He thinks of their verdict."[2] The preacher becomes, as Vinet says, "by turns * * * a lawyer and a magistrate; a lawyer, when he pleads before the conscience for the adoption of the document [Word of God]; a magistrate, when he demands man's obedience to the document as adopted."[3] Revival preaching is definite in its object, aiming at immediate results.

There are topics that have a general adaptation to all revivals; such as the old and tried doctrines of the Bible: total moral depravity, sin, the remedy for sin, the atonement, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, the claims of Christ, final judgment, and future retribution. The main substance of a sermon to sinners may be condensed into the three words which were found written in Rowland Hill's Bible,—"ruin, regeneration, redemption." The weighty matter that must constantly be pressed with great emphasis, is *sin, and salvation from sin,*—sin in its

1 Dr. Thompson's *Times of Refreshing.*
2 Beecher's *Yale Lectures*, second series.
3 *Homiletics*, p. 31.

various forms of deceitfulness and ruin, salvation in its all-sufficiency, freeness, and fullness, and faith as the only means of escaping from sin and obtaining salvation. Scatter these seed-truths, plant them deeply, water them with tears and prayers, attend them with unwearied watchfulness; and then fear no empty glean of harvest-sheaves.

The "Love of Jesus" is the greatest of all gospel themes. It is the hammer that breaks human hearts. What sinner will not be moved at the story of bleeding and suffering love that comes, not like the startling roll of Sinai's thunder, but with a voice so magical that a heart of stone can not resist its power? If this "wonderful story" will not lead a sinner to repentance, he is almost beyond the hope of recovery.

The *law* may sometimes be preached, as a "schoolmaster" to lead men to Christ. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." There are times and circumstances when the preacher must speak with great plainness and warning. He must at times "insert pangs into the hearts of his hearers, as the probing of a surgeon's knife. He must lodge the goading stings of truth in the conscience. He must sometimes uncover the pit, and give visions of its ascending smoke."[1] He should present them in such a way as to impress sinners with their guilt and condemnation, destroy their self-righteousness, and cause them to stand speechless and self-condemned before a holy and just God. He should speak of these things *compassionately*, and not *defiantly*. Let him speak, as it were, from experience, as if he himself had tasted of the bitter fruits of sin, and knew of its anguish. In this way he will convict and persuade, otherwise he may harden and repel, the sinner. Moody says, "A man's heart ought to be very tender" when speaking about the doom of the impenitent.

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1 Prof. Geo. Shephard, D. D.

2. *As to the Special Matter of the Sermon.*

Sometimes the general doctrines above stated may have done their work upon the sinner, and yet leave him undecided on account of some *special* hinderance, or for the want of the application of some *particular* truth. The preacher, therefore, ought to study the peculiarities of his hearers, know the religious opinions and feelings of them all, and watch the vicissitudes of feeling during the progress of the revival, so as to adapt his preaching to individual cases. He must leave, for a time, the general doctrine, and attend to the particular cases.

The *moralist* must be convicted of his moral blindness; of the evil of his secret thoughts, intentions, and volitions; of his want of love to God, and the souls of men; of neglect of Bible, prayer, means of grace, self-denials, duties, etc., as well as Christ's command, "Ye must be born again."

The *backslider* must be reminded of his sad fall, and urged to do his first work over, not by reformation of mere outward conduct, but by true repentance and prayer.

The *unawakened sinner* must be aroused from his stupor, perhaps by relating some startling incidents or special providences, or recalling some loud calls to him from God through accidents, sickness, or death. Many and various methods must be tried, to awaken his conscience and bring him to serious reflection.

The *convicted sinner* needs special attention; for many are convicted without repenting. A person in a convicted state is liable to lose his serious impressions unless they are followed up with wise counsel. Perhaps he has some idol, or particular sin, which he is not willing to give up; perhaps he has injured some one, and the injuries call for redress and restitution; perhaps he holds a prejudice against some one, feels ill toward some, or is angry and cherishes feelings of resentment. He may be waiting for

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when a congregation is once deeply imbued with the revival spirit, and many are engaged in seeking Christ. At no stage or state of the meeting, however, should preaching be abandoned altogether. Every service needs to be commenced with a brief discourse suited to the wants of the meeting, as there are always peculiar cases that need prompt attention, and other sinners to be convicted through the power of the truth. The vigilant and observing preacher will know when to expand his preaching into a regular sermon, and when to condense it into a short address. (Common sense is always indispensable in revival preaching.) What is insisted upon is, that every revival discourse should be brief and pungent, and keep every one wide awake from beginning to end. A revivalist's quaint advice to a young minister who asked him how to preach was, "Do make the sparks fly."

(2.) *Illustrate largely.* This helps to make the truth plain to every one, which is especially necessary in revival preaching. Especially should doctrinal points be clearly illustrated by incidents, real or supposed, and drawn from things so common that no one can misunderstand the application.

(3.) *Treat all the topics in due proportion, and repeat with variation.* If too much stress is laid on one subject, or class of subjects, the convert's character will not be evenly balanced or perfect. Let the preacher guard against using "hobbies" in a revival. Some subjects are more important than others; but all must be treated in proportion to their importance, and with reference to the circumstances of the people. Often, during the progress of a revival, the recurrence of similar circumstances will require that a former sermon be repeated, but with a change of form and language, and also, if possible, with improvement. Not only should the preacher sometimes repeat sermons,

but repeat in the same sermon whatever he sees is not perfectly understood by his hearers. A lawyer once said to Finney, "In addressing a jury, I always expect that whatever I wish to impress upon their minds, I must repeat in the same or different language. Otherwise, I do not carry their minds along with me, so that they can feel the force of what comes afterward." "In like manner," says Finney, "the minister ought to turn an important thought over and over before his audience, till even the children understand it perfectly."

(4.) *Preach so that the sinner will be made to feel his guilt.* The discourse must not only make men admire the sermon and compliment the preacher; it must not only make them weep, or leave them under the impression that they are unfortunate and unfit for heaven; it must make them *feel their guilt and condemnation*, and impress them that they have *something to do* in order to escape "the wrath to come." Hence, the conscience must be probed, and the feelings stirred.

(5.) *Urge upon the sinner immediate action.* The offer of "future salvation" is one of Satan's most cunning devices. The opposite—namely, "present salvation,"—is the gospel plan. The preacher must always, and with all his might, impress the sinner with a sense of his *present* obligation; and every appeal should end with a ringing of the all-important NOW.

(6.) *Preach in faith.* Although visible results may not at once follow, preaching must not be abandoned as a vain thing, or changed in its gospel tone, to gratify the depravity of men, or be diluted with any subterfuge or devices of men's wisdom. The preacher must believe that the word will not "return void;" and in this faith, "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts," must continue to "cry aloud," and "spare not," until results do appear.

(7.) *Preach with unction.* In order to become endowed with divine power in preaching, the preacher must banish all self-confidence, and feel his dependence on God. "When a preacher feels deeply that he is inadequate of himself to convert his hearers, they feel that they are wrestling with his God; and thus he speaks to them with 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'"[1] His heart should be in great sympathy with the truth, and with men; his feelings should flow downward to his hearers, and upward to God; and thus, with one hand at the hearts of the people and the other upon the throne of the Eternal, he should glow and melt with the solemnity of his theme; should grapple with men's consciences, and speak with the animation of direct appeal and of earnest expostulation. An ice-lump in the pulpit will make the whole congregation a moral refrigerator. People can not get warm around a cold stove. He must be a solar light and heat.

"Not only should the preacher have feeling, but he must be able to show it; to make it flash in the eye, glow in the countenance, tremble, and anon thunder, in the voice."[2] As the instrument of the Holy Ghost, he will forget all thought of self, or of applause, as he presses his suit at the court of heaven. Upon two memorable occasions, Augustine preached eloquently, and the people applauded; but he kept on until they cried, and he cried with them. Thus he accomplished what he sought. Knox spoke by inspiration. Payson, in the pulpit, pleaded with men; and if they were not moved, he came down out of the pulpit and pleaded until men yielded to God or spurned him.[3] On

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1 Prof. E. A. Park, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1847.

2 Prof. Shepherd.

3 When Robert Roberts preached, on one occasion, two school-boys went to hear him. They saw that the preacher began by an intensely earnest look upon the audience, his eyes piercing the people; and as he grew more and more earnest, some fainted, and others cried out, and the place was moved "as if an angel stood at his back to encourage him." One of the boys turned to the other and with pale face asked, "Is he a man, or an angel?" "Why, an angel; did you not know?" "Great heavens! but how much better an angel preaches than a man!"

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his congregation after the revival heat has subsided, and will gratefully respect his ministry for the benefits which they have received from his faithful labors for their salvation.

2. What portion of revival preaching should be devoted to children?

No revival meeting should be continued in utter forgetfulness of the children, who need conversion as certainly as do adults, and who may become the most promising fruits of such religous efforts. But the methods of addressing and instructing them are so different from those employed with adults, that separate services should be held for them. By holding an early meeting for children before the regular hour of service, or a daily meeting of the Sunday-school for about three-fourths of an hour, during the progress of a protracted service, for special revival-work among the children, at which the pastor will preach a short sermon to them and engage the teachers and officers in labor for their conversion, the pastor may often secure the conversion of the young while conducting other meetings for the benefit of adults. But perhaps a better way is to devote a fortnight or a month exclusively to children, because of the better opportunity it affords for adjusting and adapting all energies to this special interest.

The preaching, in matter, will be mainly as already described in this chapter, remembering, of course, the child's relation to the atonement, and strongly emphasizing the simplicity of salvation, the advantage of early conversion, and the Savior's special love to the little ones. In manner, we can not be too plain and practical in urging them to accept Christ.

§ V. CHARACTER OF THE PREACHING OF SOME OF THE MOST EMINENT REVIVALISTS.

1. *Jonathan Edwards* was the *Boanerges* of revival preachers; and his sermons struck terror to the hearts of sinners.[1] He stands pre-eminent "as a preacher of the divine law, of the divine sovereignty, of man's entire sinfulness by nature, of justification by faith, and of eternal punishment. * * * * He seldom made a gesture; his voice was not commanding; his power was that of deep thought and strong feeling. * * * * A gentleman remarked to President Dwight that when, in his youth, he heard Mr. Edwards describe the day of judgment, he fully supposed that immediately at the close of the sermon 'the Judge would descend, and the final separation take place.'"[2]

2. *George Whitefield* was pre-eminently successful as a revival preacher. He often preached two and three times a day, to audiences of from three to eight thousand; and sometimes hundreds were converted in one day under the power of his preaching. He traveled about, and preached over eighteen thousand sermons, crossing the Atlantic thirteen times on his mission.[3] He preached the old doctrines of grace in their simplicity and power, the new birth being his great theme everywhere. His great power consisted in his matchless force of delivery. His elegant voice was more perfect than any other known to history; and it was this which the great actor Garrick most coveted when he said, "I would give a hundred guineas if I could say

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1 One of his most terrific sermons was preached in Enfield, on the subject, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The people in church, before that sermon began, were thoughtless and unconcerned; but before he finished his sermon "there was such a breathing of distress and weeping that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard." It was during the delivery of this sermon that the pastor of the congregation to which he preached tried to arrest the torrent of his appalling eloquence by pulling Edwards' coat-tail and crying out, "Mr. Edwards! Mr. Edwards! is not God merciful, too?"

2 E. A. Park, in McClintock & Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Art. Jonathan Edwards.

3 Dr. Chauncy says, "Itinerant preaching had its rise from Mr. Whitefield."

'Oh!' like Mr. Whitefield."[1] But behind it all were a consecrated life and a spirit yearning for men's salvation, which made him the most seraphic orator of modern times.[2] And thus with voice and heart he addressed the conscience, until men trembled under a sense of their guilt before a holy God, and the cries and groans of the people sometimes nearly drowned his voice.

3. *Gilbert Tennent.* His preaching "was frequently both terrible and searching. It was often, for matter, justly terrible, as he, according to the Inspired Oracle, exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law, threatenings, truth, power, and majesty of God. It was not merely, nor so much, his laying open the terrors of the law and wrath of God, or damnation of hell, as his laying open their many vain and secret shifts and refuges, counterfeit resemblances of grace, delusive and dawning hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction." He was much associated with Whitefield, who said of his preaching, "I never heard such searching sermons. Being deeply convicted of sin by God's Holy Spirit, at his first conversion, Mr. Tennent has learned experimentally to dissect the heart of the natural man. He is a son of thunder, and does not fear the faces of men."

4. *Asahel Nettleton.*[3] He could adapt himself to every peculiar state of a revival, and every condition of individual experience. His preaching was intellectual, doctrinal, and experimental. "He introduced the doctrine of depravity, and made direct assaults on the consciences of

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1 Whitefield's printed sermons are not fair specimens of his preaching, because the merit of his sermons consisted mostly in their delivery.

2 "Whitefield was the greatest gospel orator of the age."—Tyerman, Whitefield's last biographer. "His eloquence was great, and of the true and noblest kind."—Dr. Gillies. "One of the greatest of all pulpit orators."—Dr. Thompson.

3 With the beginning of the work of this revivalist, preaching became of a milder type. Edwards, Whitefield, and the Tennents preached during the period of church formalism.

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he denounced popular sins without flinching; he sub-soiled the sinner's heart with tremendously close preaching of personal guilt, and made the "sword of the Spirit" cut to the very marrow of human feeling; "he put his plow in deep, clear under men's secret motives, and it made ripping work."[1] Such preaching produced acute, pungent convictions, and clear, genuine, and permanent conversions. Men of intellect and culture, lawyers, judges, physicians, merchants, skeptics, and scoffers were reached by his trenchant arguments, and thoroughly converted. As to the order of topics, he preached, first, the law, then the gospel, in order to create a sense of sin and a need of Christ. After preaching death as the *wages* of sin, love would then appear more glorious because it saves from wrath *deserved.* He always pressed the duty of *instant* surrender to God.

7. *E. P. Hammond* "has been called the children's evangelist. While his work is not given exclusively to the young, it is in this direction that his success has been most marked. He has taught the church a lesson concerning early conversions which will be useful in all coming time. * * * * The church will, perhaps, advance by increasing experience to better methods than have yet been adopted. But the essential idea that supports the work among children, both in Sunday-schools and revival meetings, that little ones can be soundly converted, that the law of spiritual growth from very feeble beginnings may be emphasized in religious life, and children be trained up in the church, rather than recovered to it after prolonged wandering, is one that will throw heavenly radiance on all the future life of the church."[2] The substance of his sermons essentially is sin and redemption. He has clear, well illustrated statements of the cross of Christ as the central doctrine. He dwells much upon the Father-

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1 T. L. Cuyler.

2 Chas. L. Thompson's *History of American Revivals.*

hood of God and the joyfulness of Christianity. He is apt in illustrations, which makes him especially interesting to children. He is considered by some too dramatic in style; but this is only the manner in which his great earnestness often manifests itself.

8. *D. L. Moody* has opened a new epoch in modern revivals, and his sermons have, in a measure, revolutionized modern preaching, especially in respect to *simplicity* and *naturalness* of style. He uses familiar household words, talks freely and in a straightforward manner, just as he would talk earnestly to a few friends at his fireside; and by this perfect naturalness, he disarms critics and secures their united interest. By his passionate earnestness and happy power of illustration, he modernizes and vitalizes the facts of scripture so that they stand out in new and living colors. He often repeats sermons and illustrations, but, usually, with increased interest and power. His logic is not that of method, but of fact and experience. He thoroughly understands human nature, and Bible teachings; and these two antipodes are brought together face to face, with unerring accuracy and searching force. As to the matter of his preaching, it consists of the various revival-topics; but special prominence is given to the importance and simplicity of *faith* in the matter of salvation. The secret of his success in preaching consists in an irrepressible ardor of personal conviction, a consciousness that God is with him, utter forgetfulness of self, and a deep, unaffected zeal for men's salvation. Here is the hiding of his power.[1]

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1 Every minister who wishes to become imbued with the spirit of revivals should read such works as Gillies' *Historical Collections*, Kirk's *Lectures on Revivals*, Headley's *Harvest Work of the Holy Spirit*, Earle's *Bringing in Sheaves*, Tracy's *Great Awakening*, Fisk's *Hand-book of Revivals*, Townsend's *Supernatural Factor in Revivals*, Humphry's *Revival Sketches and Manual*, and Thompson's *Times of Refreshing*. Finney's *Revival Lectures* are very excellent. His revival sermons collected into a volume entitled *Gospel Themes* are a fair specimen of his preaching. Moody recommends the revival sermons of Daniel Baker. The biographies of revivalists are also profitable reading.

CHAPTER VI.

SERMONS TO CHILDREN.

Reasons for Preaching to Children — Qualifications for Preaching to Children — Different Methods of Preaching to Children — Matter for the Children's Sermon — Manner of Preaching to Children — Benefits Resulting from Preaching to Children.

"Papa," said a preacher's little girl one Sunday morning, "are you going to say anything to-day that I can understand?" The father profited by this innocent rebuke, and that day, for the first time, after preaching a short time, he surprised his audience by saying, "Now, children, I will say something to you about this." So much has been written and spoken on the subject of sermonizing, by our homiletical authors and lecturers, without scarcely ever saying a word on the importance of preaching to the *children*, that we are warned by this culpable oversight in our homiletical treatises and weekly pulpit ministrations, to "say something to you about this"—this subject of preaching to children.

It is, however, a favorable omen, that just now, from every quarter of the globe, there come evidences of the beginning of a reformation—a plea for the child, a vindication of its rights in the Christian church. The claims which the child has upon the various services of the sanctuary, are beginning to be acknowledged and urged by every Christian denomination. "While adults are, perhaps, not to have less attention than before, the child is coming to the front as the one who is henceforth to absorb

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heathen of antiquity saw the importance of giving special attention to the training of their children. Hence Solon, Draco, and Lycurgus composed their laws in verse for the youth of Greece, and mothers sung them to their children. Who would say that children do not need instruction in righteousness, and things pertaining to the kingdom of God, as much as do older persons? Why should not the pulpit exert as good an influence over the child as over the parent? Why should it not be alike instrumental in their conversion?

Irenæus, of the first century, says, "He [Jesus Christ] came to save all persons by himself,—all, I say, who are *regenerated* by him unto God, infants and little ones, and children, and young and old men." Says Dr. Tyng, sen., after a long pastoral experience, "I solemnly believe in the conversion of children. I can not say how young the children should be brought to make an open profession of their faith and love for Christ, but I have seen as manifest evidences of the new birth in children of six and eight years of age as I have seen in any adult. We are in an age when the church is to take the children, nurse them, train them, educate them, protect them, and prepare them for the work appointed for them." And Dr. J. H. Vincent, the Sunday-school champion, also gives this testimony: "Whatever be the theological opinion and ecclesiastical policy with reference to children, and their religious life and relations, one thing is incontrovertible: the earlier a child can be brought to a personal recognition of Jesus as his Savior, and to a personal identification with the church, the better for him. Baptized or unbaptized in infancy; at birth a sinner, or, by the provision of grace, virtually a saint; with these questions we have not now to do; but as early in the child's life as possible, we say, teach him implicit trust in Christ, and the full consecration of his little life and all its possibilities to Christ."

The child, then, being a proper subject for admission into church-fellowship through essentially the same process required by adults, and being included in the preacher's divine commission as a proper subject of instruction, we must conclude that it has as much claim upon pulpit recognition as has any other class of hearers. It is radically wrong for the church not to care for her lambs, and to leave them at the mercy of surrounding influences. Richard Newton, in speaking of the pernicious practice of many mothers who intrust their little ones to nursing servants, says, "But is not the church, to a great extent, justly chargeable with this same offense? God designed the church to be the nursing mother of her children. Her solemn, bounden, paramount duty is to take care of her little ones, and make the best provisions possible for their instruction. * * * * Catechising, Sunday-schools, good books, etc., are not sufficient. It is only providing *foster-agents.* * * * * The church speaks authoritatively mainly through her ministers in the sanctuary. Her children have a right to look for nursing at her own bosom, and for instruction at her own lips."

2. We may expect more fruitful results from our preaching to children, than from our appeals to any other class of hearers. The youths are the most hopeful portion of our congregations. They are the most susceptible to impressions, and are most easily won for Christ; and if the golden opportunity of bringing them into the fold be postponed until maturer years shall have enchained them in habits of vice, they may be forever and hopelessly lost to the church.

Some of the most permanent and useful Christians were converted during childhood. Polycarp was converted at nine years of age, Matthew Henry at eleven, President Edwards at seven, Dr. Watts at nine, Bishop Hall at eleven, and Robert Hall at twelve. Voltaire, Tom Paine, Rous-

seau, and a host of others might have been saved from infidelity, and brought into the pale of the church, had she done her duty toward them while they were yet children.

The church should heed the words expressed by one of her staunch enemies,—"Give me the first five years of the life of a child, and I will make of it a saint or a devil;" she should understand that it is ten times more difficult to convert the adult than the child, and that the future battle between Protestantism and Catholicism is as to who shall have the child. The best way to conquer skepticism, intemperance, and all forms of vice, is to get all the children into the church, and train them in her doctrines and practices. Dr. Holland has expressed his convictions on this point very plainly and forcibly,—"We can raise more Christians by juvenile Christian culture than by adult conversion — a thousand more." And Chas. H. Spurgeon, the great London preacher, testifies to the permanence of child conversion in the following statement: "I have during the past year received forty or fifty children into church-membership. Among these I have not had, at any time, to exclude one from church-fellowship. Out of a church-membership of two thousand seven hundred members I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child." If this matter had not been so long and sadly neglected, we might have two members in the church where now there is only one; and pastors who forget the children of their parishes, are neglecting a fruitful field of usefulness. Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, near the close of his life, said, "If I had my ministry to go over again, I would give more attention to the children." Dr. Samuel Miller gave this emphatic testimony: "After the observations and experience of a long life, I have come decisively to the conclusion, that if I had my life to live over again I would pay ten times as much attention to the young of my charge as I ever did."

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each one, "I go to prepare a place for *you*," and if he prepares a place suitable and interesting for Milton, the poet, and Locke, the philosopher, and Newton, the mathematician, and Agassiz, the scientist, he also adapts heaven to the enjoyment of little children and prattling infants. But the example serves to illustrate, that if children will not want to go to the heavenly sanctuary above, unless they can be made to believe that there is something there to interest them, much less will they want to come to our earthly sanctuaries below, unless they also be made inviting and attractive by services adapted to their wants and predilection.

Dr. Richard Newton, in speaking of the importance of making the children feel that they have a part in the services, says, "Need we wonder that our children generally have so little of this feeling in reference to the services of the sanctuary, when they go there week after week, month after month, and year after year, without finding themselves distinctly recognized, or having any instruction addressed to them which was at all within the range of their comprehension? Let us put ourselves in their situation. Let us suppose the sermon to which we listen every Sabbath delivered in an unknown tongue,—and the ordinary run of sermons are essentially so to our children,—and what degree of attraction would the church present to us? What interest would we manifest in its services?"

It is useless for a pastor to urge the parents to bring their children to church, until he himself creates within the youths a desire to be there by saying something to them in his sermon that will pay them for coming to hear it.

§ II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR PREACHING TO CHILDREN.[1]

Many ministers who habitually neglect the children in the public service, excuse themselves on the plea that they have no ability for addressing children. To this it may be answered, that the time was when they could not preach to adults. Had they never applied themselves to this department of ministerial duties, they could not now preach at all. Among those who are successful preachers to little ones, few are such because of a natural talent for this particular work; most have acquired the art by careful study and practice. Nor will the acquisition of this art interfere with our efficiency in preaching to adult hearers,[2] but rather increase it, according to the testimony of all who have had the most experience in practicing both methods.[3]

The following are some of the essential elements of success in preaching to children:

1. *A real love for the children.* This is an indispensable qualification. It is a requisite based in the example of the Great Teacher himself, who so ardently loved the little ones that he took them in his arms when he preached to them; and as if he wished especially to impress this important requisite on Peter's mind, He asked him, "Lovest thou me?"—"Feed my lambs." Hence, "A Christ-loving pastor is a child-loving pastor."[4] A man who does not love children will never succeed in preaching to them. "I hold the proposition of this feeling as entitled to a high rank among the indispensable qualifications for the office of the ministry. I should as soon think of recommending a man to go to sea who was suffering from hydropho-

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1 On this subject we are indebted to Dr Richard Newton for many valuable suggestions.

2 Phillips Brooks, in his *Yale Lectures*, expresses the fear that preaching to children may mpair the power of preaching to adults.

3 See close of this chapter.

4 Dr. Tyng.

bia, or of enlisting him as a soldier when he had a constitutional and unconquerable dread of the smell of gunpowder, as of recommending a man to enter the ministry who had a positive dislike for children."[1] An affectionate devotion to children is the best incentive to the acquisition of eminent success in preaching to them.

2. *The habit of forming distinct and clear ideas of the subject handled.* The preacher should know exactly what he wants to say, not only in the main divisions, but also in the subordinate points of his discourse. Nothing is so fatal to success as want of preparation in this respect, and nothing is so uninteresting as to listen to a speaker whose mind, while speaking, is moving in a region of clouds and fogs. "All the important saving truths and practical duties of religion admit of being clearly and distinctly apprehended; and without the habit of forming clear, simple, and well-defined views of these truths, no success need be expected in addressing children. If a man will succeed in preaching to the young, he must school himself to this habit of mind; and it is one of the most important habits for a minister or teacher to acquire."[2]

3. *A natural, simple, and well-defined plan or arrangement of the subject of address.* The subject should be divided into natural and distinct heads, which should be clearly enumerated and announced, and repeated, so that they may be easily understood and remembered. "In speaking to children the preacher must not only have a distinct plan in his *own* mind, but he must make it distinct and clear to the minds of his hearers."[3] He must make them *see* each idea; for children will not likely grasp a discourse unless it has some prominent points which they can perceive and carry home. "No teaching will do any good,

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1 Newton. 2 *Ibid.* 3 *Ibid.*

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hymn immediately preceding the regular sermon; but whenever or wherever used, it should be separated from the main sermon by a song, in order to relieve the otherwise too stately service, and prepare the people to receive with a keener relish and a closer attention the weightier discourse which is to follow.

There is no reason why the introduction of the sermonette should lengthen the duration of the regular service. Let the preacher cut down his sermon of forty-five minutes to thirty-five or forty, thus improving the working-quality of his sermon, and finding ample time for speaking awhile to the children; or, what may be better still, let the sermonette be a substitute for the more formal and unessential part of the service, such as the reading of hymns, and, in churches where instrumental music is used, the use of organ voluntaries, preludes, and interludes. These fragments of time, if gathered together, would afford all the time required for the addition of a sermonette to the sermon, without lengthening the usual service. The sermonette should usually be upon a subject different from that of the sermon, and should be prepared with great care.

2. *The Duplex Method*, by which we mean the combination of the sermon and sermonette, so as to form one continuous discourse. It consists in addressing the children at intervals during each regular sermon by interpolating episodes, illustrations, etc., related to the subject, and especially adapted to their understanding, as helps to the child's comprehension of the sermon. This was the custom of some of the biblical evangelists. Paul, in the midst of his exhortations, turns to the little ones and says, "Children, obey your parents;" and Peter, in a similar discourse, says, "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." Augustine often paused in his discourse to address

the children with these words: "Young people, this is for you;" and Dr. Deems, of New York, is accustomed to intersperse remarks and illustrations for children in all his pulpit discourses.

This method is perhaps better than the first, as it distributes an equal portion alike to "young men and maidens, old men and children," without making a specialty of any class of hearers; but there is no doubt that this is the most difficult of all the modes of preaching, for very few can repeatedly pass from the style of adult address to that of a juvenile character, without a marked abruptness or break in the progress of discussion, which will mar the climax or destroy the rhetorical unity of the discourse. In order, therefore, to make this method a success, the preacher must not halt in the midst of an eloquent flight to address the young, but must wait until the inspiration is over. He should not always soar upon the wings of lofty ideas, but occasionally alight upon some humble spot to rest himself, to address the child-mind, and prepare for another flight. These halts should occur at the beginning or end of each division, where its substance can be transmuted into a juvenile discourse, and the same matter be presented in a new and interesting form which will be intelligible to all. In passing from point to point he should make the steps of his progress clear and emphatic, and all through the discourse strive to make the truth appear in such interesting forms that it may be attractive and impressive even to children.

3. *The Service of Song.* Sometimes an extra programme of music will add to the interest of a children's service. Four or five sermonettes upon various subjects, delivered by the pastor and several of his gifted laymen, or ministerial brethren, may be introduced between the different pieces of music, which will help to secure variety and

freshness throughout the entire service; or, to relieve the children from weariness, we may give them the opportunity of participating in the singing, praying, and responsive reading, or of rising sometimes during the singing of a hymn, or the reading of a chapter. Some pastors will, by previous arrangement, occasionally call upon an older child to deliver a religious address, or upon a younger one to give a suitable recitation, to take the place of a sermonette. Such a plan, without turning the service into a Sunday-school concert, will often help to increase the children's interest in the meeting by giving them a share in the services.

4. *The Children's Church.* This is a service occasionally and exclusively held for the children, in the same audience-room, during the same hour, and with the same services as the regular Sabbath-preaching services for adults, but with sermon, hymns, and prayers especially adapted to the little ones. This method has been successfully practiced by Dr. Richard Newton, of Philadelphia, and Dr. Tyng, sen., of New York, for many years, and in many respects is the best that can be used:

(1.) It gives more time for thorough preparation, by taking the place of the regular sermon, instead of constituting an extra work for the Sabbath. In the other methods already mentioned, the children's portion in the preaching-service will probably be slighted, because of the necessity of devoting most of the time for preparation to the main sermon; or, if the children's portion be properly prepared, the adults' may be deficient.

The proper preparation of a discourse to children will always make a greater draught upon a preacher's time than that of the ordinary sermon to adults. Says Dr. Richard Newton, "I am free to confess that I have never written a sermon for children which has not cost me four or five

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sermon to adults, nor that adults should be entirely overlooked in a sermon to children, but that at children's church, the general style and plan of preaching be especially adapted to the juvenile mind.

Since the sermon will occupy considerable time in delivery, and might become wearisome to the young, it is well to divide it into two sections, by the singing of a hymn. This will afford a little recreation to the children, and, if the singing be suitable to the subject, will also help to impress the lesson of the sermon on their minds, so that they will think or sing about it when at home.

§ IV. MATTER FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERMON.

Agesilaus, the Spartan king, when asked what boys should learn, admirably answered, "That which they must use when they are men." This sound principle of instruction should be engraved in letters of gold, to be used as a motto in the preparation of every children's sermon. It is a false theory which teaches that the proper aim should be, to say anything that will *interest* the lads and lasses—to express any idea or tell any story, however unreal, trivial, or heretical, that will make them listen with credulous delight. This is not only deceiving the innocent minds, but sowing pernicious seed that will spring up into thorns of folly, and disappoint their hopes, when they are men and women. Child-instruction is too responsible a work to be performed either indifferently or jestingly. Teach the children the true, solid principles of life—what they should be *now*, and especially what they must be "*when they are men*,"—truths that will stand the wear and tear of time, as they grow up; teach them thoughts that are pure, that will quicken in their minds high, noble, and generous conceptions,—thoughts that are wise and true, and that will give to them right views of the world, and healthy

views of life and duty; that will inspire them with courage to act manfully, and worthily, and heroically in the presence of difficulties and trials. Every sermon to them ought to be a fount of inspiration to do right, to think wisely, to speak truthfully, to live well, and at length to die happily. The supreme purpose, then, is not to say the most *interesting* thing, but to say the most *edifying* thing in the most interesting way.

What lessons of instruction should we teach the children?

1. Lessons of *morality;* such as goodness, kindness, unselfishness, truthfulness, honesty, obedience, patience, etc. Care should be exercised not to set up too high a standard of morality, such as it would be impossible for them to attain.

2. Lessons of *Bible facts.* Children should be made acquainted with such Bible-history as they can understand. "Great portions of the Book we are set to expound come to us in the form of stories. An endless supply is there, and boundless variety, and touched with both imaginative and ethical force. In Genesis and Exodus alone are stories which will last for a whole year. We have only to name the heroes of Bible-history to recall the rich materials prepared for our use—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jonah, Samson, Samuel, David. We have only to think of the events of which the Bible is the record to see the same thing—the expulsion from Eden, the deluge, the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the life in the wilderness. What child will not feel the awful side of the divine majesty in the story of Belshazzar's feast? or the weird doom of filial disloyalty in the death of Absalom? or the pathos of human life in the anguish which rings in the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm?—'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange

land?'—or the protective care of God in the preservation of Daniel in the lions' den? or the wonder and miracle of his presence in that story of the form of the Son of man, who was seen walking with the three children in the fire? And see how the life of our Lord has been told. That life unfolds in a way that might justify the supposition that it was meant to be told to children. It arrests the imagination and engages the heart of a child—the manger in the stable, the star, the wise men, the visit to the temple, the preaching at Nazareth, the baptism of John, the temptation. We have elements in these events of an interest which never loses its fascination for children. And, as if these were not enough, we have line upon line of other and as interesting materials in that life. There is the rich fullness of incident and circumstance in the history of the public ministry; the parables are just stories of the kind and for the kind of minds I am bringing before you; the miracles are stories; and last of all, * * * * there is the endlessly interesting story of the sufferings at the end."[1]

Then the Bible furnishes a large variety of *illustrative* history, in the form of metaphors, emblems, etc., adapted for teaching many useful lessons. Thus Dr. Tyng, sen., preached a series of sermons to children on "The Trees of the Bible," and "The Mountains of the Scriptures;" and Rev. W. F. Crafts, of Brooklyn, New York, in 1881, preached a series of five minutes' sermonettes to children on the "Birds and Foxes of the Bible." Such sermons are not so much for the sake of teaching scriptural facts, as for the sake of the lessons they may serve to impart.

3. Lessons of *Bible doctrine.* All the various established subjects of dogmatic theology which relate to human sal-

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1 Dr. Alex. Macleod, in his paper on *The Children's Portion in the Sabbath Service*, read at the Pan-Presbyterian Council in Philadelphia, 1880

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topics, derived from a multitude of sources. First, from the Bible, where are found numerous examples of pious devotion. Second, from various good books, where are recorded incidents of heroic Christian deeds that stir our souls. Tell them something about the heroes of the Reformation, the pilgrim fathers, or the Scottish covenanters. Let them know something of Bunyan's glorious dream in Bedford jail, or of the biographies of holy men and women. Third, from the world of incidents and experience. The minister only needs to be awake to matters of daily occurrence, such as he reads in papers, or sees in nature, or observes in Christian lives, to have at hand a supply of material to interest the children and incite them to Christian activity.

But as regards material, in sermons to children as in sermons to adults, nothing is so important and interesting as the plain gospel of Christ. An elder of Glasgow, in addressing an assembly of Sunday-school teachers, said, "It may be useful, and very entertaining, to tell your classes of the height and girth of the cedars of Lebanon, and the dimensions of the Temple of Solomon, and such things; but in my experience there is nothing which will interest a child so much, or bear repetition so many times, or do so much good, as the story of the cross of Christ." This story may be told in an endless variety of ways, that will always make the "old story" seem new.

§ V. MANNER OF PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

We have intimated *what* we should preach to children; we will now suggest *how* we should preach to them. Chas. H. Spurgeon says, that he has thought, when hearing certain preachers of a high order speaking to the young, that they must have understood the Lord to say, "Feed my camelopards," instead of "Feed my lambs;" for nothing

but giraffes could reach any spiritual food from the lofty rack in which it is placed. This quaint reproof is useful in denouncing a lofty style that is far above the level of those whom we address. We must come down to the intellectual process of children in order to make ourselves understood; and, as Broadus says, if we would learn the range of their ideas, we must talk much with them, and allure them into talking freely to us.

1. In order to become interesting and plain in addressing children, we must adapt ourselves to their childish instincts.

They like the jingle of rhyme, and we may utilize this instinct by teaching to them truth in hymns and verses. Curiosity is another of their peculiarities which can be used in teaching by comparisons. When the child spoke of the peacock as a turkey "bloomed out," it spoke of the truth figuratively.

In addressing them we should alternately employ pathos and humor. "The childish mind readily passes 'from grave to gay,' and almost as readily back again to what is grave. Few men can succeed well in speeches or sermons to children, unless they are able to employ at least a few touches of humor;"[1] but such pleasantry must not descend to buffoonery, nor be offered for the sake of amusement, but as subservient to a higher purpose.

We should also address the imagination, which in childhood is most prominent and active. To the child everything is associated, by resemblance, with something else. "The stars are lamps; the rainbow, ladders; the clouds, islands in a sea of blue." Thought, feeling, emotion, everything, is touched with imaginative receptiveness. It lends a charm to antiquated facts, and pictures forth spiritual truth in tangible form. By its aid we show them

1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 116.

God's image in the works of creation—looking through nature up to nature's God; we make them hear his voice in the melody of the grove, in the roaring thunder, in the wild winds; we direct them to see his fatherly hand in the vernal bloom, in the painted flower, and in the shining star. In short, we reach the child's heart through the gates of imagination.

2. Another method of making truth intelligible to children is the use of *illustrations.*

These may consist of *anecdotes*, illustrative of an idea we wish to present. Children are always craving stories, and will remember them longest when related in the most natural and familiar way.

They may consist of *pictures*, which are attractive even to grown people. Many points can be better illustrated on the blackboard, with a few bold outlines and sketches, than by any other process.[1] Sometimes, when the whole sermon is based on a pictorial representation, an artistic engraving, procured or prepared beforehand, will be either a supplement to or substitute for the blackboard.[2]

Again, they may consist of *relics* or *object-lessons.* The Jewish *charub*, the Egyptian lentil, or the Syrian sweetmeat is not difficult to find. A fac-simile of heathen idols gives the best idea of heathen worship; so an imitation of the coin which rattled in Judas' fingers, makes the scene of the betrayal very real. There are little models of the tabernacle furniture, of the Holy Land, phylacteries, and a score of other articles, that can not fail to interest and instruct the young. But there are many objects accessible to every preacher, such as a flower, an egg, a pebble, a magnet, or

1 The preacher should give some attention to blackboard drawing, and be able to produce in a few moments a figure that can be easily seen and recognized by everybody in the audience. It should be drawn in the presence of the children; for they have a creative instinct, and like to see a thing in process of formation. Study *Plain Uses of the Blackboard*, by W. F. Crafts; and *The Blackboard in the Sunday-school*, by Frank Beard.

2 Cf. chapter on Illustrated Sermons.

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must be planned beforehand, and be directed to some particular object; and then the catechising must be conducted with a skill that will avert digression, and keep the main question before the children. For example, if we wish to explain by the interrogative method why we should believe God's promises, we might put the question directly, "Why do we believe what God says, and not what Satan says?" If no answer given be correct, we must not follow any centrifugal tendency of their answers, but draw out the correct answer by a course of preparatory questions; such as, "If I would tell you that if you come to my house to-morrow I will present you with a golden dollar, would you come?" "Do you think you would get the dollar if you would come?" "Why?" "Now, if a wicked man, who makes it his business to lie, and deceive the people, would promise to give you a gold dollar if you come to his house, would you go?" "Do you think you would get the dollar if you should go?" "Why not?" "Why, then, would you believe me, and not that other man?" "Why, then, do you believe what God says, and not what Satan says?" By this time the children, no doubt, will have a correct answer.

4. Last in order, but first in importance, is the use of plain and simple language in speaking to children. This does not imply that the words used should be all monosyllables, for children can understand polysyllables as well, when they represent concrete or familiar ideas, but that they consist of common household words, such as constitute the family vocabulary in homes where the ordinary conversation between parents and children is pure and faultless. It is possible for a preacher to be child-like in his speech, and yet not childish, and to be simple without being puerile, though the thought expressed may be sublime, or even ponderous. Nothing is so improper in a

children's sermon as a scholarly, book, or essay style of expression.[1]

§ VI. BENEFITS RESULTING FROM PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

1. *To the Preacher.*—This benefit manifests itself in a more extended knowledge of human nature, as well as an extra discipline in the arts of invention and disposition. Elocutionists recommend the study of the child-nature as a model of naturalness in manner and gesture. Besides, preaching to children requires superior ability, extensive knowledge, vigorous imagination, and skill in the use of illustration. The effort required in so selecting, arranging, and simplifying the truth as to make it plain to children, will be a beneficial exercise to the sermonizer. "Nothing is easier than *to talk* to children; but to talk to them as they ought to be talked to, is the very last effort of ability. * * * No sermon ever put my mind half so much on the stretch. I am surprised at nothing which Dr. Watts did but his hymns for children. Others could have written as well as he, in his other works; but how he wrote those hymns, I know not."[2] Perspicuity is the chief quality in pulpit style. Two of the most successful preachers of the age, namely, Spurgeon and Moody, began their Christian work by preaching to children, which no doubt gave them that simplicity of utterance and clearness of expression for which they are distinguished.

2. *To the Adult Hearers.*—Some preachers entertain a fear that the style which is best adapted for a children's sermon will be repulsive to adults, and tend to gradually

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1 A doctor of divinity, in speaking to a Sunday-school, used the word "summary." The clergyman of the parish, who was sitting behind him, pulled him by the coat-tail and whispered, "Doctor, they don't know what summary means." "Ah! yes," said the doctor. "Children, my friend here tells me you don't understand what summary means. Allow me then to say that summary is synonymous with synopsis; in short, a succinct digest."

2 Cecil. See Newton's testimony.

drive them from the public service. In reply, Richard Newton says, "If proper care and pains be given to it [the children's sermon], it is possible to prepare sermons which shall be sufficiently plain and illustrative of the great truths handled in the pulpit, to engage the attention of young people of ordinary intelligence, such as are found in our Sunday-schools, and yet sensible enough not to offend by their puerilities the taste and judgment of the adult portion of the congregation." Instead of repelling adults, such preaching will most likely attract them; for one way of winning fathers and mothers is by winning their children. "Touch the hearts of the children in your flocks, and you have thereby touched the hearts of the parents;"[1] and by interesting and benefiting them, you touch tender chords in the parental heart which nothing else can touch. Many parents have been drawn to church, and finally to heaven, because some darling little one of the family has first led the way.

Besides, some adults never get clear ideas of certain doctrines and duties until they hear them explained to children in form and language so plain and simple that no one can fail to understand them. Truth so presented as to be comprehended by the child, will be comprehended by everybody else in the audience; and while there is just cause for fear that our preaching may be too intellectual for the young and the unlearned, there is never any danger lest it be too plain and interesting for the elderly and the scholarly. The difficult task of making the difficult seem easy, and the easy, easier still, is the crowning effort in the art of preaching; and success in this will be a benefit to the hearer as well as to the preacher.

3. *Especially to the Children.*—They are the greatest beneficiaries, receiving the largest profit. Is it no benefit for

[1] Macleod.

