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A

TREATISE ON HOMILETICS,

DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE

THE TRUE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

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WITH A LECTURE ON

THE PLAN OF A SERMON,

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PREFACE.

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THE design of this volume is to aid clerical students and junior ministers of the Gospel in preparing for their life-work. It aims to present in a systematic form practical views of the subject of preaching, having due reference to the experiences of the past, the wants of the present, and the hopes of the future.

While the writer has labored primarily to supply a text-book for the use of his own students, he has also sought to provide for the wants of those candidates for the ministry who for any reason pursue homiletical studies apart from the advantages of institutional instruction. He has been prompted to effort in this branch of authorship by many assurances that a work like the present was needed to supply an important desideratum, and by the hope that it may contribute its share to the promotion of the noblest objects for which men are permitted to live.

EVANSTON, ILL., *March* 1, 1864.

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"Where the development of a systematic doctrine in a course of lectures is attempted, it is useful for the lecturer to facilitate the labor to his pupils and himself by exhibiting in a manual or text-book the order of his doctrine and a summary of its contents."—*Sir William Hamilton.*

"In practical art principles are unseen guides, leading us by invisible strings through paths where the end alone is looked at. It is for science to direct and purge our vision, so that these airy ties, these principles and laws, generalizations and theories, become distinct objects of vision."—*Whewell.*

"They who know how much there is to do with many young men who enter our seats of learning, and how much of necessity the time and attention must be divided among the various subjects of study, will confess that it is no easy matter to give that prominence to homiletics which their supreme importance demands—*John Angell James.*



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A TREATISE ON HOMILETICS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPER CHARACTER OF HOMILETICS.

§ 1. Explanation of terms.

The term Homiletics has been adopted in our language as the only single word which embraces in its signification all that relates to preaching, whether regarded as a science or an art. It is analogous to mathematics, optics, metaphysics, and other scientific terms similarly derived from the Greek which, in the English language, take a plural form with a singular or integral signification.

In the German the word *Homiletik*, and in the French *Homiletique*, alike derived from the Greek ὁμιλητικός, and having precisely the same meaning as our word Homiletics, preserve the singular ending, as do logic and rhetoric in our language.

The word ὁμίλος, in classic Greek, signified a crowd or assembly of people, and in early Christian usage it came to represent an assembly for worship.

The corresponding verb, ὁμιλεω, signified to converse or communicate freely with individuals or assemblies. Hence the addresses most frequently made to Christian

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assemblies were denominated *ομιλίαί*, or homilies. The same word was promptly transferred to the Latin, becoming *homilia*, and with scarcely any variation in form has been adopted in all those modern languages which have a Christian literature. The generic term homiletics is a natural outgrowth of such a root. It was adopted cotemporaneously with a similar terminology of various other sciences and departments of science, and being closely identified with the history of preaching, is not likely to be superseded.

Homiletics a generic term.

Efforts have been made to throw ridicule upon the term homiletics, and also upon the study of the science which it indicates, in the idea that it necessarily involves stiff formalities and inflexible rules which tend rather to encumber than profit the preacher. Such efforts appear in their true light when we consider that no science should be discarded because it has been taught in an imperfect or mistaken manner. On this point, it may be remarked that while the mistakes of science can hardly ever be greater than the errors of ignorance, yet the true office of science in this as in all other spheres is to correct mistakes by showing the reasons on which both right and wrong practice are based. While, therefore, the term homiletics is not to be discarded, yet its use need not be too frequent. Other terms, for the sake of variety and convenience, although not perfect synonyms, may often be used in its stead.

PREACHING, as one of the principal forms of Christian address, and specially as the term most frequently employed in our version of the Scriptures to indicate speech for evangelical purposes, is often used in a generic sense, on the principle of a part representing the whole. The word preach is derived from the Latin

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præco, a herald or public crier, and is applicable rather to the act of the preacher than to the product of his mind or his voice. A minister of the Gospel preaches sermons, he utters exhortations, and he delivers homilies or lectures. Yet he performs all these duties in his capacity of preacher, and we speak of his preaching in the aggregate as comprising them all.

Terms used as equivalents.

As the term oratory is used generically with reference to secular eloquence, so, by analogy, the term CHRISTIAN ORATORY may be used to comprehend every species of good speaking employed in the advocacy of Christian truth.

It has not been usual in England and America to apply the term SCIENCE to preaching; partly, it is believed, owing to misconceptions as to the true classification of the subject, and partly from the irregular manner in which preaching has been taught and studied. As, however, science signifies knowledge, and implies a systematic arrangement of what is known on a given subject, there appears no reason why the term may not be applied to preaching as well as to interpretation, or any other topic or sacred study.* Let no one suppose that the use of this term indicates any disposition to lower preaching to a level with human sciences. It rather aims to rescue it from the doubtful position it has too often been made to occupy, as among the accidents of clerical education, or a mere appendage of rhetoric, and to place it in its true light as a science originated by the great Teacher, and illustrated by Christian experience in the successive ages of the Church.

* Homiletics, signifying the science of preaching, is strictly analogous to Hermeneutics, signifying the science of interpretation. Systematic theology also employs the following analogous terms, severally derived from the Greek: Apologetics, Dogmatics, Polemics, etc.

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§ 2. Homiletics not a Branch or Species of Rhetoric.