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CHAPTER VII.

EXPOSITORY SERMONS.

General Remarks—The Advantages and Disadvantages of Expository Preaching—General Management of Homiletic Exposition—Continuous Series of Exposition—Portions of Scripture Especially Adapted to this Mode of Preaching—Some Valuable Aids to Expository Preaching.

§ I. GENERAL REMARKS.

Expository preaching is mostly concerned with the exposition of the Sacred Scriptures; but its divisions may resemble those of either the topical or the textual species of sermon, both as to source and arrangement. The only difference between an expository sermon and any other kind is, that in others the divisions are treated rhetorically and dogmatically, while in this the divisions and contents are treated expositorily and exegetically.

The text may consist of a brief passage, though generally larger portions of scripture, ranging from a paragraph to a chapter, or even a whole book, are selected for this purpose.

The expository method of preaching is as old as the days of Ezra, who gave "the sense" of what he read. It was practiced by Paul when, in the synagogue of the Jews, he reasoned with his hearers "out of the Scriptures;" it was honored, in his Homilies, by Chrysostom, who was the most skilled expositor of his day, if not of any day; it was adopted by the good Archbishop Leighton, in those admirable discourses on First Peter which are so full of

unction as to delight and benefit the saint, and so rich in thought as to have furnished Coleridge with many of the aphorisms in his "Aids to Reflection."

It is to be regretted that, only a few years ago, this method of preaching had greatly fallen into disuse; and but for the recent revival of more biblical preaching through the influence and example of D. L. Moody, this decline would be rather an unfavorable omen. It is a noteworthy and historical fact that this mode of preaching always prevailed in the brightest days of the church, and declined with the decline of Christianity. In the days of Christ, in the progressive period of evangelization during the time of the apostles and the church-fathers, this was almost the only mode of preaching. Chrysostom and Augustine, the two greatest preachers of the Greek and Latin churches in the fourth century, were powerful expository preachers. It was during the medieval period, a period characterized by secular Christianity and rigid scholastic formalities, that this biblical exposition was entirely abandoned. When the light of divine truth again began to emerge from its long eclipse by sacerdotal supremacy, at the dawn of the Reformation, there was again a return to the expository mode of preaching. But Germany, which had received such an impetus to the exegetical study of the Bible from the labors of Luther and Melanchthon, soon became corrupt under the withering blight of the rationalism of the seventeenth century. The expository mode was again exchanged for the most formal and secular preaching. However, since the revival of the evangelical spirit among many of the theologians and preachers[1] of Germany, and, in our country, since the adoption of uniform Sunday-school lessons, and the

1 Reinhard, the court-preacher at Dresden, who died in 1812, has filled thirty-five volumes with expository sermons on minor topics. Cf. Hagenbach's *History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, translated by Hurst, Vol. II., p. 102, etc.

revival movements of Moody, expository preaching has again revived and many have become more interested in biblical study. Let the minister, then, who wishes to contribute to the spiritual and evangelical progress of his age, spend much time in clearly and carefully expounding the Holy Scriptures to his people; even though at first they may be averse or unaccustomed to the new mode. They will soon learn to appreciate its value.

§ II. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING COMPARED.

The advantages are:

1. It gives a more accurate and enlarged view of divine truth. By taking a fuller view of God's Word, the preacher not only becomes more familiar with the Bible, but is kept from that narrowness that often results from too much topical preaching.

2. It "gives a clearer exhibition of the great principles of religion in their mutual connection and diversified bearings than could otherwise be done."

3. It secures a variety of subjects that are fresh and charming. The topical preacher soon wears himself out, because of his constantly drawing upon himself; but "the expositor has the Word of God before him, and his lifetime will not exhaust that."[1]

4. It affords an opportunity of bringing a vast number of topics before one's hearers which it would be exceedingly difficult to dwell upon in a regular sermon, on account of their delicacy, or application to certain individuals in the congregation. The most unwelcome truths and cutting rebukes, when following in the line of biblical expounding, fall with much more grace upon the hearers than if made the special theme of a sermon.[2]

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1 W. M. Taylor.

2 It is better not to be too personal in our public addresses, but to "preach the word,"

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mentioned are overbalanced by the numerous advantages in its favor. If this mode of preaching[1] is less suited to eloquence, it is evidently better adapted for the diffusion of true scriptural knowledge and instruction, which forms by no means a small part of the preacher's office.

If a minister should say that he has no talent for expository preaching, and therefore is not required to practice it, we would remind him that he lacks one of the first qualifications for the ministry, and should not rest satisfied until he acquires the necessary skill. Every preacher who tries to understand the proper sense and meaning of scripture, can also learn to expound it to the people in the public congregation; and for him to be compelled to confess his ignorance of general Bible knowledge and exegesis, is a shame, if not a sin. There can be no better way of learning to understand the Scriptures exegetically and practically than by devoting a series of expository efforts to certain portions thereof, making them special subjects of study and investigation, so that while preparing sermons one may at the same time become an expert in scripture interpretation, accumulate a rich store of matter for topical preaching, and become fitly furnished with a variety of Bible counsels and comforts, always ready at hand, to meet all the varied experiences of a pastor's people.

§ III. GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF HOMILETIC EXPOSITION.

Expository preaching is more than a commentary, or running paraphrase. It must possess a homiletical form, and answer, also, the purpose of a sermon. "To expound the past is one thing; to move the present by means of it is another. The perfection of lecturing[2] is so to combine the past and the present, to make the one such a mirror of

1 In Scotland it is called a "lecture," on account of its didactic character.

2 The author was writing for Scottish preachers, who call expository preaching "lecturing."

the other, that what is said of the one shall have a powerful influence in moving the other. * * * * And no doubt it is a fatal fault of many lectures, as of many sermons, that they keep at a great distance from present-day experiences, and aim only at throwing light on the remote past. To find out the representative principle that underlies the Sacred Scriptures, to find in the past a type of the present, is the very perfection of an expository lecture."[1]

Not only must the exposition be adapted to present audiences, but "the sermonizer will need to employ his strongest logical talent, and his best rhetorical ability, to impart sufficient of the oratorical form and spirit to the expository sermon. He will need to watch his mind, and his plan, with great care, lest the discourse overflow its banks, and spread out in all directions, losing the current and the deep strong volume of eloquence. This species of sermonizing is very liable to be a dilution of divine truth, instead of an exposition."[2, 3] Hence, the first requisite of expository preaching is

Unity of Structure.—The great characteristic of the expository sermon which distinguishes it from the commentary, the paraphrase, the ancient homily, the exhortation, or the postil, is the unity of its component parts. Although explanation and instruction, rather than eloquence, are the principal aim in this mode, yet the minister must not forget that he is preaching a sermon, and not merely interpreting before a class of learners, thus turning the pulpit into a chair of exegetical theology; that he is addressing a public audience in a public way; and that without some rhetorical structure the hearers will not be much interested.

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1 Blaikie, pp. 196, 197.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 155.

3 Daniel Moore, in his *Thoughts on Preaching*, says, "For power to seize on the salient moral of a passage, or pick up the interlacing threads of several verses and combine them into a strand of thought, the preachers of the period referred to [Puritans] are surpassed by few."

Unity of structure is more necessary now than it was in the early age of the church. The first Christian assemblies were small and private, and hence instructions were given somewhat in the form of a familiar conference between the instructor and his disciples; and the style of it, perhaps, corresponded to that of Socrates in conversing with his disciples. Then, too, as instruction and indoctrination in the principles of Christianity were especially needed in the primitive church, the rhetorical element of the discourse was not so necessary as now, when our congregations are more public, larger, and more generally acquainted with the cardinal doctrines of the church. We are also reminded that the American people are a "speech-making race," and love to hear a discourse that is modeled after the modern rules of rhetoric. Hence, in our times and country, a discourse must possess unity in order to suit the popular mind. Not that the times should control our preaching, but our preaching, so far as it does not sacrifice any moral obligation, must be adapted to the times. Conviction and persuasion are now as needful as instruction; and this end is best secured by such a presentation of the truth as shall concentrate all its elements into one pungent, piercing point, by the aid of unity.

In order to facilitate unity in exposition, the first thing necessary is, that the passage or passages selected for a *text* must cohere, and admit of arrangement under one general subject. The division of our Bible into chapters and verses was very carelessly made, without much regard to connection or subjects, so that many have been led to think of "every chapter and every verse as a sort of separate whole."[1] Hence the preacher, in circumscribing

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1 In the new Anglo-American revision, this defect is somewhat remedied; for, although the marks of chapters and verses are retained for reference, the text is divided into sections with reference to unity or division of topics. The present division of our Bible into verses and chapters originated with the commentators of the Middle Ages, as

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6; (4) bearing all things, verse 7; (5) believing all things, verse 7; (6) hoping all things, verse 7; (7) enduring all things, verse 7.

II. The Superiority of Love, verses 1–3.

Love is superior:—(1) To human and angelic eloquence, verse 1; (2) to prophecy, verse 2; (3) to perfect knowledge, verse 2; (4) to the understanding of mysteries, verse 2; (5) to wonder-working faith, verse 2; (6) to complete beneficence, verse 3; (7) to self-sacrifice, verse 3.

III. The Durability of Love, verses 8–13.

Love survives:—(1) Prophecy, verse 8; (2) languages, verse 8; (3) knowledge, verses 8–12,—all human knowledge being comparatively partial, verse 9, imperfect, verse 10, child-like, verse 11, and therefore uncertain and transitory, verse 12. But *love* is as eternal and unchangeable as God himself.

Such an analysis will aid in a clear elucidation of the scripture idea of love. Of course, we would introduce the chapter with the last clause in chapter twelve,—"And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way,"—and conclude with an appeal upon the last verse of this chapter, and the first clause of chapter fourteen,—"Follow after love;" for these two clauses in chapters twelve and fourteen properly belong to this subject. In the conclusion, the summing up of all the lessons and teachings of the chapter would evidently point to Christ, in the following manner: To "follow after love" is to follow after Christ, for the description of love in this chapter is but another description of Christ, who possessed all the attributes of love, negatively and positively, as described under the first division; and though he was superior to all men in eloquence, prophecy, knowledge, understanding of mysteries, faith, beneficence, and self-sacrifice, as por-

trayed in the second division, yet it was love that made him divine, and therefore he shall live forever as the incarnation of love.

2. In treating a single passage.

Text.—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew v. 48.

Theme.—Human Perfection.

I. It is well to commence with the little word "as," which in this connection is the most liable to be misinterpreted. Illustrate with other passages wherein "as" occurs in different senses, as well as in similar senses, and thus prove this to be descriptive of *manner* as used in comparison.

II. What is divine perfection? "Your heavenly Father is perfect."

III. What is human perfection? "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect."

IV. Show wherein human and divine perfection differ, and wherein they agree; that the comparison of the two is one of *correspondence*, and not of *equality*—we are to be perfect in *ourselves* as God is perfect in *himself;* that *relative* perfection, in all its degrees, from brute to angelic, may be compared to *absolute perfection* only when it is complete, as exhibited in the nature and capacity of its subject; that two circles may differ in diameters and circumferences, and yet, if each is perfectly round, the one is as perfect a circle as the other; that a dog which possesses the full complement of canine attributes and qualities in all their perfection, is as perfect in his nature as God is in his. God, then, as a model of perfection, determines the character of human perfection, which is *to be* and *to do* all that is possible within the sphere of our individual capacity. This perfection is *similar* but not *equal* to God-perfection. (Luke vi. 10.) This is the highest possible human perfection that

can be conceived, but not so high as to be beyond the possibility of acquiring.

§ IV. CONTINUOUS SERIES OF EXPOSITION.[1]

Some preachers give a series of expository sermons upon certain characters, narratives, sections, or even entire books, of the Bible, in regular consecutive order, without omitting a single clause from beginning to end. "It is very common in Scotland for preachers to give expository lectures covering the whole of some book or books of the Bible. Preachers have been known to begin at Genesis and go right on, sometimes, however, selecting only portions, till they come to the end of Revelation. But for the most part, the principle of selecting certain books, as being better adapted than others for expository lecturing, has been followed." [2]

Before beginning a series of expository discourses, special preparation must be made:

1st. By carefully studying the entire section or book upon which it is proposed to give discourses, so as to obtain a view of it as a whole, and learn its peculiar features. Such a general survey of the whole section of the Word which it is designed to treat, is indispensable. If possible, this first examination of the field to be traversed should be made in the original; for, admirable as the late revision of King James' translation may be, there are, nevertheless, ideas concealed in the Hebrew and Greek texts which the best translation can not give. The next best thing is to study the text with the aid of the best commentaries. Broadus thinks that to commit the book to memory would

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1 On this manner of exposition, we are much indebted to Dr. Wm. M. Taylor for many valuable hints derived from his excellent papers on "Expository Preaching," which appeared in the *Homiletic Monthly* a few years ago. Dr. Taylor is considered one of the ablest expository preachers of our day.

2 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 207.

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be given to the author, and the purpose for which he wrote. If an epistle has been chosen, it will be well to give succinctly a history of the planting of the church to which it is addressed, and of the circumstances which called it forth. In dealing with these preliminaries, however, care should be taken not to be too exhaustive or minute."[1]

Generally, an introduction will not be needed to every different sermon in the series. Especially should one avoid recapitulating much of what has been said in a previous sermon, but should proceed with the subject, after making a few brief remarks as to its relation to, or connection with, what has gone before.

In managing the material of each sermon in the series, we must be sure to make it strictly an expository sermon, "in which not only the leading ideas of the passage are brought out, but its details are suitably explained, and made to furnish the chief material of the discourse. In order to manage this, we need to study the details thoroughly, so as to master them."[2] Not everything that could be said upon a text should be said, but only that which helps to expound and explain the text. Let the minister study his text again, more critically than in his first general examination, so as to be sure of its meaning. If different interpretations are suggested, let him examine each, and come to a definite conclusion for himself.[3] He

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1 Dr. W. M. Taylor. He also recommends Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, Fairbairn, and Kitto, as well as the introductions to the different books of the Bible in Lange's *Commentary* and in that known as the *Speaker's*, as helps in preparing an introduction to a series.

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 309, 310.

3 Dr. Taylor recommends the following authors, as helps in studying the exegesis of the text: For the Old Testament, Wiley's *Hebrew Bible*, and Gesenius' *Hebrew Lexicon*. He cautions the student in respect to the latter, which has some rationalistic tendencies; but bearing this fact in mind, we may use Gesenius with greater profit than any other. For the New Testament, the edition of the New Testament in Greek, by F. H. Scrivener, and Robinson's *Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Dr. Schaff considers Westcott and Hort's edition of the New Testament in Greek "the last and the best critical edition of the Greek Testament."

should examine the text of the Anglo-American Revision. He should read everything on the subject of his text which his library contains, and avail himself of every help at his command. "Then, having finished his study, let him, so to say, lay the whole matter to steep in his heart and brain for a time, and when he has found some principle of order which he can employ, or some thread round which his thoughts will crystallize, let him sit down and carefully prepare his discourse,—as carefully as he would any other," according to the plan already laid down on pages two hundred and eighty-nine to two hundred and ninety-one for a single expository sermon.

One thing, however, he must guard against: not to give, in his discourse, the details of his critical study, but only the result at which he has arrived. The technical process is for the study,—not for the pulpit. People do not care what this or that commentator or scholar has thought, only so that they have, in the simplest, clearest form, the most plausible conclusions of our investigations. As a rule, the criticisms of scholarship should be avoided in the pulpit.

The conclusion to the entire series should not be an after-thought of that which was omitted in the different sermons, but rather the summarizing of what has been brought out upon the entire section or book, and the enforcing upon the hearers of its great and fundamental lessons.

2. But while the main work in this mode of preaching is exposition, it should not be exclusively such. There must be some time given to *practical suggestions*, *exhortation*, and *application* of the lessons. These should be briefly indicated, and interspersed throughout the progress of the sermon, as the passages are expounded, and adapted to the wants of the congregation. Sometimes they may be

reserved for the conclusion; but, by all means, they should not be forgotten or passed over indifferently. No preacher should miss the opportunity of bringing the irregularities and derelictions of his hearers face to face with the "Thus saith the Lord;" or of contrasting the teachings of the Bible with the current practices of men. He should cultivate the habit of looking at every passage with the question uppermost in his mind, What lesson "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," can I enforce from this present passage? This requires skill, which can only be acquired by long and studious practice.

Four things should be observed in presenting such lessons:[1]

(1.) "They should be *natural.* It will not do to tie any inference to the end of an exposition. It must not be bound to what goes before, but it must spring out of it. It should be of such a nature that as soon as it is announced, the hearer should feel that it is fair and warrantable, and has the whole force of the exposition behind it.

(2.) "They should not be *common-place.* * * * * We should not care to say what recurs of itself to everybody, but we should seek to go below the surface and find that which eludes current observation.

(3.) "They should have some *principle of unity.*[2] I have not attempted to bring every possible inference out of my subject, but have contented myself with those which are homogeneous, and those I have tried to arrange in climactic order, leading up to the highest for the last.

(4.) "Do not repeat over and over again the same practical inferences. The tendency always is to go into ruts. * * * * If he has similar things to treat, let him look

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1 We quote again from Dr. Taylor's papers on expository preaching.

2 Here Dr. Taylor gives his own experience.

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suggested may be one which ought to be spoken of; and perhaps the most profitable way to deal with it may be to devote to it a few earnest, ringing sentences, and pass on. I never can forget the impression produced on my mind by my late revered tutor, the Rev. John Brown, D.D., of Edinburgh, when, during the course of his exposition of Romans, he read the verses, Romans i. 26, 27, and said, 'We shall let these mysteries of iniquity stand as they are here exposed in all their hideousness by the faithful apostle.' Then, after a solemn pause, he passed on to the succeeding verses. * * * * If I may be allowed, on this matter, to speak from my own experience, I would say that no subject in the whole course of my expositions so distressed me as the fall of David. I hesitated long before I determined to preach on that chapter of his history, but finding, as I did, that some of the most solemn lessons of his life would be quite lost sight of if I passed it by, I ultimately resolved to treat it just as I had done other incidents in his career. The discourse cost me ten times more labor than any other in the series. It was re-written more than once. It does not contain a word which a modest man may not speak and a modest woman may not hear, and I know, from testimonies received regarding it, that it was one of the most useful in the whole series to which it belonged. But my brethren will fully understand me when I say that such subjects must be handled wisely and lovingly, or not at all." [1]

§ V. PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE ESPECIALLY ADAPTED TO THIS MODE OF PREACHING.

In selecting a theme, of course the peculiar tact of the preacher for unfolding certain kinds of inspiration, and the circumstances and wants of his congregation, must, to a

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1 Wm. M. Taylor in *Homiletic Monthly*.

great extent, decide what part of the Bible to select. There are, however, certain portions that are peculiarly adapted to this mode of treatment, on account of their structure and contents. Such are the historical, doctrinal, and devotional portions of scripture.

It is well for the inexperienced to begin with the biographical and narrative, as preparatory to the doctrinal and experimental. The junior preacher, therefore, will not begin with Romans; nor should his first efforts consist of a continued series of expositions, but of single sermons on some easy topics. The book of Genesis, because of its historical and biographical character, is good for a beginning. In the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles stand foremost, but other portions, such as the fifteenth chapter of Luke, or the fourth chapter of John, are equally appropriate.

After serving an apprenticeship in this mode upon simpler sections, he may then venture upon the more argumentative and elaborate, such as the parables and miracles, the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, farewell address of our Lord, and the ten commandments. Many portions of Paul's epistles are rich in thought for a skillful expositor; as examples we may mention the eighth or twelfth chapters of Romans, the thirteenth or fifteenth of I. Corinthians, the second of Ephesians, the eleventh of Hebrews. The second and third chapters of Revelation are also good subjects for expository discussions.

It is well not to select subjects with which the people are already very familiar, lest they lose their interest in this style of preaching, and say, "I knew all these things long ago." It is better to take up the more neglected portions of scripture, according as the people need them for edification.

§ VI. SOME VALUABLE AIDS TO EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

The first is a knowledge of the original text, attained by the aid of the best lexicons and grammars. This is the best commentary. No one can be a first-class expositor who is unable to examine for himself the Sacred Word in the language in which it was originally recorded; yet valuable aid can be obtained by a careful study of some of the best books on scripture exposition. If he wishes to investigate the Pentateuch, he will be greatly assisted by Keil and Delitzsch on the Pentateuch. On the historical part, "Speaker's Commentary," and Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church" are valuable. Lange's and Henry's commentaries may be consulted,—the former for its exegetical, and the latter for its homiletical character. On the topography of Palestine, Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," and Robinson's "Biblical Researches" are the best.

On the New Testament, the works of Meyer and Alford will be found serviceable. Bengel's "Gnomon on the New Testament," which should be read, if possible, in the original, is a seed-bed of thoughts. Every clause is full of meaning. He condenses a page into a sentence, and sometimes gives a sermon in a phrase. On the Acts of the Apostles we recommend Alexander and Dr. Vaughan; on the epistles of Paul, Lightfoot, Ellicott, and Vaughan, in connection with Conybeare and Howson, and Farrar, on the Life of Paul.

The biblical expounder should consult Farrar, Presseuse, and Neander on the Life of Christ; Stier on "Discourses of Christ;" J. P. Thompson on "Theology of Christ;" Tholuck's "Sermon on the Mount;" Trench on "Miracles," "Parables," and "Studies in the Gospels;" and "Paul's Speech on Mars' Hill," by Dr. Lindsay Alexander.[1]

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1 For further information on this subject, see Spurgeon's book entitled *Commenting and Commentaries*, which enters fully into the merits of those books concerning which

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTRODUCTION.

Introductory Remarks on the Composition of the Sermon — Definition of Introduction — Design of an Introduction — The Materials or Sources of an Introduction — Improper Material for an Introduction — Character or Quality of the Introduction—Suggestions on the Composition of the Introduction.

§ I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE SERMON.

Compose, from *componere*, to put together, has reference to the actual construction of the whole sermon, including both invention and disposition. It is concerned with every part of its incipiency, growth, and conception, and forms the web and woof of the sermon. Vinet calls the material "the chemistry of oratorical discourse," since it has to do "with the elements or ingredients which interpenetrate one another." But disposition he calls "the physics or mechanism of discourse, as it has for its object the stages which succeed or the parts which are in contact with one another."

These two, substance and arrangement, are co-partners in the development of a discourse, and often grow together, as in the plant. In this, substance is not first generated as an independent, isolated act, and afterward its atoms disposed into their respective places; but the particles of matter arrange themselves spontaneously, and simultaneously with their growth. The mind, in its act of literary production, in its most active state, works in a similar

method. It is analytico-inventive. When it grasps an idea, it usually also assigns it a place. This, however, is not always so. Invention and disposition are different things. While their acts may be synchronous, their natures are diverse, and we would make a mistake to suppose that all that can be done for disposition has been secured when invention is completed.

Shedd very wisely urges the adoption of a *plan* before beginning the composition of a sermon; but a plan is distinct from composition as consisting of invention and arrangement. The general plan of a plant exists in the germ of its seed, and the general plan of a discourse must first be in its original inception or embryonic state before development or composition can begin. Without some definite points of beginning or ending, and some outline of procedure, the discourse will likely become rambling, hortatory, and confusing. "The first and most essential principle is that a sermon must be a vertebrate composition. It must have a vertebrate column—a backbone. * * * * Sometimes we hear of a speaker having lost the thread of his discourse,"[1] because it never had one in its plan of composition.

The simplest and most generic divisions of a sermon are the Introduction, the Discussion, and the Conclusion. This analysis has reference to the essential constituent parts of every discourse; and in a homiletical treatise these parts should be treated separately and consecutively, for these three members constitute the bulk and subject matter of a sermon. Other topics, such as text, explanation, proposition, divisions, and development, enter into the composition of the main parts in different ways and proportions, and should be treated in their proper places. Aristotle's division of discourse into introduction, proposition, proof,

1 Zincke's *Extemporaneous Preaching*, p. 78.

and conclusion, is retained in its essential elements, for it can not be improved in condensed comprehensiveness, except, perhaps, that proposition and proof might, in sacred rhetoric, be merged into the one head, discussion. Not everything belonging to the introduction, discussion, and conclusion is discussed under these heads, for many things relate equally to each part, and to the sermon as a whole, and therefore require special treatment under distinct titles. They may or may not be used in every discourse, but "in any formal address we can not dispense with such grand divisions as the introduction, the argument, and the conclusion; for every true discourse must have at least a beginning, a middle, and an end; and the beginning and end are naturally of less dimensions than the middle. In like manner every human frame has a head, body, and extremities; every rock has a foot, middle, and summit; every tree has a root, trunk, and crown."[1]

§ II. DEFINITION OF INTRODUCTION.

Schott defines the introduction as "all that part of a sermon which is intended to prepare the hearers for the body of the sermon, by bringing them into the same circle of ideas and sympathy of feeling with the speaker." More accurately, as to its true purpose, Hoppin calls it "something which conducts to the real subject, but which is not itself the real subject. It is not, strictly speaking, the beginning of the discourse, but it leads to the beginning."[2] It is, then, the finger-board of the sermon, pointing the auditors to the subject-matter, and if skillfully executed will lead them with the speaker through the whole line of discussion. Hence, a good introduction can not be framed unless the whole thread of thought in a sermon be like the

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1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 287.

2 *Homiletics*, p. 338.

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Broadus says, "The German preachers very often give an introduction before announcing the text. This fashion appears to have originated in the fact that most of them are required to take their text from the *pericope*, or lesson appointed for the day, so that it may be assumed as to some extent known already, before it is announced." [1, 2] The text is always a part of the introduction, and may sometimes be introduced in the middle or end of it, even where the German custom does not prevail.[3]

This part of discourse is called by various names to indicate the same general idea. A *prologue* is a discourse preceding a dramatic play. *Exordium* is the name often given by Latin rhetoricians to denote the beginning of a speech. "The *proem* is the beginning of an oration, and, as it were, the preparing of the way before one enters into it."[4] In music this part is called *prelude;* in literature, *preface;* but in a sermon it is called *introduction*, from its analogy to that formal introduction to a stranger which initiates us into his acquaintance.

Every sermon before delivery is an unknown creature (?) to the congregation, and needs some words of introduction before the hearers' sympathy and interest can be enlisted in favor of the subject. To plunge into a discourse without some premonition would be like a shower without a previous cloud, a summer without a spring, or noonday splendor bursting out of midnight. The mind is so constituted that it can not instantaneously or abruptly enter into the heart of a subject, but must be led to it gradually, by regular initiatory steps. There is no conclusion without premises. The discovery of galvanism was preceded by

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1 *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 250.

2 For example, see Pastor Harms' sermon on "The Goal and the Complaint." Text, Phil. iii. 12-14.

3 See sermons of Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow.

4 Hobbes' brief of Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric.*

experiments on a frog. The law preceded the gospel. The coming of the Prince of Peace was preceded by the prevalence of a general peace all over the world. If the Lord adopts such initiatory plans to instruct men, if the mind receives higher truths only as it is approached by steps from the lower to the higher, we need no further argument to show the Propriety of an introduction to the sermon. This prepares us to consider the

§ III. DESIGN OF AN INTRODUCTION.

The design of "the introduction, rhetorically, or as it regards the treatment of the subject, is to mediate between the text and the theme. It is the way of arriving at the one from the other. * * * * The introduction is the genesis of the theme—the process of the text's crystallization into the theme."[1] It is not, as in the secular oration, so much to conciliate personal favor, or remove prejudice in the minds of the hearers, as to summon their attention, enlist their interest, and especially to *lead their minds into the subject.* Etymologically, the word implies a *leading inward;* and it is like a vestibule that admits us into the audience-chamber. It is a part of the sermon, but a subsidiary part, and its only use is to serve as an inlet to the theme, as the conclusion is an outlet from the theme after a free bath in the discussion. "It does not lay down any truth; it does not establish any doctrine; it simply prepares the way for the fundamental parts, and necessary matter, of the discourse."[2] Before the speaker arises to address his hearers their minds are unoccupied and unmoved, or often wandering to and fro. The introduction is a signal-bell to arrest their attention, collect their roving thoughts, and lead them *en masse* toward the object of the sermon. At

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1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, pp. 340, 341.
2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 180.

its close the mind should be eager to hear the discussion which is to follow. It opens a channel for their thoughts to run in, which widens and deepens as it progresses, until unconsciously it opens into the great stream of the sermon.

§ IV. THE MATERIALS OR SOURCES OF INTRODUCTION.

These are so abundant and diversified that we can mention only the most important. Materials may be drawn,—

1. *From the text and its surroundings.*

Often the words or ideas of a text need explanation. In the textual sermon, especially when discussed in the expository mode, it is not so necessary, since the whole discourse is devoted to this work; but in the topical, explanation is highly important, except when, for reasons already mentioned, the circumstances of the occasion require no introduction.

Sometimes the literal meaning of a text may seem paradoxical, or contradictory to some other text, or may involve a doctrinal difficulty. This may often be explained by referring to the object of the writer, or the circumstances under which it was written. Thus, when Paul said, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28), his object was to prove the great cardinal doctrine of *salvation by faith.* But when James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James ii. 24), he only corrected an error of the Jewish notion, that faith is a mere verbal profession, and taught that works were evidences of genuine faith. "The two apostles, while looking at justification from distinct stand-points, perfectly harmonize and mutually complement the definition of one another."[1] So also, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sab-

[1] Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's *Commentary.*

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"he may state the connections of the subject with other more practical spiritual truths. He may remove the prejudice that the doctrine has no immediate practical bearing or utility, even as depravity, for instance, or the doctrine of sin, lies, in one sense, at the base of the whole Christian system of the atonement, regeneration, holiness, and the Christian life."[1]

3. *From the relation of the subject*

(1.) To the genus of which the subject is the species, and *vice versa.* Thus, with the text, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth" (Acts ix. 11), one might commence by stating a general truth taught in another passage, "Who maketh the wrath of men to praise him," and show that the text is only an instance of a more comprehensive truth; or, where no such relation exists (namely, of text as species to a genus), one may take some specific truth leading up to the subject. Thus, should the latter verse be the text, it might be introduced with the former.

(2.) To some other subject to which it may be compared or differentiated. We have an example of analogy from a sermon by Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, on the text (Gal. vi. 7), "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He commenced by stating the "analogy between the world of nature and the world of spirit," as bearing the same impress, and that "the worlds visible and invisible are two books written by the same finger, and governed by the same idea." An example of introduction by difference is given by Blaikie, on the text, "I am in a strait betwixt two," etc., as follows: "The two things that Saint Paul was in a strait between, are not those which most men are in a strait between. Most men who

1 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 343.

are in any strait in connection with religion, are in a strait between Christ and the world, between earth and heaven, between the broad road that goes down to destruction and the narrow path that leadeth to life, * * * * but the things that Paul was in a strait between are quite different from these. His hesitation lay between the service of Christ here and the full enjoyment of him hereafter; between this life with all its drawbacks, but its noble opportunity of Christian usefulness, and the life to come, so perfect in its blessedness, so glorious in its rewards."[1]

The advantage of distinguishing the theme from something else with which it might easily be confounded is, that the interest of the hearers is thereby gained, and at the outset their minds are put on the track which will lead them directly into the subject.

(3.) To some anecdote or illustration relating to our subject. This is always a sure way of gaining the hearer's attention, but renders it more difficult for the preacher to maintain the same degree of interest throughout the rest of the discourse. Hence, the narrative should not be unduly sensational or far-fetched, but decidedly pertinent to the main body (or discussion), and so give the key-note of what is to follow. Sometimes one may begin with a well-known maxim, some striking quotation, or even an imaginary supposition.

4. *From the various present circumstances.*

(1.) Of time. The season of the year, or the hour of the day, in which the sermon is to be delivered may afford suitable material for the introduction of certain texts; such as, "We all do fade as a leaf" (Isa. lxiv. 6), "For there shall be no night there" (Rev. xxi. 25). So, also, the character of the times, and of current events, is often calculated to gain and fix the attention at once.

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1 *For the Work of the Ministry* p. 178.

(2.) Of place. The scenes that surround the speaker, whether at home or abroad, in the open air or in a house, among friends or enemies, acquaintances or strangers, will furnish something appropriate with which to begin. Thus, Paul, standing on Mars' hill and surveying the scene around him,—heathen temples and statues and shrines and deities and philosophies,—until his spirit was stirred within him as he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, took the inscription on an altar for a text, and thus commenced his discourse: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you."[1] (Acts xvii. 22, 23.) Never was there a more fitting introduction, calculated at once to conciliate his hearers, to gain their interest,[2] and to lead them to the subject of his sermon.[3]

(3.) Of the condition of the congregation addressed. For example, their need of preparation for a revival might constitute the substance of a profitable preface to such texts as, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," etc.; "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion." So, also, we may take advantage of their lack of liberality, unity, zeal, faith, etc., in introducing other subjects suited to their condition.

(4.) Of the occasion; such as funerals, church-dedications, conventions, baccalaureate days, the administration of divine ordinances, etc. Perhaps this is the most successful way of preparing hearers for the discourse—to connect the circumstances of the occasion with the subject.

5. *From miscellaneous sources.*

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1 Corrected rendering. The translation which charges them to be superstitious is unfortunate; the correct rendering is rather a compliment.

2 By calling attention to one of their altars.

3 By ingeniously leading their minds from the unknown deity to the true one, as seen in the last clause.

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first effort must be to make them *forget* the *preacher*, and his second to make them *think* of his *subject*.

§ V. IMPROPER MATERIAL FOR AN INTRODUCTION.

At the commencement of a sermon the preacher is often tempted to say many things which a conscientious fidelity to the supreme object of the sermon will forbid. Nothing is easier than to compose an introduction when he assumes the privilege of saying anything that may be prompted by his feelings. But the law of efficiency imposes on him certain self-denials and restrictions. Hence, to begin by complimenting the hearers,[1] or indulging in apologies, is very much out of place. All this has nothing to do with the subject, and ill becomes one whose only object should be to convince and persuade men on the great themes of the gospel. Many begin, especially on important occasions, by deploring their inability to meet the demands of the occasion, or their lack of preparation. But to all this it may be replied that it is our business to be prepared; and if not prepared, to mention it publicly will only create suspicion as to our sincerity, and impress the people with the idea that we seek the praise and sympathy of men rather than their spiritual welfare, and may at the outset militate against the good effect of the whole sermon. Besides, under a sense of personal weakness at the beginning, we may quite surpass ourselves before the close, and disappoint the audience; while at other times, when fully prepared, we make little impression. It would be better at all times not to mention our feelings, but rather seek our hearers' prayers, and then leave results with God.[2]

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1 This was the fault of some of the old French court-preachers. See Gould's *Post-Medieval Preachers*, pp. 45-47.

2 As to the question, Should the outline be used in introduction? see Theremin's *Sys. Rhet.*, p. 113.

§ VI. CHARACTER OR QUALITY OF THE INTRODUCTION.

It is not enough that the matter suit the design of the introduction; for the materials of a porch may be suitable, but not well constructed in reference to the design or perfection of the whole building. Hence we need to give further attention to the qualities of a good introduction. Many writers, such as Blair and Cicero, urge that it should be: (1.) Easy and natural. (2.) Correct, without the appearance of artificiality. (3.) Modest but dignified. (4.) Calm in manner. (5.) Not anticipating any material part of the subject. Claude thinks it should be brief, clear, cool and grave, engaging and agreeable, naturally connected with all the matter of the text, and simple but common. Admitting that all this is desirable in an introduction, we proceed to mention some of the important qualities:

1. *Unity.* There should be only one general idea in the introduction, leading to the subject. We must not amuse our hearers with various objects of interest in the outer court; stopping to look at a curiosity here or a mystery there, pointing out something pretty near by or something fragrant yonder; showing them the many doors that open into the inner temple, as if the most important scenery were outside. Where so much is to be seen within, our hearers are anxious to enter, at once, through the door that will afford them the most advantageous view. No time should be lost in unduly lingering around externals. A preacher who dwells for some time on an introductory idea and then branches off to another and another, is making no progress, and at the end of the introduction will be no nearer his subject than he was at the beginning; while his auditors all the while will be perplexed to know what he is aiming at. A gun that scatters shot is not

likely to hit the mark. He will thus be chasing his hearers hither and thither in pursuit of his subject, and instead of preparing their minds by collecting their thoughts to one subject, he confuses them by turning them adrift to the scattering winds of a multitude of diverse thoughts. This does not imply that there should be only one single idea in the introduction, without any subordinates or associates, but that all ideas should converge, and not diverge or run parallel, as is often the case. Let every additional thought be tributary, and flow into the same channel toward the same great goal. Unity is the life of any discourse, and is especially important in an introduction.

2. *Pertinency.* The preparatory idea must be not only single, but also pertinent to the subject. Pertinency does not apply "to an idea in the neighborhood of that of the discourse, but to an idea in immediate contact with it, between which and that of the discourse there is no place for another idea, so that the first step we take out of that idea, transports us into our subject. * * * * We may be assured that an exordium is not a good one, if it does not appear necessary, if it does not appear incorporated with the discourse, if it gives the idea of a foreign discourse stitched more or less ingeniously to the principal discourse, if it leaves the hearer at liberty to think some other exordium preferable, or as good. The exordium is good only in so far as it has been suggested by the subject, as it is born of the subject, as it is united to it as intimately as the flower is united to the stem."[1]

This rule of pertinence is violated when in our introduction we include or anticipate any part of the discussion, or speak of an idea which bears some kind of relation to the theme, but which, for some reason, we rejected from the discussion, or consider one that relates to the

1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 300.

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that "he was so long laying the cloth that his hearers despaired of the dinner." Palmer thinks that an introduction should never, at longest, occupy more than an eighth of a sermon; and Hoppin says that no introduction is better than one which is long and wearisome. No special rule can be given as to the length of an introduction. Some subjects from their nature require longer exordiums than others; but in every case we should make them as short as is consistent with clearness and preparation for the discussion. Many preachers consume unnecessary time in amplifying their prefatory remarks, and thereby weary their hearers' patience by unduly detaining them on the threshold of the house. Theremin says, "Time spent in merely paving the way for the idea [of the discourse] might better be employed in the development of the idea itself." Especially would we condemn far-fetched narratives that begin in Genesis and end with the text.[1] "Adam is nowhere else so important a character, not even in the Turretinian theology, as he is in the introductions of sermons. * * * * Long-winded introductions generally possess, in some form, this fault of antipodean beginning."[2] The sermons of Augustine and F. W. Robertson deserve to be studied for the brevity and artistic excellence of their introductions. Especially have we models worthy of study in the introductions of Homer's "Iliad," Virgil's "Æneid," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Dante's "Divine Comedy," and Spenser's "Faerie Queen." Though short, they no doubt were not composed hastily, and may have been the last finished.

4. *Simplicity and Modesty.* Auditors, at the beginning, are generally calm, so that it is exceedingly imprudent to

1 A preacher, on the text, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," introduced his subject by going back to the institution of marriage in paradise. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone." It occasioned a smile and many witty remarks.

2 Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, p. 244.

dash upon them with abstruse and earnest thought or impassioned and imaginative language. Grand imagery or oratorical display at the outset is distracting, and incapacitates the hearers for a due relish of the solid food which is to be laid before them in the body of the sermon. It also disappoints them by promising too much, — by impressing them that the sermon will be a masterpiece of eloquence and learning; whereas, unable to meet their expectation, the preacher gradually sinks as he advances. "It is difficult, after a flowing introduction, to support and increase the fire to that degree which such an introduction promises; and a burning commencement ill accords with an icy progress. The preacher in such attempts, it has been said, resembles a sky-rocket; he rises in a flame and falls a mere stick."[1]

There should be becoming simplicity and modesty in the thought, style, manner, and preacher, such as becomes a mortal man standing in the presence of his Master, whose message he is to deliver. Luther once said, "I am now an old man and have been a long time employed in the business of preaching, but I never ascend the pulpit without trembling." This timidity arises, not from a "man-fearing spirit," but from a consciousness of the divine presence and of grave responsibility. We may be timid for ourselves, but bold for the truth. Drs. J. H. Newman's and Robert South's sermons furnish models of this simple, unaffected manner of introducing a subject.

5. *Variety.* We should avoid sameness in the manner and matter of the introduction. He who makes the introduction answer its chief design, will soon learn, from the foregoing remarks in this chapter, that every sermon requires a special exordium—one which can not be exchanged for another.

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1 Cannon's *Pastoral Theology.*

Though the introduction is only a subsidiary part of the sermon, yet great care should be taken in its composition, for two reasons: *First.* Because a good beginning is much in our favor. *Dimidium facti, qui coepit, habet* (well begun is half done). "The success of a discourse often depends on the beginning; from first impressions, whether good or bad, we do not easily recover."[1] "Napoleon is reported to have said that 'the first five minutes of a battle are the decisive ones;' and this remark might sometimes also be applied to a sermon; for although the preacher, like a military general, by good fortune and skill may be able to recover lost ground, he may also, like a general, not be able to restore the lost chances of a blundering and unfortunate initiative movement, and may be forced to a humiliating defeat."[2] "We all know how much depends in the ordinary affairs of life upon first impressions."[3] *Second.* Because faults are most conspicuous in an introduction. In the glow and vehemence of the discussion our hearers are more apt to disregard inaccuracies than they are in the calm, deliberate introduction. It can not, therefore, be too faultless. Dr. J. B. Smith wrote out in full no part of his sermon, except the introduction.

§ VII. SUGGESTIONS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE INTRODUCTION.

Because this is the first part delivered in a discourse, it does not follow that this should also be the first part composed. There may be exceptional cases, but as a general rule the proper time for the preparation of the introduction is after the subject has been thoroughly studied. To invert this order would be like building a portico before determining upon the kind of a house to which it is to be attached. Many writers on this subject teach that we

1 Gaichies, quoted by Vinet. See also Cicero, *De Oratore*, Lib. ii., Cap. 78.
2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p 334.
3 Potter's *Sacred Eloquence*, quoted by Broadus, p. 249.

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to secure this adaptation after the main body of discussion is known, than before. But where the two can not have this relation, let the introduction suffer rather than the discussion. "Begin always with your finished thinking on a subject, not with your first crude attempts to grasp it."

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISCUSSION.

Origination of Material — Arrangement of Material—Qualities of the Discussion — Explanation — Conviction — Refutation—Fallacies—Suggestions on the Composition of the Discussion.

The Discussion is the main body of a sermon, and therefore demands special attention. It embraces all that portion of the discourse outside of the introduction, proposition, and conclusion; and failure or success in the work of sermonizing depends chiefly, if not exclusively, upon its quality.