A common and long-standing injustice has been done to this subject by treating it as merely a branch of rhetoric. The efficiency of preaching has been curtailed during successive ages by too servile an adherence to the formulæ and irrelevant precepts of systematic rhetoricians. The error from which such results have followed dates back to the fourth century, a period in which external prosperity became a snare to the Church in many respects, and when some of the prominent Church fathers sought to improve upon the simplicity of Christian teaching by arraying it in the adornments of pagan rhetoric. This mistake, under various modifications, has been so far perpetuated that even now many seem to suppose that rhetoric, having been perfected in ancient times, moderns, and even Christian ministers, are to find their highest teachings in the systems of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Thus Vinet says, "Rhetoric is the genus, homiletics the species;" Porter speaks of "sacred rhetoric, including homiletics and preaching;" Ripley has written a book on "Sacred Rhetoric;" and various theological institutions have professorships of sacred rhetoric, designed to cover the whole ground of homiletics. Most writers on rhetoric make a similar distribution of our theme; and while Christian ministers treat of the composition and delivery of sermons as constituting the whole work of the preacher, rhetoricians, making three classes of orations, deliberative, judicial, and demonstrative, assign to the sermon its place as a *species* of the latter, thus subordinating Christian eloquence to an inferior position.

A just view of this subject will show that rhetoric

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itself is a progressive science, an outgrowth of language and human experience. It was highly cultivated indeed in Greece and Rome, but is nevertheless subject to its most perfect development as a result of Christian progress. With all that has been written on the subject, there is not even yet an agreement among rhetoricians as to what constitutes the proper character of rhetoric itself. One class treat it as an independent science, embracing in its relations and within its laws every species of human language. Another class, of whom is Whately, following Aristotle, treat it as the art of persuasion, "an offshoot of logic." It may be readily and justly inferred, that the Divine Author of preaching did not appoint an agency for the renovation of the world which could, with any propriety, be regarded as a mere addendum to rhetoric, or indeed any system of human science.

Opposite views of Rhetoric.

§ 3. A higher Science to which Rhetoric, Logic, and other Systems of Human Knowledge are tributary.

Preaching is to be regarded as pre-eminently a religious agency appointed by the Saviour of the world as a means of rescuing men from error and sin, and teaching them the way of life and immortality. It is a human exponent of the divine plan of salvation. In this distinctive character it was employed by Christ and enjoined upon his disciples.

Its essential character and its fundamental designs were therefore impossible of conception to the masters of ancient rhetoric. Of these, it may be well to remember that the most distinguished lived before the Christian era. Isocrates

Early Rhetoricians.

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flourished 436 B. C., Aristotle 384 B. C., and Cicero 107 B. C.; while Quintilian, who in respect to originality was a mere echo of those who had preceded him, wrote A. D. 42.

The Lord Jesus Christ quoted none of these authors, studied none of their works, and yet "he spake as never man spake." Himself the author of truth, he had no occasion to go to heathen sages as a copyist. Nevertheless, it was within his plan and province to avail himself of knowledge and truth wherever found. Hence the literary preparation of the world for the Saviour's advent was as significant as the political. The fact that the Gospel was written and preached in that very Grecian language in which both rhetoric and logic had received their highest cultivation, clearly indicates that Christianity was designed to avail itself as a tributary of whatever good thing science and culture had prepared to its hand.

§ 4. Distinction between Originality and Novelty.

It is an error to suppose that nothing is original which is not in its elements novel, or at least new. Originality consists in being first in order. To maintain the originality of an invention, it is only necessary to show that its principle or that the combination of its materials was unknown before. Thus new inventions in the arts are continually arising.

So in reference to preaching as appointed by Christ; human speech, a capacity cotemporaneous with the existence of the race, was exalted to a new office, and in a new combination with divine truth and human experience was adopted as the great agency for the promotion of the Gospel in the world. Under the working of a

A new agency of speech.

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newly developed principle, a distinguishing attibute of humanity was ordained to serve as a chosen instrumentality for the salvation of men. This, too, was in accordance with another important act of the divine administration. When God saw fit to appoint a token of his covenant not to destroy the earth again by a flood, he did not create a new emblem for that purpose. He designated a product of the existing laws of nature. He set his bow in the cloud to be that token. From that moment the rainbow was invested with a new and peculiar significance. Its appointment as a bow of promise was original, although the bow itself was as ancient as the morning of creation.

Thus when the Saviour designated as a principal agency for the evangelization of the world the common power of human speech, so original and apparently simple was the appointment, that it was scoffed at by both Jews and Greeks as absurdly inadequate to such a purpose. Nevertheless, it was in this precise manner that "God made foolish the wisdom of this world." "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

§ 5. Preaching not a Patriarchal nor a Jewish Institution.

The chief allusions to preaching in the Old Testament are prophetic of the Saviour and his mission. The most striking are found in Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation." lii. 7. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath

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anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." lxi. 1, 2.

The Church in successive ages has interpreted these and kindred passages as solely applicable to the Messiah and the preaching of his Gospel, and not to anything known under the Jewish dispensation. The term preacher is, indeed, applied to Solomon in a single book of the Old Testament, and by the New Testament to the antediluvian patriarch Noah.

Noah's specific office was to forewarn men of the flood. In this respect he was alone, and we are not authorized by the Scripture record to infer that during the patriarchal age any systematic public efforts for the promotion of truth were appointed or practiced. Enoch, according to the Apostle Jude, "prophesied" of the judgment; but the teaching office among the patriarchs was exercised chiefly through the agency of tradition.

Preaching proper unknown among the Jews.

The sense in which Solomon applied to himself the term Ecclesiastes, or preacher, will be shown in chapter second. He was a moralist, and taught the people in proverbs. His father David had impressed and cheered them with lyrics. Both characters were peculiar, and without successors either among the kings or people of the Jewish nation.

While the Old Testament applies the term preacher to no Jew besides Solomon, it represents Jonah as appointed to preach to Nineveh the preaching that the Lord bade him. The verse Jonah iii. 2, might justly have been rendered "proclaim to it the proclamation that I bid thee." Here we reach the important fact

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that the Jewish prophets, although not preachers in a proper sense, formed a class of religious teachers whose office was, in several respects, analogous to that of preachers under the Christian dispensation. This analogy is clearly recognized by our Saviour in his allusion to the men of Nineveh, who, said he, "repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Matt. xii. 41; Luke xi. 32.