The discussion is the *development* of the body of discourse,—the unfolding of the text, theme, proposition, and divisions,—and consists in the work of originating, inventing, manipulating, and arranging the material for the sermon. It is the actual treatment, actual building, or actual composing of the sermon; it determines the character of the sermon, and bears an analogy to the body of a man, or the trunk of a tree.

§ I. ORIGINATION OF MATERIAL.

This is the test of the preacher, requiring the utmost stretch of his intellect. Let him not shrink from this task, for it will strengthen his mental powers, and discipline his tact in the homiletical art. Skill in sermonizing comes not so much from a knowledge of the art as from its vigorous practice. We acquire skill by experience, by failures, by

despairs. The discovery of our failures leads us to find out the true method of success; the exertion of effort begets power, and uplifts us in the very attempt to grasp the best things.

1. Having selected the text and theme, the next thing is to *to apply one's self to the invention of thought, giving no attention to anything else for the time.* Invention is a species of generation, an incubation of the subject which, by the warmth of vigorous thinking, at last brings forth a brood of ideas. In the close, vigorous application of thinking out the subject selected, all minor considerations, such as arrangement, method, logic, language, etc., must be entirely disregarded. The mind must be untrammeled by such hinderances, in order that it may be free and unembarrassed in employing all its force and concentrating all its energies upon the work of evolving thought.

Some wait for a favorable moment when sudden inspiration will seize them, or thought spontaneously arise. True, the thoughts that come to us unsought are often the most precious; but such times and thoughts may come or they may not come; at least, it is not wise, usually, to wait for such happy but uncertain moments. The mind must be *trained* to think — must wake up when necessity demands. Like the lazy ox in the stall, it must often be driven to work with the lash. Having settled down on a subject, the preacher must often think with his eyes closed, must shut out books and scenes, retire into the secret closet of his own ideality, and commune with himself. Let him then fix the mind on the thing in hand, check reverie and rambling thought, fish for thought in the sea of ideas, begin with the first thought that comes to him, however meager it may be, and use it as a bait to suggestion. Let him utilize the little stock he has as capital in trade, and it will soon increase in his hands. He

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digger; sink the shaft fearlessly; the gold is emboweled in the deep places; go down, persevere, and bring it up. There is water even in the rock; smite it with a heaven-directed hand, and it will gush most freely. There is poetry in all the old historic page; breathe on it with prayer, and the song will be heard. Whatever your text be, it is capable of turning out plenty of material to sustain a separate discourse; honor it so, and you will never lack scope and variety."[1] This is excellent advice; and would that every preacher would see and practice it.

There are various methods of stimulating thought. Some shut themselves up in a dark room; others can invent best by walking the floor. Schleiermacher made his sermons, leaning out of the window. Robert Hall composed his elegant discourses while lying at full length upon chairs placed side by side. Others can think most freely by writing. They write until they feel a glow; the faster the better. However, a better way have they who before taking a pen get themselves saturated with their subject. They write from a full head. "You might as well attempt to scratch your thoughts upon paper without ink, or pour water from an empty pitcher, as to write from vacuity;" but having a few seed-thoughts to start from, many can quicken them into rapid fruitfulness by the process of rapid writing. The following was Dr. Blackburn's plan: "In his studies and preparation for the pulpit, his plan was to fold a sheet of paper and lay it on his writing-desk, and then commence walking backward and forward across the room, occasionally stopping to note down a head or leading subdivision of his thoughts, leaving considerable space under each note. Having thus arranged the plan of his discourse, which he called 'blazing his path,'—borrowing a figure from backwoods life,—he then proceeded to take

1 *Ad Clerum*, p. 170.

up each head and subdivision separately, and amplify it in his mind, until he had thought his whole discourse through and through, stopping occasionally, as before, to jot down a word or thought, sometimes a sentence or an illustration, under each division, until he had finished."[1]

Out of the many ways used by preachers, each one must know what plan is best for him to adopt; for it is not to be expected that we should all do our work in the same way. It is, however, a well admitted fact that no exercise is more useful in quickening thought than earnest, fervent prayer. Let the preacher who fails to arouse his mind, retire to his closet of devotion, and pour out his soul in holy communion with God, until his heart is touched with a live coal of religious fervor. This, more than anything else, will stir the feelings, kindle the imagination, and shake the mind out of its supineness and lethargy. "The best sermons of a preacher are generally composed under the impulse of a lively state of religious feeling."[2] Sermons that savor of the praying-breath, or give evidence of having been born under a shower of tears that fell over the ills of distressed humanity, or have sprung up out of personal experience while struggling with some temptation or triumphing over some bosom sin,—such sermons, in which the Holy Spirit is breathing, will always be brimful of interest, and be sure to benefit the hearer.

2. Having exhausted his own resources upon the subject by this sort of mental and spiritual meditation, the preacher *may then resort to suggestive reading.* There are some books that are stimulating and inspiring. Their thoughts glow with animation, and kindle in our minds a new activity. By such communings with superior minds our thoughts are aroused anew; and "thus uplifted, the

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1 *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, March, 1853.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics*, p. 131.

mind obtains inspiration; and thus inspired, it may go back to the thing in hand, tremulous with inventive ardor." But we should also read whatever we can find upon the subject of our discussion,— not so much for the sake of accumulating more and better material for the sermon, as for *suggesting* to us new views of thought or methods of treatment. What we want is the employment of every expedient that will help to open up the subject before our gaze, even if sometimes we must look through the telescope of other men's ideas to see what lies beyond, or to enlarge our field of mental vision.

Kidder's six brief rules in reference to invention are so valuable that we here quote them in full:

"1. Address your mind to the invention of thoughts, not words. Words may be employed, but only as auxiliaries.

"2. Note down or otherwise make sure of whatever relevant thoughts your mind can call to its aid, irrespective of order, or mainly so.

"3. At first be not too scrupulous on the subject of relevancy. Entertain whatever seemingly good thoughts come at your call. Try them, push them out to conclusions. Perhaps if not available themselves they will lead to others that are.

"4. Pursue invention in every variety of circumstance, in the study and out of it. Make it the subject of special and protracted occupation, and also of occasional attention, when walking or riding, when taking exercise or rest. One's very dreams at night may sometimes be made serviceable for this object.

"5. Make an early selection of subjects in order to secure the advantages of the repeated and incidental action of the inventive powers.

"6. Use former studies and preparations as helps to invention rather than as substitutes for it.

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lose much of their force. Ideas have relations to each other, either as antecedent and consequent, or as primary and secondary; and a proper arrangement of these ideas will give them additional force, each one being a cog-wheel between two wheels, which receives from the preceding, and imparts to the succeeding, an increasing momentum. If every wheel in the structure of the machinery is in place, and the whole arranged in view of some particular end, the work of the discussion will be well accomplished.

This process of arranging is called by rhetoricians *Disposition*, and completes the work of invention. The difference between the two is thus pointed out by Dr. Kidder: "Invention accumulates, disposition distributes. Invention gathers together the wood, the stone, the iron, and every species of material essential to a building. Disposition from shapeless heaps constructs a beautiful edifice. The business of invention is to roam in the forest, to delve in the quarry, to sink the mine and purge its ores, to visit the manufactory and select its useful or ornamental products. Disposition takes the material selected and places each stone, each piece of wood, and each ornament or fastening where it is required."[1]

§ III. QUALITIES OF THE DISCUSSION.

1. *Unity.*—Unity is that quality of discussion which consists in the converging of all its parts steadily to one object—in their gravitation toward a common center. The speaker must have one general aim, and the hearer get one general impression. The plurality of material must be so arranged and treated that unity will run through the whole, and through all its parts, combining all its elements in the conclusion. Hence it is necessary to frame every discourse into a doctrinal proposition, to be held up as the pole-star

1 *Homiletics*, pp. 153, 154.

in the voyage of discussion. "The unity, however, may be that of subject or of person or of place, provided in the latter cases there be also some internal connection, so that all may blend in the general effect of the discourse. Thus topics apparently so diverse as suicide, ingratitude, avarice, and remorse, might all be treated in a sermon upon Judas, because they not only pertain to the one person, but were in his case intimately connected, as will be apparent from stating them in a different order, avarice, ingratitude, remorse, suicide."[1]

Unity may be sacrificed by needless digression. Rowland Hill often went so far as to introduce various subjects, entirely different from each other, into one sermon. His familiar saying is, "The gospel is an excellent milch-cow, which always gives plenty of milk, and of the best quality. I first pull at justification; then I give a plug at adoption, and afterward a tit at sanctification, and so on till I have filled my pail with gospel milk." Such preaching is as aimless as the language is quaint.

Often excessive illustrations, comparisons or contrasts, or elaborate treatment of interesting but minor points, tend to give the discourse a centrifugal force. Whatever topics are introduced, they should have a common affinity for each other, and pertinence to the theme, so as to form an aggregate whole in the discussion.

2. *Symmetry.*—This has respect to the development of the parts, and the proportion which each part or division should bear in relation to the main proposition and to every other part of the discourse. A sermon is like a body with an osseous frame-work of proper proportions. The frame-work must not have the body of a monster attached to a feeble back-bone, or thigh-bones like finger-bones, and finger-bones like thigh-bones, or a giant's head and an

1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 296.

infant's body. So a discourse with its main proposition feebly constructed and its subsidiary parts unduly magnified, would be a mental monstrosity. "It is a great beauty when a preacher knows in what part the real pith of his sermon lies, and where to lay out his strength."[1]

Proportion should be governed by weight, the largest space being given to the weightiest matter. Each thought must be fully developed and strengthened, and yet not beyond what its relative importance demands. This gives tone and balance to the sermon; otherwise it would be deformed in symmetry and impaired in rhetorical strength. The plan of the discourse should have, so to speak, a spinal column, with well-balanced limbs and ligatures, and then each part should be clothed with sufficient flesh to give it strength and beauty of figure.

3. *Progress.*—"This has reference to the right ordering of thoughts, so that one thought should prepare for and be succeeded by another which forms an advance; this secures an increasing momentum of impression. The sermon should not repeat itself, or retrace its steps, but go on with accelerated power to the end."[2]

§ IV. EXPLANATION.

The material being at hand and a plan laid, how shall we compose with the best effect? Here, in the first place, we need to be reminded that the three great objects of a discussion are: (1.) *Explanation.* (2.) *Conviction.* (3.) *Persuasion.* The first two appeal to the intellect; the last, to the sensibilities and will. As the last step, namely, persuasion, follows naturally from a faithful presentation of the first and second, and depends much upon a forcible delivery, we will reserve this last for the chapter on Elo-

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1 Hoppin's *Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, p. 176.

2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, pp. 424, 425.

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used as the text of discourse, but of all biblical references and proof-texts employed in the discussion. It looks at the text subjectively, and endeavors to discover its internal meaning, its literal and relative idea, as the absolute truth or germ from which the entire development must originate. This exegetical explanation is an important work in sermonizing, for it brings to light new and correct ideas not always apparent in the best translation. While various meanings are assigned to the same passages by different authorities, and some erroneous views arising from early impressions, prejudice, or habits of thought are often entertained by ourselves, it is absolutely necessary to be able to investigate our biblical material in the light of independent exegesis, and thus satisfy ourselves as to the correct meaning of a passage.

Such an exegesis can not be secured except by the understanding and aid of sacred philology, archæology, hermeneutics, and common sense. The context, parallels, and historical facts of the passages requiring exposition, and all helps from whatever source, ancient or modern, must be carefully considered, as assisting us to understand the written word in its true and primitive meaning.

II. DEFINITION, also, is necessary to clearness of thought. It is that process which separates in our thoughts an idea from all other ideas. "It marks the limits of an idea.*** When the idea, so to speak, is fortified, entrenched, so that on all sides it repels ideas which would mix themselves with it, the object is defined."[1] Definition may cost severe and unwearied mental effort in trying to penetrate and discriminate the object in the mind; but clearness, so valuable in a discussion, should always be secured even at the price of the hardest toil. "Definition is not only a means of perspicuity, an element of instruction, the basis of

1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 161.

argumentation; it is often the beginning of proof;"[1] and therefore it should precede all other methods of explanation in the order of composition. The object must first be defined before we can elucidate it.

Definition may be either etymological or philosophical. The former is concerned with the meaning of a word as affected by its origin, history, and present acceptation (common parlance); the latter, with the meaning, not of a word, but of an idea. It is often necessary, after defining a word or sentence etymologically, to also define philosophically the idea of the definition; for the first will clear away the mist from the language, while the second will remove the mist from the thought.

A few hints of importance we give from Vinet: 1. "Avoid too subtile distinctions and classifications." 2. Do "not seek to define everything;" for example, "ideas which are too simple," "ideas which instantly escape, and refuse definition, on account of the elevated or purely moral sphere to which they belong."

Definition, in fact, need never be employed unless it will aid in clearing up the thought we wish to present. On the one hand we must not dodge difficulties by withholding definition, and on the other, should not strain to discover subtle distinctions and ideas, lest we seem to aim at a display of our learning instead of a clear understanding of the subject we treat.

III. NARRATION is the statement of facts connected with an event, or events, in their proper order. The facts may be material, spiritual, or even imaginary, and the order of rehearsal chronological or philosophical. When the narrative relates a series of events that have transpired one after another in a certain period of time, without regard to causal sequence, it is chronological. Such was the dis-

1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 164.

course of Stephen, the martyr. (See Acts vii.) When the facts are related in the order of cause and effect, so as to present a bond of internal connection between events, the narrative is called philosophical — an example of which is seen in philosophical history.

As the same incident may be used for different objects of discourse, we should select from the narrative only such facts as most directly relate to that object. "It is generally better to choose some one event of the man's history, or some one trait of his character, and narrate only what bears upon that. In preaching upon the *meekness* of Moses, there would be occasion to state briefly those circumstances of his training and career which were particularly unfavorable to the development of meekness, and then to narrate, with vivid touches, the leading instances in which his meekness was exhibited, as well as those in which it temporarily failed."[1] This will give unity to the narrative and freshness to the discourse. It should be considered no violation of unity, incidentally to pause in the course of narration to apply the moral lesson which a certain fact therein may contain. This will give interest and vivacity to the narrative, and lend new beauty to a scripture statement that may have become antiquated and threadbare to our hearers on account of its life-long familiarity. Let all such application, however, be very brief and pointed.

IV. Description is that process of explanation which represents a subject under the relation of *space*.

Narration and description are akin in respect to the *object* which they treat, but differ in the *mode* of treating it. The first views it in relation to time; the second, in relation to space; the first, as becoming or changing; the second, as being or existing. Narration enumerates several

1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 149.

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interpolations be natural, and such as might possibly and reasonably have occurred in conjunction with the recorded facts.

V. ILLUSTRATION is the most approved method of explaining and clarifying the ideas of the discussion. It is to the mind what a picture is to the eye; it attracts attention, and helps to fasten the truth in the mind.

"The correspondence of the physical to the moral world is striking. Nature is an immense parable,"[1] and we may draw our illustrations from all sources. Whately was fond of drawing from zoölogy; James Hamilton, from botany.

The most successful preachers,—such as Chrysostom, Evans, Chalmers, Guthrie, Todd, Beecher, Spurgeon, Talmage, and Moody,—have shown the force of illustration in preaching. But the use of illustrations in expressing and enforcing religious truth has a higher sanction. Christ's public discourses abounded with numerous parables, figures, and illustrations drawn from familiar objects. His Sermon on the Mount is illustrated by the salt, the candle, the city on the hill, the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field, the house built on the sand; and scarcely ever did he speak without a parable or an illustration.

Illustration is to be recommended for the following reasons:

(1.) It secures attention. Everybody will listen to a familiar example, no matter how indifferent they may seem to every other part of the sermon. A sermon well illustrated is never dull.

(2.) It assists the memory. It is the salt that preserves in the mind of the hearers what otherwise would soon be forgotten. It is the nail that fastens the truth in the heart; and this is an important function of its use.

(3.) It affords variety in methods of presenting truth.

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1 Vinet's *Homiletics*, p. 90.

Though our theme be always the same oft-repeated story of salvation, yet it continues new and fresh by being presented and illustrated in various ways. The cakes on the table of shew-bread were all baked out of the same fine flour, but they were removed and replaced by newly-baked loaves every Sabbath. A preacher, by the aid of an endless variety of illustration, may bring before his congregation every Sunday a fresh morsel from the same unchanging Bread of Life. Here is an anomaly, but it is the life and power of preaching; namely, that it is different and yet always the same.

(4.) It is suited to all classes of hearers. "Some parts of a discourse may be adapted to one class and some to another, but the illustrations are for all. They are the pictures of spoken instruction,"[1] and are equally understood by child and philosopher. Everybody is to be benefited by the sermon; and it should be the aim of every preacher to be understood by the greatest possible number of his listeners. Illustration will help to secure this end.

(5.) It renders complex and difficult subjects easy. Beecher says, "An illustration is a window in an argument, and lets in light." While it gives light on the subject, it also affords rest to the hearer's mind, and affords opportunity to reflect and fix the argument in mind. A Moses may rapidly lead his people up a steep and rugged road; but some of his band, who may not be accustomed to such marching, will soon cease to follow, unless he gives them some time to rest their weary limbs while gazing at a landscape here and there by the way.

The habit of illustrating is entirely natural to some, while others must acquire it. This can be done by cultivating a habit of *observation*. The preacher must keep his eyes open, and be interested in things around him, and

1 Blaikie, p. 92.

make sermons out of everything. He should also acquire an extensive knowledge of literature, and if not gifted with a retentive memory, write down whatever may be thus acquired; and especially does he need a thorough acquaintance with the example which he uses to illustrate an idea.

To collect a number of examples and build a sermon around them is an abuse of the illustrative art. An illustration must be used to clear a thought, not to cloud it. It "ought always to be transparent, never opaque. It ought to make what is on the other side of it *more clear*, but never hide it." Sometimes by elaborating and unduly lengthening an illustration, we draw the hearer's mind away from the truth and cause him to remember nothing but the illustration. This is a mistake which must be strictly avoided, and which may effect the very opposite of that for which the illustration was intended.[1]

In the discussion of a subject we may use other means of explanation, such as hypothesis, exemplification, comparison, and contrast; but all these, together with those treated above, are but means, and of themselves do not constitute a sermon. The workman will at once see the difference between his tools and his work, and know when and how to use them. The processes, or tools, of explanation being at hand, one must learn to manipulate, which is a trade of its own kind, and requires separate practice and skill in order that proficiency in it may be attained.

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1 The story of the Spanish painter of the Lord's Supper will serve to illustrate the tendency of elaborate illustrations. It was his object to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Savior; but on the table, in the foreground of the picture, he painted some chaste cups, so exceedingly beautiful and so skillfully painted that the attention of all who called to see the picture was at once attracted to the cups, and every one was loud in their praise. The painter, observing this, saw that he had failed in his design of directing attention to the principal object in the picture, and exclaiming, "I have made a mistake, for these cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the Master," he immediately seized his brush and dashed them from the canvas. See Kidder's *Homiletics*, pp. 252, 253.

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reasoners; not, perhaps, all of them, in the scientific methods of strict logic, but in the clear development of the foundation principles of doctrine, and in that method of persuasion which the heart teaches to the true preacher. Jonathan Edwards reasoned so forcibly that his hearers thought God was speaking to them through him, as, indeed, he was; for he grasped fundamental principles, and so entered into them, that while he himself was hidden, he shook the consciences of men by the pure power of truth." "Plain, sensible, and comprehensive reasoning, without the pedantry of the logician, or the hardness of the metaphysician, always has power with the great mass of common sense, intelligent hearers. A sermon which has nothing of this element of thoughtful argumentation in it rarely makes an enduring impression, because it does not reach the depths of the subject, or the depths of the mind. It ruffles the top waves; it does not go down into the springs of thought or motive."

The *Apodixis Biblica* (an appeal to scripture) is the highest form of proof that a minister can employ in the pulpit. Many doctrines need only to be stated and impressed on the mind, without attempting any proof. The "thus saith the Lord" ought to be sufficient proof, putting to silence all foolish questions and petty doubtings; for the word and testimony of the Sacred Scriptures are above human reason. The *dicta probantia* (proof-texts) should constitute the principal proof. Our assurance in divine truth rests on the *authority of God*, since he alone has the right to be believed on the strength of his unimpeachable character and the infallibility of the divine counsel as compared with the fallibility of human reason. The profounder our faith in God, the more powerful and convincing will be our preaching. As heralds of the Holy Oracle, we are invested with an authority which demands from

the hearers confidence in the message—"the sure word of promise" which we deliver. "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." (Titus ii. 15.)

But "the testimony of scripture must be enforced and strengthened by every means in our power. * * * * And this introduces us to nearly all the topics and modes of argument which are common to other rhetoricians. Still, there are some more applicable to the pulpit than others, and some which are altogether inapplicable."[1] We speak of those of most importance.

1. *A priori method.*—This argument was given specific form by Anselm, of the eleventh century. Whately thinks this is the εἰκός of Aristotle, which, for want of a better term, has been generally translated "probability," but as he classes it under necessary premises it certainly resembles Anselm's argument. What is a proof *a priori?* To answer clearly we must first know what is an *a priori truth.* It is a necessary truth which is not the result of sense or experience, but is *primordial* and *intuitive*—a principle that is *self-evident* and *original, necessary* and *universal.* Thus, all mathematical and philosophical axioms, such as "The whole is greater than any of its parts," "The same can not be and not be at the same time," are *a priori* cognitions, acknowledged by all as necessary, even by John Stuart Mill, and other opponents of the intuitional school of philosophy. They are called *a priori*, not because acquired first in the order of time,[2] but because they stand first "in the order of *rational* or *logical importance.* Hence they are called first principles: principles or truths *a priori*, as opposed to knowledge *a posteriori.*"[3]

Now, what is an *a priori* argument? It is one that pro-

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1 Gresley's *Treatise on Preaching*, Letter ix.

2 Porter says, "they are the *last* which are reached, and by only a few of the race are ever reached at all."—*Human Intellect*, p. 502.

3 Porter's *Human Intellect*, p. 502.

ceeds from *cause to effect.* In a general sense it is "applicable to any case of proper physical causes, but is chiefly applied to argument from a necessary principle"—from first principles imbedded in the mind to those which necessarily result therefrom. Thus, we prove *a priori* that sin is offensive to God from the necessary idea of God's holiness. Anselm argues the existence of God from our necessary idea of the most perfect being conceivable. The objective reality of such a being is greater than the subjective idea. Hence such a being *must exist*, for existence is included in the very idea of perfection; and to admit his non-existence is contradictory to the idea of his perfection. The last step is, that *necessary* existence implies *actual* existence.[1]

"The conclusion from an *a priori* argument (supposing it logically conducted) will be certain, if on the one hand the supposed cause is a real one, and on the other hand, there is nothing to interfere with its operation; but if the reality of the cause (or necessary principle) be subject to question, or its operations be liable to interference, then the conclusion is only more or less probable."[2]

2. *A posteriori method.*—This is the opposite of the *a priori*, and proceeds from effect to cause, or from knowledge and consequences, whether physical or otherwise, to their proper necessary principles. It is a far more convincing and less abstruse mode of argument than the *a priori.* It admits of great elaboration, and may embrace the universe of things and events. It was introduced by heathen philosophers before the Christian era, and is largely used in modern science, as well as by theologians of the present day, in presenting the evidences of a divine Being. This method may easily be confounded with the *a priori.* Thus, Descartes, in his *cogito, ergo sum*, begins with the *a priori*,

1 See Shedd's *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. I., p. 231; also, Knapp's *Theology*, p. 86; Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I., p. 204.

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 175.

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The Scriptures abound with this mode of reasoning. See Romans viii. 32; Luke xxiii. 31; I. Peter iv. 17, 18; Hebrews ii. 2–4, xii. 25, etc.

4. *Experience.*—This might be treated under Induction, but as it is narrower in its range than induction, inasmuch as it pertains to only one individual being, we prefer to give it a separate treatment.

"Strictly speaking, we know by experience only the *past*, and what has passed under our own observation."[1] But then, unlike the other arguments, experience enters more or less into all facts and subjects, in proportion as man's life comes in contact with the natural and spiritual world. It is the most accessible and familiar argument, but may be unreliable and unsatisfactory to others; for what is evident to us may not be so to all, unless there be a common experience. Hence, to make a criterion we must observe that "our experience is either uniform or various. In the one case, provided the facts on which it is founded be sufficiently numerous, the conclusion is said to be morally certain. In the other, the conclusion built on the greater number of instances is said to be probable, and more or less so according to the proportion which the instances on that side bear to those on the opposite."[2] Thus, I am sure that a body when unsupported will drop to the earth, because of my frequent and uniform observation of the fact. That God will answer prayer immediately may be probable, if in our experience he has done so oftener than the contrary; that he will answer sometime is more probable, but not certain, for we remember instances in which to our knowledge no answer has ever been received; that he will answer prayer offered in accordance with his will at sometime is still more probable because of a greater uniformity of instances in our history.

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1 Whately's *Rhetoric*, Part I., Chap. ii., § 7

2 Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 72.

An argument derived from our own experience often has great weight on the minds of others. Paul, who suffered affliction, distress, imprisonment, labor, dishonor, scourging, stoning, shipwreck, and all manner of bereavements and losses, concludes that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord." How many afflicted Christians have secured comfort from this universal law of Providence proclaimed by Paul, who discovered it by his own experience!

The certainty of an argument derived from our uniform experience depends on the number of experiments. The coincidence of a few observations might be accidental, and this has often led to superstition.[1]

5. *Testimony.*—This is the declaration of a witness as to matters of *fact.* Experience is the source of philosophy, but testimony is the source of history. Much of our mediate knowledge is based on testimony, which, if trustworthy, affords as great certainty as man can ordinarily have in this life. "We are so constituted as to be inclined to believe testimony, and it is only when the incredibility of the witness has been ascertained by sufficient evidence, that we refuse our assent."[2]

To properly estimate the weight of testimony we must regard:

(1.) The witnesses. (*a.*) Their *number.* The greater the number the stronger the evidence, provided they concur in the fact testified. Thus, the resurrection of Christ is proved by the concurrent testimony of many witnesses. The alleged contradictions in the narratives of the resurrection[3] are not contradictions of facts, but variations of

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1 A man affirms that three successive times he took a journey on a Friday, and in each case he met with an accident; it is therefore clear that Friday is an unlucky day. The ancient Greeks supposed their deity dwelt at Delphi because a few men on approaching the place were seized with a singular paroxysm of shivering and jumping.

2 Haven's *Mental Philosophy*, p. 192.

3 See Strauss' *Life of Christ.*

statements.[1] (*b.*) Their *character.* Testimony will be convincing according to the knowledge, sincerity, and veracity of the witnesses. When there is no motive for deception, and no previous concert, and when there is opportunity and ability of knowing the facts certified, we may repose credibility in their testimony. Such was the character of the witnesses of Christ's resurrection and his miracles.

(2.) The nature of the facts attested. There are some facts which no number of witnesses, however trustworthy, could verify by mere testimony, for it is possible for fallible man to be deceived. Our sense of sight would invariably assert that a straight stick in water is crooked, and this delusion must be corrected by our judgment of the nature of the case. No amount of testimony could prove the claims of Spiritualism, on account of the many things that oppose the pretension. So, again, there are some facts so evident, and so thoroughly established by other evidences, that they would remain unaffected even though the witnesses were of such a character as to merit no credence at all. Such is the case with Christ's resurrection and miracles. Had the apostles been wicked men, whose only motive was to deceive, the fact they assert would still be certain, for to reject their testimony would thrust upon us a greater miracle than the truth of their assertion.[2]

6. *Induction.*—This is the most general method of reasoning. Every process of deriving general truths from particulars is called induction. We observe in a number of individual objects that they all possess some common characteristic, and therefore conclude that this characteristic belongs to them all as a class. We need not examine every particular object belonging to the class in order to draw a correct conclusion. "If induction," says Galileo,

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1 Cf. Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, Lecture vii., p. 468 ff.

2 Cf. Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 180–184.

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Aristotle, that whatever is predicated of a class may be predicated of every individual of the class.[1]

In preaching we do not use the formal syllogism, but rather its abbreviated form, known as the enthymeme. We may prove that John the Baptist was a priest because he was the son of a priest; or, again, suppressing the premise which is plain to all, we may assert that he was a priest because in the Old Testament Scriptures we learn that the sons of priests were themselves priests. We must, however, use sound judgment in this mode of arguing. "We can very seldom take a general truth and make a series of deductions from it as is done in geometry, and feel safe as to the results. * * * * The idea of establishing some truth of religion by 'a perfect demonstration' is commonly delusive. Human life is not really controlled by demonstrated truth, as to this world or the next. We must be content with those practical certainties which the conditions of existence allow us to attain; and while constantly drawing inferences, as it is right we should do, must be content to compare them with fact and scripture, to make sure that they are correct."[2]

§ VI. REFUTATION.

Refutation is not proof, but counter-proof, used in the overthrow of objections. Our work is not done when we think we have sufficiently proved a doctrine; we must remember that men will object to almost everything. "There are objections to a *plenum*, and objections to a vacuum; yet one or the other must be true."[3] And as the mind is not willing to accept a proposition, however well supported by affirmative arguments, until its prejudice or

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1 The original passage of Aristotle, upon which this doctrine is founded, is Ὅσα κατὰ τοῦ κατηγορουμένου λέγεται, πάντα καὶ κατὰ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ῥηθήσεται.——See Porter's *Human Intellect*, p. 446.

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 194, 195.

3 Dr. Johnson.

objections to it are removed, we must often meet our opponent on his own ground and despoil him of his weapons. If our only object were to remove his opposition to truth, we might consider our work accomplished when we have answered all his objections; but our great aim should be, not only to make him surrender his position, but to bring him over to our side,—to *convert* him from "the error of his way," so as to make him an *advocate* of the truth. This can only be done by "affirmative and negative argumentation"[1] combined.

I. *Relative Value of Affirmative and Negative Argumentation.*

Positive proof is worth more than refutation. "Strictly, he who has proved, has done everything; he is not obliged to refute objections."[2] It is more important that he should give assurance of the truth, and "a reason of the hope that is in" us, than to try to demolish the *Fata Morgana*[3] of some delusive theory. We should not notice trifling objections, or heresies that are unknown to our hearers. "Never raise an old heresy from the grave where it has slept quietly for centuries."[4] When informed of the objections, our hearers will too often remember the objections and forget the refutation. One discussion constructed out of solid proof is worth more than half a dozen logical skirmishes against an enemy. The former is a monument, a tower of strength, a proof against opposing storm; but the latter is a wrestling with a combatant that may result in our confusion.

While it is better to build a good fort than to defend a poor one, still, as Vinet says, "Proof often needs refutation as a supplement, and even as a complement. It often happens that a mere refutation becomes proof in the soul of

1 Vinet's *Homiletics.* 2 *Ibid*, p. 178.
3 Fantastic atmospheric phenomena along the coast of Sicily.
4 Gresley's *Treatise on Preaching*, p. 237, quoted from Whately.

the hearer;"[1] for since many religious truths are incapable of proof, refutation of all objections against them will be necessary to establish our faith.

Three things are necessary before we undertake refutation. *First*, a thorough understanding of the objection itself; for how can we meet an objector unless we clearly understand his position? *Second*, a fair statement of the objection, so that the objector can say, "That is exactly my objection." *Third*, ability to answer the objection satisfactorily. Without these three requisites on the part of the preacher, every attempt to refute will be futile,—a beating of the air. Everything should be done in fairness, or our hearers will lose confidence in the validity of our positive proofs.

II. *Modes of Refutation.*

1. By proving the contradictory. This in form would really be an affirmative argument; but as its effect is to overthrow objections and establish a proposition with one stroke, we may classify it under refutation as one of its most effectual modes.

2. By showing the fallacy of the argument by which the objection is supported, which may lie either in erroneous premises or erroneous conclusions. The enemies of Christ bribed the soldiers to use this argument against his resurrection: We slept; while we slept the disciples stole his body; therefore, he did not rise by his own power. Here the first premise, "We slept," is incorrect, for it is not likely that a guard of sixty would all fall asleep, when the penalty to which a sentinel was liable for sleeping at his post was death. Besides, it would be a deep sleep that could not be disturbed by an earthquake, such as occurred when Christ arose. The second premise, "While we slept his disciples stole him," is equally false; for if

1 *Homiletics*, p. 178.

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and a seed are not in themselves alike, but bear a like relation, to the parent bird and to her future nestling, on the one hand, and to the old and young plant on the other, respectively."[1] "The point to be guarded is, never to say there is an analogy between objects, unless there is a correspondence (identity or similarity) in their relations to something else, however like or however unlike the objects themselves may be."[2]

This argument may be abused by carrying the analogy too far. It never amounts to positive proof, but is used in silencing objections, and in the hands of Bishop Butler became a powerful weapon in refuting the cavils of infidelity.

5. By *Irony*. This consists in admitting the premise or conclusion which is to be disproved, and building upon it such other conclusions as would be ridiculous. Irony should be used sparingly and prudently in the pulpit, as it is incompatible with sober reasoning; but it is often used effectually in reproving vice and folly by rendering them ridiculous. See examples of this in scripture (I. Kings, xxii. 15, Eccles. xi. 9).

III. *Arrangement of Refutation.*

Hoppin, in his late work on homiletics, thinks that refutation "should generally be in the first part of the body of the discourse, because the last words should be the strongest, and should leave a positive impression." This is an excellent general rule. If objections to our doctrine are well known and weighty, we may begin by removing them, lest our hearers, while the objections remain in their minds, listen with prejudice to our positive proofs. But if the objections are contingent, and there is fear that they may arise in the mind, it is well to leave

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1 Whately.

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 190.

them for the last. If objections are sufficiently met in the main direct arguments, it is better to refute them after presenting those direct arguments and before proceeding to another point in the sermon. Unless objections are obvious or plausible, there is no need of even alluding to them.

§ VII. FALLACIES.

A fallacy is "any unsound mode of arguing, which appears to demand our conviction, and to be decisive of the question in hand, when in fairness it is not." The preacher may not wish to deceive his hearers by any sophistical reasoning, but may himself be deceived, and think he has proved his proposition, when unknowingly he has erred by violating the rules of logic, or, perhaps, has been influenced by prejudice or passion. "It should be allowed at once that the best safeguard against error of every kind is to be found in a sincere desire to discover the truth, which keeps the mind open to facts and arguments, from whatever quarter they come—'When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light.'"[1] But the most honest inquirer after truth may be deceived, for "to err is human;" and hence arises the importance of understanding the laws of reasoning. It will be useful here to refer to those fallacies (material or informal) which are of most common occurrence in the pulpit.

I. *Verbal Fallacies.*

Words are the vehicles which convey ideas; but how inadequately do they often perform their work. The idea in the mind of a speaker may be right, but may be wrongly expressed; for the English language, being composed of so many words from various sources, and being subject to great fluctuation, is liable to deceive both the speaker and

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1 McCosh's *Logic*, p. 169. As to how the heart sways the head in reasoning, see his *Logic*, Part III., § 81.

the hearer. Words, from their etymology, admit of various meanings and shades of meaning; custom, also, has attached various significations to the same word. Thus, *to make*, has, according to Johnson, sixty-six meanings; *to put*, eighty; and *to take*, one hundred and thirty-four meanings. Again, the meaning attached to a word in one age by no means determines what it will be in another age. Thus, many words of scripture in King James' day had meanings which are obsolete to-day. For example, "prevent," in I. Thess. iv. 15, meant to go before, or anticipate; the "caterpillar" of the Old Testament is a locust with wings. In Psalms cxxiv. 3, "They had swallowed us up *quick*," did not then mean *rapidly*, but *alive*. "Outlandish," in Nehemiah xiii. 26, meant *foreign*.

The chief sources of error in language respect either the meaning of single words or the construction of sentences.

1. *Words.* (1.) *Ambiguous terms.* Thus the word *church* may mean (*a*) a place of meeting for worship; (*b*) "a formally organized body of Christian believers worshiping together;" (*c*) "a body of Christian believers, observing the same rites and acknowledging the same ecclesiastical authority;" (*d*) all the faithful who compose the mystical body of Christ. (2.) *Paronymous, or cognate words*, "are the noun, substantive, adjective, verb, etc., belonging to each other and springing from the same root;"[1] but they may differ widely from each other in signification; such as, art, artful; faith, faithful. So the words *image* and *imaginary* are from the same root; but the one implies something real, the other *unreal*. (3.) Akin to this are instances where a word is used in two senses—"one time in its customary, and at another in its etymological, sense."[2]

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1 Coppee's *Elements of Logic*, p. 191.
2 Whately's *Logic*.

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out asserting much more than can be proven, he gives prominence to all the circumstances which support his case, or glides lightly over those which are unfavorable to it."[1]

II. There is another class of material fallacies which consist in deducing conclusions from premises known to be invalid in themselves.[2]

1. The most common is the *petitio principii* (begging the question), which "takes place when one of the premises (whether true or false) is either plainly equivalent to the conclusion, or depends on that for its own reception."[3] Its most deceptive form is the "circle," which assumes the fact and by means of it reaches a conclusion which is afterward employed to establish the fact assumed. "Thus," says Hamilton, "Plato in his *Phædo* demonstrates the immortality of the soul from its simplicity; and in the *Republic* he demonstrates its simplicity from its immortality." Preachers often fall into this error by first proving some doctrine with various facts, and then establishing these facts from the truth of the doctrine. Under this head Day speaks of the "*hysteron proteron*," in which the truth of the antecedent is dependent upon the conclusion;

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1 Quoted in McCosh's *Logic*, p. 18.

2 "Hume's celebrated argument against miracles is of this character. 'It is contrary to experience,' he says, 'that the laws of nature should be suspended, while it accords with experience that testimony should prove false. Miracles, therefore, which imply a suspension or violation of the laws of nature, can not be established by testimony.' Now the major premise, being that which affirms that it accords with experience that testimony should prove false, is unallowable, because its contradictory — to wit: *some* forms of testimony never prove false, is an ascertained and universally admitted truth. The Christian syllogism upon the subject is this: Some kinds of testimony never, as a matter of fact, do prove false. The testimony which affirms the truth of the miracles of the Bible is exclusively of this character. The major premise of this syllogism none will dare deny. Mr. Hume, then, in assuming the contradictory of this as true, has laid down premises which prove nothing whatever. His major premise also is unallowable, for the very reason that the minor is, and also contains the fault of begging the question at issue. The real meaning of his major is this: it is contrary to *universal* experience, that is, to the experience of *all* finite intelligences, that the laws of nature should be suspended. This, to say the least, is not an ascertained truth, and therefore is utterly void of all logical consequence till proven."—Mahan's *Logic*, p. 237.

3 Whately's *Logic*.

as, when scripture testimony is urged in favor of the being of God, scripture testimony being valid only as it is the testimony of God, and therefore pre-supposing his existence.[1]

2. "There are certain kinds of argument recounted and named by logical writers, which we should by no means universally call fallacies; but which *when unfairly* used, and *so far as they are* fallacious, may very well be referred to the present head; such as the '*argumentum ad hominem*' (or 'personal argument'), '*argumentum ad verecundiam*,' '*argumentum ad populum*,' etc., all of them regarded as contradistinguished from '*argumentum ad rem*.' * * * * Along with these is usually enumerated '*argumentum ad ignorantiam*.'"[2]

A preacher may also commit the error of proving too much, by building conclusions on premises which might also be used in building other conclusions known to be false. *Qui nimium probat, nihil probat.*[3]

Every preacher, in his discussion, should avoid all *jests*, raillery, and punning, or any other mock arguments which are not proof, and are out of harmony with the solid material of a serious production. Likewise, the use of epithets, the calling of names, indicates temper or a paucity of ideas. Either impression made on an audience is fatal to the speaker. Epithets are not arguments. "Come now, and let us *reason* together, saith the Lord."

§ VIII. SUGGESTIONS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE DISCUSSION.

1. Do not depend too much on logical proof in the effort to produce conviction. Reason is one of the means, but not the only means, by which we make men feel and believe the great truths of the gospel. Sympathy with the

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1 Day's *Elements of Logic*, p. 192.

2 Whately's *Logic*, Book III., pp. 236, 237.

3 He who proves too much, proves nothing

truth, and an earnest enforcement of the revealed word as recorded by the inspired writers, often do more to bring men over to the side of truth than a long course of ratiocination. "There are comparatively few in our ordinary congregations who are able to follow a long series of arguments and demonstrations."[1]

Besides, the majority that compose our American congregations, who are already sufficiently convinced in their minds of the truth of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, will weary in listening to a labored argument that aims only to prove something which they never doubted for a moment. "In preaching we need not act as if everything had to be proved. Some things can not be proved; some do not need to be, and others have been sufficiently proved before, and should now be taken for granted."[2] It is not necessary to prove that death is certain, that truth is right, or that eternity is important, for such facts must always be assumed. The sermon is not a proposition of Euclid, which must go through a strictly dialectical and demonstrative process, but should be connected with the will, the feeling, the experience, as well as with the reason. Purely cold logic, like that of Butler's "Analogy," is utterly unfit for the pulpit. Neither should we attempt to prove something that is doubtful, or strain a point, for the sake of showing our tact in argumentation.

Another fact, which has been well attested by human experience, is, that reason, at best, is often unreliable, and should therefore be made subordinate to the divine testimony. There were times when men, for thousands of years, taught that the sun moved around the earth, and accused Copernicus for teaching otherwise. Thales, the Ionic philosopher, supposed he had demonstrated that "the

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1 Potter's *Sacred Eloquence.*

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 160.

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exhortation, application or amplification. What particular mode of handling is to be used must be determined

(1.) By the nature of the subject treated, which may be congenial to one kind of treatment and repulsive to another. Thus, to discuss the subject, "Christ's Love," argumentatively, and the subject, "The Extent of the Atonement," historically, would be incongruous, and should be reversed.

(2.) By the nature of the audience. Some congregations could not be benefited by a metaphysical or dialectic discussion, and therefore the sermonizer must adapt his matter and manner to the intellectual grade of his hearers as unlearned, cultured, or juvenile.

(3.) By the occasion. A revival, out-door, or funeral sermon must have little elaborate dogmatism, and much practical intensity; while a discourse on special literary occasions will admit of much scholarly disquisition, and less of the hortatory style. It would seem that the place and circumstances of an argument would, *prima facie*, determine the course to be pursued in the discussion.

A preacher should accustom himself to a suitable variety of treatment, not indulging habitually in the argumentative method, or the illustrative, but using each in proper proportions. Much tact is needed, not only in the choice of rhetorical discussion, but also in the actual treatment of it.

3. Having invented the thought for the discussion, the next and last work is to arrange, correct, and finish.

If the thought produced is homogeneous, the sermon should assume the topical form; if heterogeneous, as suggested by the various themes of the text, it would naturally fall into the textual. If unwritten, consisting of "jottings down" in a crude state, the sermonizer should draft an outline for a sermon therefrom, ready for delivery in the

pulpit; if written, in addition to arranging, attention must also be given to style, according to chapter on Style.