Jewish teaching analogous.

It is worthy of remark that this is the only expression of Christ which attributes preaching to any of the worthies of the Old Testament, and the following statement in this case marks broadly the difference between the simple warning of Jonah to the Ninevites and the preaching which Christ came to institute, namely, "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke ii. 10.

While, therefore, by analogy we may learn some valuable lessons from the lives and labors of the Jewish prophets, (vide chapter ii. § 4,) we can only recognize them as occasional and extraordinary messengers sent with special warnings and predictions to admonish mankind of the will and authority of God.

Judaism was eminently a religion of ceremonies. In its tabernacle and temple centered its power. The Levites who performed its ceremonial services were priests, not preachers. Their business was to offer sacrifices typical of Christ; a duty which came to an end when the great Sacrifice was offered, and consequently could have no perpetuation in the Christian Church.

Having thus surveyed the ground, we find that neither the patriarchal nor the Jewish dispensations possessed or recognized such an institution as that of preaching.

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Hence, if we speak of "the preachers of the Old Testament," it should be understood that we call them such by *analogy* only.*

§ 6. Preaching a Peculiar Institution of Christianity.

its original and authoritative appointment.

It has never been claimed that preaching belonged to any form of heathenism, and the foregoing remarks show that it was neither an institution of patriarchism nor of Judaism. In accordance with these facts, the New Testament proves it to have originated with Christianity as one of the leading characteristics of the new dispensation. What can be found in no antecedent history there stands forth as a familiar fact.

John the Baptist slightly anticipated the mission of the great preacher, "Crying in the wilderness of Judea and preaching the baptism of repentance;" but

* As the doctrine of this section differs from commonly received opinion, it may be corroborated by an extract that has come to the author's attention since the foregoing section was written:

"The inspired men under the Old Testament did not preach. They proclaimed the will of God in a variety of forms. Moses enacted statutes, prescribed and predicted natural results as patriot and legislator; Joshua after his sword was sheathed swore the nation to fidelity; Samuel judged and taught with divine authority; David sang as saint and king, and gave utterance to emotions common to the Church in every age; Elijah challenged and battled for God in days of idolatrous degeneracy; Solomon embodied his experience in pithy and pointed sentences. The prophets, as a body, portrayed present obligation and future crises. The burdens pronounced by Isaiah ring over Babylon, sweep through the wilderness, and are borne up the Nile.

"Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel interest themselves with national affairs and theocratic history. Obadiah seals the fate of Edom, and Haggai and Malachi censure the selfishness of their age.

"These old seers foretold Messiah, but did not exhibit him. They pictured him, but did not preach him."—Eadie.

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it was reserved for Christ himself to institute by his own example the practice of preaching the Gospel. At the very commencement of his public ministry it is recorded of him, (Matt. iv. 17,) "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Immediately thereafter we have the record of his great inaugural discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, following which notices of Christ's preaching are frequent throughout the evangelical history.

His own conception of the magnitude of his mission in this respect appears from Luke iv. 43: "And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: *for therefore am I sent.* And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee." Not only did Christ himself preach, but he appointed his disciples to preach also. He sent them forth saying, "*As ye go, preach.*" In the great task thus assigned them it was a prominent part of Christ's earthly mission to instruct his disciples both by example and precept, until finally, after his resurrection, he gave them as his farewell injunction the great commission, "*Go ye into all the world, and* PREACH THE GOSPEL *to every creature.*"

Private and public speech, even rhetoric and oratory, had been in the world anterior to this, but nothing like the institution of preaching. Judicial, deliberative, and forensic eloquence had been highly cultivated at Greece and Rome, and also philosophic teaching; but the former were confined to tribunes, senates, and forums, and the latter to academic shades. Here was a new and broader field opened for eloquence. Preaching was appointed for the world, and preachers were made debtors of the Gospel to every human being, whether Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor, bond or free.

Preaching designed to be world-wide and perpetual.

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The peculiarity of preaching is seen not only in the originality, but also in the authority of its appointment as an institution of the Christian Church. Christ did not recommend preaching as other teachers might have done, to be continued or not, at the option of his followers. "He commanded and it stood fast." It was not an institution that, like others of human invention, would become obsolete in the lapse of time. The very terms of its appointment implied continuance, and the event has shown it.

Since the days of Christ the forums of Greece and Rome have perished, and the systems of their wisest philosophers have passed away; but the preaching of the Gospel has continued, and so multiplied itself that it more nearly fills the world than any system of teaching or of influencing mankind has ever done. And still this great function of the Christian ministry has a world-wide field open before it, and demanding its increased and most efficient exercise.

PRIMARY IDEAS OF THE WORK OF PREACHING.

Original terms. The original terms of the New Testament illustrate suggestively the most important elements of the preacher's work. Foremost among them is εναγγελίζω, from which we derive the English word evangelize. It is the verb of εναγγέλιον, which we render gospel, meaning originally glad tidings, and by usage the peculiar glad tidings of salvation through Christ. This verb in its various forms is translated *preach* more than fifty times in the authorized version of the New Testament. It implies in almost every case the announcement of a joyful message, as in Matt. xi. 5: "The poor have the Gospel *preached* unto them;" and Romans x. 15: "How beautiful are the feet of

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them that *preach* the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

Kindred to the word just considered in καταγγελω which is sometimes translated *teach* and *declare*, but usually *preach*. Its primary meaning is to bring down word, or a message. The use of κατα, intensive, implies publication or urgency of announcement. An example of its use is found in Col. i. 28: "Whom we *preach*, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

The next principal word of the New Testament rendered *preach* is κηρνσσω, derived from κηρυξ, a herald or crier. This word signifies to proclaim publicly, as in Matt. x. 7: "As ye go, *preach*, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and in the twenty-seventh verse of the same chapter: "What ye hear in the ear, that *preach* ye upon the housetops." In the New Testament κηρυσσω is used about sixty times, and fifty-four times is translated by the word *preach*.

Another verb occasionally rendered *preach* in δίαλεγομαι. It implies argumentation, and is often rendered *reasoned* or *disputed*. It is used in Acts xvii. 17: "Therefore *disputed* he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market (or forum) daily with them that met with him." The same term is used in Acts xx. to describe a Sabbath discourse of the apostle at Troas, in which he *preached* to the disciples till midnight. This term is almost exclusively applied to the discourses of Paul.

The only other Greek verb rendered *preach* is λαλεω, which usually and primarily signifies to *speak*, but in a few instances in connection with λογος is translated *preach*. An example is found in Mark ii. 2: "He *preached* the word unto them."

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From this view of the original terms employed to designate the great work of the Christian minister, we perceive that the proper idea of preaching embodies three important elements;

1. The announcement of joyful tidings.
2. The proclamation of truth as by a herald, that is, urgently and authoritatively.
3. The conviction or persuasion of men to belief by means of arguments.

These elements naturally blend together, forming a union never before instituted, but highly important in view of the great objects contemplated.

THE PECULIAR OBJECTS AND POWER OF PREACHING.

At this point the special character and transcendent importance of the preacher's work become strikingly apparent. He goes not forth to entertain men with pleasant words. He strives not to excite their admiration. He is not content with presenting the best forms of argument. He does not pause to discuss mere secular issues, however exciting.

The preacher a divine messenger.

The preacher goes forth as a messenger of the King of kings to annouce to a lost world the tidings of salvation through a risen Saviour. He proclaims the one only name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved. He cries aloud and spares not. He urgently entreats and fervently beseeches men, as in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. And to leave them without excuse, he reasons of temperance, righteousness, and a judgment to come.

Objects of superlative importance.

Differing from every other system of human teaching, and rising in its objects superior to any unaided conceptions of the human mind, preaching aims at the eternal salvation of the souls of men. This aim embraces two important elements:

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The conversion of men from error and sin.

Their instruction and edification in Christian truth.

Here are objects involving everything of most importance to the welfare of the life that now is and of that which is to come; objects, moreover, of universal necessity. There is no condition of humanity that does not demand the preaching of the Gospel. There is no nation it may not exalt. There is no soul that does not crave the blessing it proposes to confer. Yet no other agency is so adapted to secure that blessing. Philosophy fails, learning falls short, and human power is insufficient. But the preaching of the cross proves to be "the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." It reached the hearts of men at Jerusalem, at Athens, and at Rome. It has come down the track of ages, and wherever employed, with its proper conditions of success, it is found adapted to its object. It awakens the idolater on the banks of the Ganges; it stays the hand and melts the heart of the cannibal of New Zealand; it points the ancestral worshiper of China to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; it refines and elevates alike the savage of Africa and of Greenland; while in enlightened countries it rescues the victim of vice and sin, and saves the most refined and exalted with "the power of an endless life."

Preaching addresses conscience.

One grand element of the power of preaching consists in its design and adaptation to manifest the truth of God to the consciences of men.* The highest aim of secular eloquence is to quicken the intellect, control the judgment, and rouse the passions. The loftiest flight of poetry is on the wings of the imagination; but preaching, although it may primarily address itself both to the intellect, the imagination, and the passions, yet it regards them only

* 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

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as the media of access to that higher and controlling faculty of the human mind, the conscience. In that it finds an auxiliary of power second only to the influence of the Spirit of God. Thus it is that preaching has been adapted to the moral nature of man by the divine arrangement, and he who fails to perceive this striking peculiarity of design fall utterly below a just conception of the dignity and power of the Gospel ministry.

PREREQUISITES AND MATERIAL OF PREACHING.

As the objects of preaching are peculiar, so are the necessary prerequisites. Preaching is not be undertaken by every one who may desire to be eloquent, or who even might be eloquent in other kinds of discourse. It is sacrilegious presumption for any person to attempt or to pretend to preach the Gospel who has not a genuine Christian experience. The heathen rhetoricians insisted that an orator must be a good man. How much more a Christian minister!

Essential prerequisites

Yet not every person having a genuine Christian experience is capable of publicly preaching the Gospel. A *divine call* is essential to the office and gift of preaching. Such a call may be manifested in various ways, but must always include the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the individual and the corresponding action of the Church. Not only should the sacred vocation be clearly manifested at the outset of a preacher's career by evidences of gifts, grace, and usefulness, but it should be kept in vital force, so that the soul of the preacher may ever vibrate in conscious unison of the divine Spirit. The form or ceremony of preaching may be taken up and laid aside as easily as other forms; but true preaching, the preaching that Christ appointed, demands the power of an active faith, a holy sympathy, and a conscious mission from God.

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In secular oratory, themes change with circumstances. In preaching the theme is one. Nevertheless, the one theme prescribed to the preacher is adapted to all circumstances and to all time. It is so vast and peculiar as to embrace in just relations to itself the whole realm of truth. Christianity indeed is truth itself, of which Christ is the sun and centre. Christianity specially communicates revealed truth, but it legitimately embraces natural truth also, since the author of nature and revelation is one.