A final criticism must not be omitted. Perhaps no time spent upon the sermon can be more profitably employed than this. Let no admiration of the sermon blunt the keenness of the pruning-knife, or destroy the severe accuracy of the honest balances that weigh the "aptness of the quotations, the proportions of the treatment, the purity of the style, and the cogency of the argument." Buffon was accustomed, after the first work, to put aside the manuscript, to leave it without thinking of it, without seeing it, during a time sufficiently long for the mind to become entirely free from the impression under which he had composed it. When he took it up again, after securing to himself as calm a frame of mind as possible, he had it read aloud to him by a person to whom the sketch was entirely new. Every phrase of which the reader did not seize the construction, which did not run easily and harmoniously, every thought which did not belong to the general sense, and which embarrassed or confused the reason, was changed. He went through this courageous labor every time that a newly discovered fact required a modification.[1] Moral criticism is as needful as verbal. The searching question should often cross us, "Is this to glorify God or to please men?" And if it is our sincere desire to give our divine Master the very best we have to give, we will grudge neither our time nor our pains.

In the second process of composition, observe the following rules:

(1.) Be not too critical, lest the sermon appear pedantic and labored. Pick out error only as one picks cinders out of a fire, not to slacken but increase its heat. Where a suitable thought can not be made to conform to the re-

1 See Boyd's *Composition and Rhetoric*, p. 236.

quirements of homiletic structure without detriment to the good effect of the sermon, it is always better to sacrifice the form than the substance.

(2.) Make your theme the subject of special thought during the entire week. Many useful suggestions may come to you during recreation, reading, or pastoral work.

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was elaborated sixteen times, and established his fame.[1] The conclusion of Lord Brougham's defense of Queen Caroline is said to have been rewritten eighteen or twenty times before it was delivered. The great political orator, John Bright, always spent much time in preparing his conclusions. So important seemed the conclusion in the estimation of all successful orators that "at this point in the process of the orator, they seem to have exerted their utmost possibility of effort, like a leaper, who throws his whole brute force into that one leap which is to save his life from destruction."[2]

If the conclusion is so important in secular and political oratory, it is still more so in the preaching of the gospel. Addresses before judicial tribunals are followed by immediate action affecting men's temporal weal or woe; but in religious addresses much greater interests are at stake, and much more depends on the final impression which the religious teacher makes upon the mind of his auditor. This is the decisive moment, the last effort which is to decide the victory. This effort ought to be a signal one, such a one as would cause the hearer to say, "Were I to live a hundred years I would never forget it." "The last five minutes of the sermon, in point of real effect, ought to be worth all the thirty or thirty-five that have gone before them." An English preacher used to say that he cared very little what he said the first half hour, but that he cared a very great deal what he said the last five minutes.[3]

We know of nothing in sermonizing which is more difficult, and which requires more skill and prudent consideration, than the construction of a good conclusion. Yet

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1 Hastings himself said, that in listening to it he felt himself to be the most guilty man alive.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 197.

3 Cicero's rule was, "*Quae excellant serventur ad perorandum*;"—Let the most excellent things be reserved for the peroration.

how many preachers slight this part of the work. The introduction and discussion are carefully prepared and well delivered, but when they come to the conclusion they are fatigued, exhausted, and hurry to get done. They dispatch the latter part with some common-place exhortation, or remarks that are scattering and feeble. "The conclusion ought to have moved like a river, growing in volume and power, but instead of that, the discourse loses itself in some great marsh, or ends like the emptying of a pitcher, with a few poor drops and dregs."[1] It is folly for a preacher to offer in his conclusion the fruits of a jaded mind, or to exhaust himself or his audience before the decisive moment is reached. He who will be master of the situation and conqueror on the battle-field, must reserve his sublimest effort for the last.

Of the three fundamental parts of the sermon, introduction, discussion, and conclusion, the last is the most telling. If it is poor, it may destroy the impression of the first, and do much to neutralize the second; but if it is good, it will help to atone for the deficiencies of the first and second, or to heighten preceding excellences. The fault of indifference is nowhere so fatal as in the conclusion. The first two prepare the way for powerful impressions. They furnish the heat which, when concentrated into a focus, will burn; and he who neglects the opportunity of turning his material to good effect by focalizing it into a powerful conclusion, will make a failure of his sermon, however well prepared in its beginning and groundwork.

§ II. DESIGN OF THE CONCLUSION.

Secondarily, the design of the conclusion may be to avoid *abruptness* in closing a sermon,[2] which would be a

1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 278.

2 Dr. James Wilson, of Philadelphia, used to preach exactly one hour by the clock; no more, no less. At the moment the hour hand pointed to twelve o'clock, he would stop and say, "Brethren, the hour is up; let us pray."

greater fault in the discourse than the sudden beginning of fiery eloquence in the introduction; for having acquired the momentum of a heated discussion, an abrupt halt would be like the sudden stopping of a flying train. Or, the design may be, so to speak, to bid *farewell* to a subject with which we have held sweet converse for a time; and as the final parting of a dear friend impresses us with all the good qualities of his nature, so that we feel his worth as never before; so all the pleasant associations of the sermon in its preparation and delivery are revived afresh in the conclusion, when we take final leave of the subject.

But primarily, the fundamental design of a conclusion is, *to concentrate the principal elements of truth contained in the discussion into one powerful impression, in such a way as to imprint the supreme object of the discourse upon the hearer's mind.* The scattering rays of heat must be brought to a burning focus, which focus must coincide with the ultimate object which the preacher had in view when he selected his subject. Every preacher should see the end from the beginning, and steadily advance toward it with ever increasing power and undeviating aim of purpose. The introduction and conclusion stand over against each other, like the two continents at Behring's Strait, one or both of which is always in sight while you cross as soon as practicable the intermediate sea of discussion. The materials in the main body of the sermon must be of such a nature and arrangement that they will combine their effect in the conclusion. "There is something in this principle of oratory analogous to the current of a great river. It rises in remote mountains, a mere rill, then it becomes a rivulet, then a brook, then by the accession of tributary streams it swells, and widens, and deepens in its course till it rolls on a flood of waters to the ocean. But imagine, if you can, a river diminishing in force as it runs, parting off a

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The conclusion ought to be the quintessence of all that precedes it,—the combination of the best parts of the discussion into one final effort of eloquence. Especially ought it to be the natural *effect* of a *cause;* for, as Vinet says, speaking of the conclusion, "it is not a separate and independent discourse; it is the *result* of the discourse," which should flow spontaneously from the contents of the discussion.

"The peroration should be drawn from the very heart of the subject, should be something striking, something felicitous, something by itself apart, something different from what has gone before, though derived from it, something more vehement and direct, which completes and forms the crown of the whole sermon."[1]

The material sometimes is of the nature of a—

I. Recapitulation. "There are two kinds of perorations, the one recapitulation, and the other whatever is adapted to excite the feelings."[2] It is often necessary, at the end, to make a recapitulation, which collects, in few words, the leading arguments into a solid group. It is the finishing stroke that clinches the nails of argument. Generally, it constitutes the beginning of the conclusion; and it is used as a transition from the discussion to the ultimate object of the sermon, or as the connecting link between the arguments and the crowning impression at the close. It is mostly used in argumentative and explanatory discourse, or when it is important to bring together the most important things that have been said, so as to accumulate oratorical force for the final appeal.

But to recapitulate thus is not to repeat the sermon in brief, or to restate all the divisions and sub-divisions in the order previously used, but to revive the important

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1 Coquerel, quoted by Hoppin, in *Homiletics*, p. 434

2 Hervey's *Christian Rhetoric*, p. 326.

points by recalling the train of thought, in a general way, and concentrating them into a final effort of conviction. Sometimes a sermon may be so constituted that each succeeding division will carry along with it the full weight of all that precedes it, which will render recapitulation at the close unnecessary. In such cases we may leave off where we began, by simply referring to the text, introduction, or initial argument, for the sake of unity and of holding our hearers to that which was the first and last object of the discourse. Such reference may bring up in their minds the whole train of arguments, without a formal statement of them by the preacher.

The recapitulation should be *brief*. Its object is to compress in an epitome the whole force of the discussion, in order to thrust it forth at one blow. It ought to be only a bird's-eye view of the theme, without anything "stiff, formal, or statistical."

It should be *strictly a recapitulation*. It should not admit any new material, nor a new explanation of the old. It should be given in *climactic order, and be expressed in language different from that used in the body of the sermon*, so as to give the old material freshness of form and expression.[1] It should be *expressed in livelier, stronger terms, with additional power and interest*. How forcible the recapitulation of Solomon's elaborate treatise on earthly vanities when he says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecc. xii. 13.)

Generally, the conclusion is made up of—

II. Application. The conclusion proper consists of the application of the subject to the object of the sermon. This is the supreme purpose for which the sermon was

1 Dr. Doddridge often used to compose a hymn made up of the leading thoughts of his sermon, and offer it for the service of song at the close. The hymn beginning, "Jesus, I love thy charming name," is one of these sermon-synopses.

prepared; and a preacher preaching a sermon without application would be like a physician giving to his patient a lecture on general health, and forgetting to write him a prescription.[1]

In expository or historical sermons, in sermons to children, or in revival preaching, especially in discussions of a hortatory nature, there may be continuous application running along with the development of the sermon, in which each division or part of the discourse is applied as the sermon proceeds. In such cases the same rules apply to the management of application in sectional portions as in a summary effort, or compact application.

But generally, the application is condensed into one solid effort in the conclusion. Especially is this true in continuous argument, each branch of which is incomplete until the whole is finished. To insert the application sooner would interrupt the discussion and leave the conclusion weak for want of accumulative force of application. "Delay often reduplicates the force of application when it comes;"[2] for an argument gathers force as it advances toward a climax, and pours its accumulated wealth of thought and feeling into a powerful conclusion. The preacher is gathering a volume of reserve-force as he proceeds, without a word expressive of the gathering storm, except the silent emanations going forth from the whole discussion, which soften the feelings, awaken the conscience, and prepare the mind of the hearer for deep, concentrated impression. "Weight, not bulk, of appeal becomes the test of value."

The compact application has another advantage, in that it arouses the sensibilities but once, and at the most propitious time. The heart can best be reached after the

1 Daniel Webster used to say, "When a man preaches to me, I want him to make it a *personal matter*."

2 Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, p. 507.

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character; otherwise, they would be only suggestions or lessons that have some relation to or connection with the subject, but no vital, necessary union with the main body of discourse. Inferences may be logical, in the sense that they have a possible or circuitous *nexus* with the theme that would be entirely unsuspected to the hearer; but unless the inferences are the inevitable offspring from the parent idea of discourse they are not legitimate. They must come from the actual, not possible, range of the subject.

(2.) Forcible. That is, they should not be all the logical inferences that could be drawn, but the best; it is better that they be few and significant than many and trifling. One of Flavel's sermons has twenty-four inferences in the conclusion, another has fifty-six. One of President Edwards' sermons has twenty-two divisions in the application, and one has thirty-one. Such multiplication of inferences is destructive to a forcible conclusion. Inferences gather force by being homogeneous and cumulative. They are intensified by harmony, and acquire increased momentum by climactic arrangement. Sometimes a specific inference may be drawn from a general inference with great effect.

(3.) Practical. The principal design of inference is to evolve practical matter out of metaphysical discussion. If it fails in this, the object of the sermon, or the value of the conclusion, is essentially impaired, if not entirely lost. What we want, after the intellect has been fed with strong meat, is an eloquent appeal to the will and affections, having reference to the great duties of life, and the best interests of the hearer, for which object the whole sermon was constructed.

Again, the application may be in the form of—

2. *Remarks.*—"An inference is a logical sequence: a

remark is a suggested sequence. Both are rhetorically related to the discussion as consequent to antecedent."[1] It is said of Dr. Skinner, of New York, that he was so exact in distinguishing these two forms of application that he would often say, in the beginning of the conclusion of his sermon, "I shall now close this discourse with a notice of three inferences and one remark." Sometimes a very happy thought connected with the subject may be used with great weight in the conclusion; but such applicatory remarks, whether consisting of hints, lessons, or suggestions, should all be *natural* sequences derived from the discussion. Neither should they be stiff, dull, or formal, but consist of fresh, invigorating material that will give impulse to the mind of the hearer. "Some preachers are more inventive, more prolific, more racy, in every other process of sermonizing than in that of applying truth to its practical uses. They explain lucidly, they prove forcibly, they illustrate vividly; but they do not apply truth eloquently. * * * * No art of invention should be despised by a preacher in the effort to throw a spell over an audience by the raciness of closing thoughts and the magnetism of last words."[2]

Again, the several remarks, especially when the application consists entirely of such, should converge to one general point of appeal. The different reflections suggested by the discourse may be isolated; they may grow out of different parts of the main body; they may be contrasted with each other or with the theme; they may consist of rules or suggestions as to the best means of practicing the lessons or duties evolved from the text; and yet all such remarks may point to one grand concluding center, and end in one burning point of powerful address.

Lastly, the application may be in the form of an—

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1 Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, p. 523. 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 535, 536.

3. *Appeal.*—This surpasses in oratorical force the inferences and remarks, and is the most eloquent form of speech. It is the point in the discourse where the highest inspiration and the most enraptured feelings are enjoyed. It is not necessarily vehement. It may be the most tranquil part of the sermon; but it should be the "tranquillity of the deepest feeling, of the fullest thought, of the most solemn and momentous truth; for it has then reached a point where it is about to mingle with the ocean of eternal life or death."[1] It, therefore, does not further develop the subject, but applies it in the most natural and spontaneous manner to the hearts and consciences of the hearers.

The appeal should be addressed:

(1.) To the conscience. Men must have their sense of right and duty awakened by lively agitation. It is not enough that the intellect be addressed; for the mind may receive knowledge without feeling any moral obligation. It is one thing to be made to understand a thing; another, to be made to feel that a thing ought to be done.

(2.) To the feelings. When conscience has first been aroused, it is an easy matter to stir the feelings so as to render the hearer responsive to the appeal. The object of moving the feelings is that thereby we may the better move the will. The mind may be fully convinced, the conscience wide-awake, and yet the will unchanged. If at this point we call to our aid the powerful influence of emotion, we may gain a complete victory over the will of the hearer, which otherwise might be almost gained but altogether lost. But the feelings, either of the speaker or of the hearer, should not be overwrought. Pathos does not so much consist of a strained, agitated manner as of a deep feeling of earnestness pervading the whole man. There is

1 Hoppin's *Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, p. 189.

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others, without a determination to make an effort to conquer their bosom sins, or to relieve human suffering by alms and deeds of mercy? The emotion of the worshipers must, by the force of appeal, be brought to the test of executive action, before the preacher's object is accomplished. The hearer must be made better, even though he should not understand all that the discourse contained. It is said of a poor woman who worked in a wool-mill, and who was accustomed to walk a long way to attend the services of a godly minister, but could not remember his sermons, that when her neighbors would taunt her on account of her defective memory she would reply, "Do you see the wool that I am washing? It keeps none of the water, but it is always growing whiter; but I would fain hope that I, too, am growing whiter."[1] This is the effect which every sermon should have upon the hearer. A sermon, however elegant, that does not lift a soul nearer to God, is not worth the name of a sermon. It should impart not only instruction, but character. "Not only are words to be transmitted and repeated; *a life is to be communicated.*"[2] John Livingston, no doubt, felt this when five hundred souls were converted as the fruits of one of his sermons.

In arousing the conscience, feelings, and executive actions of the hearer, we may succeed best by appealing to the various intuitions, emotions, affections, and desires of the soul, such as the sense of right, of duty, of honor, of self-respect, or of patriotic instinct, courage and constancy in affliction, or firmness in temptation, love and gratitude to God, hope of happiness or fear of condemnation, sympathy for suffering humanity, admiration for the true, the beautiful, and the good, etc., through which man's

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1 See Blaikie, p. 195.

2 Vinet, quoted by Hoppin, *Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, p. 190.

higher nature is most easily approached at moments of great pending issues. Let all such appeals, however, be very brief; for none of these dispositions will bear long-winded appeal.[1]

The application, whether in the form of inferences, remarks, or appeal, should be *individual, yet not personal.* "It is not upright in a preacher, either from fear of man, or from a false kindness, to shrink, in the peroration, from a plain and solemn application of the subject of his discourse;"[2] but "the more completely truth is so exhibited that *conscience* is compelled to do its own work in making the application to individuals, the stronger and the better is the impression produced; just as two persons, standing before a portrait-painting, are said each to feel a deeper interest in it by supposing that it looks *at himself.*"[3] Jeremy Taylor, in his "Advice to the Clergy," says, "In the reproof of sin, be as particular as you please and spare no man's sin, but *meddle with no man's person.* Neither name any man, nor signify him, nor make him to be suspected. Every minister, in reproof of sin and sinners, ought to concern himself in the faults of those that are present, but not the absent."

To the beginner, no part in the composition of the sermon is so difficult as the application; for to make it effective requires an extended experience with the world and with human life in its various phases. The preacher must study his own heart, and, especially, the hearts of his hearers, by familiarizing himself with their experiences in

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1 "There are three sorts of dispositions, or emotions,— the violent, the tender, and the elevated. The violent are, for example, fear, zeal, courage, firmness against temptation, repentance, self-loathing, etc. The tender emotions are joy, consolation, gratitude; tender subjects are pardon, pity, prayer, etc. The elevated are admiration of the majesty of God, the ways of Providence, the glory of paradise, the expectation of benefits, etc."— Claude's *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, with alterations and improvements by Chas. Simeon, p 312.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 207.

3 Porter's *Lectures on Homiletics*, p. 160.

sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, and with all their trials and dispositions in the ordinary occupations of life, in order to understand the intricate mazes of human life, and apply the truth effectively to individual cases.

May the conclusion be composite,—that is, consist of recapitulation, inferences, remarks, and appeals combined? This depends on circumstances. Some discussions, as those of a hortatory nature, do not require, in the conclusion, any recapitulation or inference, but may close with some striking remark or appeal; while a very argumentative or abstruse discourse may conclude with all the forms, beginning with recapitulation and ending in a strong appeal to the feelings. No uniform rule can be given except that which governs the *design* of a conclusion. Whatever method will aid most in impressing the object of the sermon most effectually upon the hearer is the best method. One should try to make the conclusion sympathetic with the discussion, whether by recapitulation, inference, remark, or appeal, one or all, as may be requisite to evolve most richly the applicatory force of the whole sermon.

The *final words* of a conclusion may consist of a scripture passage,—either the text (showing thereby that we have not lost, but developed the text), or a parallel or cognate text; or, perhaps, an appropriate stanza of a hymn; or a short prayer, or a benediction.[1]

§ IV. IMPROPER MATERIAL FOR CONCLUSION.

It is out of keeping with the design of the conclusion to introduce into it any matter which, for some reason, was rejected from the introduction or discussion, and reserved for the close as the only place of utilizing such cast-off material. The importance of closing words demands the

1 "The Roman and French Catholics sometimes conclude with the paraphrase of some psalm. See Bourdaloue on 'Riches,' Massillon on the 'Resurrection of Lazarus,' and Abbe Poulle on 'Heaven.'"—Hervey's *Christian Rhetoric*, p. 330.

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are unbecoming in all parts of a religious discourse, but more so in the conclusion, where the preacher is to utter words that are to ring in the ears when his voice is silent. "I thought your concluding sentences very *pretty*," was offered as a compliment to a youthful preacher who had just finished a sermon on the Day of Judgment. The conclusion of that sermon, in point of simplicity and real effect, was, of course, a failure.

2. *It should be eloquently delivered.* In speaking of the peroration, Quintilian says, "Here, if ever, it is proper to open all the fountains of eloquence. * * * * Having weathered the shallows and breakers, we may spread full sail, and according to the chief design of a peroration, we may give free scope to magnificence in sentiment and language." The conclusion ought to be the most pungent and impressive part of the sermon. Its delivery ought to be characterized by the utmost intensity, energy, vividness, and motion. If the discussion has been converging toward some great purpose, and the preacher is what he ought to be in heart, and in sympathy with the truth and with men, the awful, critical moment when the verities of truth are to be applied in their intensity to men's hearts and consciences, the moment that may decide their eternal destinies, will inspire him with a glow of thought and feeling that is irrepressible, and that will give vent to "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

3. *It should not be too long.* It is great wisdom to know when to stop, so as not to become tedious. The great danger in extemporaneous preaching is excessive length of the conclusion. The preacher sometimes feels that his effort has been a failure, and, in order to redeem himself, before he closes he will try to produce some effect by struggling for new thoughts here and there, renewing and repeating again and again his vain attempts, and thus

spinning out the conclusion until he is bewildered and exhausted, and his hearers are weary in waiting for him to stop. If the discussion has been labored and unsuccessful, and no inspiration comes in the conclusion, then the sooner he stops the better. The best discourse should have no longer conclusion than is needful to make a deep impression. The feelings of the hearer will not continue intense for any considerable length of time. Nothing, says Cicero, dries up sooner than tears.

4. *It should not be monotonous.* One of the great faults of the conclusion is monotony of form,—always ending in the same way, or addressing the same class of hearers.

5. *Should a part of every conclusion be addressed to the unconverted?* Not necessarily. The particular design of the discourse must determine what class to address. If the object of the sermon be the conversion of the sinner, not only a part, but the entire burden of application must be directed toward him alone. If the object is to edify the Christian, or to enforce some particular duty, the conclusion must be faithfully devoted to this object. We have no right to divert the drift of the discourse at its terminus, or to cripple the final impression, by deserting the subject for the sake of addressing the sinner, except under very peculiar circumstances. Besides, the sermon may be of such a nature that both classes of hearers will be equally benefited in the conclusion; for, as Broadus says, "A sermon addressed throughout to pious people will often specially instruct and impress the unconverted," and *vice versa.* Still, there are subjects and times when both classes may be directly and separately addressed in the same conclusion; and in such cases Hoppin says, "We should address those first who are most favorably disposed, and therefore,

cæteris paribus, we should address the converted before the unconverted." [1]

§ VI. SUGGESTIONS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE CONCLUSION.

The transition from discussion to conclusion is really a transition from the intellect to the heart, or from the more argumentative process to the emotional mood of pathetic exhortation. In preparing for the composition of the conclusion the sermonizer must therefore adjust himself to this transduction. He will now quit the cold field of dialectical research, and betake himself to the warmer climate of human feelings.

Before beginning to compose the conclusion it is important to bring the heart into full sympathy with the concluding thought. The discussion will prepare the way for, but not always produce, this state of soul-quickening. After accumulating strength for the conclusion from the construction of the main body of the sermon, and estimating its bearing upon the object to be enforced in the conclusion, we should pause long enough to muse upon the whole matter until it burns within us. This is, so to speak, boiling down the sermon to a point. At the degree of blood-heat we may begin composition. This will be a propelling power, making the movement of thought in the conclusion to sparkle with life and glow with intensity. It might be well sometimes to write out the conclusion and commit it to memory, or in some way so forcibly impress it on the mind that it will be uppermost in the mind during delivery in the pulpit.

Since the conclusion is the crowning part of the sermon, it should be composed during our happiest moments and best moods. If the mind be wearied after completing the discussion, the finishing of the conclusion should be post-

1 *Homiletics*, p. 435.

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PART III.

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and conduct their faith whither we will, until we reach a certain point—the almost impassable gate of iron will—the transition point from faith to action, where believing is to be exchanged for doing. This point many will reach in an hour, but halt there for years, perhaps for life; and at this point the preacher must call into requisition the whole momentum of his strength, to move men off their paths of sinful repose. This is the work of persuasion,—the most essential part of the sermon,—and should engage the earnest attention of every preacher in the study of the best methods that will accomplish the results desired.

Persuasion is best accomplished by the use of such motives as commend themselves to conscience,—to man's sense of duty and right. A motive is that which induces to free action; for, usually, that which moves a man to do voluntarily a certain thing, is a motive. The preacher, of course, will employ the highest motives, such as:

(*a.*) *Happiness.* Perhaps more men act from this motive than from any other. Whether of a temporal or eternal nature, it is the secret which furnishes the key to the solution of most of the problems of human choice. Christianity offers the inducement to a righteous life, that a good man, as a general rule, has more enjoyment than a bad man, "having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

(*b.*) *Goodness.* Nature has implanted in every heart at least a *desire* to be good. Even the most wicked are not insensible to its influence, and often covet the noble character they see in others; while the good are inspired by the contemplation of superior goodness above and beyond them. Moreover, the blessedness of the holiness of God, especially when contrasted with the natural results of wickedness, is a powerful motive in persuading men to seek purity and holiness of life.

(*c.*) *Duty.* This is, perhaps, the highest motive, since it has its seat in the conscience, and appeals to the ethical nature. "We can not help acknowledging the rightness of the right, the wrongness of the wrong. We are so formed that we must feel that we ought to do right; and here is the ground of the law of duty. Here is its great motive of persuasion. The doing of right because it is right, for its own sake, is the grand motive of duty to which, as preachers of righteousness, we can and should ever appeal."

(*d.*) *Love.* Love is the most powerful motive in subduing the heart. The lower order of love between man and man has incited men to the most daring, heroic acts of self-sacrifice. Its influence has been the source of a multitude of charities, and made the earth bloom as under the most genial sun. But the divine love of God, as revealed through the Son, and concentrated upon the cross, is the greatest motive-power in the world. It is the center of gravity in the moral universe. It is the silent, potent power by which Christ draws all men to him. The gospel of universal love, faithfully preached, is an irresistible power, before which the most stubborn heart will yield; and if it will not conquer man's will, he is almost beyond the hope of recovery.

Preachers who are eloquent in the pulpit, usually employ these motives to persuasion; but not all who understand and use these motives are eloquent. There must be possessed by the speaker a certain nature which not only instinctively discerns the highest motives, but presents them most eloquently. Hence the great secret of persuasion lies in the degree of eloquence with which the truth is proclaimed.

The subject of eloquence has been so much discussed, both in ancient and modern times, that a review of the

various opinions held and advocated would fill a large volume. Yet with an abundance of good literature on eloquence, we have few truly eloquent orators, because speakers, though they generally study its philosophy, neglect its proper cultivation. Theory without practice is worthless. The reason that many are deficient in this art s, that they undervalue its importance. In the pulpit it is everything,—the sum total of ministerial excellencies, the chief qualification, to which all other clerical attainments are subservient. Of what use were teaching without the persuasive, moving power? An essay or a book may contain all the matter necessary to salvation. The Bible, in this respect, is all that might be required; but God foresaw that it needed the embodiment of personal power. The message must have a messenger; truth must become incarnate, must be vitalized by a living spirit, and be presented to depraved humanity by flaming tongues. Hence, the most inspired are the most eloquent; and the most eloquent, the most powerful. Witness Chrysostom, Whitefield, Spurgeon, and Moody. Besides, the object which preaching has in view is of such a difficult nature and of such momentous importance, that it demands the highest possible human skill in order to succeed. This grandest virtue of pulpit power is eloquence.

We know that there exists in the minds of many a strong prejudice against the cultivation and use of eloquence. There are men, and men, too, of distinction and learning, such as Aristotle, and Kant, who set a very low estimate upon eloquence, and would even have nothing to do with it. In their opinion, it is clear that its only purpose is to excite the feelings, which is always useless, and sometimes injurious. In their opinion, we should address the *understanding* alone by stringent *arguments*, and avoid the excitement of the feelings and the influencing of the will. This

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§ I. WHAT IT IS NOT.

1. *Eloquence is not poetry only*—a sort of sentiment that seeks only to *please*, with no higher motive than the gratification of the hearer. Such a type of oratory may suit the Ingersolls of æsthetic and comic fancy, but not the minister of sober truth. It may possess a certain charm that makes it look like reality, but it is a vision without a substance. True eloquence may have poetic beauty; but this is an accident, and not a fundamental quality.

2. Eloquence is not *expression* only. A copious vocabulary, elegant diction, musical intonation, graceful gesture, and easy delivery are but the external drapery. Hence, to begin the study of oratory with rhetoric and elocution is putting the work in the reverse of the true order. It is putting leaves and blossoms on a dead tree. As in vegetable growth the inorganic matter is changed to organic, so in eloquence truth must become galvanized and vitalized, incarnate in the soul; and its highest development was witnessed in that "Word" that "was made flesh," and that "spake as never man spake." It is not in the *speech*, but in the *man*.

3. Eloquence is not *sensationalism*. When men try to "play the orator," without possessing the qualities of an orator, the blunder is called sensation. The sensationalist does not seek to persuade because of a personal conviction, but from a desire to please, or to exhilarate, or to startle, or to excite, and so descends from the lofty position of eloquence to the lower level of sensationalism. Losing sight of the great object which a minister should have in view, he indulges in incoherent ravings and extravagant epithets, gives exaggerated descriptions, and magnifies or distorts features, all for the sake of effect. "Such a one may suddenly rise to popularity, and for a time draw a crowd; for

we live in an age which craves the sensational. * * * * Trustees of embarrassed churches may so far catch the infection of our times as to look for a minister who will fill the pews by some sudden rush, and bring up the revenue to a flowing surplus." But all this will prove disastrous in the end. The attempt to express and describe what we never felt will bring dishonor upon the cause we represent, and in time drive the people away from our churches. There is but one attraction which it is safe for a minister to use: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Let him adhere to that; for in the end it will prove sufficient. It may not bring the crowd so rapidly, but it will transform them as they come; and they will come to stay.

Some men, such as Dr. Talmage, by their natural peculiarities, may produce what might be described as sensational effects; and yet it would be unfair to call them sensational. Thus, Whitefield, in depicting the danger of the blind man, did it so graphically that even the cold and phlegmatic Chesterfield was compelled to relieve his feelings by crying out, "Good God, he is gone." That was undoubtedly a sensational effect; but it does not follow that Whitefield was a sensationalist. The truth, rather, is that Whitefield had a sensational hearer, who came not to be benefited, but to enjoy the eloquence of the orator.[1]

§ II. WHAT IT IS.

Eloquence is *spiritual agitation*,[2]—the soul in motion; soul in motion produces *soul-force;* and soul-force produces *soul-*

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1 See "Sensationalism in the Pulpit," by Dr. William M. Taylor, in *North American Review*, February, 1879.

2 Ministerial power "is spiritual and invisible. * * * * Indeed, power is in its nature indescribable. It is known simply by its results. Gravitation, that greatest of all material powers, ceaselessly active, everywhere potent, is wholly beyond our research, or even our conception. Where are those cords, stronger than steel, which bind the planets to their centers? * * * * Who can tell what is power? We see it in its effects, we measure it in its results. So with spiritual power."—Simpson's *Yale Lectures*, pp. 202, 203.

heat. This is eloquence.[1] It is a *hidden* motion within which can not be repressed. "Chains can not bind it. Mountains can not bury it. It thaws through the most icy habits. It bursts from the lip. It speaks from the eye. It modulates the tone. It pervades the manner. It possesses and controls the whole man. He is seen to be in earnest; he convinces; he persuades."[2] He speaks because he can not help it, as did the prophet when he said, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay;" or the psalmist: "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." Eloquence is a *magnetic* force, which, through the aid of language, disseminates itself through the entire mass of an assembly in an effervescence of similar feelings with those of the speaker, who is charged with it "as a jar in a battery is charged with the whole electricity of the bat-

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1 See this illustrated in model orators. Demosthenes was the very personification of force, as if he had been raised up as an illustration of eloquence for all ages. Cicero was superior to Demosthenes in general learning. Cicero was like the Amazon, great in all its windings, and on the whole, the broadest, largest, mightiest river in the world. Demosthenes was one whole Niagara, whose awful thundering flood nothing could resist. Fox exhibited this force. What was the secret of the power of the Earl of Chatham? Not learning, imagination, cunning; it was vehemence—an indomitable energy of purpose to carry his point. In Burke there was the want of that fire, and hence he was too loquacious, abstract, and prosy. Patrick Henry and Fisher Ames are illustrations of force and warmth. Their burning spirit, manifested in the eye, cheek, hand, gave their eloquence a power before which enemies quailed, and under its influence men held their breath or shouted with involuntary applause. The leading characteristic of Webster was force.

The French preachers made powerful representations of the majesty and awfulness of God; they searched and harrowed the guilty conscience; they struck the delicate chords of tenderness, and produced a shower of tears. Saurin's discourses are torrents of fire. . While the French pulpit exhibited force of *feeling*, the English pulpit exhibited force of *thought*. Barrow was a mine of rich thought—all gold and precious stones. Jeremy Taylor was a wilderness of sweets. Howe was serious and mighty in scripture. Tillotson was wise, eloquent, but cold. Baxter was heart-searching, pungent, and sometimes pathetic. Whitefield had a deep, experimental perception of the gospel truth, and an almost infinite sense of its importance The truth was a fire in his bones. Edwards was eloquent, but in a different way. His mind was of crystal clearness, acute, logical, ardent. His convictions of truth were as decided as Whitefield's. He wrote his sermons and confined himself to his notes, but he uncovered men's hearts, bringing out evil from its deepest recesses —See *Bibliotheca Sacra.*

2 Adams, in *Biblical Repository*, 1812, quoted by Kidder, in *Homiletics*, p. 408.

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contact of soul and truth, and when clearly expressed "extorts attention from the listless, excites the thoughtfulness of the indifferent, and kindles the emotion of the coldest heart."[1]

Therefore, eloquence is "'truth all aglow, * * * * truth felt and transferred to others; it is the transfer of the orator's consciousness into the auditor's consciousness,' says D'Alembert. * * * * It is the vehemence of the soul, the onward, sweeping rush in a channel which the mind has worn into a subject, and which it is continually wearing deeper. * * * * An eloquent mind, then, is a mind under motion. It is the mind moving forward, under the influence of clear knowledge and deep feeling, with constantly accelerated motion and constantly increasing momentum, to a final end, which is always a practical one. Eloquence itself, then, is thought with an impulse in it, thought with a drift and rush in it. Eloquence is, as one instinctively denominated it, a *flood*."[2]

2. But you ask, "If truth is the great factor in eloquence, then what has imagination to do with it, which is generally considered so important to a speaker?" You remind us that the "Iliad," "Æucid," Dante's "Inferno," and Milton's "Paradise Lost," abound with the most eloquent speeches, and yet these are all works of fiction. We answer: When imagination manufactures only phantoms, and scatters them every-where like sky-rockets — when it indulges in such fire-works of fancy, it should be branded as the greatest enemy of oratory. But this is a perversion of the faculty. Imagination is not untruth. It does not create anything which has not its prototype in some object that has its existence somewhere in the realm of actuality; or, more plainly, every picture of the imagination must

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1 Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 401.

2 Dr. Shedd, in Introduction to Theremin's *Systematic Rhetoric*.

have truth for its basis. Its province is not to create *de nihilo*, but to present truth in new and various forms; to combine facts in a way in which they never existed before. You can not imagine an impossibility. You might imagine the sun rising from the West, but you *can not* imagine two straight lines inclosing space. The imagination has limits, and these limits must be somewhere within the bounds of truth. The plays of Shakespeare find their realization in human nature. The poems of Virgil and Homer are the distant echoes of scripture facts; for recent writers have shown how the mythology of the ancients is borrowed from our Bible. "Paradise Lost," and "Inferno," are Bible truths presented in new and fascinating ways. It is truth that kindles the *imagination* and makes *it* helpful to eloquence. It is truth that awakens the *emotions* and makes *them* helpful to eloquence. It is truth that stimulates *thought* and makes *it* helpful to eloquence. Imagination, emotion, thought, all inspire eloquence; but these are all inspired by truth, and without it they would be as lifeless as the eye, and the ear, and the tongue, without the circulating life-blood. Take truth out of the realm of eloquence, and every speaker would become a mummy, a heartless, lifeless statue, fit only for the museum, and not for the rostrum.

§ III. HOW TO PRODUCE ELOQUENCE.

We have examined the nature of eloquence, and considered it as consisting of soul and truth, not in the passive, but in the active state. The important inquiry now is, How can this soul-action, or eloquence, be induced?

1. *By vivid, vigorous thought.* This is a great stimulant. It quickens soul and body into new activity, and, like a flint, produces vital sparks of eloquence. It is only he who clearly grasps his subject that can clothe his thoughts in

living colors. "Leonardo da Vinci had in his mind certain vivid and distinct conceptions of the Last Supper, which, with his pencil, by light, and shade, and color, he exhibited in his celebrated painting in the Cathedral of Milan, in forms so true to nature that the spectator could hardly resist the impression that he was actually gazing upon breathing bodies. What light, and shade, and color are to the painter, such are words, and tones, and gestures to the orator."[1] But without this clear, vivid conception of a subject, which made the painter's canvas a breathing expression of his ideal, the speaker can not impress a facsimile of his thoughts upon the hearer's mind, or turn his "ears into eyes."

Again, the heart is influenced chiefly through the intellect. "No one is moved with that which he does not *understand* and does not *believe*. The affections, therefore, can not be moved unless the understanding is previously enlightened."[2] "If Plato had reason for writing over the door of his academy, 'Let no one who is not a geometrician enter here,' the orator has equal reason for inscribing upon the rostrum, Let no one ascend here who is not a scholar and a thinker."[3] Thought arouses the soul to action, and makes it scintillate with sparks of eloquence.

2. *By emotion springing from genuine sympathy.* If the intellect acts upon the emotions, the emotions in turn react upon the intellect, and this reciprocating influence will intensify rhetorical action. Whatever, then, can excite the emotions in a benevolent direction will aid in promoting religious oratory. To this end there must be—

(1.) *Sympathy* with the *truth*. Not only must the mind have clear views and firm convictions upon the teachings of Revelation, but the heart must admire its teachings, fall

1 Fowler's *English Language*, p. 663.

2 Porter's *Lectures on Eloquence and Style*.

3 Shedd's Introduction to Theremin's *Systematic Rhetoric*.

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kindred to home, and home to country; break the electric current that girdles the world in one common brotherhood of feeling and sympathy, and the sacred wand of eloquence would be forever broken. Vinet says that eloquence "is the power of making the primitive chords of the soul (its purely human elements) vibrate within us." It is "the contact of man with man;" and hence Broadus thinks that "it is impossible to be eloquent on any subject, save by associating it with such ideas as that of mother, child, friends, home, country, heaven, and the like," because they possess an interest common to all.

"There is nothing else on earth so great as human life, and nothing whose contact is so inspiring. There was nothing more noticeable in Christ than his intense and constant sympathy with human life. He knew how great it was, for he had created it. He felt how great it was, for its mystery filled him. He sought it out everywhere —in the booth of the publican and the boat of the fisherman, in the fair face of John and the rough mien of Peter, in the cottage where dwelt the sisters whom he loved, and under the disheveled locks of the penitent who poured her tears, more odorous than the ointment, upon his feet. And he won his way to the hearts of his disciples, he wins his way now to the barbarian and islander, to the poor and the young, to the deaf and the blind, because all feel him in sympathy with them. The great requisite, then, for an orator is power of kindness, a tender and sorrowful sympathy with the bereaved, compassion for the poor, the unfortunate, and the erring; reverence for true nobleness and dignity of character, admiration of great achievements and powers, and a ready appreciation of every excellence in others."[1]

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1 Dr. Storrs, in *Bibliotheca Sacra.*

"*Si vis me flere, dolendum est*
Primum ipsi tibi: tum tua me infortunia laedent,
Telephe vel Peleu; male si mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo aut ridebo."[1]

3. *By the character of the speaker.* In Christian eloquence the chief quality is not *action*, as Demosthenes thought,[2] but the first and the second and the third qualification is *real, moral goodness.* The fact that the orator must be a good man has been recognized from the days of Cicero and Quintilian to the present time. Solon, nearly six hundred years before Christ, said, "*Τὸν λόγον εἴδωλον εἶναι*,"—the discourse is the image of the conduct,—and it startles you as if inspiration had been there, when you read in another, "*Ut vivat quemque etiam dicere*,"—every man speaks as he lives. The discourse is the exponent of the man. The preacher is the sermon, and the sermon is the preacher. "Could any one have stolen Whitefield's sermon? George Whitefield *was* the sermon; it was *in* him as part of his very life, and his word was therefore with living power."[3] Why do Whitefield's sermons read so poorly in print? There is nothing in their perusal that would secure him any reputation for eloquence. The explanation is that there was a *holy personality* behind them that fanned his utterances into a living flame,—a weight of character which could not be transferred to paper. It is not so much what is said as who says it, that makes an impression. "Neither cogent reasoning, nor solemn tones, nor flowing tears can have influence with an audience, if we are known to be other than men of integrity, men of truth, men of honor, men who *are*, in some measure, what

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1 If you wish me to weep, you must weep first yourself; then will your misfortunes grieve me, O Telephus or Peleus; but if you speak badly things commanded [or commissioned], I shall either sleep or laugh.—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 102–105.

2 See chapter on Elocution and Conduct in the Pulpit, p. 476.

3 Parker, in *Ad Clerum*.

they say. In order to successful eloquence, then, the speaker must at least *seem* good, and the only way to seem good is to be so." Theremin, in his excellent treatise on "Eloquence a Virtue," makes eloquence to consist exclusively of ethical laws, and makes it depend upon the character of the speaker. If virtue is not the all of eloquence, it is a large part of it; and it is certainly very imperfect without it. Chrysostom reduces all eloquence of preaching to this one object—*to please God.*[1]

4. *By Christian faith.* There are some things in Christian theology that can never reach the heart through the intellect, inasmuch as they are beyond the ken of human reason. The thoughts that move the deepest fountain of the soul; the sublimest truths of eschatology that can inspire human spirits with holy aspirations, are objects of our Christian faith. In proportion as these unseen truths become *realities* in the speaker's consciousness, will he be eloquent. He believes, therefore he speaks, "as seeing Him who is invisible."

"When religious truth fades out of view, when themes of eternity as awful verities cease to stir the soul, something insincere, artificial, and unreal is suggested to the hearer, and the speaker finds himself lifeless and inefficient. Unbelief relaxes the nerves of oratory, and makes one an empty declaimer instead of a powerful preacher. It requires the electricity of faith to produce sons of thunder. * * * * It was this vivid *realization* of the spiritual and unseen that gave Brainerd such irresistible power over the sons of the wilderness. Paul always spoke of eternal things as one *who knew*,—'We believe, and therefore speak,' —and prophets uttered their terrific maledictions and foretold coming glories with the conviction of a conscious certainty. Grasp the truth with the simple but gigantic

1 Neander's *Life of Chrysostom*, p. 73.

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The united co-operation of these five agencies—namely invigorating thought, which is the soul's vivid perception of truth; a tender sympathy, which brings soul and truth into lively contact, producing a glow of emotion; an irreproachable, holy life, which makes the preacher and the truth consistent with each other, precept and example to correspond, without which the effects of our preaching can not be powerful and permanent; a living faith in the testimony of God, which brings the truth of unseen realities into the immediate presence and possession of the soul; and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,—a supernatural influence which makes the preacher more than a natural orator, investing him with divine power that makes him a conqueror among men,—the co-operation of all these great instrumentalities is essential to pulpit eloquence. Of course, there must also be a clear *expression* of our thoughts and feelings in the most suitable language,—which will be discussed in the following chapters on Style, Modes of Delivery, and Elocution.

The value of eloquence in the pulpit, and the importance of its cultivation, can not be overestimated. Emerson says that the orator is a man who possesses eloquence, not merely in the quiet, rural district, or in the city, guarded by police force, or in broad daylight, and under the eyes of a hundred thousand law-loving and law-abiding people, but who upon the Atlantic, in a storm, can infuse reason into men disabled by terror, can bring himself off safe even among thieves, among an infuriated populace, and among hungry cannibals; a man before whose fame all other fames are hushed; whose ability is to alter in a pair of hours, perhaps in a half-hour's discourse, the convictions

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portioned to his natural powers. Let but this baptism descend, and thousands of us who, up to this day, have been but commonplace or weak ministers, such as might easily pass from the memory of mankind, would then become mighty."—Extracts from Arthur's *Tongue of Fire*, pp. 97, 300.

and habits of years; whose eloquence needs no bell to call the people together, and no constable to keep them; which draws the children from their play, the old from their arm-chairs, the invalid from his warm chamber; which holds the hearer fast; steals away his feet, that he shall not depart,—his memory, that he shall not remember the most pressing affairs,—his belief, that he shall not admit any opposing considerations.

"If our estate or life were suspended on a judicial trial, who of us would not wish for an eloquent man as our advocate? Why, then, if the soul of our brother is to be rescued from eternal death, should we not wish the emotions of the gospel to be addressed to him by a powerful and persuasive eloquence? The ambition of Philip, the treason of Catiline, the usurpation of Cæsar, called forth strains of eloquence which have been the admiration of succeeding ages. Yet those subjects were trifles, fit only for the prattle of children, compared with the joyful and dreadful themes that employ a preacher's tongue."[1]

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1 Porter's *Lectures on Eloquence and Style*, p. 28.

CHAPTER II.

STYLE.

Primary Qualities of Style—Secondary Qualities—Means of Acquiring a Good Style.

Style, as referring to discourse, has been variously defined;[1] but most definitions have reference either to language alone, or to the union of thought and language. A true definition of style, however, should include three ideas: *intellect* as the germ, *sensibility* as the circulating fluid, and *language* as the development or outer manifestation of these two faculties. Hence, men's natural habits of expression will vary according to their different mental idiosyncrasies, and style is therefore an exhibition of character, which was evidently the idea of Buffon when he said, "The style is the man himself."[2] Style, then, is the tri-unity of thought, feeling, and language, and is therefore both subjective and objective; it has a soul as well as a body, intimately and inseparably connected, so that we can not speak of one without speaking also of the other. There is a difference, as well as an identity, between words and emotions and thoughts. "Thoughts and feelings are the sons of God, and words are the daughters of men;"

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1 "Style is the incarnation of thought."—Wordsworth. "Style is the way in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language"—Blair and Beattie "Treats of the expression of thought in language," and is "the verbal body of thought"—Day. "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style."—Swift. "The manner of writing with regard to language, or the choice and arrangement of words." ster.

2 *Discours sur le Style.*

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in every respect.[1] The theory must be adapted to its peculiar function, as rhetoric is adapted to preaching. In conversation we speak to the few; in preaching, to the many; in the former we have a rejoinder, and alternately become speaker and hearer; in the latter we become spokesman of all. The difference between the two is not in the instrument, "but simply a higher or lower range on the same instrument."[2] The theory is, that the pulpit style be essentially conversational,—the preacher's natural way of thinking, feeling, and speaking, excluding the conventionalities of a common colloquy, and including the grander, richer, and fuller wings of powerful eloquence.

We shall speak of style more in detail.

§ I. PRIMARY QUALITIES OF STYLE.

Writers have recommended many and various properties as belonging to good style. We shall distinguish between those that are fundamental, and such as are important but not essential. We proceed in the order of their importance.

I. PERSPICUITY.

There are three prime qualities of style,—perspicuity, energy, beauty; but the greatest of these is perspicuity. "*Nobis prima sit virtus perspicuitas.*"[3]

Perspicuity means, in a most literal sense, *transparency*, and signifies such felicity of expression that the thought is clearly perceived, while the style itself is least seen.

Quintilian says that the discourse should enter the mind, as the light enters the eye, even although not intently fixed upon it; so that pains are necessary not merely that

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1 "If men were to converse as they sometimes preach, it would be bombastic absurdity; if they were to preach as they usually speak, it would be bare, passionless, and tame in the extreme. But this may be because their actual preaching is bombastic, and their actual conversation poor and tame."—Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 135.

2 Broadus.

3 Let us regard perspicuity as the first excellence.—Quintilian, Lib. VIII., Cap. II.

the hearer may be able to understand it, but that he can in no way fail to understand it.[1] He who strives to be intelligible should imitate the example of a German philosopher, the clearest thinker and writer of his time, who entitled a treatise, "An account, clear as the sun, of the real nature of my philosophy; or, an attempt to compel the reader to understand."[2]

The preacher may often be tempted to yield to a false idea of style which delights in a labored and learned kind of rhetoric, or in a brilliant "blaze of oratorical fireworks," than which there is no manner more offensive to good sense. In our time, there is a class who would rather have their ears tickled than their hearts and minds enlightened; and they demand a florid kind of obscurity; but he should dare to be plain, and thus correct this evil tendency of our day. If he endeavor to please this class of hearers, he will displease many others, "without in fact succeeding better with the class whose applause was desired." In secular oratory, where the highest object, often, is simply to entertain and to please, an artificial style may be excusable; but the preacher has a higher mission than to delight the people with his rhetorical enchantment. Nothing is more unbecoming than grandiloquence in the pulpit, —words, words, without a meaning. The message of salvation to perishing men must be plainly and clearly rendered. Says J. Angell James, "I could as soon believe a physician were intent on saving his fellow-creatures from death, who, when the plague was sweeping them into the grave, spent his time in studying to write his prescription in beautiful characters and classic Latinity."[3] "Would a man of any bowels of compassion go from a prince to a

1 "*Ut in animum ejus oratio, ut sol in oculos, etiamsi in eam non intendatur, incurrat. Quare non, ut intelligere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intelligere, curandum.*"—*Orat. Inst.*, III., 2, 23, 24.

2 Fichte. Quoted by Shedd and Broadus.

3 *Earnest Ministry*, p. 92.

condemned man and tell him, in such a language that he should not understand, the condition upon which the prince would pardon him, and then the poor man lose his life because the proud and haughty messenger must show his knack in delivering his message in fine English, which the condemned man could not understand?"[1]

The chief requisite in perspicuity of style is—

1. *A distinct and clear conception of the subject.* Language is the photograph of thought. It is a copy of the mind's idea, presented to others in characters or sounds, so that when we write we think visibly, when we speak we think audibly. How, then, can the expression of one's thoughts be perspicuous when the thoughts themselves are confused? "A writer can never make that clear to his readers which is not clear to himself."[2] Obscurity in language is usually the result of obscurity in thought; while clear, lucid ideas naturally clothe themselves in plain and intelligible words. It is a mistake to suppose that common people can not understand a profoundly deep preacher, provided he has a clear style; but on the other hand, the most intelligent (as well as the most illiterate) are often perplexed at the ambiguous diction of a superficial discourse that lacks thoroughness of conception in the speaker's own mind. "Don't be afraid to say simple things. The greatest sayings are simple." Albert Barnes truly says, "A river may be deep, and yet its waters so pure that the bottom may be seen at a great depth; and glass in the window is most valuable the clearer and purer it is, when it is itself least seen, and when it gives no obstruction to the light. If the purpose be that the glass may be in itself ornamental, it may be well to stain it; if to give light, it should be pure. A very shallow stream may be very

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1 Doolittle.

2 Porter's *Lectures on Eloquence and Style.*

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It does not follow, however, that a word is a really plain word because it happens to be common, or Saxon.[1] Mr. Burgon says, "We have heard too much of the importance of using Anglo-Saxon words in addressing the uneducated. * * * * The humblest auditors * * * * are familiar with Bible-English. To suppose that monosyllables will of necessity conduce to plainness is a kindred mistake."[2] Yet as a rule, words of Anglo-Saxon origin are best adapted to a mixed audience. They constitute the bulk and original stock of our language, its true vernacular. It has been ascertained that the English language now consists of about thirty-eight thousand words, of which twenty-three thousand, or nearly five eighths, are Anglo-Saxon in their origin; in our most idiomatic writers about nine tenths are Anglo-Saxon, and in our least idiomatic writers about two thirds. From an examination of passages from the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, Cowley, Thomson, Addison, Spenser, Locke, Pope, Young, Gibbon, and Johnson, it appears that of one thousand four hundred and ninety-two words in sentences taken from these authors there are only two hundred not Saxon. Upon this basis of calculation about four fifths of the words in actual use are of Anglo-Saxon origin. Many words of foreign composition are equally plain; but what is insisted upon is that the words of every-day usage, such as have settled and well-understood meanings, are best for the pulpit.

Hence, avoid technicalities.[3] When used they should be

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1 "For example, most church-going people would understand what we mean by an *edifying* sermon, and many of them would be a little surprised by hearing the phrase, a *building-up* sermon; and yet *edify* is Latin and *build up* is Saxon"—*Homiletical and Pastoral Lectures*, delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral, before the Church Homiletical Society, p. 109.

2 *Treatise on the Pastoral Office*, p. 176

3 The language of science and professionals is not intelligible to the majority of people. "Even those technical terms in theology with which the people are very familiar do not always represent to them any distinct conception."—Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 344.

sufficiently explained.[1] How different a hearer's criticism after listening to the scholarly sermon of a certain preacher, "I ought to have taken my dictionary instead of my Bible to church to-day," from the fine compliment on Webster's speech: "I read your speech through without the aid of a dictionary." Webster used to refer to this as the best compliment of his life.

Archaism, provincialism, barbarism, solecism, alienism, cant words, and all scientific and foreign phrases, though useful in literary composition and in treatises on scientific subjects, are utterly out of place in the pulpit. In shunning an inflated style of phraseology the preacher must equally shun everything that is trivial or vulgar in expression.

4. *The language will give amplitude to the conception.* By this is meant the dwelling upon an important point or principle, until the hearer shall feel the whole force of it. It is not enough that the words and sentences be clear; the leading ideas (as well as the sub-ideas) of the sermon, which we wish to impress, must possess fullness and completeness. "Style is not only a medium; it is also a form. It is not only translucent and transparent, like the undefined and all-pervading atmosphere; it also has definite outlines, like a single object. Style is not only clear like the light; it is rotund like the sun. While, therefore, the conception of perspicuity of medium is retained, there should also be combined with it the conception of fullness of outline, and vividness of impression, so as to secure a comprehensive, and all-including idea of that first fundamental property of style which renders it intelligible."[2]

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1 "If there be a common and a scientific name for the same object, ten to one that the latter is adopted. Heat straightway becomes 'caloric;' lightning, the 'electric fluid,' instead of plants and animals, we are surrounded by 'organized substances;' life is nothing half so good as the 'vital principle,' phenomena of all kinds are very plentiful; these phenomena are 'developed,' and 'combined,' and 'analyzed,' and, in short, done everything with except being made intelligible."—*Edinburgh Review*, quoted by Ripley, in *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 139.

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 61.

Whately says that the relation of the generality of minds to thought is analogous to that of the horse to its food. The horse can not be fed on corn alone, but straw or hay must be added, to supply the necessary bulk to distend the stomach, in order that it may act with its full powers. Something like hay and straw in the form of illustration, repetition, variation, etc., must be added to the more solid arguments, for the twofold purpose of giving fullness, and of aiding the hearer in clearly grasping the thoughts and digesting their contents. In this respect Chalmers is a model, whose discourses are so full and compiete that one can not fail to understand his ideas, or ever cease to remember them.

In the matter of fullness of treatment, two extremes should be guarded against. The first is *prolixity*. Too much amplifying of the subject becomes wearisome to the audience, and verbal circumlocution is disgusting. Avoid *flumen dicendi*.[1, 2] "Poverty of thought seeks to conceal itself under a profusion of words. With such a mind thoughts are too precious a commodity to be dealt out freely, but words, which cost nothing, and which are common property to the wise and foolish, may be lavished with unsparing liberality. * * * * Let a weak writer attempt to describe a good character, and he overwhelms you with epithets. All is lofty and magnificent. Because common words are too tame to suit his style of elevated encomium, he resorts to superlatives and intensives. Pope says,—

> 'Words are like leaves; and when they most abound,
> Much fruit of *sense* beneath is rarely found.'"[3]

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1 A flood of speech.

2 "It is not uncommon to hear a writer or speaker of this class mentioned as having 'a very fine command of language,' when perhaps it might be said with more correctness that 'his language has a command of him' * * * * He has but the same 'command of language' that the rider has of a horse which runs away with him."—Whately, quoted by Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 370, 371.

3 Porter's *Lectures on Eloquence and Style.*

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Rogers says, in speaking of the seventeenth century,—

"Most of the sermons of that age are full of quotations absolutely unintelligible to the common people. Numberless passages of Jeremy Taylor, in particular, are little better than a curious tessellation of English, Greek, and Latin."[1]

"Even Wesley's sermons abound in such quotations, though he preached mainly to the common people. It is a sign of improved taste that this is no longer the practice. * * * * Even where one refers to the original Scriptures, it is very rarely proper to mention the Greek or Hebrew word. * * * * The preacher must never invent words. Madame de Stael says, 'There is in general no surer symptom of barrenness of ideas, than the invention of words,'—a remark which may at least be set over against the notion that such invention is a symptom of originality."[2]

"It is said that Archbishop Tillotson was in the habit of reading his sermons to an illiterate old woman that lived with him, and altering all the phrases till he had brought them down to the level of her capacity. Some authors will go over a paper again and again for no other purpose than to find out whether more common and intelligible words or phrases could be substituted for any that they have used. It is a mistake to suppose that a style on which no pains have been bestowed is necessarily a clear one."[3]

"He [the preacher] must be determined to be so intelligible, that the mind of the hearer can not fail to understand him. He must *compel* the hearer to understand. He must force his way into consciousness, by the most significant, the most direct, the very plainest address to his cognitive powers. * * * * Let the preacher, whether he is master of any other properties of style, and before troubling himself about them, be clear as the sun in his presentation of truth, and then he will compel men to understand."[4]

"So anxious ought the Christian teacher to be for clearness in his instructions, as even to forego some of the most cultivated forms of speech; nor will he be so solicitous whether his words will sound well, as whether they will directly convey what he wishes to present. * * * * He will even descend from his own level, if occasion requires, and adopt expressions which are common to the class of people he is addressing.

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1 *Essay on Sacred Eloquence.*

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 329.

3 Blaikie, p 142.

4 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 72.

* * * * Why should we speak at all, if those for whose benefit we ought to speak can not understand us? A preacher ought, then, to avoid all such forms of speech as are not suited to convey his meaning to the particular assembly he is addressing, however well adapted they may be to another assembly; and in their stead, he should endeavor to select other pure words and phrases."[1]

"'Fire low,' the order which generals have often given to their men before fighting began, suits the pulpit not less than the battle-field. The mistake, common to both soldiers and speakers, is to shoot too high, over people's heads; missing by a want of directness and plainness both the persons they preach to and the purpose they preach for."

II. Energy.

Energy, strength, force, or vivacity, as it is variously called, is the forcible expression of a soul in earnest. It "is power *manifested;* power streaming out in all directions, and from every pore of the mind."[3] It is not merely *vehemence;* for a man may be boisterous without being impressive. One of the leading characteristics of energy is pungency,—that quality which renders thought penetrative, and drives truth home to the quick. Sheer physical force may stun with its bluntness; but soul-earnestness pierces the heart with poignancy. It is not *exaggeration.* Men of wild imagination or strong impulsiveness, or, perhaps, of a phlegmatic disposition or dull apprehension, may feign enthusiasm by the use of extravagant expressions and hyperbolic phrases. Such a superficial kind of earnestness is not energy, *in sano sensu* (in a proper sense). It is a fiction, and really changes a truth into a falsehood through the means of an overwrought rhetoric.[4]

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1 Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Lib. IV., Cap. X.

2 Dr. Guthrie, in Introduction to his sermon on "Neglected Warnings."

3 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p 73.

4 "A story is told of a minister so prone to exaggeration, that after his brethren had admonished him in vain they voted that he should be called before the bar of the conference, and should be reproved by the presiding bishop. The reproof was kindly and affectionately given, and was received by the erring brother with perfect submission and with tears. At the close he promised to reform, expressed deep sorrow for his error, said it had cost him many a pang, and that over it he had shed *barrels of tears*."—Bishop Simpson, in *Yale Lectures*.

True energy, says Shedd, "originates in *truth* itself, and partakes of its nature. * * * * Man's strength is in God, and the mind's strength is in truth." True energy, then, consists in making the truth appear natural, and thereby giving to every grade thereof that proportion of energy which is natural to it, or which its importance demands. All truth is not the same in its relations to man; and therefore energy in expression is not the same, but varies in degree of vigor, according as the truth is weighty or otherwise.[1]

But all religious truth is essentially weighty; and therefore *preaching*—the expressing and imparting of these momentous doctrines of our faith which are calculated to shape and fix eternal destinies—demands more force in style than any other species of oratory that can engage the human mind. We will now present the requisites of energetic style.

1. *An energetic nature.* This makes the mind responsive, in the sense that it not only *feels* the full weight of the truth that strikes upon it, but echoes it back to men in its original, true force. A sluggish disposition, instead of making a truth to rebound, will cause it to be dormant in the mind, without any sign of vitality. But let that frigid nature become animated by a vigorous emotion, and every thought receives elasticity, momentum, power.

Dr. Cuyler says, "Feel everything. The common lack of the pulpit is a lack of feeling. We do not want less logic, nor less Bible knowledge; but we do want more holy ardor and love of souls. We want the argument red-hot with emotion, the inner fire piercing through the logic,

1 "An author should guard against the vain ambition of expressing *everything* in an *equally* high-wrought, brilliant, and forcible style * * * * To brighten the dark parts of a picture, produces much the same result as if one had darkened the bright parts; in either case there is a want of *relief* and *contrast;* and composition, as well as painting, has its lights and shades, which must be distributed with no less skill, if we would produce the desired effect."—Whately, p. 334, quoted by Broadus.

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His thoughts cut through the more dull and apathetic parts, into the quick, and produce a keen sensation." [1]

Energy of style, then, is a subjective quality; a work which has its origin within, and proceeds from an inward conception and feeling. This is the true philosophy of a forcible style. Intensity of feeling and pungency of thought are the fountains of rhetorical force. The man who thinks deeply and feels strongly, expresses himself powerfully. "The state of the mind at the time of writing is an important consideration—the interest felt in the subject, the vivid conception of the theme, and the strength of purpose and of aim. * * * * There must be the energy of soul before energy of expression." [2]

3. *Style of language.* What, now, should be the kind of language to correspond with this kind of inner soul-force?

(1.) It must possess *energetic brevity.* Such was the style of Aristotle, Tacitus, Phocion, and Milton. How pointed the words of Milton's Satan, spoken to the fallen angels: "Princes, potentates, warriors, * * * * awake, arise, or be forever fallen!" [3] The American Indian orators are especially noted for a brevity which is full of feeling. Note the language of Black Hawk, in his speech at Prairie du Chien, speaking of himself in the third person. "Black Hawk is a true Indian, and disdains to cry like a woman. He feels for his wife, his children, and his friends. But he does not care for himself. He cares for the nation and the Indians. They will suffer. He laments their fate. He has been taken prisoner, and his plans are stopped. He can do no more. He is near his end. His sun is setting, and he will rise no more." These sparks of laconic brevity proceeded from a feeling heart, and impress us deeply. "It may be established as a maxim that admits no exception,

1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 83.

2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 773.

3 *Paradise Lost.*

that the fewer the words are, provided neither propriety nor perspicuity be violated, the expression is always the more vivid."[1, 2] "Oratory, like the drama, abhors lengthiness."[3]

(2.) It must possess *energetic construction.* This is secured:

(*a.*) By conserving *unity* in the sentences,—presenting but one leading idea, and preserving the same order and construction throughout the entire sentence. Thus, the sentence, "He believed the truth of the Scriptures, and also in the absolute perfection of God, and that man is a ruined sinner," is defective in unity of grammatical relation. How much more forcible when stated thus: "He believed the truth of the Scriptures, the perfection of God, and the ruin of man;" or, "He believed that the Scriptures are true, that God is perfect, and that man is a ruined sinner."[4]

(*b.*) By using specific rather than general or abstract terms. Dr. Campbell says that the more general the terms are, the fainter is the picture; the more special they are, the brighter. "In the song of Moses, occasioned by the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, the inspired poet, speaking of the Egyptians, says, 'They *sank* as *lead* in the mighty waters.' Make but a small alteration on the expression, and say, 'They *fell* as *metal* in the mighty waters,' and the difference in the effect will be quite astonishing. * * * * 'Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' * * * * Let us here adopt a little of the tasteless

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1 Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 353, quoted by Broadus.

2 The Greek and Latin languages are favorable to brevity of expression; for example, "*Vincit, Christo duce.*" He conquers, Christ being his leader.

3 Lytton's *Caxtoniana*, p. 94.

4 See Porter's *Lectures on Eloquence and Style.*

manner of modern paraphrasts, by the substitution of more general terms, * * * * and observe the effect produced by this change. 'Consider the flowers how they gradually increase in their size; they do no manner of work, and yet I declare to you that no king whatever, in his most splendid habit, is dressed up like them.' * * * * How spiritless is the same sentiment rendered by these small variations."[1]

(*c.*) By arranging words in an order that is most adapted to strongly impress the hearer. In the language of passion, whatever is most felt will first find utterance. Thus, Shakespeare makes the murderer of Hamlet's father say in horror of his soul, "Pray—I can not." This is more expressive than the grammatical order, "I can not pray." Broadus speaks of "what grammarians call *aposiopesis*, where part of a sentence is suppressed through emotion. *E. g.*, Luke xix. 42, 'If even thou hadst known * * * * the things that belong to thy peace!' How much better would have been her destiny, it is left for silence to suggest. Luke xxii. 42, 'Father, if thou art willing to remove this cup from me!' * * * * Acts xxiii. 9, 'We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit spoke to him, or an angel—?' How expressive was this silence, from a Pharisee speaking in the Sanhedrim, in presence of the Sadducees."

The *climax*, or that structure of a sentence in which the different members succeed each other in order of strength or importance, the most impressive being placed last, is a species of energetic arrangement.

(3.) It must possess *energetic imagery.* Representative

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1 Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, pp. 307, 308.—Our most abstract and generic terms are from the Latin, while the specific are from the Anglo-Saxon. Thus, *color* is Latin but white, black, green, are Anglo-Saxon. *Crime* is Latin, but murder, theft, robbery etc., are Anglo-Saxon. Hence the latter are more expressive. "Well-being arises from well-doing," is Saxon. "Felicity attends virtue," is Latin. How inferior in force is the latter! An admirer of Howe's sermon on "The Savior's Tears" said, "I could think of the word *tear* till I wept." How flat it would sound to say, "The *lachrymal* distress of Jesus."

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III. BEAUTY.

Beauty is the last and least in the triplet of primary qualities of style. Some regard this property as altogether unnecessary in a sermon, and studiously avoid all elegant phraseology, as though it were a defect. Others give it supreme importance, and their chief concern is to clothe their thoughts in the most ornamental garb. Both views are inconsistent with good style and a cultivated taste. That which is really desirable in style is neither artificial beauty nor uncouth homeliness, but that artless charm and symmetry which inheres in something really and intrinsically beautiful,—natural elegance as opposed to outward decoration. "A painted cheek is an abomination; but let there be high health, and animated feeling, and without an effort or a thought the cheek takes to itself a color most bright and fair. The Creator meant that it should be so."[1]

Hence, such an idea of beauty as above described, though inferior and subservient to perspicuity and energy, is not to be ostracized as unworthy a place in religious eloquence. Beauty evidently is a divine creation, and is everywhere displayed,—in Revelation as well as in nature, and from the smallest dew-drop that sparkles in the morning light, up to the heavens that "declare the glory of God." Everything touched by the fingers of Divinity shows something of the "beauty of the Lord" (Psalms xxvii. 4); "and it is on the basis of this style touched with corresponding beauty that devout souls love most to hear the lessons of divine truth from human lips."[2] If human hearts can be impressed by truth presented with clearness and force, they can also be impressed with its beauty and its loveliness. The mistake is in regarding beauty as nothing more than ornament—

1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 386.

2 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 149.

an external embellishment added to truth in order to make it entertaining or pleasing to an æsthetic mind. There is, indeed, an outward beauty, but there is also a living beauty. There is a difference between a real flower and a bouquet of wax-work.

Beauty, like the properties of perspicuity and energy, is an efflux from within, and is manifested through the verbal expression. But it does not spring from one internal attribute, but from many. It is rather the symmetrical union of the most perfect qualities which blend in beautiful utterances; as, in the various natural features of a landscape, or the many component parts of a painting, the pleasing grace called the beautiful is the result of their variety harmonized into unity. Imagination, passion, order, simplicity, perspicuity, force,—all are the constituents of a beautiful style; the more perfect these are, the more elegant will be the style. The effort to be plain, forcible, clear, interesting, systematic, results in beauty. Without this harmony of the best internal faculties, every endeavor to delight the hearer, by the use of gaudy metaphors or brilliant language, will be affectation, and not real beauty.

As a complement to this beauty of qualities, there is a beauty of *language* which characterizes an admirable speaker.

1. The language will be *poetical;* not poetry in the proper sense, but a kind of poetical prose, that flows with ease and smoothness.[1] This is the natural movement of deep feeling and earnest thinking. As deep rivers flow in majestic smoothness, so a full heart and a full mind will move with lubricity and melody. The words "*fitly spoken*," which Solomon portrays as "apples of gold in pictures of silver," literally, are *words on wheels*, which,

1 "Prose is words in the right places; and poetry, the best words in the best places." —Coleridge.

instead of rasping and grating on the ear, roll along with ease and evenness.

Euphony, according to Vinet, is "the combination of agreeable, and the exclusion of discordant sounds." A pleasing combination must be promoted by avoiding harsh sounds, arising from difficult combinations of Greek and Latin terms, as well as words and sentences containing a succession of unaccented syllables; such as, meteorological, desultoriness, etc.

Harmony has reference to rhythmical flow of thought, and adds greatly to the beauty of expression. Examples of it abound in the Scriptures; such as the words of Ruth to Naomi, the one hundred and third and one hundred and seventh psalms, our Lord's invitation to the weary and heavy laden, and the last chapter of Revelation.

In trying to secure euphony and harmony of language we must not aim at making musical sentences, but remember that beauty of style flows naturally from a deeply emotional and mental state of the speaker. *Alliteration* sometimes increases euphony; as, "above | all pain, | all passion, | and all pride." A resemblance between the sounds of certain words and their significance, as in "splash," "whiz," "rough," "smooth," "blunt," "hard," etc., is as expressive as it is beautiful.

An important rule is, "That the language ought to correspond to the subject: heroic actions or sentiments require elevated language; tender sentiments ought to be expressed in words soft and flowing, and plain language void of ornament is adapted to subjects grave and didactic. Language may be considered as the dress of thought; and where the one is not suited to the other, we are sensible of incongruity, in the same manner as where a judge is dressed like a fop, or a peasant like a man of quality. Where the impression made by the words resembles the impression made

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value without clearness; but clearness and energy without beauty are better than clearness and beauty without energy. Clearness is the one indispensable requisite in every conceivable circumstance. The other two qualities stand related as second and third best. A preacher should be forcible, and sometimes rhetorically fascinating; but he *must be clear*, or with all his power and beauty of utterance he will not be understood. Obscurity is the greatest fault in pulpit style. We should earnestly seek for clearness and force, but never for beauty; but we should expect beauty as a natural product of gospel truth. "He who finds beauty shall lose it, but he who loses beauty shall find it."[1]

§ II. SECONDARY QUALITIES.

There are some other properties of style, which, though not fundamental, are nevertheless important. We mention:

1. The *scriptural* style. The sermon should be strongly flavored with a Bible-sentiment. A discourse need not be composed of scripture quotations alone, but it may be imbued with scriptural scenes, imagery, facts, illustrations, thoughts, language, etc. A preacher may have his favorite authors, such as Bunyan, Milton, Thomas à Kempis, and have his quiver full of the plumage of their thoughts, but his mind must be steeped in the fountain of Sacred Writ, and saturated with its spirit. This makes D. L. Moody such an effective preacher. Though many be ignorant of the Bible, yet, with the generality of hearers, thoughts are better understood in a biblical dress than in any other. Vinet, upon this point, gives the following advice to every preacher: "Feed upon the Bible, live in the Bible, unite yourself to it; let it abound in your mem-

1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 93.

ory and heart; let a frequent personal study of it reveal to you the force, give you the secret of a multitude of passages, which without such study would remain to you as mere commonplaces, and take no root in your memory; mix the recollection of them with your most tender affections, with your prayers, your gravest occupations; let the words of scripture gradually become the natural and involuntary form of your most inward thoughts;—then meditate on a subject for the pulpit; write; preach; your word will come filled with the richness, interblended with the colors of the word of inspiration." [1]

2. The style will sometimes be *sublime.* Such a style is appropriate in describing such objects and ideas as transport the mind and fill it with veneration and awe. Sublimity lies in the thought and object rather than in the language. The wide expanse of ocean, the canopy of heaven, a precipice, or a peak hiding its head in the clouds, the power of gravitation amid the harmony of heaven, are all objects of sublimity. In preaching, more than in any other species of oratory, is there occasion for this style; for in the realm of sacred truth are found the sublimest themes. Nothing can be more truly sublime than the greatness of God, his attributes and works, as well as human responsibility and destiny, and the various subjects of eschatology.

The language in which lofty thoughts are expressed is not necessarily lofty, but often simple and concise. What impression of divine power is conveyed by the simple words of Moses, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." With the same majestic simplicity, Christ calls a dead man to life,—"Lazarus, come forth,"—and hushes a tempest with, "Peace, be still." Generally, sublime conceptions are expressed by bold figures and images,

1 *Homiletics*, p. 420.

an example of which may be seen in Milton's description of the battle of angels in "Paradise Lost."[1]

This style should never be used unless the nature of the thought and feeling demands it. To force a trivial object into sublimity, or to unduly exalt a sublime object, is bombast and fustian.

3. The style should always be *natural.* A preacher is always the most successful when he speaks in a style that is perfectly natural to him. To imitate the style of eloquent preachers is putting Saul's armor on David, and renders the preacher awkward before the people. "We do not wish to hear Chalmers from any but Chalmers."[2] Besides, in copying the excellences of great speakers we may also copy their faults. Use and improve the gifts God gave you, rather than those which he did not give to you but to others.

Yet one's natural style may have serious defects. It is natural for some preachers to be obscure; to be flowery in diction, without being clear or energetic; to become excited over the most trivial subjects, or to dwell indifferently upon the sublimest sentiments. Such individuality of style, however characteristic of a speaker, can not be commended. Truth has a naturalness *sui generis*, and a preacher's natural way of presenting truth may present truth very unnaturally. To be truly natural, one's peculiar habits of speaking must be conformed to the requirements of the

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1 See example of the sublime style in Psalms cxiv; Isaiah lv. 1, 12, Habakkuk iii 10. One of the best examples of the sublime style may be found in the conclusion of one of Whitefield's sermons, of which the infidel Hume, who heard it, said, "It surpassed everything I ever saw or heard." The preacher, after a solemn pause, thus addressed his hearers. "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven, and shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of *one* sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?" Then he lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, stamped with his foot, and with gushing tears cried aloud, "*Stop*, Gabriel! *Stop*, Gabriel!! Stop, Gabriel!!! ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the tidings of *one* sinner converted to God." The effect was electrical, the assembly melted into tears.

2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, p. 737.

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pulpit. The preacher, then, should cultivate daily a *model* style of conversation, strictly avoiding all the faults of thoughtless persons around him, and imitating the excellences of those who are adepts in this art. The language of our childhood is usually very defective, being mixed with the infections of bad example daily surrounding us in youth, so that time and effort are required in adult years to rid ourselves of the evil habits acquired in early life. Pains and patience, however, will do wonders in correcting the erroneous habits of childhood and in enabling one to acquire facility in proper expression. Let him who would become a natural and easy pulpit orator practice daily and continually, in his conversation with the family, in the parish, on the street, and wherever he goes, the most approved and easy style of communicating his thoughts, remembering that what becomes habitual and natural in ordinary conversation will also become habitual and natural in the pulpit. "In order to speak well sometimes, it is necessary to speak well always."[1] "Let him make sparing use of contractions. Let him not allow a low or slang word to slip out; for the expressions one is accustomed to use in conversation will surely show themselves in the pulpit, especially in extemporaneous discourse. * * * * A refined man is shown in his conversation more quickly than in any other way. Burnet, in the 'History of His Own Time,' says of Leighton, 'In a free and frequent conversation with him for twenty-two years I never heard him utter an idle word, or a word that had not a direct tendency to edification.'"[2]

2. By *a diligent study of the language in which he speaks.* Such study must include a knowledge of the *nature* and *history* of the language, and, if possible, an acquaintance

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1 Coquerel.

2 Hoppin's *Homiletics*, pp. 746, 747.

with the ancient languages, as the only true foundation for success in mastering the English. He should never become deficient in grammar, no matter how complete his knowledge of this branch in his former school-days. Let him carefully study the etymology and definition of words, and accumulate an extensive vocabulary on the various theological ideas, out of which to select the most suitable words to express an idea in its various forms and shades.[1] It is therefore essential that the orator be provided with a copious vocabulary, and that he possess an entire command of all the resources and appliances of his language.

In the study of the English language, one will obtain much help from such works as Müller's "Science of Language;" Whitney's "Language and the Study of Language;" Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language;" Alford's "The Queen's English;" Trench's "English, Past and Present," and "Study of Words;" Mathews' "Words, Their Use and Abuse;" also, Angus' "Hand-Book of the English Tongue." Roget's "Thesaurus of English Words" is indispensable. Crabb's or Whately's "Synonymes," or Smith's "Synonymes Discriminated," should be used in connection with Roget. Of course the minister will have a Webster's or Worcester's unabridged dictionary. On English grammar, Fowler's "English Language in its Elements and Forms, with a History of its Origin and Development," is best for one acquainted with the rudiments of grammar. One should become versed in the meaning of words in their *most common acceptation.* Let

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1 "A well-educated person in England seldom uses more than about three thousand or four thousand words in actual conversation. Accurate thinkers and close reasoners, who avoid vague and general expressions, and wait till they find the word that exactly fits their meaning, employ a larger stock; and eloquent speakers may rise to a command of ten thousand. Shakespeare, who displayed a greater variety of expressions than probably any other writer in any language, produced all his plays with about fifteen thousand words. Milton's prose works are built up with eight thousand; and the Old Testament says all that it has to say with five thousand six hundred and forty-two words."—Muller's *Science of Language*, p. 266.

him note the language of eloquent speakers, whether secular or pulpit, to whom he has listened.

3. By *the careful reading of the best literature.* He must pass by all the inferior, and study the very best, models of style. "Great but mistaken are the efforts which some preachers make to acquire style—an *elegant* style. They read the magazines, they pore over novels, they study Emerson, and even Parker, not to speak of Macaulay and De Quincey. * * * * As a consequence their pulpit style is miserably vitiated, and they become vain of its very defects and blemishes."[1] Reading, like conversation, gives character to our style of pulpit address. "As, when I walk in the sun, even though I walk for another reason, my complexion is yet colored; so, when I have read these books [Greek authors], I feel that my style of speaking is as it were colored by their influence."[2] The reader's mind is like a *camera obscura;* it receives a distinct impress of both the object—*thought*—and its dress—*language*—which come within the range of his reading. By reading authors we imbibe their spirit and style, just as the suckling derives its nutriment and likeness from its mother. Goethe received his style from Shakespeare; Robertson from Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Butler, and Edwards. Nothing will more greatly aid us in acquiring good style than the reading of good models.[3]

4. By *careful practice in writing.* This is the most effectual method of utilizing the former three means of im-

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1 Kidder's *Homiletics*, pp. 304, 305.

2 Cicero's *De Oratore*, II., 15, 16, quoted by Broadus.

3 For Perspicuity: Chalmers, Archbishop Whately, Dr. Emmonds.
For Energy: Milton, Baxter.
For Beauty: Chrysostom, Jeremy Taylor.
For Precision: Bishop Hall, Lord Jeffrey, Robert South.
For Simplicity: Bunyan, Spurgeon.
For Sublimity: Milton, Jeremy Taylor.
For Purity: Thomas Hooker, Wordsworth, Washington Irving.
Robert Hall is a model of style in many respects. But above all, nothing affords a better example of style than the Bible.

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ions concerning his style. If he is sincere, and possessed of the right motive, no amount of approbation can inflate him with vanity, and no censure can discourage him. If a preacher will be "spoiled by praise" he is not a good preacher. The successful preacher *must* hear of many eulogies upon his efforts; and an inability to stand this test is an inability to preach well, and will forever bar his road to success. The same may be said of censure. A qualified and conscientious preacher will always look upon those who truly tell him of his faults as his *best friends.*

But the preacher should never think about his style while in the act of preaching. Let him do that afterward, and seek to remedy former defects, discovered by himself or others, in his preparation for the next effort.

Finally, the preacher who wishes to be successful in the art of speaking must apply himself with an iron will to the task of acquiring and perfecting a model pulpit style. "Such an acquirement is not to be gained by idle wishes or faint endeavors. The modes of failure are numerous, the path to success is long and often difficult. But it is rendered attractive by the fame of those who have traversed it. Few, if any, of the great orators of the past have attained the goal of success without diligent and self-denying elementary efforts; and let it never be said that any one called of God to preach the gospel is unable or unwilling to put forth equal exertions to attain proficiency in effective speaking."[1]

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1 Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 347.

CHAPTER III.

MODES OF DELIVERY.

Brief History of the Different Modes of Delivery—The Reading Method—The Memoriter Method—The Extemporaneous Method—The Composite Method—Some Practical Suggestions and Advice.

Public speaking is an art. It does not come by instinct, or chance, and our first attempts must necessarily be awkward and unsuccessful. The preacher's chief business is to speak in the public congregation, and that in the best manner that culture and experience can bestow upon his faithful efforts. A good delivery is not acquired in a day, nor by random experiments, but by much practice according to the most approved methods of speaking.

The modes of delivery which will be presented in this chapter are the fruits of experience. They are gathered from the actual practice of the wisest and best of all ages, whose oratorical history abounds in successes and failures, according as they adopted the right or wrong method of speaking.

§ I. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DIFFERENT MODES OF DELIVERY.

Few questions pertaining to homiletics have been more ardently discussed during the last few centuries than the merits and demerits of the various modes of delivering sermons. In order to decide which method has received the commendation of the best writers and preachers of all ages, we will briefly examine the history of the different modes.

Extemporaneous preaching was the primitive mode, used by Christ and his apostles, and prevailed almost exclusively during the early ages of the church. We have no historic evidence of many sermons being read or recited during the first three centuries; but it is well known that the discourses of Ambrose, Jerome, Origen, and Chrysostom were extemporaneous, and that they were all taken down by reporters, and so preserved for posterity.[1] These sermons give many internal evidences of having been spoken extemporaneously; for they contain many passages which evidently owed their origin to some passing events which could not have been premeditated.

"'We are also informed by Chrysostom that his subject was frequently suggested to him by something he met with on his way to church, or which suddenly occurred during divine service.' Reference is made in a note to a sermon of Chrysostom, chosen on his way to church, when he saw, in the winter, lying in the vicinity of the church, many sick persons and beggars; and, touched with pity, he felt constrained to exhort his hearers to works of brotherly kindness and charity, and also reference is made to the turn given to his discourse when the lighting of the lamps drew away the attention of his hearers."[2]

The *memoriter* method was introduced about the fourth century, and adopted by the more indolent and disqualified ecclesiastics, who, either unwilling or unable to produce good sermons of their own, took to the habit of committing and reciting the sermons of able preachers. Many of the homilies of Cyril, of Alexandria, were committed to memory by Greek bishops as models of Christian decla-

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1 'Οξυγράφοι, note-takers, or short-hand writers, were men licensed by authority to take down public addresses, who, after reporting, submitted their manuscript to the preacher before publication.

2 Hoppin's *Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, pp. 34, 35.

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the following royal decree against the custom was published:

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN:—Whereas his Majesty is informed that the practice of *reading sermons* is generally taken up by the preachers before the university, and therefore continued even before himself, his Majesty hath commanded me to signify to you his pleasure that the said practice, which took beginning with the disorders of the late times, be wholly laid aside; and that the aforesaid preachers deliver their sermons, both in Latin and English, by memory, or without book, as being a way of preaching which his Majesty judgeth most agreeable to the use of all foreign churches, to the custom of the university heretofore, and to the nature and intendment of that holy exercise. And that his Majesty's commands in the premises may be duly regarded and observed, his further pleasure is that the names of all such ecclesiastical persons as shall continue the present *supine and slothful way of preaching* be from time to time signified unto me by the vice chancellor for the time being, upon pain of his Majesty's displeasure.

MONMOUTH.

OCTOBER 8, 1674.

In spite of this decree, the practice of reading prevailed in England until it reached the height of formality in the eighteenth century. The prevalent coldness and formality of the times encouraged it, until the older method, sanctified though it was by the example of all Christian antiquity, came to be counted a token of fanaticism. It is said of a clergyman that on one occasion he seriously compromised his character because he ventured to raise his eyes from his manuscript during the reading of his sermon. Then followed the ignoble practice of clergymen "borrowing sermons from one another, and the still more handy custom of lithographic sermons sold at so much the dozen. Under such practice it need not be said that the pulpit suffered greatly."[1] In our time, however, there is again a return to the extemporaneous method.

Thus, after a thorough trial of the various modes of delivery, for about fourteen hundred years, and after three

1 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, pp. 216, 217.

hundred years of discussion upon their advantages and disadvantages, "the best modern opinion is in favor of the primitive mode of extemporaneous address, rendered, however, as nearly perfect as possible by collateral and auxiliary writing."[1] Our best authors on homiletics, such as Kidder, Shedd, Broadus, and Hoppin, all strongly advocate the extempore method. In the Church of England, the homiletic writers, Bridges, Gresley, and Moore; among the Baptists, Ripley, Wayland, and Broadus; among the Presbyterians, Skinner and Shedd, unanimously give the palm to the same method. Even Ware, a Unitarian author, has written the most systematic treatise on extemporaneous preaching. Among the Methodists, "not one is known," says Dr. Kidder, "that was ever a reader of sermons." The United Brethren in Christ have always employed this method.