A sacred theme,

The word of God is to be considered not only the text-book, but the grand treasury of truth for the preacher. In it he is furnished with history, poetry, experience, and philosophy, as well as perceptive instruction and evangelical announcements. By obvious affinities these truths are connected with kindred truths in creation and providence. Hence the preacher, having an eye single to the glory of God and the direct accomplishment of the mission with which he is charged, may feel authorized to draw truth from all sources that he may bring every phase of truth to bear on the furtherance of the Gospel. His great work, however, must be to declare the doctrine of the cross, "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and to do this effectually, he not only needs an intellectual perception of its excellence, but the feeling of its power, yea, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. This supernatural gift was bestowed on the apostles at the Pentecost as the consummation of their appointment to evangelize the world, and as an index of the most essential qualification of all true evangelists to the end of the world.*

* "Preaching far excels philosophy and oratory, and yet is genuine philosophy and living oratory. No romance equals in wonder the story of the cross; no shapes of wonder have the divine style of Christianity, and no mode of speaking can surpass in pathos and penetration that of a man to his sinful fellows on the themes of God and eternity, Christ and heaven."—EADIE.

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§ 7. The Importance of Homiletical Study.

The very nature of preaching, as the peculiar and characteristic agency for the promotion of Christianity, suggests the unspeakable importance of a thorough study of the principles which underlie its exercise, as well as of the modes most conducive to its successful practice.

The subject demands study.

Moreover, Christianity prescribes study as the duty of all Christians. "Search the Scriptures," and "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you," are precepts applicable to every believer.

More definite precepts still are given to ministers of the Gospel, as by St. Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

This passage of Scripture clearly shows that special study to become qualified to preach the Gospel effectually is well pleasing to God; indeed, a positive duty of the preacher.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

Two classes of views have been urged in opposition to the special study here recommended.

On the one hand it has been argued that, as the apostles of Christ were unlettered men, and were specially qualified by divine appointment for their work, so in later times truly pious men, called of God to the ministry, may expect directly from God all the aid they require. The favourite maxim of those holding this view is that God will qualify men for any work to which he calls them.

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On the other hand, many who insist largely on the importance of education for Christian ministers demur to any special training for the ministerial work. In their view general education is sufficient, and a special application of its requirements to preaching is only the work of common sense and experience.

The practice growing out of the latter view was stated and reprobated in the following terms by Bishop Wilkins, of Chester, in his "Gift of Preaching," published in 1650:

> It hath been the usual course at the university to venture upon this calling in an abrupt and over-hasty manner. When scholars have passed over their philosophical studies and made some little entrance upon divinity they presently think themselves fit for the pulpit, without any further inquiry, as if the gift of preaching and sacred oratory were not a distinct art of itself. This would be counted a very preposterous course in other matters if a man should presume of being an orator because he was a logician, or to practice physic because he had learned philosophy. And certainly the pre-eminence of this profession above others must needs extremely aggravate such neglect, and make it so much the more mischievous by how much the calling is more solemn.

As to the former objection, it is proper to remark that the error of representing the apostles of Christ as ignorant men is not more common than it is pernicious. Some preachers and some writers are never tired of ringing changes upon "the unlettered fishermen of Galilee." Unlettered they doubtles were in cabalistic lore, and untaught in the Rabbinical schools. But the circumstance of their having originally been fishermen casts no doubt on their having had good instruction in the elementary education of their times, any more than it does upon their individual and sterling talent. It is known that the best

Refutation.

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educated men of those days were taught trades. Thus Saul of Tarsus, although brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, was a tent-maker, capable of supporting himself by the labor of his own hands.

If, then, the fair supposition be admitted that the disciples of Christ had, at the beginning, the common education of their times, let us consider what it would involve as elements of preparation for their work. In the first place, they would necessarily be able to read and understand the Old Testament Scriptures in the original Hebrew; and in the second place, to read, speak, and write the Hellenistic Greek then current in Palestine.

Attainments of the apostles.

In a familiar, not to say profound acquaintance with these two languages, to suppose nothing more, it will be readily seen that their attainments in letters far exceeded those of many, who in modern days have been accustomed to decry the learning of the apostles. That they had less education in the beginning than is above described cannot reasonably be supposed. Christ did not teach them letters, and yet their writings in Greek have been the admiration of after ages, and their quotations of the Old Testament prove that they were familiar, not only with its spirit, but its letter.

The fact that they were inspired does not impugn their ordinary intelligence and cultivation. And now let it be asked, What college, university, or theological school of any age, has sent forth a greater proportion of authors of merit than did the college of the apostles? The answer is obvious.

Let no man, then, presume to call the disciples of our Lord uneducated preachers. Of the most important letters or languages they had a practical and substantial knowledge; and besides that, they had

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the unequaled advantage of two or more years special training and instruction under the personal guidance of their divine Master.* What Christian minister would not value such an opportunity for education as they had above all price, and regard his own best privileges as unworthy to be named in the comparison! †

When again, for a similar work, more especially among the Gentiles, a man was chosen who lacked the personal training which Christ gave the twelve, he was one who had previously been taught in the learning of the schools. But even Paul did not enter upon his great preaching mission until after he had spent three years in Arabia, as is generally and *reasonably supposed*, in special study and preparation for his new and holy vocation.

From these facts in regard to apostolic preachers we are authorized to infer that those disciples of Jesus, who in modern days are called to preach the unsearchable

* On the special character of their instruction in the matter and manner of preaching see § 5 chap. ii.

† The only passage of Scripture that may be fairly thought to support the view here controverted is that found in Acts iv. 13. It is a record of the opinion formed of Peter and John, representative apostles, immediately after the Pentecost: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." The whole passage indicates the conflict of fact and reason with the prevailing prejudice of the Jewish rulers, a prejudice of rank or caste as well as of religion. The term *ἰδιῶται*, not happily rendered *ignorant* in our version, simply means *private* or *plebeian* persons, as opposed to those who held any office, ecclesiastical or civil. The preceding term, *ἀγράμματοι*, literally *unlettered*, signifies according to Bloomfield, representing the best commentators, "ignorant of, or but slightly versed in that kind of knowledge which the Jews alone prized, namely, of the Scriptures, as explained by their Rabbinical interpreters. In classical use the word denoted those devoid of learn-

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riches of Christ, should specially and profoundly study whatever will tend to enlighten them as to the greatness of the preacher's work, or will enable them in the best possible manner to perform it.