This mode of delivery was also adopted by the most successful preachers of nearly all denominations. In the Congregational Church, Charles Backus, W. T. Dwight, Edward Payson; in the Presbyterian, the Alexanders, S. K. Kollock, J. M. Mason, George Potts, Gideon Blackburn, S. Larned; in the Baptist, James Manning, Thomas Baldwin, S. H. Cone, E. Tucker; in the Episcopal, Joseph Pilmoor, J. K. Henshaw, G. T. Bedell; in the Methodist Episcopal, Bishops Janes and Foster, Dr. Eddy, Dr. Dashiel; in the United Brethren, Otterbein, Markwood, Alexander Owen,—all who possessed a high reputation as the most powerful preachers, were accustomed to speak extemporaneously. The greatest pulpit orators of to-day, Newman Hall, Charles H. Spurgeon, Joseph Parker, Henry Ward Beecher, T. De Witt Talmage, belong to the school of extemporaneous address.

From these historic facts, the conclusion is inevitable

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1 Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 326.

that the original and time-honored mode of speaking without manuscript is the best for all times and for all men, and calculated to produce the most efficient preaching. Chalmers and Edwards, perhaps, were exceptions; but these "sons of thunder" possessed such an ungovernable flood and luxuriance of feeling that they needed the curb of the manuscript in order to keep them within legitimate bounds; and yet Chalmers read his paper in tones of enthusiasm that "made the rafters roar." "During the reading of his sermons Dr. Chalmers was absolutely terrible. His heavy frame was convulsed, his face was flushed; the veins on his forehead and neck stood out like whip-cords; the foam flew from his mouth in flakes. He hung over his audience, menacing them with his shaking fist, or he stood erect, manacled and staring."[1] No one will object to that kind of sermon-reading, so far as animation is concerned. "His manuscript *burned*, but some of our modern manuscripts *ought* to be burned."

In order that the reader may know more of the relative value of the different modes of delivery, we will, deliberately and fairly, discuss the merits and demerits of each, so that we may be prepared to give some practical advice to those who are about to adopt a mode for themselves.

§ II. THE READING METHOD.

This method is much adopted by the public lecturer of to-day; but we have no evidence that it was used by the orators of ancient Greece and Rome. In pulpit oratory it has few advocates, and is gradually falling into disrepute among the ablest preachers both of England and America. Nevertheless it is practiced by the majority of English and American Episcopal clergy, and prevails to a considerable

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1 *British Quarterly Review.*

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down. It is quite a relief, then, to read the sermon, as a remedy for any distressing anxiety that a diffident preacher may have in public delivery.

4. The written sermon can be *preserved for future usefulness*, and thus help to *perpetuate a preacher's religious influence.* Extemporaneous sermons are like time itself—evanescent; but *scripta litera manet.* They "spend their life in their birth, and may have public audience but once."[1] The written sermon, however, can be of frequent service during a preacher's life-time. He can use it again, without spending extra time and labor in renewing preparation, when he is too ill, or too old, or too weary, to re-investigate a difficult subject, or when he is removed to a new charge, or is too busily engaged in other important duties. Besides, many a truly eloquent sermon has been lost to posterity, because never committed to paper; while the written discourse has been published, read, and prized by thousands who never had the opportunity of hearing it delivered; and by thus preserving and transmitting pulpit instruction, many a preacher, "being dead, yet speaketh."

II. While we admit these considerations to be real advantages, they are overbalanced by the many *disadvantages* that incumber the method and hinder effective delivery.

1. Reading interferes with the *full use* of a preacher's *corporeal powers.* The confined attitude of the reader is unfavorable to the freedom and power of effectual delivery; and most of the gestures and expressions of the countenance will seem unnatural. The eye, so expressive of the varied emotions of the soul, and so helpful to eloquence, is deprived of its power upon audiences while fastened upon a manuscript. The preacher speaks of the stars of heaven while he is watching the written page; his soul may glow

1 Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V., Chap. xxi.

with eloquence, and shine through the eye, and play upon the features, but the sightless paper that attracts his gaze shares most of the benefit. The voice, also, in reading, is naturally more monotonous and unnatural than in free speaking, and according to the testimony of many physicians, and writers on vocal culture, suffers greater injuries from the practice than we are wont to believe. "Sitting with the chin dropped, or standing with the face turned downward toward a manuscript, one can not form pure tones. The emission of sound is impeded. The position of the larynx is not directly over the windpipe. Irritation of the throat soon results from these constrained positions."[1] The hands, voice, eyes, and face are all *media* of communicating thought; and to be deprived of their perfect use is to be deprived of the full force of language.

2. It is liable to degenerate *into a dull and slothful way of preaching.* Reading acts as a restraint to earnestness. If Chalmers had to use a manuscript to check the volubility of his nature, we can see what would be the tendency of such a practice with ordinary or apathetic minds; the generality of preachers need a spur rather than a curb in their delivery, and the same sharp bit that holds a fiery steed will be a hinderance to the gentler horse. Many things in the reading method tend to enfeeble preaching. In preparation, the absence of an audience to inspire and shape every sentence with breathing, burning life; and in delivery, the difficulty of bringing one's heart into unison with what he has written and is now reading, or of falling *en rapport* with the soul of his audience; the interference with the reciprocal influence between speaker and hearer; and the preacher's dependence upon a prepared manuscript,—all help to rob the discourse of its life and quickening spirit, so that it gradually degenerates into

1 Prof. E. P. Thwing's *Drill Book in Vocal Culture and Gesture*, p. 33.

dullness and deadness, until, finally, we bring sermons to church "as we do a corpse for a burial."[1]

3. It involves a *great waste of precious time in the mechanical work of writing.* A minister has so many important duties to engage his mind that he can not afford to spend so many hours each week in the mere task of transcribing all his thoughts for the pulpit. Every change or improvement in the sermon requires a rewriting of the whole. The time thus employed should rather be devoted to a more thorough consideration of the subject, to general improvement, or to some other useful employment. Besides, the great strain that this work imposes upon the mind not only is debilitating through excessive labor, but renders it impossible, except for very extraordinary minds, to write two good sermons a week. Robert Hall says, "A genius can write a sermon in a month, a man of talent one in a fortnight, an ordinary man one in a week, a fool two in a week."

4. It prevents the preacher *from using new thoughts that may occur during the delivery.* Many good ideas often occur after the sermon is written; while some think best when engaged in the act of speaking. But even where this is not the case, it is almost universally true that the presence of an audience, and the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the preacher while speaking, bring vividly before the mind many rich thoughts that did not occur during the preparation. "The warmth which animates him gives birth to expressions and figures which he could not have prepared in his study."[2] The close reader loses the benefit of all such spontaneous impulses, unless possessed of a peculiar tact in turning them to good account as they occur. But the men who can do this successfully are few.

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1 Baxter.

2 Fenelon.

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another, namely, *reading*, is one of the plainest examples of artificiality, and artificiality is antagonistic to true eloquence. There is an eloquence of art as well as an eloquence of heart; but the difference between the two is as great as the difference between the cold marble statue of Webster, and Webster himself.[1]

Besides, an orator's eloquence will be inspired according to the freshness with which he delivers his thoughts. It is almost impossible, after a sermon is written out in full, to read it with "spontaneous, original, native force." After it has once been cast into a mold, so that the written words become a gauged track upon which the thoughts are made to run, one may not only read without thinking or feeling what he says, but it is a psychological fact that the mind and heart can not act untrammeled while the eye is engaged in watching and tracing a written page. Hence, reading a book never impresses us as much as public speaking, because it lacks the personal power of the author. True eloquence is concerned chiefly with thought and feeling rather than with language; for language is its servant, and not its master. What words will be the most eloquent—those which are prepared, or those which are spontaneous? It is evident that the phrases which occur to us in extemporaneous discourse are more natural and vivid than those which are worked out in our study. Summerfield used to say that "the best word was the word which came to him in the heat of the moment." In such fervid heart-utterances we will attain to the highest eloquence. An unexpressed idea holds the mind intent and fixed during the act of expression, thus giving life and vigor to its birth; but when the idea is once expressed and recorded, the mind relaxes its tension, and the words when

1 Cf. N. Murray's *Preachers and Preaching*, p. 105.

repeated become empty sounds, intended for preservation rather than for impression.

§ III. THE MEMORITER METHOD.

This consists in writing, committing, and reciting the sermon *verbatim.* This is the most polished and artistic mode of delivery, and was the general practice of most of the ancient orators. In Scotland and France, where preaching is less frequent than with us, and "where people regard the 'paper' with horror, it is a common practice for ministers to write their sermons, then to learn them by heart, clause after clause, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph."[1] Bourdaloue, the leading court-preacher, and the eloquent Guthrie, of whose sermons the Scotch women said, "They would have been good even if he had whistled them," used the memoriter method. De Ravignan, Lacordaire, and Père Hyacinthe also were memoriter preachers. Monod, Athanase Coquerel, Vinet, and especially the German Reinhard, held that any other kind of preaching than memoriter was inefficient, indolent, and unworthy of the occasion and the truth. This method has been adopted by many with a view of overcoming many of the disadvantages, and of securing most of the advantages, of the reading method. It has all its advantages except the third, and escapes all its disadvantages except the third, fourth, and fifth. But nothing is gained by this method, since it adds other disadvantages; such as:

1. *A great tendency to unnaturalness.* The recitation is likely to be mechanical, and the preacher to become automatic, *imitating tones* of emotions instead of actually *feeling* and *expressing* them. Every audience can detect the trickery of art, and perceive the difference between an extemporaneous discourse and a recitation; and this dis-

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1 Dale's *Yale Lectures.*

covery will expose the preacher to many suspicions of insincerity, inability, or plagiarism. The men who can deliver a committed sermon with the naturalness of free speech are few.

2. *A painful liability to failure that may result from a treacherous memory.* The memory is overburdened with an enormous catalogue of systematically-arranged words, each to be uttered in its proper order and with its proper emphasis; and the first displacement or omission of a single word is liable to introduce confusion in the sense, and excite the preacher's fears. The eye stares on vacancy, the brow is contracted, and the perplexed and distracted mind is running to and fro in the chambers of the brain, looking for missing words, searching in the dark, very much like Æneas when calling again and again for the lost Creusa. If memory fails us here our only resort is gone, and we are doomed to utter failure and chagrin. Even Bourdaloue was obliged to keep his eyes partly closed during delivery, lest the sight of the congregation should divert his attention and cause him to forget his lesson.

3. *The excessive labor of preparation is injurious. First,* it is injurious to a preacher's usefulness. We have already noticed how much time is lost in the habitual writing of sermons; but in this method, in addition to the writing, two or three days each week are ordinarily required to memorize one or two sermons, which are forgotten as soon as delivered. Thus about one half of a preacher's ministry is wasted in laborious and unprofitable drudgery, which if employed in charitable deeds would double his usefulness, and morally increase his life; for, "We live in deeds, not years."[1] *Second,* it is detrimental to health. If a pastor be earnest, and slight none of his other official duties, the additional and intolerable strain upon his mind

[1] P. J. Bailey.

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"Whenever any great movement has been produced, either in church or state, it has commonly taken its rise, so far as human agency is concerned, from the unwritten words of some man of sound knowledge, and thorough discipline, impelled to speak by strong feeling in his heart."[1]

Since the majority of the best writers and preachers advocate and practice free speaking, the presumption is evidently in favor of the extempore method, and the burden of proof (*onus probandi*) must fall upon the opponent of this method. Therefore, without reiterating the many advantages usually claimed in its favor, or repeating what has been mentioned under the first and second methods, most of which will clearly indicate the superior merits of this third method, (for naturally the opposite of every disadvantage in the first and second will be an advantage in the third, but not *vice versa*,) we will now answer the *objections* to this method, and thereby show how *it may secure all the advantages of reading or reciting.*

Objection 1. *It tends to indolence in preparation, and to inaccuracy of thought.*[2]

Answer. It is a great mistake to suppose that by extemporaneous preaching we mean unpremeditated or unprepared preaching,—a method chosen to avoid severe and careful study, and because it is the least troublesome. On the contrary, preparation for extempore preaching demands a thorough mental diagnosis of the subject, and the most perfect command of its subject-matter—a thing which the written sermon often lacks. Being obliged to give considerable time to verbal composition, we have less time for maturing and mastering a fundamental scheme of sermonizing, often beginning to write without much depth or grasp of thought. Occasionally, indolent men will shirk

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1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 243.

2 See page 445, I., 1.

this preparatory brain-work, and preach without much premeditation. But this is an abuse of the method—a fault of the preacher, and not of the system; and such men would hardly do any better by writing their sermons. Some men are so gifted in extemporaneous speaking, through long practice and a naturally logical mind, that they can preach the most effective sermons with but little previous thought. It is reported of St. Augustine and Chrysostom that they sometimes selected their subjects on their way to church. John Howe possessed such stores of thought, and so thoroughly were they digested, that he could preach as methodically without preparation as others could after the closest study. Henry Ward Beecher seldom selects his subjects until Sunday mornings. Such extraordinary cases, instead of proving any demoralizing tendency in the system, rather show its superior adaptation to such equipped orators, who can "look a subject into shape," and speak *impromptu* without the nuisance of a prepared manuscript. Ordinarily, men with honest desires of success will work harder in developing, digesting, and assimilating their sermons, and will have less opportunity for indolence, in the extempore method than in the writing and reading process, in which they can borrow, buy, or copy their sermons without much mental labor.

Nor will the sermon be less *accurate.* The secret of accurate statement and correct definition is a clear conception of the truth to be stated or defined. If this conception has become familiar to the preacher in his study, he can better communicate it to the hearers through free speech than through a written statement; for he can, at least, express an idea as correctly with the tongue as with the pen. Then, by a variety of statement, imagery, and illustration, he can define it perfectly, repeating and revolving an idea, when necessary, until the mind comprehends the

truth he wishes to convey. "Does not the professor in his lecture-room state his definitions clearly, and does he not make them plain to his students? It may be said he is familiar with them; so should the minister be with definitions in theology. If, after having studied a course of divinity, and having prepared his specific sermon, he can not trust to his memory for the necessary definitions, will they be easily comprehended by his people?"[1] By this process an idea will finally be defined more fully, roundly, and therefore more *exactly*, than can be done by any single written statement, however precise or correct. The written sermon may state a thing so precisely and briefly that the hearer can not catch half its meaning as the preacher hurriedly passes along, "coldly correct and critically dull." The true object of preaching is to *fix* an idea in the hearts and minds of the hearers. "This fixing of things is just what written sermons rarely do. The very repetition which the writer avoids is absolutely needed to drive the truth home and imbed it in the very consciousness of the listener." Hence, extemporaneously-delivered sermons can be as thorough and accurate as the best written discourses; and hence, in this respect, what is generally considered a rare advantage in the first method can also be secured in the third.

Objection 2. *The style will be less elegant and complete.*

Answer. In reply, it may be said that elegant and finished style is by no means an essential, but a secondary quality of the sermon. Truth scientifically prepared and exquisitely served may be more palatable, but not more nutritious. Elegant style would be a poor substitute for Christian earnestness. We could easily sacrifice the former, if thereby we could gain the latter. But this exchange need not be made in the present case; for unlike any other

[1] Bishop M. Simpson's *Yale Lectures*, p. 171.

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good, will always do his best, and never dream of failure. He is above such silly fears. And even though he should fail, he regards it as a help rather than a defeat.

In the third case, in which fear is constitutional, it is difficult to prescribe a remedy, and the unfortunate preacher deserves pity rather than censure. But, all things considered, there is more hope of partially subduing this infirmity through extemporaneous exercise, than by the use of the paper. As the defect of a stammering tongue can never be removed by shunning speech altogether, but by practice upon the most difficult sounds, so protection from fear will not cure fear so soon as constant exposure to it. The paper fosters one's timidity, or rather increases it, by cultivating confidence in the paper rather than in one's self. It protects one from a complete failure, but it does not protect one from the confusion and unnaturalness which are the inevitable results of this abnormal, innate fear, and which, so far as effect is concerned, are almost as bad as total failure. It is our candid opinion that the reading method, instead of being an advantage to a nervous preacher, is rather a disadvantage, and that a change to the extempore method is the only antidote.

Objection 4. *The extemporaneous sermon is not so available for future use, in an emergency, or for publication.*

Answer. For the purpose of repeating sermons, in most cases, more time is required in renewing preparation in written discourse than in the extempore mode. Unless the written discourse has been unusually good, the change of circumstances, congregation, time, as well as the change of our ideas, feelings, etc., will also necessitate a change in the discourse, either in whole or in part, which will require a remodeling, rewriting, and recommitting of the entire sermon, while the extemporaneous preacher has nothing to do but to recast the material in his mind; and this kind

of refreshing of our ideas is the best preparation for a second successful delivery.

Besides, every preacher can and should preserve his best extempore sermons for any future emergencies, or for publication, should they be demanded. It is not intended that the extempore preacher should neglect writing. On the contrary, he should write out in full as many sermons as his time will permit. However, let these be his very best ones, and let them be written in the very best style possible, either before or after delivery. John Angell James preached without manuscript, but wrote out many of his sermons. Newman Hall delivered an excellent sermon in Dr. Cuyler's church from a "brief" of twenty lines, and three months afterward wrote out the same discourse for publication. Some of the greatest sermons of Robert Hall were never written till after delivery. Dr. John Hall, following the example of the Halls, writes many of his sermons, but speaks extemporaneously. Many, after finishing a carefully-written sermon, unconsciously remember much of the language used, so that, upon delivery, their minds readily recall it without effort.

In the beginning of his ministry it will be a good exercise for the preacher to spend months upon a single sermon, in a masterly effort of composition, writing, criticising, revising, and rewriting, until it has reached the acme of his ability. Dr. Emmonds said, "I have often spent a whole day in selecting the right phrase for a good thought." Another divine, who has been called the "prince of pulpit orators," spent a fortnight on a single paragraph of one of his published sermons, in unfolding his thoughts in the most precise and effective style. Robert Hall, in writing his sermon on "Modern Infidelity," invigorated his mind by tasking it to the utmost. "A man does not know himself unless he labors sometimes to

make full proof of his faculties."[1] Michael Angelo devoted sixteen months to the statue of Pope Julius II. Why should not the preacher sometimes spend as much time in producing a masterpiece of composition? "I light my candle at the sun," was the motto of a great author who kept himself familiar with Homer's poems, while preparing his works for the press; and every preacher, while writing his sermon, should light the candle of his intellect at some lofty ideal of perfection.[2]

The object of such a rigorous discipline in composition is to get all the benefit which the best use of the pen can bestow, so as to make its contributions not a hinderance but a help in the pulpit. One sermon carefully written is worth a dozen hurriedly dashed off, at the rate of one or two a week, under the reading system, and will be of more practical service in cultivating a good pulpit style than much writing--however skillfully executed—without at times a thorough test of one's ability in composition. Not that such extraordinary sermons should be read or recited in the pulpit *verbatim*, except in cases which will soon be mentioned, but they should be held up as models of imitation and inspiration. They will thus not only elevate our standard of sermonizing, but actually inspire us in the delivery of every other sermon. Besides, they will answer all the purposes of a system of weekly sermon-writing, and will be all the better for future use or publication.[3]

In examining the different modes of delivery, we have not separately and formally discussed the numerous merits of the extempore method. They are so evident and im-

1 Edwards A. Park.

2 Virgil wrote his *Georgics* at the rate of one line a day. In writing his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Edmund Burke sometimes had more than twelve proofs worked off and destroyed before he could satisfy himself. Rousseau says that his own blots, emendations, and transcriptions, before printing and after, were numberless.

3 It was the recommendation of Dr. Lyman Beecher, to speak extemporaneously in order to write with more vigor; and to write, so as to speak extemporaneously with more precision.

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general who wishes to incite his army to valor before going into battle, would not think of reading his address. Let not the minister suppose that the cause he represents is inferior to that of the lawyer, the politician, or the general.

§ V. THE COMPOSITE METHOD.

This consists in a blending of all the modes,—sometimes writing a sermon partially, or entirely, sometimes reciting, reading, or extemporizing certain parts, such as introduction, conclusion, or some points in the discussion, as may best suit the preacher's convenience. Some few have adopted such a style of preaching (among whom is Dr. Tholuck, of Germany); but the awkward transition from one method to the other renders this custom very objectionable. "The whole train of operations is different in reading or writing a discourse, and in pronouncing it extempore. If I may borrow a figure from engines, the mind is *geared differently*. No man goes from one track to the other without a painful jog at the 'switch.' * * * * It is not unlike trying to speak in two languages. It requires the practice of years to dovetail an extemporaneous paragraph gracefully into a written sermon."[1]

§ VI. SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE.

1. *When and how to use the memoriter method.* In recommending the extemporaneous method we do not claim for it exclusive and universal expediency in every variety of circumstances. There are some occasions and subjects, and some peculiarities of intellect and temperament, that render other methods of delivery permissible, if not preferable. On a literary occasion, before a body of educated and fastidious hearers who expect and can appreciate an

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1 J. W. Alexander's *Thoughts on Preaching*, quoted by Kidder, *Homiletics*, p. 315.

able, artistic production, and where ample time is allowed for writing and memorizing, a recited discourse is justifiable. Besides, some seem to have a call from heaven to preach memoriter. They are endowed with such a power of memory that they can speak more naturally in this method than in any other. They have a faculty of remembering, almost equal to that of Cyrus, Themistocles, or Hortensius. Such were the memories of the clergymen, Bates and Warburton, that they could commit to memory as fast as they could write, and with little effort.[1] Such men, and others, who, like Robert Hall, can, without writing, verbally think out their entire sermon, and reproduce it without any deviation, ought to preach *memoriter*. In such cases there can be no risk of failure or loss of time, and the memoriter mode is almost equal to the extempore. Some can greatly shorten the time of committing, by continued practice. Thus, Dr. Christlieb, of Bonn University, says that while it took him, at first, four days to commit a sermon to memory, he soon reduced it to two days, and that now it is only necessary for him to read it over twice in order to know it perfectly.

But in order to render a recitation as free from objections of formality as possible, the discourse should be very thoroughly committed to memory, so that during delivery the mind may be occupied with thoughts rather than with words. Herein lay the success of the French preachers. They had their sermons so well memorized that they could throw their soul into their speech, and feel intensely as they went along. Hence, when Massillon was asked which was the best sermon be ever preached, he answered, "That which I knew the best.'

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1 "Dr. Parkhurst gave Bishop Jewell some of the most difficult words he could find. Bishop Hooper gave him forty Welsh, Irish, and foreign words, and Jewell, after reading them once or twice, repeated them forward and backward with perfect accuracy."—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1872.

2. *When and how to use the reading method.* When a discourse is to be exceedingly doctrinal, requiring many accurate statements of critical points which would be burdensome for an ordinary memory to retain in their exactness; or, when it deals with embarrassing forms of vice which require great care and delicacy of language; or, when it navigates a narrow channel of truth between Scylla and Charybdis, where every word must be carefully selected to avoid a false conception,[1] it is generally expedient to write and read the discourse. So, also, men who, like the Catholic priest, Semeunais, are possessed of an unusually emotional spirit, which can not be controlled without a manuscript, should never fail to read. Before audiences of principally professional men, or at colleges and seminaries, and before various literary societies and assemblies, it is, with good reason, customary to read, rather than recite or extemporize.

But let all such discourses be *thoroughly prepared*,[2] and written in the form of extempore address, with the audience constantly in the mind's eye. Read as nearly like speaking as possible. Shun mannerism and monotony. Read slowly and deliberately. Give proper variety of intonation to the various expressions of joy, grief, fear, etc. Keep your eye in advance of your tongue, repeatedly raising your eyes from the manuscript and looking at the audience while you complete a sentence or two. You must actually read one line while uttering another, for you can not give the right expression to the beginning of a sentence without knowing the purport of what is a little in advance. In practice this is not so difficult as it appears in description, especially if you thoroughly familiarize yourself with your paper by frequent rehearsals in the study, before

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1 Cf. Blaikie.

2 See pp. 458–460.

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make their ministry the most successful possible, must expect to do it through the extemporaneous method of preaching. Let them dare to begin right. We know how hazardous are the first attempts; but great attainments are worth great risks. "Victory crowns the brave." The beginner, however well educated, must not expect to succeed at first, but may be sure to succeed at last; and though frequently humbled by failures, courage and perseverance will help him to surmount all obstacles and finally make him master of the situation. When Sheridan failed in his first attempt to speak in Parliament, and was advised to abandon any further efforts in the House, he stoutly replied, "Never. I am sure it is in me; and it shall come out."[1] The young minister who has a high purpose, a firm resolve, and a humble trust in God, will not be afraid to venture boldly in an extemporaneous effort.

Bishop Simpson, in one of his "Yale Lectures on Preaching," says, "If I am asked, How and when you shall begin? I answer, The first time you preach; and, if praticable, before a small audience. There is, certainly, some risk, but don't stand shivering on the bank; plunge in at once. Gilbert Stuart, in answer to a question as to how young artists are to commence their subjects, is reported to have said, 'Just as puppies are taught to swim — chuck them in.'"

After the habit of extemporaneous preaching has once been acquired, it is no more difficult to practice it through

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1 Ripley's *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 178, where also is found the following statement: "Mr. Hall, while a student at Bristol, was appointed in his turn to preach in the vestry of Broadmead Chapel. 'After proceeding for a short time, much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, covered his face with his hands, exclaimed, "Oh! I have lost all my ideas," and sat down, his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if once he acquired self-possession. He was therefore appointed to speak again the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more grievous to bear.'—Dr. Gregory's *Memoir of Robert Hall*, p. 7."

life than to practice the reading and reciting methods. "If the habit of delivering thought without pen in hand were taken up *as early in life*, by the educated clergy, and were as *uniform* and *fixed*, as is the habit of delivering it with pen in hand, it would be just as easy a habit."[1] Let the preacher, however, not neglect much careful writing during the first five or ten years of his preaching.

4. *What should those do who have already accustomed themselves to reading or reciting?* Unless eminently successful in this practice of preaching, or too old or too nearly worn out for much future service, it will be best for the preacher to adopt the extempore practice, even in the middle of his life and in the fullness of his strength. True, the change of modes may subject him to a disadvantage for a short time, for it is almost like beginning the ministry anew; but the extempore method can be acquired now as well as at first, and in the great majority of such experiments will vastly increase usefulness and power in the pulpit. Zincke's example is worthy of imitation by every one who is trying to break away from the slavish dependence upon manuscript.

Let the transition, however, be made *at once*, and not *gradually*. If the preacher makes one or two attempts to preach extemporaneously and then again tries his usual plan, he will not be likely to succeed. "Remembering the defects of these first attempts, and comparing them with the more finished discourses which he has been in the *habit* and *practice* of writing, he draws the hasty and unfounded inference, that, from the nature of the case, oral discourse must be inferior to written discourse."[2] The advantage of a sudden change is, that it saves the preacher much time and annoyance occasioned by a slow, vacillating process

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1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, pp. 222, 223. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 225.

of change. If the suddenness be more trying, it will be more economical and beneficial.

5. *What are the important requisites for good extemporaneous preaching?* The process of learning to extemporize may differ with different men, but with most men the following requisites will be necessary in order to become successful in extemporaneous preaching:

"(1.) That the preacher should have an abundant supply of ideas, especially of religious and moral ideas, without which all the advantages of facile delivery amount to nothing; for a lack of ideas leads to the bare repetition of thoughts—to words, words, words.

"(2.) There is also needed a rich, intimate, and verbal knowledge of the Scriptures, and especially of the New Testament (we venture to say that a full knowledge of the Old Testament also gives a devotional flavor to the preacher's imagination that hardly anything else can; it smells as of Carmel and Lebanon and the gardens of spices). But a familiarity with, and a facility in repeating, texts, analogues, proofs, allusions, figures, promises, threatenings, proverbs, precepts, reasonings, from the Bible, are of inestimable aid. If the Bible be not a perfectly well-known book to the preacher, his improvisations are apt to become mere moral declamations and philosophical platitudes.

"(3.) A fluent and idiomatic use of his mother tongue. Otherwise there will be stiffness and mannerism, hiatuses, strained and inverted sentences, confused parentheses, and absolute blunders in the construction of sentences, which will take away one of the great charms and powers of extemporaneous speech—its easy, natural flow. It is not so difficult to commence a sentence, but the difficulty is to end it. Unless with prompt and practiced speakers, the decisive word, the key-word of the sentence, which binds

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subject that may be suggested by his study or reading, and speaking the thoughts in his own language, several times in succession, trying to vary and improve each repetition, and giving special attention to correct and clear expression.

6. *How to prepare for immediate delivery.* Of course it is supposed that the preacher has already selected a "subject in which he feels an interest at the time, and in which he desires to engage the interest of others;" that he has thought out the subject, and carefully arranged his thoughts in their most natural order. The next question is, how to get ready for delivery. Let *him thoroughly familiarize himself with his prepared material,* by reviewing the "outline" and fixing in his mind the train of ideas, together with their connections, mutual relations, and importance. "If needful to this result, I would write the plan of the sermon over twenty times before preaching it; not copying, merely, from one piece of paper upon another, but writing it out carefully and fully, each time independently, till I perfectly knew it; till it was fixed absolutely in the mind."[1] Propositions, divisions, quotations, and definitions should be *thoroughly memorized.* Better, however, read them from books or manuscript than recite them in a bungling manner, because only half committed to memory. These are key-notes in the sermon, and an indistinct rendering of them will mar the sense and destroy the effect.[2]

As to the manner of familiarizing one's self with his preparation, Broadus says, "Speaking it over in his room

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1 Dr. Storrs' *Preaching Without Notes*, p. 109.

2 I remember that while at the seminary, Dr. John Hall, in a lecture to the students, gave us his plan of preparing for the pulpit, in the following words: "I put on paper all that I know about my subject, in the order in which it ought to be spoken. I fix this order and the illustrations in my mind in studious disregard of the language, except in the case of definitions, if there are any depending on verbal exactness. I try to have it so that I could talk it over, give the end first, or begin in the middle if need be, and then I go to the pulpit and converse with the people about the matter, in a tone loud enough to be heard through the house, if I can. That is all. There is no secret about it, gentlemen."

or in the forest is not wrong, and some find it in their early preparations very useful."[1]

Before delivery the preacher's mind should be calm, and as free as possible from over-anxiety concerning the sermon about to be delivered. This condition may be secured by selecting all his hymns, reading lessons, and other concomitants to the sermon some time before the preaching-hour, so as not to be compelled to select them in the pulpit, where he may be too much hurried and distracted to find suitable selections, and distracting thoughts may unfit his mind for the delivery of the sermon.

"The minister should set himself resolutely against hearing anything that might worry or agitate him as he enters the pulpit. There are often well-meaning but thoughtless persons, and more frequently habitual fault-finders, who will waylay him there to tell him of some trouble that is brewing in the church, of some members who are walking unworthily, or of some duty which is calculated to perplex. This is simply cruel; it is torturing the minister when there is most need for his mind to be settled. * * * * All his ingenuity should be exerted in devising methods for freeing himself from this sore annoyance."[2]

Never enter the pulpit without first praying for divine assistance, and realizing your dependence on God.[3] If we should not trust to the inspiration of the hour, neither should we trust alone to our mental preparation. He who

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1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 443.

2 Murphy's *Pastoral Theology*, p. 217.

3 "Those who have been most successful in achieving the great ends of preaching have been most faithful to this discipline of secret prayer. Baxter used to pray thus with his Bible open before him, and his finger on the text of his sermon. Often, with tears of impassioned desire, would he pour forth his supplications for the spiritual success of his day's work. On one occasion, when the thought occurred to him, when thus prostrate before God, of his popularity as a preacher, and of the throngs which he knew would crowd the church where he was about to preach, he broke out with the exclamation, 'Not this, not this, O Lord! but the souls of this poor people of Kidderminster.'" —Phelps' *Theory of Preaching*, p 570.

leans upon his "own understanding," without "praying always with all prayer" that the "word may be made powerful" and that "utterance" be given him "to make known the mystery of the gospel," will likely be disappointed in his public delivery, notwithstanding his previous drill, and leave the pulpit without having made any spiritual impression. Besides, too much study and review of the sermon may lessen our interest in it, and make the material seem to us stale, or effete; but by laying it aside a few hours before speaking, and holding uninterrupted communion with God, we will come to the pulpit refreshed and quickened, and this spiritual animation will give a new charm to the driest material.

7. *How to extemporize in the pulpit.* There are two forms of extemporaneous delivery. The one consists in speaking from brief notes, with "heads" and mnemonic "catchwords" and prominent points of the sermon distinctly marked, to be used as an aid to memory in case of confusion, while the language to be employed is left to be suggested at the moment of speaking.[1] Let this skeleton be as small as possible, written legibly in large letters, so as to be easily read without stooping, with emphatic words underscored, and divisions plainly marked. Never refer to your notes unless you have forgotten something; but keep your mind looking in advance, so that by a skillful glance of your eye you may recover a forgotten point before getting to it in the course of your delivery. Otherwise, you may come to a halt while you try to find the lost place on the paper.

The other, and by far the better, form of extempore delivery is to be entirely independent of notes, and to carry no paper of any kind into the pulpit. J. W. Alexander, in

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1 F. W. Robertson used a small slip of paper with a few notes upon it, to which he referred now and then. Spurgeon uses the same mode.

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to say next, do not stop. Nothing is so awkward as a dead pause; and the awkwardness increases in geometrical ratio to the seconds of time. Say something, repeat, recapitulate, talk at random even,—anything rather than stop. If you become embarrassed with a tangled sentence, do not turn back, but burst through. If you have made a mistake of grammar, pronunciation, or the like, do not stop to correct it, unless it is serious.[1] An occasional inadvertence is readily pardoned, if the general style be good. And if you greatly blunder in style, forget half your best thoughts, or utterly break down, it will not kill you. Other great men have failed. Remember young Robert Hall."[2]

If, after one has familiarized himself with his sermon, he then "can not remember its various links, is it probable that his people can follow and remember it, who hear it for the first time?" "If the points of his sermon are so feebly connected that, after studying and writing, he can not recall them in proper order, is the order very material? If he has not interest enough in his subject to remember the message which God sends through him, is it likely to interest the people?"[3]

Nay, if a man is permeated and possessed with his doctrine, he needs no paper to prompt him, but will speak out boldly as a messenger sent from God to rescue souls from destruction, and "put the truth in such a way that if a man were asleep it would wake him up; and if he were dead it would give him resurrection for the hour."[4] "When the clergy shall dare to *speak* to the people, with

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1 At one time when Father Taylor, of Boston, was preaching to his audience of seamen, he lost himself in a thicket of accumulated clauses; he extricated himself by the exclamation, "I have lost track of the nominative case; but, my brethren, one thing I know, *I am bound for the kingdom of heaven.*"

2 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 443

3 Simpson's *Yale Lectures.*

4 H. W. Beecher's *Yale Lectures.*

extemporaneous boldness, out of a full heart, full head, and clear mind, we may expect, under the Divine blessing, to see some of those great movements which characterized the ages of extempore preaching,—the age of the Apostles, the age of the Reformers, the age of John Knox in Scotland, the age of Wesley and Whitefield in England and America." [1]

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1 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 244.

CHAPTER IV.

ELOCUTION, AND CONDUCT IN THE PULPIT.

The Voice — Gesture — Conduct in the Pulpit.

In the preceding chapter we considered the modes of delivery; we will now discuss the subject of elocution, or delivery in action,—the "executive branch of homiletics," — a very important topic for our consideration.

Elocution, as understood in modern times, is the art of expressing thought by means of speech and gesture.

The ancients gave great attention to oratorical delivery. Demosthenes made it the first, second, and third requisite in oratory; *i. e.*, he believed it to be the chief qualification for eloquence. Doubtless these orators of antiquity went too far in this respect; but our modern preachers often err as much in the opposite direction, by ignoring its importance and utterly neglecting elocutionary discipline. The result of such rhetorical indifference is dullness in the pulpit. "Dull as a parson," "Stupid as a sermon," are phrases suggested by our unpardonably careless delivery; and the well-known saying of Garrick is to the point, that ministers "speak truth as though it were fiction." Why should preachers not study and practice the best and most natural way of expressing their thoughts? Why should secular oratory be more perfect than sacred? The reverse ought to be true, for the subjects belonging to the pulpit deserve to be presented in the most effectual manner possible, that the truth may be so declared as to be real and

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to be unnatural, and it often takes one a long time to "come to himself." Hence, it requires the process of true art to get back to true nature. "Nature is the art of God, and art in its perfection reproduces nature." Those who despise rhetorical art are sometimes the most artificial, and least natural. In urging, therefore, the subject of elocutionary drill, we only urge that which tends to make men more, not less, natural, that what they *do* express shall not be at variance with what they *intend* to express. "Some men, it is true, of eminent abilities, may dispense with rules. They are a law unto themselves. They instinctively follow laws and rules without knowing it. * * * * It is manifest from these statements that rhetorical discipline does not consist so much in a collection of rules as in the formation of correct habits, * * * * from which flows easily and naturally correct and accurate expression."[1] These habits, when once fixed, become a second nature, so that we unconsciously apply the rules of rhetoric and elocution.

Henry Ward Beecher, one of the most natural orators in America, became such through a rigid course of elocutionary drill. He says, "I had from childhood a thickness of speech, arising from a large palate, so that, when a boy, I used to be laughed at for talking as if I had pudding in my mouth. When I went to Amherst, I was fortunate in passing into the hands of John Lovell, a teacher of elocution; and of a better teacher for my purpose I can not conceive. For a period of three years I was drilled incessantly. His manner, however, he very properly did not communicate to me. It was the skill of that gentleman that he never left a manner with anybody. He simply gave his pupils the knowledge of what they had in themselves. His system consisted in drill, or the thorough

[1] Townsend's *Sword and Garment.*

practice of inflexions by the voice, of gesture, posture, and articulation. Sometimes I was a whole hour practicing my voice on a word—like *justice.* I would have to take a posture, frequently at a mark chalked on the floor. Then we would go through all the gestures,—exercising each movement of the arm and throwing open the hand. All gestures, except those of precision, go in curves, the arm rising from the side, coming to the front, turning to the left or right. I was drilled as to how far the arm should come forward, where it should start from, how far go back, and under what circumstances these movements should be made. It was drill, drill, drill, until the motions almost became a second nature. Now, I never know what movements I shall make. My gestures are natural, because this drill made them natural to me. The only method of acquiring an effective elocution is by practice, of not less than an hour a day, until the student has his voice and himself thoroughly subdued and trained to right expression."

However, elocution is not eloquence. It can not create soul-action, or kindle the sacred fire within; it only teaches the best method of *expressing* eloquence. But so important is elocution in delivery, that a second-rate thought *well* expressed makes more impression than a first-rate thought *poorly* expressed.

Let it not be forgotten that the prevalent deficiency in elocution in the pulpit, in our day, is one great hinderance to our success, and often creates a depreciation of and disrespect for the ministry on the part of the unconverted masses. By our unnatural delivery we impress the skeptical that we do not believe what we say. One of the most distinguished professors of elocution in this country, who was an infidel, said, "I have been fourteen years employed in teaching elocution to ministers; and I know

they do not believe the Christian religion. The Bible may be true. I do not pretend to know as to that; but I know these ministers do not believe it. I can demonstrate that they do not. The perfection of my art is to teach them to speak naturally on this subject. I go to their studies and converse with them, and they speak eloquently. I say to them, 'Gentlemen, if you will preach just as you yourselves naturally speak on any other subject in which you are interested, you do not need to be taught. That is just what I am trying to teach you. I hear you talk on other subjects with admirable force and eloquence. I see you go into the pulpit, and you speak and act as if you did not believe what you are saying.' I have told them again and again to talk in the pulpit as they naturally talk to me. And I *can not make* them do it, and so I know they do not believe the Christian religion."

§ I. THE VOICE.

The voice should be cultivated, for the following reasons:

(1.) The voice is the speaker's chief instrument in elocution. Edward Payson said that it was half in the pulpit discourse; while Cicero assigned it the highest place in delivery.

(2.) It is capable of such a variety of strains, expressive of every emotion of the soul, that, when under systematic control, its charm is almost magical. Such was the power of Bossuet's voice that when he pronounced the words, "The princess is dying—*the princess is dead*," he could no longer proceed on account of the sobs and groans of the audience. When Massillon, in his funeral oration upon Louis XIV., raised his hands to heaven, and in subdued tones said, "God only is great," the vast audience, breathless and awe-struck, started to their feet as with an impulse, and bowed reverently before the altar. Whitefield could

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makes it a bass voice, tenor, or soprano, with intermediate variations. The middle, or tenor voice, is the most favorable for speaking, since it is the most pleasing and enduring, commands the greatest variety of intonations, (for, being in the middle of the scale, it rises or sinks with greater ease,) and can be projected to the greatest distance.[1]

Whatever be his natural key-note of speech, every preacher should cultivate *compass* of voice, by practicing upon the vocal register, ranging from the highest to the lowest sounds possible. Singing is a profitable exercise; but the vocal exercise of examples in literature suited to the various tones, such as simple pure, orotund, pectoral, guttural, aspirated, and falsetto, is better calculated to develop a speaking-voice, which differs very much from the singing-voice. One should carefully avoid all imperfect tones, nasal tones, and all whines, or mincing tones of false taste, arising from overstraining or wrong management of the vocal organs. In most cases unnatural tones "are the effect of unreality, the words not coming from a heart exercised at the time in accordance with the words."[2] Melody, movement, and nearly all the qualities of voice, can be improved by conversation and audible reading. Prof. McIlvaine, in his excellent work on elocution, thinks that the best exercise is reading aloud dialogues, in which there are frequent and rapid changes of voice and animation represented in the different interlocutors.

Very important in preaching is the *sympathetic* tone, by which we mean a voice in harmony with the subject. Just

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1 Elocution can not obliterate the native characteristics of one's voice, but it can correct and improve the voice in its most essential qualities. "Dr. Streeter thus illustrates the fact that 'muscles possess the power of retaining habits taught them.' Select a brick, for instance. After retaining it in the hand, lay it down, and the hand for some little time retains the shape into which it formed itself in order to hold the weight. So with the muscles involved in speech. As a shoe or glove which has been worn takes the form of the foot or hand, so the vocal ligaments gain in flexibility by use, and take on fixed habits according to the tension of the parts."—Prof. Thwing.