§ 8. Orders and Relations of Homiletical Study.

One of the most anxious periods of a minister's life is that in which he is about to commence his career as a public teacher. He has heard preaching all his life, and it has seemed to him a simple matter for others to proclaim the Gospel. But now he is about to place the trumpet to his own lips, and he is justly fearful that it will not give forth a certain sound.

ing or science, such as was imparted by the education of the higher classes." These interpretations are in perfect accordance with the view here advocated, namely, that the disciples were not learned in Rabbinical lore, but that they had been taught after the manner of the common people, a style of education which, however elementary, and despised by the Jewish officials, was, nevertheless, far more free from error than their own.

That the disciples were from the lower orders of society in point of rank is not only admitted, but made the subject of frequent remark in the New Testament. For example, 1 Cor. i, 27: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

While from this and kindred passages we are taught that Christ intended, in the choice of his apostles, to demonstrate the divinity of their calling and commission, yet no just interpretation can authorize us to impugn the ordinary intelligence and development of the twelve, even before they commenced to learn of Jesus.

Dr. Clarke, on the passage first quoted, strongly and justly says: "In no sense of the word could any of the apostles be called ignorant men; for though their spiritual knowledge came all from heaven, yet in all other matters they seem to have been men of good, sound, strong, common sense."

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Is he willing at such a period to proceed at random, or is he anxious to concentrate upon his path the full light of past experience? He is now about to form habits, which if unfriendly to success may diminish his usefulness and embarrass him for life, if indeed they do not render him positively unacceptable and inefficient. On the other hand, if he can adopt habits correct in principle and useful in practice, he may expect to begin well and to go forward in an ever-enlarging sphere of improvement. To enable him to embrace the latter series of alternatives is the design of homiletics.

Importance and period of study.

This topic is not to be regarded as a branch of general or elementary education. It belongs exclusively to those who feel themselves moved of the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel. From such, it demands attention at the period when they can bring to bear upon it mature results of intellectual cultivation and ample acquisitions of sound knowledge, and when also they can commence turning to account its principles and precepts by practice in actual preaching.

In anticipation of that important period, intending ministers should employ great diligence in preparatory studies, both of literature and of theology. The acutest mental discipline and the richest accumulations of secular and sacred science will not only be appropriate, but of great practical advantage as introductory to the study of homiletics. Nor is this a study which can be finished and laid aside with scholastic course. It is to be presumed that every preacher, before entering upon his public duties, will desire to possess himself of all available instruction. As he progresses in the work of the ministry, he will become capable of still greater improve-

Preparation needed.

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A subject of life-long interest.

ment; and as from the elements of homiletics he advances to the highest grade of practical effort in preaching, he may expect to be learning continually, and to be ever deeply interested in what will enable him to preach a better sermon or more effectually to win souls to Christ. Thus homiletics in fact, if not in form, become the essential life-study of every true-hearted minister of the Gospel. Indifference to this means of improvement conduces to a premature decline of usefulness, if not to mental decay; whereas a lively interest in the principles of the noblest science within the reach of mortal conception aids effectually those who would be co-workers with God in the evangelization of the world. Let it, however, be always understood that no amount of theory on the subject will avail to make the preacher, unless he have ample resources of biblical knowledge and theological truth for the material of his preaching. As well might the science of architecture rear a grand cathedral without wood and stone. On the other hand the wood and stone might remain useless in their native forests and quarries, or if removed, be only shapeless logs and heaps without the skill of the architect to fashion them into forms of beauty and of grandeur.

All branches of knowledge mutually related.

Thus knowledge, experience, and the word of God, which are designed to furnish the subject-matter of preaching, may and often do remain powerless of good to mankind for lack of skilful utterance. The skill of the preacher is wanted to transfuse these materials and apply them to the hearts of men.

Thus in all the universe matter and mind, truth and its expression, are correlated. Hence let neither be displaced or undervalued. Let exegetical and didactic

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theology be recognized as the mine or treasure-house from which homiletics, as the leading and active element of practical theology, is to draw forth its materials and adapt them for influence upon the human mind and conscience.

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CHAPTER II.

SOURCES AND MATERIALS OF HOMILETICAL SCIENCE.

BIBLICAL.

THE proper mode of preaching must necessarily have been a subject of anxious thought and inquiry to every true preacher, from the foundation of the Church to the present time. How can it be supposed that any man called of God to preach the Gospel would be indifferent to the best mode of discharging this great duty? Yet, owing to the diversity of circumstances and of human talents, the conclusions individually reached have been various in the extreme. It is the province of science to deduce from varying examples the principles which underlie or govern the whole and to render them available for didactic use.

§ 1. THE MATERIALS CUMULATIVE.

In this department of knowledge, as in most others, time and experiment are elements of general progress. Apart from the gift of inspiration bestowed upon the apostles, the preaching of each successive generation ought to be an improvement upon that of the last. But unhappily at some periods of the Church the standard of piety has been lamentably low, necessarily affecting the character both of preachers and preaching. At other times the standard of knowledge among ministers has been low, and preaching has suffered in consequence; while again both

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knowledge and piety have been debased together, and the true idea of preaching has been trampled in the dust.

It is nevertheless an arrangement of Providence that both the successes and failures of the past may become instructive for the present and the future. Hence we may expect to derive knowledge of greater or less importance with reference to preaching from every period of the history of the Church.

Past experience profitable.

Whatever instructions is afforded by the inspired word must be considered of primary importance. Beyond that, the studies and the experience of successful preachers in different ages will naturally challenge the attention of the student of preaching.