2 Blaikie, *For the Work of the Ministry*, p. 240.

as in music, the impression will be deepest when the tune corresponds with the sentiment of the words; so a speaker can best succeed in gaining the attention and affection of the hearer, and in winning him to his side, when his voice naturally echoes the feelings of his heart. "The Author of the human constitution has so contrived the organization of the corporeal frame, in conjunction with the sensibility of the soul, that certain notes of the voice are necessarily associated with certain emotions;"[1] and the best way to impart the sympathetic power to the voice is to express our thoughts and convictions freely and vividly, and above all to have fervent charity in the heart; for nothing gives more sympathy to the voice than real goodness.

Among the important qualities of a good delivery, *distinct articulation* is indispensable; for it is not so much loudness as clearness of enunciation that renders the speaker intelligible at the remotest corner of the church. "A man who articulates well can make himself heard at a distance without vociferation, even though he lay little stress upon the vowels; and this is the method to which actors have recourse when they make dying persons speak with a subdued voice; they explode the consonants while they retain the vowel sounds."[2]

"Macaulay says of William Pitt, 'His voice, even when it sank to a whisper, was heard to the remotest benches of the House of Commons.' It has been well said that the most noisy gun is not the one which carries a ball the furthest; the crack of a rifle is anything but noisy. It is not the loudness of your voice, it is the force which you put into it that is effective. I am certain that I could whisper so as to be heard throughout every corner of our

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1 Russell's *Vocal Culture*, p. 106.

2 Dr. Adolph Monod on *The Delivery of Sermons*, translated by J. W. Alexander.

great Tabernacle, and I am equally certain that I could holloa and shout so that nobody could understand me. * * * * Ink is necessary to write with, but if you upset the ink-bottle over the sheet of paper, you convey no meaning thereby. So it is with sound; sound is the ink, but management is needed, not quantity, to produce an intelligible writing upon the ear. * * * * A bell will be heard much farther off than a drum; and very singularly, the more musical a sound is the farther it travels. It is not the thumping of the piano which is needed, but the judicious sounding of the best keys." [1]

Faults in articulation may arise from physical defects in the speaking apparatus; but they are usually the result of neglect in early training, timidity, loss of self-possession, or affectation, each of which may be corrected by the proper appliances. Physical defects need surgical aid. Habitual carelessness may be corrected by daily and systematic practice upon phonetic spelling, difficult combinations of words, and whispering exercises.[2] He who lacks self-possession through fear may acquire it by exercising increased deliberation;[3] but he who has an affected precision needs, most of all, common sense.

The English language has many analogies of sounds, which, if distinctly uttered, are very significant—such as *dash*, *harsh*, *ring*, the *hiss* of the serpent, the *wash* of the ocean waves.

Correct articulation, however, may be carried too far, and become "faultily faultless." Some give the *r* a forcible trill; others sound the *o* in Creator, benefactor, etc., so distinctly as to give it undue prominence, and draw special attentior to the fact that they know that the word is

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1 Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students*, First Series, pp. 190, 191.

2 Whispering so as to be heard at a distance brings out a speaker's articulating powers.

3 Moody is said to have spoken two hundred and twenty words a minute.

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of triumph, and from the murmur of repose to the boldest swell of joy, without injury to himself or weariness to his hearers. "By calling to a friend on an opposite hill, * * * * we naturally develop this power; but great care must be taken not to substitute an alteration of pitch or tone."[1, 2] And in actual preaching we should adjust the volume of the voice so as to be heard by persons sitting in the farthest pews of the church.

Volume of sound is promoted by singing, or a judicious practice of gymnastic exercises that will enlarge the vocal capacity. "Its thorough discipline must be mastered, from the lightest whisper to the loudest shouting; not with a view to actual use, but for securing a command over every degree of force and pliancy. Even in a few weeks a stentorian power can be imparted to a comparatively weak voice."[3] The horseback riding and manual labor of our forefathers who were in charge of large circuits, served the purpose of a gymnasium; and it would be an advantage to some of our modern preachers of sedentary habits, to practice, for the sake of health and voice-culture, such exercises as sawing and cutting wood, boat-rowing, base-ball playing, etc. Our preachers need more physical application, more muscle and vigor of health, in order to make their voices ring in the pulpit.

3. *Some directions in regard to voice.*

(1.) In the exercise of vocal gymnastics, be guided by the instructions of some good teacher of elocution; or, if one is not accessible, inform yourself of the anatomy of the vocal organs by means of a good manual of elocution;[4]

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1 See Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 455.

2 Among the Romans, a class of vocalists were called *vociferarii*, who developed power and compass of voice by loud speaking. "Our street peddlers, newsboys, and others who habituate themselves to out-door vocal exercises in all kinds of weather with comparative impunity, are illustrations of the benefit of such training."

3 Frobisher's *Voice and Action*, p. 19.

4 The two great standard works on elocution are Rev. Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia*, and Dr. Rush's *Philosophy of the Human Voice*. Upon the latter is founded Prof. Wm. Rus-

otherwise the drill may be injudicious and injurious; for every approved theory may be abused when ignorantly or excessively applied, and thus become a hinderance rather than a help in actual experience. "Practice makes perfect; and bad practice makes perfectly bad." Never practice elocution with a full stomach. A full meal reduces the capacity of the lungs from ten to twenty cubic inches. Hence, says Monod, "The time most favorable for these exercises is an hour or two after meal; the stomach ought to be neither too full nor too empty." For the same reason one should not eat immediately before preaching.

(2.) In actual preaching, speak with entire forgetfulness of all rules and instructions. The preparatory drill in our former years of training must have been so thorough and so identified with our habits as to become a second nature to us. "No knowledge is really *knowledge* until you can use it without knowing it." Mr. Sankey, the great evangelistic musician, does not think of A and B and C, or sharps and flats, when he fills a vast congregation with the charming notes of his voice and organ. His voice and fingers unconsciously obey the impulse of his will. No one, while listening to a skillful reader, would think of the months and years which he spent in mastering the alphabet, the spelling-book, and the school-reader. The accomplished penman writes as if he had never studied the art. The soldier forgets his drill when in battle. So elocutionary drill will be utterly useless until its rules become familiar, inwrought into our habits of speaking, and applied in practice spontaneously and without reflection. What men call genius is often the result of patient and persevering toil. Demosthenes, Apelles, Virgil, and Handel,

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sell's treatise on *Pulpit Elocution*, which stands without a rival among books of its class. McIlvaine's *Elocution;* Prof. Thwing's *Drill Book in Vocal Culture and Gesture*, for Clergymen; Russell and Murdock's *Vocal Culture*, and Shoemaker's *Practical Elocution*, are all excellent.

in their respective arts of eloquence, painting, poetry, and music, attained their perfection through the most rigid discipline. The perfection of art is not to *conceal* art, but to *forget* it, or, to convert art into nature. As soon as a preacher has so assimilated the rules of elocution that they become a part of himself, he will be a natural orator; otherwise, he will be an artificer or an actor.

(3.) Maintain good health. Ill health will impair the voice and give it a cracked sound, similar to that of a broken bell. "One who neglects the laws of health in the matter of dress and food, and in the use of drugs, or drinks, can not have pure tones. The prevalence of catarrhal difficulties in the north Atlantic states causes nasal sounds. The use of flatulent food, ice-water, hot drinks, pastry, confections, strong tea, tobacco, and other poisons, spoils the voice; some of them by direct action on the stomach, causing eructations, some by induration of the mucous membrane, making it leathery, and some by ruining the teeth, and thus affecting articulation. One more bad habit is that of sleeping with the mouth open. This is a source of pulmonary disease. It also helps to give the countenance of the person, when awake, the air of indecision, if not of idiocy or senility. But how may the habit be cured? First, keep the mouth shut while awake, and always breathe through the nose. Second, sleep on either side, but not on the back." [1]

We also quote the excellent advice of Prof. McIlvaine in his "Elocution": "For the reason that clergymen are compelled to speak twice or three times on Sunday, they ought never to leave the study later than at noon on Saturday. The remainder of the day should be devoted to rest, and gentle exercise in the open air, and the night to sound and refreshing sleep. In like manner, the intervals

[1] Thwing's *Drill Book in Vocal Culture and Gesture*, p. 35.

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as to *hear* him, so that what the ear can not distinguish the eye may read in the expression of the countenance, the look of the eye, or the motion of the hand — these natural interpreters of language. Every power of body should help us to preach,— voice, face, eyes, hands, feet; every available aid to expression should be pressed into service. There should be "*vividus vultus, vividi oculi, vividæ manus, denique omnia vivida.*" [1]

Gesture embraces position, action, and expression of the countenance.

1. *Position.*

By the posture which one habitually assumes, he unconsciously indicates his moral character. "While the reveler reels, and the miser stoops, and the voluptuary yawns, the true man stands upright and downright." The preacher, then, will stand firm, but not rigid; erect, but not bent backward. Every part of the body should assume an easy, graceful, yet manly position, so as to afford full inhalation of the lungs: "the feet a little apart, and at an angle not quite as broad as a right angle; the wrists against the hip-joint; the shoulders square; the chest expanded, and the head erect, so that the larynx is directly over the windpipe." This is the most pleasing and healthful position; and all faults which tend to awkwardness, or which interfere with the free use of the vocal organs, should be carefully corrected.

2. *Action.*

The most practical advice with reference to action is, to observe the gestures of children when they talk, and note how the freedom, grace, and naturalness of their motions add to the power of their expression. Some preachers gesticulate without intermission while speaking, while

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1 Animated countenance, animated eyes, animated hands, and, in short, the whole body animated.—Luther.

others are reserved and stoical in their action. These two extremes are exhibited in the French and English pulpits, while the Americans seem to occupy an intermediate position in this respect. To a French preacher, action is as natural as to an Englishman it is difficult. Addison, in speaking of the latter, says, "Our preachers stand stock-still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world." We need not wonder that Dean Swift called churches "public dormitories;" and Sidney Smith referred to preachers as "holy lumps of ice," and asked, "Is it the rule of oratory to handle the sublimest truths in the driest manner?" The preacher whose heart is stirred with holy thoughts will instinctively use the instrumental art of gesture to help him make the truth impressive. "Emotion rather than thought," says McIlvaine, "is the immediate cause of gesture."

For special directions as to movements of the body, head, hands, arms, feet, etc., we refer the reader to Bacon's "Manual of Gesture," which contains all needed information on this subject. However, for such as have not access to this manual, we will give here a condensed methodology of gestures, together with their generic signification, arranged from the best sources.

GESTURES EMPLOYED.	Position and Motion.....	*a.* *Initial.*	
		b. *Active*—of the.....	Head. Eyes. Trunk. Hands. Arms. Feet.

PARTS OF GESTURE.	*Preparation;* *i. e.*, raising the hand obliquely to a level with the head. *Execution;* *i. e.*, the executing of the gesture. *Sustentation;* *i. e.*, the holding of the gesture. *Impulse;* *i. e.*, a slight repetition to clinch gesture. *Transition;* *i. e.*, a change from one position to another. *Return;* *i. e.*, finish.

- **Gesture Demands:**
  - Rhetorical characteristics corresponding to thought and emotion as expressed in speech:
    - Unity.
    - Combination.
    - Cumulative Force.
    - Climax.
    - *Various Conditions.*
      - Simplicity.
      - Grace—as opposed to awkwardness.
      - Propriety.
      - Precision.
      - Energy.
      - Boldness.
      - Magnificence.

- **General Significance of Position.**
  - **Initial Position of the**
    - *Head,* / *Trunk,* — Erect.....
      - Calmness.
      - Self-Possession.
    - *Arms,* Hanging at the side = Dignity.
    - *Feet.* First, right advanced, left supporting the body, = [Readiness of Action.
  - **Position of Action.**
    - *Hands,*
      - General
        - Supine.....
          - Impartation.
          - Receptivity.
        - Prone.....
          - Superposition.
          - Repression.
        - Vertical...
          - Aversion.
          - Repulsion.
      - Special.
        - Index = Designation.
        - Clinched = Vehemenoc.
        - Clasped ....
          - Emotion.
          - Distress.
        - Applied = Adoration.
        - Folded = Self-abasement.
        - Crossed.....
          - Humility.
          - Veneration.
    - *Arms,*
      - Uplifted .
        - Elevation.
        - Wonder.
      - Lateral = Expansion.
      - Parallel = Combination.

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In a general sense, Bacon observes that "the descending gestures belong to the sphere of the Will, and, therefore, predominate in strong resolve and determination, in bold and emphatic assertion, and vehement argumentation.

"The horizontal lines belong more especially to the realm of Intellect, and are employed in general thought, and in historical and geographical allusions.

"The ascending gestures belong to the Imagination. These are employed in sublimity and general elevation—physical, intellectual, and moral."

3. *Some directions in regard to gesture.*

(1.) In gesturing, we must not neutralize or contradict our words, by assuming a position or executing a movement that is not in harmony with what we say. It is reported of a certain minister, who was discoursing on the divine mercy, that, with upraised hand and fist shaken at the heads of his hearers, he quoted the passage beginning, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," etc., not noting the ludicrous contrast between the sentiment and the gesture. Naturalness also requires that the gestures be not simultaneous with, but slightly antecedent or introductory to, the verbal expression, so as to prepare the hearers for what is coming. "The first step is conception in the mind; the next, the movement of the eye toward the place; then of the face; then hand; next the finger points it out; and last of all comes the expression by words." It is absurd for one to study his gestures before preaching, or to practice them before the mirror, in order to be natural. If by previous training he has acquired the habit of natural gesticulation, and has self-possession and genuine earnestness while engaged in speaking, his bodily action will be spontaneously natural and effective.

(2.) Avoid excess in gesture. While it is the fault of

some timid speakers to use weak and irresolute action, resulting in muscular stiffness and a sort of pump-handle movement, others greatly err in making too many or too extravagant gesticulations. Sawing the air with the hands, with fingers distended like the prongs of a fork, tossing the head, and all violent action without respite, are unsightly, and wearisome to a congregation. Generally, moderation is better than superfluity of action. Excess of action is worse than no action at all. Too much gesticulating, like too much emphasis in reading, will weaken its own effect. To mimic every action described is also absurd.[1]

(3.) Avoid monotony. Professor Porter tells of one preacher who had but three gestures; first with the right hand, then with the left, and then with both. Next to monotony of voice, nothing puts a congregation to sleep sooner than continually repeating a gesture which marks with exactness each part of a period, as a pendulum beats the time.

4. *Facial expression.*

The expression of the countenance might properly be classified with gesture of action, but so important in delivery is the language of the face that it deserves a separate consideration.

The face can be made the exponent of every thought and feeling; for "the strongest passions bolt into the face." The signs of joy or sorrow, of hope or fear, of pleasure or pain, of storm or calm; the emotions which successively agitate the human breast, and which give life and movement to the physiognomy, and powerful emphasis and double effect to words, can all be photographed in the

1 Broadus gives the following incident: "A really good man, in preaching at a university, once said: 'You shut your eyes to the beauty of piety; you stop your ears to the calls of the gospel; you turn your back,' etc.; and in saying it, shut his eyes, stopped his ears with his fingers, and whirled his broad back into view. * * * * In 'suiting the action to the word,' he 'o'erstepped the modesty of nature.'"

countenance, and play upon its features like sunshine and shadow. The face, then, may be said to be the mirror of the soul, in which are seen its secret motives, whether of virtue or of vice. It is often difficult, when this soul-reflector is brought under close examination, to conceal our real character; for a blush, or an elevation or depression of the countenance, is often beyond our control, and speaks for itself. Hence the significance of Shakespeare's expression, "I saw his heart in his face," and Amaziah's words to Jehoash, "Come, let us look one another in the face." (II. Kings xiv. 8.) Says Cicero, "Next to the voice in effectiveness is the countenance, and this is ruled over by the eye." And McIlvaine observes that "the expressive power of the human eye is so great that it determines, in a manner, the expression of the whole countenance. It is almost impossible to disguise it. It is said that gamblers rely more upon the study of the eye, to discover the state of their opponents' game, than upon any other means. Even animals are susceptible of its power. The dog watches the eyes of his master, and discovers from them, before a word is spoken, whether he is to expect a caress, or apprehend chastisement. It is said that the lion can not attack a man, so long as the man looks him steadily in the eyes."

According to Delsarte's[1] system, the eye is capable of seven hundred and twenty-nine different expressions. It sparkles with interest, flashes with anger, weeps with grief, melts with pity, languishes with love, twinkles with humor, dances with joy, starts with amazement, and in a multitude of ways reflects the various emotions of the soul.[2]

To avoid faults in the use of the eye, the following suggestions should be observed:

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1 A master of histrionic art, in Europe.

2 See chapter on Modes of Delivery, p. 446.

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see him, will avoid all grimaces that would render him ridiculous before an audience.

§ III. CONDUCT IN THE PULPIT.

1. *Earnestness of manner.* Earnestness lies at the foundation of good elocution. It will dictate matter and manner, give tone to the voice, expression to the countenance, grace to the gesture; and without it, it is impossible to speak naturally. The rules of art can not impart that feeling which is necessary to animate speech and throw ardor and transport into word and action. *Pectus est quod disertum facit.*[1] The depths of the soul must be moved by some great purpose, that takes possession of the man, and instinctively grasps the form of language and gesture that is appropriate to it. To speak earnestly, one must feel earnestly; or, as Prof. Blaikie said, be "a man of business on fire." As J. Angell James says, in his "Earnest Ministry," "All men are in earnest when they feel."[2]

Earnestness is *intensity* of feeling. A mother is in earnest "when she pleads with her wayward boy. A father is in earnest, when, from his dying bed, he gives his last message to his weeping children;"[3] and a preacher is in earnest when the salvation of souls becomes the passion and burden of his soul; when the love of Christ constrains him and drives him forward with the force of a torrent; when the solemn and awful verities of life and immortality become settled and firm convictions that will not let him be at rest while men are heedlessly drifting to endless ruin. Pity for human suffering has produced Howards, Wilber-

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1 It is the heart that makes one eloquent.

2 Dr. Cuyler said, "When a youth, I once preached before an eminent lawyer, and was foolish enough next day to apologize for the force I used in some parts of my sermon. 'I thank you for that earnestness,' said he; 'It was the best thing about your manner. If I had a youth studying law with me, who would not exhibit more earnestness in pleading a five-dollar suit than most ministers do in persuading men to accept of eternal life, I would kick him out of my office.'"

3 Bishop Simpson.

forces, and Shaftsburys; but the causes that produce a preacher's earnestness are deeper than those of philanthropy. The manner of earnestness can not be better described than was done by David Garrick, in a letter to his student, Dr. Stonehouse, in reply to the question, How ought a sermon to be delivered?

"MY DEAR PUPIL:—You know how you would feel and speak in the parlor to a dear friend who was in imminent danger of his life, and with what energetic pathos of diction and countenance you would enforce the observance of that which you really thought would be for his preservation. You would not think of playing the orator, of studying your emphasis, cadence, or gesture. You would be yourself; and the interesting nature of your subject impressing your heart would furnish you with the most natural tone of voice, the most proper language, the most engaging features, the most suitable and graceful gestures. What you would be in the parlor, be in the pulpit; and you will not fail to please, to affect, to profit. Adieu. ————."

If this excellent advice were heeded by ministers, and they were as much in earnest to save men's souls as the merchant is in saving his goods from fire in a great conflagration, they would make their hearers feel in earnest too. J. Angell James, in his admirable work on an "Earnest Ministry," says, "That man must be a stone, and destitute of the ordinary feelings of humanity, who can see another interested, active, zealous for his welfare, and he himself remain inert and indifferent. Even the apathetic and indolent have sometimes been kindled into ardor, and led to make efforts for themselves, by the solicitude which others have manifested for their welfare. There is a silent and almost unperceived process of thought going on in the minds of those who are listening to the sermons of a preacher really laboring for the conversion of souls of this kind. 'Is he so earnest about my salvation, and shall I care nothing about the matter? Is my eternal happiness so much in his account, and shall it be nothing in mine?

I can meet cold logic with counter-arguments; or at any rate I can raise up difficulties against evidence. I can smile at the artifices of rhetoric, and be pleased with the displays of eloquence. I can sit unmoved under sermons which seem intended by the preacher to raise my estimate of himself; but I can not stand this earnestness about *me*. The man is evidently intent upon saving my soul. I feel the grasp of his hand laying hold of my arm as if he would pluck me out of the fire. He has not only made me think, but he has made me feel. His earnestness has subdued me.'"[1]

It is said of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, that he preached "with such an unction and emotion, that even those amongst his audience who did not understand the language in which he spoke, were, nevertheless, moved to tears by the very tones of his voice—the earnestness and burning zeal which appeared in his every gesture and look."[2]

In order to be earnest a preacher must not *aim* at earnestness, but "must aim at his *object*, which is to do some spiritual good to his hearers, and which will at once *make* him earnest."[3]

2. *Self-possession in the pulpit.* The loss of one's self-possession in the pulpit is a great embarrassment to preaching. It renders the preacher unhappy, and the audience uncomfortable; while the preacher's words will be empty sounds, falling as dead weights from his lips. It is a condition calculated to make one feel "cheap." "Sometimes God seems designedly to show us our weakness by taking from

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1 "After the death of McCheyne, of Scotland, there was found upon his desk an unopened note, from one who had heard his last sermon, to this effect: 'Pardon a stranger for addressing to you a few lines. I heard you preach last Sabbath evening, and it pleased God to bless that sermon to my soul. It was not so much what you said as your manner of speaking it that struck me. I saw in you a beauty of holiness I never saw before.'"—Kidder's *Homiletics*, pp. 378, 379.

2 Potter's *Sacred Eloquence*, p. 211. 3 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

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ures touched or tickled, than their minds instructed. A minister is justified in making his hearers weep, especially when he calls forth tears of repentance; but it is unbecoming to the nature of a serious discourse to provoke mirth over witty thoughts or words. Wit may be a good mental recreation, and refreshing after toil, but when exercised in the holy sanctuary, and during solemn preaching, is an unpardonable offense against both piety and decorum. Not that religion should put on the veil of sadness, but that we should discriminate between joyfulness and witticism—the former, an element of Christianity; the latter, a freak of human nature. "Wit and judgment seldom are united." Hence, in proportion as wit prevails in the pulpit, sound judgment and good sense will decline.

4. Equally should the preacher shun a spirit of *levity in the pulpit.* This is a greater incongruity than witticism; for it makes the minister appear actually irreverent and irreligious in the presence of his audience, which expects from him gravity and grace. Those given to occasional or habitual lightness of character should seriously consider the solemnities of their sacred office, the weight of their influence, and earnestly pray to be delivered from everything that would render their public ministrations trivial and insincere in the estimation of their hearers.

5. *Formality* quenches the spirit of earnestness, and when it proceeds from the leader of the congregation will soon freeze up the spirituality of the hearers. Coldness, and its co-partner, stiffness, are unseemly in a minister, and "suggest to an audience," says Kidder, "that a speaker thinks more of himself than of his message."[1]

6. *Affectation* in every shape is always repulsive, but when it assumes lofty airs, uses swelling words, and feels great self-importance, it becomes disgusting. Vanity and

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1 *Homiletics*, p. 333.

conceit! let them be forever driven from the pulpit as enemies to ministerial success. The grace of humility and the beauty of modesty! let them be set side by side as gems of loveliness in pulpit decorum.

> "What! — will a man play tricks, will he indulge
> A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
> And just proportion, fashionable mien,
> And pretty face, in presence of his God?
> Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
> As with the diamond on his lily hand,
> And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
> When I am hungry for the bread of life?
> He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
> His noble office, and, instead of truth,
> Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!
> Therefore, avaunt all attitude, and stare,
> And start theatric, practiced at the glass!" [1]

7. "*However offensive want of propriety may be elsewhere, it is doubly so in the house of God.*" [2] A preacher's general conduct in the public congregation and the pulpit should be a matter of no small concern. From the time he enters the church until he leaves it again, he is under the constant gaze and scrutiny of various kinds of observers. Placed thus conspicuously in the center of observation, his actions often speak louder than his words; and in a short time he has left an impression upon their minds, favorable or otherwise.[3] The following was said of a minister: "The manner in which he comes in, and sits in the pulpit, and rises to speak, is a sermon of itself. It shows that he has something to say that is important and solemn." [4]

A man's thoughts will, to a certain extent, control his actions. A mind brimful of a weighty subject will manifest

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1 Cowper, *The Task*, Book II.

2 Arthur's *Tongue of Fire*, p. 233.

3 Many persons form their opinion of a preacher the first time they come to hear him preach, and from this first impression they seldom change.

4 Finney's *Revival Lectures*, p. 202.

itself in the bodily movement, giving a certain expression to the countenance, and significance to the general deportment. And if manner grows out of matter, it also grows out of character. Whatever a man *is*, in mind or in life, will also appear on the outward surface as displayed in the general carriage. We can not dissemble before the public eye. All mannerism will be abortive, and the real man, in spite of himself, will appear in the disposition of the speaker.

While every preacher's manner possesses an individuality of its own, yet there are some particular things that should characterize every preacher's behavior in the public congregation. The refining influence of education and religion should teach him to avoid all awkwardness, carelessness, haughtiness, coarseness, egotism, and vulgarity, and to cultivate calmness, gracefulness, ease, and the proprieties of the pulpit. To enter the church and the pulpit hastily, carelessly, or haughtily, will expose him to just criticism.[1]

After taking a position upon the platform, the head should be reverently bowed in silent prayer. Some prefer to kneel. The form, however, is not so important as the spirit of invocation; for this observance must not be for the sake of an established custom, but for the sake of seeking "divine aid in every act and word belonging to that sacred place." To gaze about over the audience, or look at every one that comes in, is a breach of religious propriety, and would be a poor example for his hearers to follow.

"Even as the pulpit itself should be entered with simple

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1 "It is related of the eloquent and devoted Spencer, of Liverpool, that on one occasion when about to ascend the steps of his pulpit he so far forgot himself as to spring up two or three steps at a single bound. This circumstance naturally excited remark and censure among his people, and was a cause of bitter humiliation and regret to himself." Kidder's *Homiletics*, p. 378.

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manipulating the handkerchief, running the hands through the hair, turning your back to the audience while stepping from desk to chair, hunting hymns or announcements, or whispering to another minister in the pulpit while one is praying, is much out of harmony with the solemn service. Some are addicted to awkwardness of posture—such as leaning against the pulpit; crossing the legs while standing on one foot, with the other resting on tip-toe; resting one hand in the bosom, or thrusting both into the pockets, or behind the back, under the skirts of the coat; supporting the hands on the hips, clasping them across the abdomen, dangling them at the side, or engaging in playing with buttons, watch-chain, etc. Some have a habit of swinging the body to and fro, rotating in an arc or semicircle, with one heel used as a pivot, "or walking the platform like a tiger in his cage," or stamping like a horse; while others stand stock-still, like a post, without a motion or gesture. Extremes should always be avoided. Let there be action without ranting; exactness without formality.

Preachers make a great mistake when, for the sake of improving the voice, they get into the habit of sipping water at intervals while preaching. Hoarseness is often the result of the injudicious habit of using cold water too freely during the exercise of speaking. The normal condition of the voice needs not the aid of water or troches. No one should create injurious necessities for himself.

Announcements and notices should be read at a time when they will least interfere with the services, or divert the effect of the sermon. A good time is just before beginning to preach. The congregation should be dismissed with proper solemnity, and the people should retire in orderly manner, carrying home with them every good impression received in God's sanctuary.

As a rule, the minister is responsible for the public con-

duct of his congregation. Occasionally, it may be necessary to administer verbal reproof; but usually, a preacher's manly example in the pulpit is the best reproof to disorderly hearers, and his presence alone should be sufficient to quietly rule a religious assembly, and to keep them within the bounds of Christian propriety.

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CONCOMITANT TO THE SERMON.

We have now finished our treatment of the sermon. What follows does not properly belong to the department of homiletics, but is intimately connected with it as a necessary accompaniment to preaching. In the exercise of public address, he who preaches has also other duties to perform, which belong to sacred rhetoric rather than to the narrow sphere of homiletics; but as these duties are of a rhetorical, not pastoral, nature, and demand for their successful performance a special preparation and skill which are similar to, though distinct from, those required for preaching, we will append a short discussion of such concomitant duties.

Preaching is the principal part of a preacher's work;[1] but his official duties in the conduct of public worship, and in the various Christian enterprises which call for his aid in the form of suitable addresses, are not unimportant. Although they are subordinate to the chief work, they should not therefore be neglected as if they were no part of religious service. Minor duties need to be executed as faithfully as major ones. It would be incongruous for a minister to preach well, but pray poorly; to deliver eloquent sermons, but to be unable to interest a Sunday-school or a temperance meeting in a becoming speech.

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1 See Part I., Chap. L, § II.

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the soul as is the free, spontaneous, and spiritual worship of the heart. It may satisfy the æsthetical emotions, but can not meet the wants of the soul. The preacher should, in these devotional exercises, endeavor to lead his hearers into a serious and genuinely devotional state of mind. In his reading, singing, and praying, he should conduct them from the letter to the spirit, engaging their hearts in the true worship of God. While he worships, he moves his congregation to worship with him. To say, "Let us worship together," is a good way to announce the opening exercises. While he leads, the people follow. He gives tone to the devotions by the matter and manner of conducting them, and infuses into the meeting the state of his own spirituality.

The preliminary services are preparatory to the sermon. They divert the hearers' thoughts from the secular pursuits and earthly cares that engaged them during the week, and bring the mind into sympathy with the services of the sanctuary. They kindle the emotions, revive the spirits, and in every way render the hearers attentive to the truth which is to follow. The twenty-five or thirty minutes spent in such preparatory devotion, then, should be very interesting and highly edifying to all present — an attractive feature of the public services. When the sermon so monopolizes the whole time and interest of the hour that the devotional exercises must be passed over hurriedly and carelessly; when preaching becomes everything, and congregational worship little or nothing, the Sabbath service fails in its object, and loses influence with the worshipers. They want not only to listen to an interesting, eloquent address, but also to unite in sweet communion with each other and with God.

The sermon, and its accompanying devotions, when of the right order, will exert a reciprocal influence. The first

will give depth and momentum to the second, while the second will impart impulse and animation to the first. The preacher who enters the pulpit with unavoidable coldness of heart, may, during the simple, earnest exercise of praying, singing, or reading of the word, receive a glow of warm feeling that will wonderfully help him in preaching.[1]

§ I. READING OF SCRIPTURE.

The reading of the scripture-lesson is the proper exercise with which to begin divine services. "Hear the word of the Lord," is the signal for the congregation to give audience to the truth as uttered by inspired lips.

This part of the introductory devotions consists in preceptive instruction and meditation; and as its thoughts are a matter of selection and not of original composition on the part of the preacher, we will give some directions in the matter of

1. *Selecting a scripture-lesson.*

The controlling principle is, to choose passages that are in harmony with the general tone of the services,—the occasion, or the discourse, or both. The lesson need not be upon the same subject, but between the two — the lesson and the kind of service — there should be such a similarity of spirit that they can easily blend in one general impression. Thus, a sermon on the divine attribute of Love, or Goodness, might be introduced with a psalm of thanksgiving; because a discourse on such a topic will naturally produce sentiments of praise. Between the text

1 On a visit to a sister congregation, on one occasion, I was invited into the pulpit, but the pastor asked me to excuse him from requesting me to take any part in conducting the opening exercises; for, said he, "I am spiritually so cold this morning that I need all the benefit of these devotions to warm me up for preaching." The sermon that followed was certainly delivered with considerable unction. On every occasion, the minister who is to do the preaching, whether he himself, or another, conduct the introductory exercises, should dismiss from his mind all thoughts and anxieties about his sermon, and enter fully into the spirit of the devotions.

and reading-lesson there should be congeniality, without the formality of topical unity.

If the scripture-lesson is to aid in the devotional service, we may make good selections from the Psalms, which are full of matter suited to awaken devotional feelings. "The harp of David was full-stringed, and every angel of joy and of sorrow swept over the chords, as he passed." With wonderful variety and tenderness of feeling, they range over nearly every note in the key-board of religious devotion. Many parts of the prophecies, gospels, epistles, and Revelation are well adapted to the exercise of praise, adoration, and contrition. Whatever portion is selected, it should harmonize with the general effect which the sermon is intended to produce.

If the lesson is to be didactic, or a counterpart of the sermon, having a close topical relation to the sermon, whether doctrinal or historical, we have the whole range of the Scriptures before us from which to choose. The portion selected, then, should be mainly pertinent, but not so exclusively so as to omit from the reading all impertinent passages, unless they be some of the more indelicate ones, the public reading of which, in the presence of a modern assembly, would seem repulsive.

The reading-lesson may be double,—one from the Old Testament and another from the New, upon mutually related subjects. Revelation has a dual structure, which exhibits a marked contrast or comparison, when viewed together as the old and new economy of grace. Sometimes read side by side such passages as Job and Paul on the immortality of the soul; the Mosaic and Christian theories of the Sabbath; the ten commandments and their summary in the Christian law of love; the imprecatory psalms and the Sermon on the Mount; and such other selections as exhibit the analogy of faith and the consist-

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parable of the prodigal son in the same manner as the first chapter of Genesis. Poetical portions are the most difficult to render; for, unless the reader catches and feels all the hidden springs of emotion that lie beneath the writer's utterances, he can not do justice to their meaning. The psalmist often gives evidence of the loftiest conceptions of grief, praise, or exultation, which lie hidden in the concrete forms of the original, and which nothing but a rigid exegesis and pious appreciation of the author's feelings can evolve. If these inspired poets could sometimes hear how miserably their sentiments are often read, they might feel grieved at the apathy of man. Many portions of the gospels exhibit a variety of readings; especially the first chapter of St. John. "A man who can read properly the first chapter of John's Gospel, can read properly anything in the Bible. The first verse is crucial. I confess to have spent a quarter of a century in striving to learn to read it, but I am not now so confident of my reading as to insist upon it. But this verse is a good verse for practice."[1]

As to *tone* of voice, let it be reverential, distinguished from that hasty, careless strain in which other books are read; but let it be free from the formality of a "churchly" tone, which becomes uniform, habitual, and effete. The frequent repetition of the same well-known passages is apt to generate formalism. The minister reads them so frequently that a tendency to mechanical utterance becomes natural; and hence the mannerism of which he is unconscious. The reading of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians in the sonorous, sepulchral tones which are heard so often at funerals, is out of harmony with the spirit of the subject, which is full of consolation, adapted to such occasions, and which culminates in a burst of tri-

1 Chas. F. Deems, LL. D.

umphant joy. Of course, there should be nothing boisterous, but a subdued tone — the devotional intonation of the orotund, without the sad, proverbial strain that formerly distinguished the conventicle.[1] The only remedy against a drawling, whining, groaning habit of reading is a lively appreciation of what one reads, and a constant watchfulness of manner of expression. Nature abhors monotony. Let there be a free variety, flexibility, and modulation in scripture-reading.

The *pronunciation* should be natural, that is, according to the adopted vernacular, without attempting to add a sacredness to certain words by a pedantic manner of utterance. It would be affectation to pronounce the name God as if it were spelled G-a-u-d. A pernicious practice, acquired from the Irish pulpit, is that of dividing "Lord" into two syllables; as in the passage, "The earth is the *Law-words*, and the fullness thereof." The pronouncing of the termination *ed* as if it were a separate syllable, as, "He pray-*ed* unto the Lord," "It displeas-*ed* Jehovah," is a grave error often committed in the pulpit. Proper names should be pronounced "correctly, and yet without pedantry."

But in the public reading of the Scriptures nothing is more important than *emphasis*. Some one has said, "Emphasis *is* exposition." It certainly has exegetical value in helping to make plain the sense. Ezra and his companions, on the return from captivity, "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This was not only a translating of the pure Hebrew into Chaldee, the vernacular of the exile in Babylon, but a distinct verbal rendering that, by the use of comment and emphasis, gave them the sense of the reading. A correct exegesis is necessary to correct

1 On the *sympathetic* tone, see page 482.

emphasis; for how can we give the sense of that which we have not previously understood by careful examination. For example, the fifty-first verse of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is often read, "We shall not *all* SLEEP, but we shall *all* BE CHANGED." This is the reading suggested by the English version, conveying the idea that some shall sleep, and others shall not sleep, but that all, both those who sleep and those who do not, shall be changed. But a close inspection of the original shows this a faulty rendering. The proper interpretation is that "all we" shall *not sleep*, but "all we" shall *be changed.* The denial and affirmation relate to the same class, and not to two. So the fifty-third verse is usually read, "For this *mortal* must put on *immortality.*" But the idea to be expressed in this verse is not what shall succeed this mortal, but the absolute necessity and inevitable certainty of a change in the resurrection, which is conveyed by the word "must," and the passage should therefore be read, "For this corruptible MUST put on incorruption, and this mortal MUST put on immortality." So, also, the passage in Mark xiv. 13, "There shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water," should have the emphasis on "man," because it was the custom of women, and not men, to bear burdens.[1] "Why stand ye *here* all the day idle?" as if to say, Why not go elsewhere? or, "Why *stand* ye here all the day idle?" as if to say, Ye might as well sit. How different these interpretations from the correct one, "Why stand ye here all the day *idle?*"

Carelessness in the matter of emphasis not only misinterprets, but sometimes renders the reader extremely ridiculous; as in the familiar story of an Irish clergyman who, in reading I. Kings xiii. 27, had it thus, "And he spake

1 "So singular would be the sight of a *man* thus engaged that our Savior gives it as a sign, as though, in all the throng, not more than a single instance of the kind would occur."—Dr. Burt, in *The Land and Its Story.*

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3. *Preparation of the reading-lesson.*

The lesson should always be selected before entering the pulpit. It is humiliating to a preacher, in the presence of his congregation, to show his neglect of preparation by busying himself in hunting through the Bible for something to read; and, perhaps, after a fruitless search, and the arrival of the hour for services to begin, he reads an ill-adapted selection. Besides, such engagements in the pulpit are out of harmony with a true spirit of devotion, and deprive the minister of its benefits; for the few minutes during which he sits in the pulpit before beginning divine services should be devoted to silent meditation, instead of being spent in doing work which should have been done in the study.

But a reading-lesson requires preparatory study. Says Dr. J. Parker, of London, "I doubt whether it is not profane to read in a pulpit a chapter to which no attention has been paid in private." How can we, in the best possible manner, perform our duty in this part of the services? Surely, not by the mere pronouncing of words in a careless, unmeaning manner, performed more for the sake of custom than for benefit. On the stage, men deliver passages of Shakespeare over which they have spent months of careful study. Is the reading of Moses or Paul or Christ of less importance than that of Shakespeare? A true reading of God's word requires an intellectual and sympathetic conception of the author's meaning, and a rendering of it that will convey fully and impressively the author's thoughts to the hearer. If the preacher would read with the understanding and with the spirit, let him study the lesson carefully,—if possible, in the original,—and with prayer, which will help him to the intellectual conception and spiritual significance of the passage. One should at least carefully read over in private the scripture to be read in public.

§ II. HYMNS.

Music is a powerful means of expression and impression. It penetrates the very depths of the soul, seeks out the tenderest emotions and sentiments, and is able to arouse or subdue, to brighten or extinguish them. How wonderful is its influence over all sentient beings! The fabled Orpheus tamed wild beasts with the bewitching tones of his voice. Bees that have escaped from the hive have been lured back to their homes by the sound of cymbals and the jingle of bells. The horse, excited by martial music, plunges furiously into the midst of the fray and the thickest of the fight. Dogs often utter woful cries at the sound of military music.

If music can thus move brute-feelings, how much greater its power over human spirits! It kept Dr. Kane from despair, and his men from mutiny, while in the arctic regions. Especially does it affect the morals of men, drawing them from wild passions, and calling out the "better angel of their nature." It has brought tears from the eyes of the drunkard and helped him to abandon the cup. It has delivered many a poor Saul from his "evil spirit," and, even more than David's harp could do for the proud king, lifted him into a life of holiness before the Lord.

If such be the power of music, we would naturally expect its influence to be employed in the exercise of religious worship. Sacred music is the appropriate language of devotion; for the fervent spirit of adoration instinctively seeks to express itself in song. It is the most fitting expression of religious emotion, and its effect upon the hearts of the people is even beyond that of the most eloquent sermon. Ought we not to preach less, and sing more, in our religious assemblies? If any person can not be induced to listen to our sermon, he will listen to our song. If dull hearers can

not be conquered by eloquent preachers, they will be aroused by the "sweet singers of Israel," who speak to each other "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in [their] hearts to the Lord." What heart is so hard that it can not be touched by the poetical strains of sacred song? Many who have withstood the appeals of sermon after sermon, can date their conversion to the impression made upon them by some simple hymn.

Why should the world have better music than the church, and the devil's choir get more hearers than those who sing for Christ? The melody of song, sanctified by devotional piety, and poured forth with the union of voice and heart in singing the praises of God, is the sublimest and most inspiring exercise in which worshipers can engage. It kindles their zeal into a holy fervor which swells and circles up to heaven like a cloud of incense. The best artistic skill of profane and theatrical music bears no comparison, in effect and permanence of influence, to the divine power of sacred song. There are some hymns that will never get old, on account of their genuine gospel sentiment and the many hallowed associations which they recall to the Christian's memory. Will the church ever cease to sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood," or, "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove"? Wherever you go, into whatever denomination or locality, you hear "Rock of Ages" sung with a spirit that thrills the heart as if it had never been sung before. Such heaven-inspired thoughts and tunes, which are familiar to everybody, which are sung in every Christian land, which have done so much to cheer disconsolate, drooping spirits, will never wear out by use or time; and when the names of Gluck, Mozart, and Rossini are forgotten, those of Wesley, Watts, and Ken will shine all the brighter because of the holy sentiments which they almost unconsciously immortalized in song. Music is one of our spirit-

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well as many of the old English ballads, and scattered lyrics, will cultivate an artistic instinct and feeling for lyric poetry.

But we must go to the sacred odes of the Christian church for our principal study of song. The most popular and lasting hymns are those which are not only most lyrical in form, but at the same time the most deeply permeated by Christian life and feeling. Without these elements they could not be popular, because lacking the common element of worship. Many of the hymns of the patristic and medieval church, such as the *Gloria in excelsis*, the *Te Deum laudamus*, and the *Dies Iræ*, are unsurpassed in devotional spirit by anything in hymnology, while others are corrupted by mariolatry and saint-worship. The German hymns are undoubtedly the richest, both in quantity and quality, of any in modern tongues, and should be studied in the original. English hymnology is truly represented by Dr. Watts, of whom Montgomery said, "He may almost be called the inventor of hymns in our language; for he so far departed from all precedent that few of his compositions resemble those of his forerunners, while he so far established a precedent to all his successors that none have departed from it otherwise than according to the peculiar turn of mind of the writer, and the style of expressing Christian truth employed by the denomination to which he belonged." Many other hymns, such as those of Charles Wesley, Augustus Toplady, and John Newton, are worthy of careful study. "The *Lyra Sacra* of America is well represented. Although only about thirty years old, it is far richer than our British friends are aware of."[1] We are indebted chiefly to Bishop Doane, W. A. Muhlenberg, A. C. Coxe, Ray Palmer, and Mrs. Sigourney for some of our best Christian ballads.