Uninspired contributions to homiletics may be divided into two classes, the direct and indirect. The direct comprise treatises upon the subject, or some branch of it, designed for the instruction or edification of others. The indirect embrace individual examples of preaching and the history of preaching. The latter topic involves a consideration of both the manner and the matter of preaching, and the corresponding results in different periods and circumstances.

Two Classes.

At the present time we have the means of deriving instruction from all the past, and if we are true to our responsibilities we shall not fail to accumulate material for those who may follow us.

§ 2. Chronological Classification.

For practical purposes the most convenient classification of the available material of homiletics involves a chronological arrangement, as follows: 1. Biblical; 2. Patristic; 3. Scholastic; 4. Modern. In the order

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of this arrangement it is proposed to indicate the more important topics which deserve the attention of homiletical students.

§ 3. Biblical Materials.

Considering the inspired volume as a whole, no argument is needed to prove that the Bible must be the corner-stone of every just system of homiletics. The Bible does not treat this subject systematically any more than it does theology itself. Nevertheless the Bible may be most profitably studied with reference to both the matter and manner of preaching.

Matter. When the matter of preaching is the object of our inquiry, we must necessarily give attention to the doctrines and facts of Scripture.

When we seek instruction as to the manner of preaching, we may look for, 1. Specific precepts;
2. Examples.

Examples may be either, 1.) Direct, or,
2.) Analogous.

Manner. Manner, in its broadest sense, being the subject of our present inquiry, our attention will first be directed to the Old Testament, subsequently to the New.

§ 4. The Old Testament instructs the Preacher chiefly by Analogous Examples.

In the Old Testament we find no specific precepts in reference to preaching, and but few, if any, direct examples. Of analogous examples it contains several very instructive.

THE EXAMPLE OF SOLOMON.

The only person entitled a preacher in the Old Testament is Solomon. He gave himself that appel-

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lation repeatedly in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and only in that book. The Hebrew term which Solomon applies to himself is קֹהֶלֶת, *kōh-heh'-leth*, derived from קָהַל, v., *to assemble*, and corresponding to קָהָל, n., signifying *assembly* or *congregation*. The term, therefore, means one who assembles a congregation, or, according to Gesenius, "one who addresses an assembly, discoursing of human things." **Hebrew term.**

In this character Solomon says of himself, Eccl. i 13: "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven." Also, Eccl. xii., 9-11: "Moreover because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies."

These declarations are certainly full of interest, as stating the personal experience and studious habits of one of whom the sacred history records (1 Kings iv. 32, 34) that "he spake three thousand proverbs;" "and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." Also chap. x. 24: "And all the earth sought to Solomon, (*Heb.*, sought the face of Solomon,) to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart." **A preacher should be studious.**

Like Solomon, the preacher of the Gospel should be wise. Therefore he should be diligent in study and in prayer that he may secure the divine gift of wisdom in his heart. Solomon's example should also teach preachers the importance of at- **Wise.**

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tention to their style, that they may acquire the use of acceptable words, and such a mode of applying them as will not only attract hearers, but leave upon them a lasting impression.

HEBREW TERMS RENDERED PREACH.

Two Hebrew verbs of the Old Testament have been translated *preach* in the English version of the Bible.

The first is קָרָא, *kah-rah*, to call, to cry, to proclaim. It is used in the false accusation of Sanballat against Nehemiah, Neh. vi. 7: "Thou hast also appointed prophets to *preach* of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah." A reference to the context will show that in this instance the idea has no relevancy to the present topic of inquiry.

The same verb is used again in Jonah iii. 2: "Go unto Nineveh, and *preach* unto it the *preaching* that I bid thee." In this case the word has been rendered by κηρυσσω in the Septuagint; according to which the meaning both of the original and the Greek translation is equivalent to this: "Go proclaim the proclamation which I command thee." Corresponding to the idea of a warning proclamation, Jonah's message when uttered was simply this: "He cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

The other Hebrew verb translated preach is בָּשַׂר, *bah-sar*, signifying in *Kal* to be joyful, and in *Piel* to cheer with glad tidings.

This word is employed in Psalm xl. 9, where David says, "I have *preached* righteousness in the great congregation;" literally, I have *borne tidings* of righteousness, etc.

The same verb is also used three times by the Prophet Isaiah, for example, xl. 9: "O Zion, that

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bringest good tidings." Isaiah lii. 7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that *bringeth good tidings*, that publisheth peace; that *bringeth good tidings* of good." Isaiah lxi. 1: "The Lord hath anointed me to *preach good tidings* unto the meek."

In all these examples the phrophecies are Messianic and the ideas are evangelical; hence we are not surprised to find them expressed in the Septuagint by the Greek word εναγγελίζω, so common in the New Testament, and always associated with the Gospel message.

THE TEACHING OFFICE OF JEWISH PRIESTS.

Under the Mosaic dispensation the law, and the ceremonies by which it was illustrated, formed the principal agency of public instruction. So far as the Old Testament portrays to us the lives and engagements of Jewish priests, we find them chiefly occupied with sacrifices and ritual ceremonies, with only occasional occupation as direct religious teachers. Nevertheless, so far as the teaching office belonged to the priesthood, it is instructive in reference to the analogous duties of the Christian ministry.

Devoted to ritualism.

In Leviticus x. 8, 11, abstinence from wine and strong drink was enjoined upon Aaron and his sons on penalty of death, for the following reasons: "That ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean: and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." That they were expected to teach these statutes by precept as well as by example may be fairly inferred. Thus we are taught that

Abstinence enjoined.

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temperance and purity are essential moral requisites of religious instructors.

A singular instance of the teaching office in the priesthood is recorded in 2 Kings xvii. 27, 28, where "the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord."

Forms powerless.

The result, as stated in the following verse, shows that no form of instruction is adequate to religious purposes which does not affect the heart and reform the life. "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made."