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1 Dr. Philip Schaff, in Preface to *Christ in Song*.

No one can know much of the beauty of sacred song without imbuing his mind with the spirit of Hebrew poetry, which stands unique in originality, freshness, and simplicity of thought. The writer of the Psalms began a new era in lyric song; and his free, spontaneous, and melting effusions have been imitated by all our successful hymn-writers in the church. "The modern poet must go to the song of Deborah, and the psalms of David, for triumphant and jubilant praise, for the seven-fold chorus and hallelujahs and harping symphonies."

But each preacher should be well versed in the hymn-book of his own church, so that he may, at any moment, make good selections, suited to every state or change in a religious meeting, as well as to enable him to make apt quotations therefrom in his sermons or prayer-meeting addresses, all of which add greatly to the effectiveness of the devotions. "A delightful hour may sometimes be spent by friends in discussing the hymn-book, comparing favorite hymns, reading specimens, and thus gaining critical knowledge, at the same time with devotional enjoyment and profit."[1]

The advantage of such a critical knowledge of the nature, and such a sympathetic instinct for the spirit, of lyric poetry, consists in a skill and taste for selecting the right kind of hymns for every variety of devotional services. An unsuitable selection, made carelessly or ignorantly, often chills the spirit of true devotion. To this general qualification we add, in condensed form, a few special rules for selecting proper hymns, as given by Dr. Broadus. He says we should select hymns that are, "(1.) Correct in sentiment. * * * * (2.) Devotional in spirit. * * * * (3.) Poetical in imagery and diction. * * * * (4.) Rhythmical.

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1 Broadus' *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, p. 486, to which we are indebted for many other valuable suggestions on this subject.

* * * * (5.) Symmetrical, the verses exhibiting a regular progress in thought, and forming a complete and harmonious whole. In a thoroughly good hymn, it would not be possible to omit any verse, without destroying the sense. Still, there are many useful and even delightful hymns in which this is not the case, and when the exigencies of our worship require the omission of some verse or verses, much greater care should be taken than is sometimes observed, so to manage the omission as to leave the hymn still coherent and harmonious."[1]

Usually, three hymns are to be selected; and good sense must determine the character of each. But unless reasons for exceptions exist, the general rule is that the first hymn be purely devotional, without any reference to the special subject of the sermon, consisting of invocation, praise, or expressions of longing desire, faith, humility, love, etc. If the reading-lesson preceding it be devotional in character, the first hymn should harmonize with its general tone. The second hymn, or the one immediately preceding the sermon, will be intermediate, having reference either to what preceded, or to what is to follow, or to both. The last hymn should follow up the discourse, applying its lessons, exciting the particular feelings and impressing the special object which the sermon had in view.

Every one can see the propriety of such management of divine services. The hymns naturally appeal to the emotions, and the sermon to the intellect. These two must be brought into the most favorable relationship. The opening song must be preparatory, directing the hearers' feelings and sympathies to the general class of duties or affections which the preacher has in view for the occasion, before they are advised of his object; then follows a strong, convincing address to the intellect. This intellectual im-

1 See *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 487, 488.

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so that rhythm and rhyme may be made sensible to the ear, but without giving prominence to either. Rhythm requires a more melodious utterance than prose, and is observed, not by strongly intonating it, but by the very gentlest inflection of the voice; and rhyme is indicated by a very slight emphasis placed upon it. But care must be used, in thus marking the characteristics of a hymn, not to acquire a "sing-song" habit of reading. Music and poetry are very nearly allied. Music is a series of inarticulate, lengthened sounds, divided into even periods of time. Poetry is modified music — a series of articulate sounds, or words, divided into even accentuations, instead of even periods of time. These characteristics of music and poetry run so nearly together that there is in most of us a strong tendency to pass from one to the other, or to substitute the one for the other; and thus rhythm and rhyme come to be exchanged for time, and the articulate word lapses into the musical note. To avoid the singing style of reading, one should imbue his mind with the meaning and spirit of the writer, rather than with the form of his composition, and try to give full expression to that meaning, forgetting poetical arrangement, or at least subordinating sound to sense. If the mind dwells too much upon the words, we will *sing* them, but if filled with the ideas we will *read* them.

The final pause at the end of every line, and the cæsural pause, occurring at, or not far from, the middle of the line, should be recognized by a slight pause — not dropping, but suspending the voice — to mark the rhythm and rhyme. But this must not be made an iron rule, that admits of no exceptions. Some, in reading hymns, will make a pause at precisely the same point in the meter of each line, whether or not the sense requires it. This is not only monotonous; it is erroneous. Practice and skill must determine the

place of a rhythmical pause, and the requirement of the thought must decide as to the observance or non-observance of such pauses. Whatever poetical forms are to be observed in the reading of hymns, we should always abandon ourselves to the spirit of the poet, and our utterances should be a faithful echo of his; but to do this we should select and read our hymns before entering the pulpit, in order to secure adaptation to the services and preparation for their effectual rendering.

§ III. PUBLIC PRAYER.

In the exercise of public prayer in the pulpit, the preacher becomes a leader of the people in their approach to a throne of grace, and therefore rises to his highest representative character. He is the mouth-piece of the congregation before the Father, just as if he were the representative head of a delegation that had gone to offer a petition to a king. How responsible his mission, as he carries the wants and desires of his flock before the Lord, speaking to him for them and interceding in their behalf!

It is owing chiefly to this representative character, that such strong attachments are formed between the pastor and his people, which are second only to family ties. In his public prayer, he enters sympathetically into their circumstances, showing that he knows and feels their every-day temptations, disappointments, and difficulties, and is mindful of them at a throne of grace. Their joys and sorrows thus become mutual, causing them to feel their one common brotherhood, when as belonging to the same family the pastor addresses his God and their God as "*Our* Father which art in heaven."

1. *General requisites for public prayer.*

(1.) True piety. He who would pray to the edification of others must be a man of frequent and deep communion

with God, dwelling "in the secret place of the Most High," and abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty." His private devotions in the closet during the week, by which his affections are made tender,—his communings with God in the holy mount of his presence, from which he comes down to his people on Sabbath with a heavenly radiance, give him unction and power when as a suppliant he addresses God in the public congregation.

(2.) Familiarity with scripture expressions. The language of divine inspiration is the most appropriate for use in the exercise of fervent prayer, on account of its simple and expressive style. Its varied devotional passages in the Psalms, gospels, and epistles are suited to all the desires and feelings of the human heart, and are familiar to all Christian people. Allusions to or quotations from such Bible-thoughts, expressive of our common experience, call up, in the minds of the worshiping congregation, a train of associations and memories, and awaken solemn reflections, heart-felt gratitude, and humble adoration to God. Familiarity with the devotional passages of scripture, and aptness in their quotation, will greatly assist in public prayer.

(3.) Study of the subject and models of prayer. It will be an advantage to study the nature and office of prayer, as presented in some excellent treatises, such as Miller, Watts, or Walford, on prayer. E. Porter, in his "Lectures on Homiletics," and Dabney, in his "Sacred Rhetoric," treat this subject at length. Many specimens of prayer, as presented in the Bible, in liturgies, and in books of published sermons with their accompanying prayers,[1] should be studied, not for imitation, but for illustration of the true principle, matter, and manner of prayer.

(4.) Premeditation. If the pastor is to represent his hearers at a throne of grace, he should prepare himself for

1 The prayers of Parker, of London, and Beecher, of Brooklyn, are good models.

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enterprises; moral reforms; the conversion of sinners, and the increase of truth and righteousness among men of all conditions and nations. Prayer should also consist of adoration, confession, and praise, and such appropriate topics of devotion as belong to true worship. It should frequently have reference to civil government, officers, and political interests; for the apostle says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." Nothing didactic or historical, consisting of formal statements and rehearsals which seem more like instructing than supplicating God, should enter into our petitions. Expressions of our feelings concerning certain subjects which become "occasions for thanksgiving or petition," are admissible, provided they be offered in the form of an experience, and not of instruction. Exhorting, reproving, or complimenting a congregation is much out of place in a prayer. We should remember that we are addressing God, and not man.

(2.) As to its method. Public prayer should have an order and a plan. This does not imply a strict, formal adherence to the scientific rules of disposition, but the observance of some kind of method and arrangement in our supplication that will seem the most natural and logical.

Usually the several parts of a prayer are (*a.*) the preface, including the direct address or invocation, acknowledgment of unworthiness, imploring of divine assistance and attention, or adoration. (*b.*) Confession, and prayer for pardon. (*c.*) Petitions, beginning with those that are general, and relate to God and his kingdom, and ending with those that are special, and relate to ourselves as worshipers. (*d.*) Thanksgiving. This order may be changed. Thanksgiving may precede or follow confession, according to circumstances and feelings. There is no rule determin-

ing in what proportion each of these parts should enter into prayer. Sometimes confession, or praise, will be most prominent, — seldom should these be entirely wanting, — while petitions must constitute the bulk of every prayer; for to pray is essentially to ask for something. A prayer after the sermon will omit some of these parts mentioned, and apply itself to the truth which has been presented.

While there ought to be method, it should, however, not become uniform. There should be variety in method as well as in matter. It is to be regretted that the prayers of many pious ministers have such a stereotyped uniformity that nearly every one knows before they commence what the prayer will be. The people have heard it so often that they know it by heart.[1] "In reality, it is a form, which is repeated from habit and memoriter. It is destitute of the excellences of written prayers, and yet is as monotonous, and uniform, as they are."[2]

(3.) As to its language and style. Simplicity is the characteristic feature of the language of devotion, and the most natural expression of devout feeling and heart-felt desire. Sometimes, under intense emotion, it may become figurative, but it should never degenerate into the inflated style of rhetorical display. What are called "eloquent prayers" may be fine speeches but poor prayers, since they must be designed more for the ear of man than for the ear of God. A reporter said more than he had intended when he described a prayer of Edward Everett, the orator, as "the most eloquent prayer that was ever addressed to a Boston audience." This intended compliment was a severe and just criticism.

All grammatical errors, colloquialisms, vulgarisms, and

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1 "When will he get through?" asked a tired hearer of an inattentive worshiper. "Has he got to the Jews? If so, he is just half through," was the reply. "The Jews" was the well known half-way station. Another minister always closed his prayer with "Make this land thine American Israel."

2 Shedd's *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, p. 311.

trivialities must be guarded against, as well as all pretty sentences, or stereotyped phrases, which a preacher may have adopted as his favorite expressions in prayer. The too frequent use of exclamations, expletives, and redundancies, as, "Oh!" "Alas!" "O, Lord!" "We pray thee!" "We beseech thee!" etc., are blemishes in prayer. In the use of scripture phrases we should quote correctly, and especially not introduce variations or additions, such as are heard so often in different localities, and which are traditions quoted as scripture. Examples are numerous: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, and plenteous redemption, *that thou mayest be sought unto*"; "Where two or three * * * * there am I in the midst of them, *and that to bless them*"; "Thou canst not look upon sin *without abhorrence*," or "*with the least degree of allowance*"; "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of *horrid* cruelty." The words in Italics are unwarranted additions. God is often called "the hearer *and answerer* of prayer"; and familiar expressions found in hymns and proverbs are sometimes erroneously or half-unconsciously ascribed to some inspired author.

(4.) As to its tone and utterance. Public prayer should be characterized by that tenderness of voice which becomes the delivery of supplication. There should be an undertone of contrition, humility, and reverence, breathing forth in subdued and plaintive notes the spirit of fervent entreaty into the ears of One whom we fear and adore. There should be no inordinate loudness. Animation and fervency in prayer are something quite different from vociferation. Great volubility and vocal vehemence are out of harmony with the spirit of meekness and solemnity, and offend the ear and jar the nerves of the sensitive, destroying their devotional feeling. On the other hand, the utterance should not be so feeble as to be inaudible or in-

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Such a final act of worship meets a natural craving of a worshiping congregation. After passing through the various exercises of public worship, consisting of song, prayer, sermon, and scripture-reading, the "intervention of a solitary human voice between the silent assembly and God, speaking in his name and pronouncing his blessing upon them," is what all feel to be a necessity before leaving God's house and separating from each other.

There are various forms of a closing benediction. The great apostolic benediction in II. Corinthians xiii. 14 is always appropriate: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." The form chiefly used in American Protestant churches is composed, in the first part, of Philippians iv. 7, and in the latter part, of a paraphrase of Numbers vi. 24, 25, and is as follows: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be among you and remain with you always. Amen." Sometimes the exact words as recorded in verses twenty-four, twenty-five, and twenty-six of the sixth chapter of Numbers are used. Often the regular benediction may be preceded by a few words of prayer, appropriate to the discourse delivered. In the ancient church a sort of brief doxology or benediction,—such as, "Blessed be God!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" or "Peace be unto you,"—was often used before beginning a sermon, but was subsequently changed in form and used at the close of a service. Hence it is a custom of long standing, whose propriety no one will now question.

In regard to this whole matter of worship in the sanctuary it is necessary to add only a few words. Since these

devotions are acts of homage to the Deity, and not an address to humanity, we should not indulge in gesticulation during devotional exercises, but assume such a posture as becomes a worshiper in his relation and address to God. Kneeling during prayer is the most becoming attitude of humility and solicitation, while the closed eye and upturned gaze during prayer or the benediction are indicative of our privacy when, with closed eyes, we shut out the world and shut in our souls with God, and look to heaven as seeing Him who is invisible.[1] The position of the uplifted, outstretched arms, while uttering the benediction, too much resembles the Romish custom of absolution, and should be exchanged for the applied position of the hands, as in prayer; or, perhaps, no special position should be assumed.

We do not see why a minister should not welcome and even encourage audible responses from the congregation during prayer and preaching, provided the "amens" be the sincere expression of an assenting heart, and not formal, thoughtless responses; or so profuse and boisterous as to interrupt the speaker, or the devotions. In the solemn services of God's house, everything should be "done decently and in order."

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1 The Mohammedan prays with his face toward Mecca, the birthplace of the founder of his religion. The Jew prays with his face turned toward Jerusalem, where was the temple and the Shekinah. The Christian turns his gaze to heaven, where dwells the Father.

CHAPTER II.

MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES.

Platform Addresses—Prayer-Meeting Addresses—Pulpit Addresses.

The preacher is a professional speaker, and is regarded by the community in which he lives as its mouth-piece in nearly all matters requiring public deliberation and address. He should not, however, so far surrender himself to his profession of eloquence as to mount the rostrum at every solicitation and on every occasion; for some species of oratory are below ministerial dignity, or beyond the limits of ministerial propriety. Yet there are many benevolent and Christian enterprises in which the preacher and his more intelligent lay members should heartily engage, not only in private labor, but in public counsel and address.

Speaking oratorically in the interests of such miscellaneous enterprises is not preaching. Such public addresses are usually denominated "speeches," "addresses," "lectures," or "orations," according to the nature of the subject and occasion, and differ from the sermon in being only *indirectly* aimed at the salvation of the hearer, while the regular sermon is more systematic, and aimed *directly* at the hearer's salvation. Perhaps a more discriminating distinction of purpose is, that one is in the interest of morality, benevolence, or culture, the other in the interest of Christianity and its institutions.

But there is a species of oratory whose object is the

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speak publicly and effectually in behalf of the various efforts in which Christian men and churches ought to engage. The minister should also be prepared to participate by appropriate public addresses in all patriotic and social anniversaries, turning them to a good moral and religious account."[1]

Most of the general rules of homiletics will also apply to platform addresses, so that it is generally presumed that he who can preach a good sermon can also make a good speech. But since oratory of the platform is a distinct species, like that of the bar, the senate, or the pulpit, and often engaged in by laymen, who are not supposed to be familiar with the canons of homiletics, we will give a few hints upon platform address.

1. The first requisite is a fund of general and special knowledge. To speak extemporaneously is an art that can be acquired; but to speak from vacuity is an impossibility. A speaker's *general* knowledge should be far-reaching, extending to nearly all subjects of interest. In character, it is cyclopedic rather than exhaustive, consisting in outline more than elaboration, thus affording a general survey of the field of knowledge as a supply of ideas for nearly every occasion and assembly.

His *special* knowledge will have reference to the particular interest or subject upon which he is to speak. Whether the meeting be of a literary, educational, reformatory, charitable, juvenile, or social nature, the speaker should give particular study to the one in which he is to participate, as a preparation for his address; and then, having selected his subject, let him get full to overflowing of its spirit. His general information will furnish a background for any and every local or special subject; while his special information furnishes adaptation and secures

[1] Kidder's *Homiletics*, pp. 98, 99.

pertinency. Often official specialists are chosen to deliver the principal address; but as these are not always available, the minister and his lay parishioners sometimes are substituted, or called upon to assist.

2. Another requisite is a lively imagination and sensibility. A fund of merely intellectual ideas may produce a dry, prosy speaker; and without the quickening elements of the mind and heart the speaker becomes automatic. The inventive faculty is the imagination; the emotive faculty is the sensibility; and these two inspire the whole train of thought with eloquence. The emotions may run to excess in a highly imaginative mind, and therefore two extremes should be avoided: first, of weeping during delivery (the speaker may weep with the voice, but not with the eyes); second, of undue levity in matter or manner. An ordinary degree of humor is occasionally needful to light up an address, and relieve it of monotony; but this humor must be held under proper control.

3. A good delivery. This implies a variety of particulars, principal among which are a fair knowledge and command of one's own language, a practical understanding of the rules of rhetoric and elocution, and a facility of illustrating and amplifying a subject. He is the best speaker who gives his hearers the clearest facts, strongly and manfully expressed.

In conferences, and deliberative bodies convened for the discussion of questions, or conferring in council, speeches should be brief and pointed. One should address the meeting in a business-like manner, limiting his talk strictly to the matter in hand, and saying what he has to say in the fewest words. The oratorical in matter and manner must be laid aside, and attention given to the practical—to facts and figures. He must not play the orator, but show himself a sensible man, who can adapt himself to the occasion.

§ II. PRAYER-MEETING ADDRESSES.

By prayer-meetings we mean all social gatherings for divine worship,—whether consisting of prayer, testimony, praise, experience, scripture promises, or all combined,—held for the edification of Christians, and in which everybody has a voice, with liberty to speak, pray, give advice, information, or exhortation that will advance faith and provoke one another unto "love and good works." By addresses at such meetings we mean, especially, the *opening* address or exhortation by the leader of the meeting. The conducting of the exercises is a subject for pastoral theology; but the consideration of the introductory address in its rhetorical element falls within our province.

We will consider —

1. The importance of preparing for the opening remarks. Very frequently the whole success of the meeting depends on what the leader feels and says at the beginning. He figures most prominently among the worshipers; he gives the key-note to the exercises, indicates the direction of the devotional spirit, inspires faith and zeal, and in the quickest, most practical, and most earnest way kindles the fire in every bosom. But to do this requires forethought, and not a little mental and spiritual preparation. No one, except, perhaps, the most experienced, can arise at a moment's notice and properly introduce the exercises of a prayer-meeting.

Then, again, the suggestions and ideas of the leader should not be the repetition of old, worn-out methods, that have lost all power of impression upon the worshiper by the frequency of their use. He must have something specially prepared for each occasion. Something new in thought, experience, or plan, that will arrest attention, excite thoughtfulness, and intensify devotion, is almost

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It need not be included in the scripture reading-lesson that precedes it; but the important *desideratum* is, that from whatever source derived, it be adapted to the object of such a meeting, which is to edify the Christian, confirm his faith, quicken his love, and arouse his activity. The practical and devotional must be preferred to the doctrinal and didactic. Something is needed that will express sympathy, and impart strength and patience to those who are battling with the trials and burdens of daily life. An item from the day's or week's experience, new ideas that have occurred to us in the reading and study of God's Word, victories gained over temptation, burdens which oppress us or others,—any of those things that lie nearest and freshest in our hearts, will be suitable subjects to present for prayer and contemplation at the meeting.

It may help us to select subjects which will meet the wants of the worshipers, and fall into sympathy with their daily life, if we sometimes allow them to select the themes for us. During our visits and social interviews we may privately ask a number of people, representing the various classes of Christians, to prepare a list of about half a dozen subjects which they would like to have explained or prayed over, and hand them to us. From these practical gleanings from the various ideas and experiences of every-day life, we may select a list of valuable topics that will be sure to be of interest in a prayer-meeting. They will be fresh, pleasing, and profitable, and will probably cover nearly the whole range of Christian experience, daily life, and vital doctrine.

Sometimes the leader will choose the subject of the Sunday-school lesson for his opening remarks—and occasionally it is well adapted; but as a rule, the Sunday-school topics are selected with reference to the wants of the school, rather than to the requirements of a prayer-meet-

ing. A better way of choosing scripture-subjects is to read the Bible through from beginning to end, with a view to finding out the most suitable topics for the prayer-meeting, and noting them down, together with hints and suggestions upon them, as they occur to us in our reading and reflection.

Again, the seasons, events, or signal providences of the year may suggest fresh subjects for a religious meeting. Thus, "Seed-time" (Gal. vi. 7.) is a subject for a spring service; and "Reaping-time" (II. Cor. ix. 6, or Gal. vi. 8.), for an autumn meeting, when the ingathering of grain and fruit can be made to teach many lessons of life's spiritual harvest-time. "Our Ebenezer," or "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," (I. Sam. vii. 12,) is richly suggestive for a remembrance meeting at the close of the year; the loss of a useful church-member, sudden death in the community, or any distressing calamity, may be associated with such scripture as Psalms xc., or Ecc. vii. 14, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider."

But, regardless of the subject which times and circumstances may suggest, we should suggest times and circumstances by creating new interests or opening up new lines of thought and activity. James v. 16, will preface a meeting for confession and prayer for one another. A strong, animated address upon "Regeneration," or "The Duty of Laboring for the Conversion of Sinners," might be the beginning of a great revival of religion. Indeed, the subjects brought before a week-day meeting by the leader should have reference to new developments of activity and extended usefulness in church-work.

Some churches adopt a series of uniform topics for the prayer-meeting, which are published and distributed among the people each year. This furnishes the leader with

properly prepared subjects, avoids the necessity of announcing them a week previous, and affords all an opportunity to study and prepare upon the subjects. It is only following the plan of the uniform Sunday-school lessons, and of the subjects selected for the week of prayer by the Evangelical Alliance; and as time adds new improvements to the prayer-meeting, this custom of using uniform topics, which some congregations have already adopted, may become international, and engage more interest than has hitherto been dreamed of.

The following list of uniform topics used by several Presbyterian churches is taken from "The Prayer-Meeting," by L. O. Thompson:

Jan. 2. Opening of the year. Ex. xiii. 10; Deut. xiv. 22.
" 9. Foreign Missions, General Review. Matt. xiii. 38.
" 16. Working for God every day. Ps. xcvi. 2; Heb. iii. 13.
" 23. The Work of the Holy Spirit. John xvi. 8–14.
" 30. Prayer for Schools. Isa. liv. 13; Dan. i. 17.
Feb. 6. Monthly Concert. China and the Chinese in America. Ps. ii. 8.
" 13. The Helping Hand. Gal. vi. 1–10.
" 20. Sources of Christian Life and Growth. Acts xx. 32; John xv. 4; Deut. viii. 3; I. Pet. ii. 2.
" 27. Out into the Highways. Luke xiv. 16–24.
Mar. 6. Monthly Concert. Mexico and New Mexico. Ps. cxix. 130.
" 13. Why Read the Bible? John xx. 31; II. Tim. iii. 15–17.
" 20. How to Read the Bible. Acts xvii. 11; Job xxiii. 12.
" 27. Work and Wages. Matt. xx. 1–16.
April 3. Control of the Tongue. Jas. i. 26; Jas. iii. 5–13.
" 10. Monthly Concert. India. Dan. vii. 14.
" 17. Seed Time. Ec. xi. 6; Ps. cxxvi. 6.
" 24. Psalm xxxiv.
May 1. Temperance. Eph. v. 18; Ps. xciv. 20.
" 8. Monthly Concert. Siam and Laos. Rom. x. 14, 15.
" 15. The Believer's Relation to Christ. John xv. 1–8.
" 22. Personal Religion. Ps. xxvii. 8; Ps. xvii. 4–9; I. Cor. ix. 27; Ps. xxxix. 1.
" 29. Family Religion. Gen. xviii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 15.

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this day of excessive pulpit instruction, ought to be an obsolete necessity), or a monthly missionary concert, where information from foreign fields is often added, the introductory remarks should rarely exceed ten minutes,—oftener less than more. Long exhortations and formal addresses are an abomination, and should be forever banished from the prayer-meeting. Where so many are to speak and pray in an hour's time, the words must be few and full of meaning. Brevity will require condensation, point, and purpose, and must make up in quality what it lacks in quantity. The time being limited, the subject with which we open the services, except in case of exposition, should not be treated analytically. One idea, or one view of a topic, is all that can be expected in a discourse of a few minutes. A single thought, explained, amplified, illustrated, and pressed upon the attention of the hearers, will give more unity and fervency of feeling to a meeting than a division or composition of ideas.

It should be very *plain* in matter and manner, so that any child present could be interested and benefited. Ostentation of manner, or display of rhetoric, acts as a restraint upon the freedom of voluntary participation in the subsequent exercises of the hour, and chills the spirit of devotion. An unassuming, humble manner, breathing a fervent, congenial, and God-like spirit, will make the services appear more like family worship on a large scale, and make everybody feel free, as in his own home.

In it all, there should be genuine *fervency*. Let the leader so ponder his subject and arouse his convictions upon it, that what he has to say at the opening of the services shall come from the heart, in earnest, telling words. It is no easy matter to make the first address, and break the ice of formality, at the commencement of religious worship. Any one can say an earnest word when the de-

votions are at white-heat; but "blessed is the man who dares to take hold of the cold end of a prayer-meeting," and quicken it into new life with the life-giving touch of a warm spirit.

§ III. PULPIT ADDRESSES.

Pulpit addresses are not sermons, but a related species of eloquence, adapted to the sanctuary, and delivered by pastors, lay preachers, or prospective ministers, as a supplement to, or substitute for, the regular sermon. They are called exhortations, lay sermons, and Bible-readings. These forms of pulpit address will be separately discussed.

I. EXHORTATION.

Exhortation, from *exhortari*, to encourage, to stimulate, to excite, to admonish, has reference to special hortatory address in public. It consists in "the act of laying such motives before a person as may excite him to the performance of any duty. It differs only from *suasion* in that the latter principally endeavors to convince the understanding, and the former to work on the affections."[1]

The custom which formerly prevailed of one minister following the sermon of another with a brief exhortation, and which continues to be practiced at some camp-meetings, is now generally considered a useless expedient. But there are a few circumstances under which a sermon may be effectually supplemented by a stirring exhortation: (1.) When the sermon has been almost exclusively doctrinal; or failed to apply and impress the truth by an earnest appeal. (2.) When a stranger has preached very important truths, but, for want of a personal acquaintance with the congregation addressed, could not adapt his conclusion or application to the hearers, the pastor in charge may take the liberty to add a few words of earnest

1 Buck's *Theological Dictionary.*

exhortation, bringing the truth home to the hearts of his people. (3.) When the congregation is composed of an almost equal number of German and English speaking people who can not understand both languages, as is often the case in our country, an English sermon may be followed by a German exhortation, and the reverse.

But by exhortation we have more special reference to that species of hortatory religious address which often takes the place of a sermon, and in which appeal, entreaty, or consolation enter as principal constituent elements. This form of address was often used by the prophets and apostles in the ancient church,[1] and should not be ignored in our day.

Preachers, and even laymen, should diligently cultivate the art of exhortation as a means of increased usefulness in revivals, camp-meetings, prayer-meetings, and all religious assemblies for the promotion of piety and the conversion of sinners. A ready skill in arousing the feelings and stirring the hearts in a powerful exhortation whenever a religious occasion affords a suitable opportunity for the exercise of such a talent, is a gift to be earnestly coveted by every Christian worker, and can be made an agency of great good.

"While the inherent right of thus laboring to promote the cause of God is generally conceded to Christian laymen, it is the custom of some churches to make official appointment of exhorters as a primary grade of religious teachers, from which, after due trial, they advance to the more responsible office of preachers. This custom deserves commendation, since no more fitting elementary practice can be devised for young men contemplating the ministry than that prescribed by the Apostle Paul to

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1 See Luke iii. 18; Acts ii. 40, xiv. 21, 22, xv. 32; also, as commands, I. Tim. iv. 13, vi. 2; II. Tim. iv. 2; Tit. ii. 15; Heb. iii. 13.

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which God giveth" them, who can and ought to proclaim the message of salvation in a more public way, as they may have opportunity.

The difference between a pastor and a lay preacher lies only in their official capacity. The former is the embassador of God, set apart by the Holy Ghost and the authority of the church to the special work of the ministry, and hence becomes the responsible and commissioned representative of His kingdom. The lay preacher, without formal credentials, except the evidence of vital godliness and special gifts, preaches here and there, whenever his assistance is needed in any kind of evangelistic work.

Lay preaching is not a modern innovation, but largely prevailed in the primitive church; for many unordained disciples who were scattered from Jerusalem by persecution "went everywhere preaching the word." (See, also, Acts xi. 19, 20.) Christ sent forth seventy lay disciples "two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." For the same purpose, Paul, immediately after his conversion and long before his ordination, "straightway preached Christ in the synagogues." It is also to be observed that the word κηρύσσω, as expressing the act of preaching, usually has reference to the ordained apostles,[1] in distinction from εὐαγγελίζομαι, which implies the proclaiming of good news by any of the evangelistic disciples. Thus we learn that the office of preaching was not committed exclusively to presbyters and bishops, but, as Neander says, that all Christians had originally the right of proclaiming the gospel in the public assemblies. So great was the demand for telling the good news that the disciples (not apostles) went everywhere preaching the gospel.

This common right was not questioned until the age of

1 See Mark iii. 14; Acts x. 42; I. Tim. ii. 7.

Tertullian; and even from that time to the Reformation it was maintained. Origen was a lay preacher. In the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions," representing the practice of the church in the third and fourth centuries, we find the law that "if any man, though a layman, is skillful in expounding doctrine, and of venerable manners, he may be allowed to teach." In the thirteenth or fourteenth century a preaching order of monks, especially the Franciscans and Dominicans, were, in an ecclesiastical point of view, laymen. However, a formal organization of lay preachers as a system was not recognized as a branch of church-effort until the time of John Wesley, of the eighteenth century. To-day, lay preaching is not only returning to the primitive Christian practice, but becoming a recognized element of power in the evangelical work of the church.

With our present vast Sunday-school enterprise, Christian associations, and missionary work, there is a special demand for lay evangelization; for our regularly ordained ministry is not sufficient to meet all the wants of the world. Numerous revival-efforts become too burdensome a task to be left exclusively to our ministers, and need a hundred more Moodys to hold up the arms, as well as lead the van, of our revival preachers.

We may briefly consider a few objections to lay preaching.

1. It is objected by some that preaching by the laity will antagonize the regular ministry.

We see no reason for confliction between two different orders of preachers proclaiming the same truth, but many reasons for mutual co-operation. There no doubt exists an opportunity for antagonism; but so far from abusing a useful agency, our best lay evangelists work in harmony with the pastors; and most pastors, in turn, encourage the labors of lay evangelists by their presence, sympathy, and

aid; and thus they acknowledge each other as co-laborers in the Lord's vineyard.

2. It is, again, objected that the popularity of successful lay preachers may tempt into its ranks many who are ignorant, and otherwise unfit for the work. It is predicted by some one that we will soon have a multitude of preaching laymen "who will have more Bible ignorance than Bible knowledge, more self-confidence than wisdom, more conceit than consecration, and who will catch up the oddities of the prominent lay preachers, under the mistaken idea that their success lies there."

This objection is well attested by facts; for many who are mentally and morally unqualified have been mere imitators, and seekers of vainglory. But the same complaint might also be made against an ordained ministry, which, in all probability, has more unworthy representatives who have been led into its ranks under the vain hope of gaining the fame which great pulpit orators have achieved, than have ever been allured into the lay ministry by similar motives. Its tendencies for good overbalance its tendencies for evil.

3. It is also feared by some that the novelty and excitement usually attending evangelistic efforts will detract from the interest of the ordinary and more substantial means of grace.

A right view of the relations existing between special evangelistic tides of revival and the regular institutions of the church, will remove such a fear. The former are a kind of invasion upon the world for the ingathering and conversion of the churchless masses; the latter are a school for the nurture and improvement of Christian graces. Now such periodic movements for the recruiting of church-force, instead of diminishing, are nearly always sure of increasing, the interest in the regular means of grace. The

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texts as its heads. It is a kind of expository discourse, but differs from it by expounding *subjects scripturally*, rather than *texts topically*. It leads the people over a wide tract of scripture, and gives a many-sided view of a subject from a biblical stand-point. It selects the most vital topics of doctrine and experience, carefully collates all the most essential scripture-passages relevant to the subject, and presents them under properly-arranged divisions, as the sum and substance of God's teaching upon a given subject.

The variety of modes in which this is done may best be explained by a few examples of outline plans of Bible-readings.

1. The divisions may be few and illustrative.

Subject.—*The Atonement.*

(1.) The Atonement in type. Ex. xii. 1–31

(2.) The Atonement in Psalms. Ps. xxii.

(3.) The Atonement in prophecy. Isa. liii.

(4.) The Atonement in its historical accomplishment. John xix.

(5.) Doctrinal summary. Heb. ix.

Or, Subject.—*From Suffering to Glory.*

Jesus. Heb. xii. 2; I. Peter i. 21–24.

Paul. Rom. viii. 18; II. Cor. iv. 17, 18.

Peter. I. Peter iv. 12–14.

All. Rev. vii. 9–17.[1]

2. A subject may be treated emblematically.

Subject.—*The Word of God.*

(1.) A Lamp, Lantern, Light. Ps. cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23.

(2.) A Fire. Jer. xxiii. 29.

(3.) A Hammer. Jer. xxiii. 29.

(4.) A Sharp Sword. Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12.

(5.) A Gift. James i. 21.

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1 Selected.

(6.) A Mirror. James i. 23.
(7.) Pure Milk. I. Peter ii. 2.
(8.) The Food of the Soul. Jer. xv. 16.[1]

3. A subject may be treated doctrinally.

Subject.—*Regeneration.*

(1.) Its Definition. II. Cor. v. 17; Rom. vi. 4; Eph. ii. 1–5; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Eph. iv. 24.
(2.) Its Necessity. John iii. 3–6; Rom. viii. 7, 8; Matt. xviii. 3.
(3.) Its Author. John i. 13; I. Peter i. 3; I. John ii. 29; John iii. 6; Titus iii. 5.
(4.) Its Means. James i. 18; I. Peter i. 23; I. Cor. iv. 15; Ps. cxix. 59; John vi. 45.
(5.) Its Evidences. I. John v. 1, ii. 29, iv. 7; II. Cor. v. 17.
(6.) Its Fruits. Eph. iv. 24; Rom. viii. 29; Col. iii. 10; I. John v. 4; Rom. vii. 22.
(7.) Its Blessedness. Rom. iv. 6–8, v. 1–3, viii. 16, 17; II. Cor. ix. 8; Jude xxiv.[2]

4. A subject may be treated practically.

Subject.—*What a Prayer-meeting should be.*

(1.) Regular and punctual attendance. Heb. x. 25.
(2.) Bring others. Num. x. 29.
(3.) Come for an object. John xii. 21.
(4.) Continue in prayer. Acts i. 4, 14.
(5.) Avoid criticism. Ps. cxxxiii. 1; Rom. xii. 10; John xvii. 23.
(6.) Participate heartily and promptly in the exercises. Col. iii. 16; II. Cor. i. 11; Heb. iv. 16.
(7.) Let all the exercises be brief. Eccl. v. 2.
(8.) Keep in mind that we speak and sing before God. II. Cor. xii. 19.

1 Selected.
2 J. H. Vincent, D. D.

(9.) Christian testimony. Ps. xl. 10, li. 15, lxiii. 3–5, cxix. 171, 172; Isa. xliii. 10; Mal. iii. 16, 17; Heb. iii. 13; Matt. x. 32, 33; John xii. 42; I. Cor. i. 5; II. Cor. viii. 7; Rom. x. 9, 10.[1]

5. A subject may be treated expositorily, by scripture illustrations.

Subject.—*The Twenty-third Psalm.*

(1.) The Lord is my Shepherd. Isa. xl. 11; John x. 11–14.

(2.) I shall not want. Ps. lxxxiv. 11, xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxiv. 22, xxxvii. 18, 19.

(3.) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures —in pastures of tender grass. He leadeth me beside the still waters—waters of quietness—a gentle Shepherd still.

(4.) He restoreth my soul. Ruth iv. 15; Isa. lviii. 12.

(5.) He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. Isa. xlviii. 17; John x. 13. Sing: "He leadeth me."

(6.) For his name's sake. I. Sam. xii. 22; Ps. cvi. 8; I. John ii. 12; Ps. lxxii. 17–19.

(7.) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Isa. xliii. 12; Acts xxvii. 20–25; Dan. iii. 25–27.

(8.) Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Ex. xvii. 5, 6; Micah vii. 14.

(9.) Thou preparest, etc. Ps. lxxviii. 25–28; Luke xxii. 29, 30; Rev. vii. 17.

(10.) Thou anointest my head with oil. Ps. xlv. 7, lxxxix. 20, xcii. 10, xxviii. 8.

(11.) My cup runneth over. Ps. xxxi. 19, xxxiv. 6–8, xlv. 13–15, lxxxix. 1, xcvii. 10–12, ciii. 1–5.

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[1] Rev. W. F. Crafts.

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(1.) "Come unto me." Matt. xi. 28–30; John vii. 37, xiv. 6, vi. 37; Luke xiv. 17, 23; John xi. 28; Rev. xxii. 17.

(2.) "Follow me." Matt. iv. 19, viii. 22, ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; John i. 43, xxi. 19; Matt. xvi. 24, xix. 21; John x. 27, x. 5, xii. 26; Rev. xiv. 4.

(3.) "Abide in me." Luke xxiv. 29; John xv. 4–10; I. John ii. 24; II. Tim. ii. 13.[1]

From the above examples, we see that a Bible-reading exercise is not a compilation of miscellaneous texts brought together without thoughtful care and method, but consists of a well-matured plan in collecting the passages most pertinent to the particular view of the subject which we wish to present. The preparation of a good Bible-reading service will require as much study as, if not more than, the preparation of a sermon. "There is much that passes for Bible-reading, that is dry and unprofitable enough. A good one can not be hastily prepared by running down a column of Cruden's Concordance. The enthusiasm that has been aroused in some parts of the country by the means of Bible-readings has led many laymen, and ministers too, to a hasty conclusion that all that is necessary to make a Bible-reading successful is to string together a lot of texts in which the same English Bible-word occurs, have them read successively by the people, and linked together by extemporaneous comment. It is evident that this kind of work must be not only heterogeneous, but often misleading as to the true meaning of the Scriptures. * * * * For example, he who should give a Bible-reading on the word 'Light,' knowing no distinction and making none between the two Greek words used in the New Testament to designate that light, would not only fail in a beautiful distinction, but in the true scriptural intent."[2]

---

1 Selected.

2 *Times of Refreshing*, by C. L. Thompson, D.D. p. 369.

To assist one in preparing a Bible-reading, the following helps are almost indispensable: A Bagster's wide-margin Bible for *notes;* a Bible text-book, giving references to scripture-teachings according to *subjects;* a concordance, giving classification of scripture-texts according to *words;* a good commentary; Townsend's "Chronological Harmony of the Bible"; a church-history; a history of Christian doctrine; Inglis' "Bible-text Cyclopædia"; Hitchcock's or West's "Analysis of the Bible"; Locke's "Commonplace Book of the Holy Bible"; "The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament," or, "The Hebraist's *Vade Mecum*"; and "The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament." These will place the texts of the Bible at our command in a way that will greatly facilitate the labor of preparing a Bible-reading exercise.

Having selected a live subject, the steps in actual preparation are:

1. Selecting a sufficient number of pertinent texts, which are to compose the web and woof of the address. These may be copied, each on a separate slip of paper, with the book, chapter, and verse from which they are taken.

2. Arrangement under appropriate heads. Passage will be compared with passage, and then brought under proper classification. If several texts selected happen to be very similar in meaning, the most important is taken, and the others are used as references, without reading or commenting on them before the congregation. The separate slips can be pinned upon paper under their proper divisions, leaving space between each for jotting down an outline of comment and ideas, such as are necessary to give connection and unity to the discourse; or, if the texts selected be not too numerous, the slips may be labeled 1, 2, 3, etc., accord-

ing to the order in which they are to be used in the service, and placed in their proper places in a hand Bible, from which they will be read as needed, the slips also serving as book-marks of references.

3. A thorough review of the preparation, so as to bring its contents into perfect command for delivery. The subject must engage our interest, the divisions be clearly fixed in the mind, the texts committed to memory, and the whole subject matter be at our tongue's end.

In delivery, two methods have been adopted:

1. The speaker does all the scripture-reading or reciting himself, only asking the congregation to be provided with Bibles, to follow the references as they occur in the reading. This method is best adapted to large audiences.

2. In prayer-meetings, or small congregations, the people sometimes participate in the exercises by reading the references in concert; or, what is perhaps better, certain ones who are good and prompt readers are requested to respond when a text is called for. In reference to this mode, Major Whittle says, "Use slips of paper in giving out the references. Have them prepared before you go to the meeting, and ask some one who is acquainted with the audience to distribute them to good readers as you are singing the opening hymn, or (this is far better) before you commence the exercises. It is not safe to call out references and let them be taken by volunteers. Some will have wrong passages, and some will not read distinctly. * * * * It is better for the leader, also, as he opens the meeting, to distinctly explain what he expects of those who have received slips, and to request them, if they do not intend to comply, to pass the slips back. After calling for a reference twice, with slight intervals, the leader had better read himself,—not delaying the audience for those who have lost the place."

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CONCLUDING REMARKS.

For the attainment of the highest results in the ministry, we need not only a knowledge of the formal rules of homiletics, but also an affecting view of our personal obligation to Christ for the honor conferred upon us in calling us into his ministry, a deep conviction of the grave responsibility of our high vocation, and a strong and ever-present sense of the aid and influence of the Holy Spirit to give success to the preached word. Upon the faithful preacher heaven drops its showers of blessings, making his ministry rich in enjoyments to himself, and in good to others. The true preacher envies no man's fortune, for he feels that, on earth, nothing pays better than to preach the gospel in its fullness. If the reward is not now, in silver and gold, it will come, at last, in crowns of immortality and stars of unfading glory.

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