At Hezekiah's passover, described in 2 Chron. xxx. the king "spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord," clearly distinguishing between those who were faithful, and the many who by their unfaithfulness had brought ignorance upon the people and impending ruin upon the nation.

On the restoration of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity, special services were instituted for the instruction of the people in the law of the Lord. The eighth chapter of Nehemiah describes the occasion in full. The principal facts were these: "All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate." "And Ezra the priest brought the book of the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding." "And he read

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therein from morning until midday, and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."

"And Ezra the scribe stood upon the pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose,* and beside him stood various "priests and Levites who caused the people to understand the law." "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

Primitive pulpit.

The eighth verse, last quoted, has been supposed to describe the origin of preaching from texts of Scripture. The more correct view of its meaning is this. The phrase "gave the sense" describes the necessary process of translation or paraphrase by which the old Hebrews of the law was rendered into Chaldee, or the mingled vernacular which the Jews spoke after seventy years expatriation in Babylon.

Paraphrase.

The priests and Levites who officiated on this occasion were readers of the law, and not preachers. Nevertheless, their mode of causing the people to understand is highly illustrative of the duty of preachers under the Christian dispensation. 1. They read distinctly. 2. They gave the sense. 3. They caused the people to understand. From this analogous example it may be justly inferred that a good elocution, a capacity to expound the Scriptures, and also great perspicuity and force in communicating truth, are important to all preachers of the word.

Elements of success.

Not only the Hebrew of the Old Testament, but the Greek of the New, have long since ceased to be

* Merely a platform to raise him sufficiently for the people to see and hear him.

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spoken; but the duty of Christian ministers to read them intelligibly, to expound them correctly, and to impress the truths they contain upon the minds of men in all nations of the earth, will ever remain in force.

The curse of unfaithful pastors.

In the book of Jeremiah the term pastors is introduced, with apparent reference to the priests of the Jews. While, on the one hand, unfaithful pastors are fearfully reproved, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord," Jer. xxiii. 1; on the other hand the Lord, through his prophet, promises: "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jer. iii. 15.

Corresponding to this declaration of the necessity of knowledge and understanding on the part of religious pastors is that of Malachi ii. 7: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

Notwithstanding the excellence of the Old Testament precepts with reference to religious instruction, and the edifying example of a few individuals among them, yet the practical example of the Jewish priests as a body is one of melancholy admonition to ministers of the Gospel. Of all the thousands who officiated at the alters of the tabernacle and the temple, we find on record the names of but few who were distinguished for moral power.—The majority seemed to have lived and died contented with mere ceremonial routine, careless of their higher responsibilities, and without any suitable efforts to instruct the people in righteousness and truth. Too often was the lamentation of the Prophet Azariah

Lack of moral power.

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true: "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a TEACHING priest, and without law." 2 Chron. xv. 3. Not only so, but frequently the whole nation was corrupted through the idolatrous apostacy of the priests. They who were charged with the keeping of the law violated the law, and the proverb "like priest like people" was often painfully illustrated in the prevailing wickedness of the entire nation.

The inferences from this whole subject are, that whatever intellectual or moral qualification was essential to Jewish priests in their teaching capacity is equally if not more essential to the teachers of the doctrine of Christ. Indeed, if temperance, consistency, fidelity, knowledge, and understanding were essential to them, how much more essential to us who publish a higher law, and whose great business it is to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world. At the same time, we should stand admonished against the errors and sins which rendered inefficient the teaching of the Jewish priests, and brought upon them the frowns and the judgments of God.

Lesson to be learned.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE PROPHETS.

The prophetical office was not a regular part of the Jewish system. It was rather a special appendage designed to remedy the inefficient or unfaithfulness of the priesthood, as well as to provide a peculiar class of evidences to authenticate the truth of revealed religion. This office existed at intervals during a thousand years. It was sometimes conferred upon Levites, at other times upon men of secular avocations, and in a few instances upon females.

Prophetic office.

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Usually the prophets proclaimed their messages orally, either to individuals or assemblies, and afterward committed them to writing. They were teachers as well as foretellers of future events. In their didactic utterances they taught the people righteousness and enforced the authority of the Almighty. In their prophetic declarations they warned men and nations of the impending judgments of God, the consequences of their sins, and, amid the gloom of overwhelming calamities, they announced glorious promises of a Saviour to come. In every form of their labors they have accumulated rich examples of the proprieties of thought and of language, together with an exhaustless fund of matter which may be tributary to similar communications while the world endures.

Warnings and promises.

They were devout in their habits and holy in their lives. Regardless of personal interest or safety, they were ready to rebuke sin in high places or in low. Priests, kings, and conquerors were alike required to listen to their words, and made to quail before their messages. Generally their work was limited to their own nation; but in a few instances they were personally sent abroad, as Jonah to the Ninevites, and Daniel to the monarch of Babylon. Specially chosen, as the prophets were, to a holy office typical of that which the Messiah was to establish on a more glorious foundation, nevertheless many of them were specially educated. Witness the allusions of the Old Testament to the sons of the prophets, and the schools of the prophets under the direction of holy men, from whom even miraculous powers were not withheld. With all their treasures of sacred knowledge, derived both from study and inspiration, they often lived in poverty, content

Authority.

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in any way to fulfill their sacred mission, of the importance and truthfulness of which the history of the world is a never-ending attestation. **Poverty.**

Thus did these teachers of righteousness, these monitors of past and future ages, render their lives sublime. Men were they of whom the world was not worthy. In pursuance of their holy calling they endured trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth. Nevertheless, through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* **Spiritual power.**

Truly, if virtue tends to eloquence, it is not wonderful that the Hebrew prophets gave utterance to some of the sublimest passages that ever fell from mortal lips. Hence the propriety o tudying both their character and their works as a means of learning better to accomplish the work o the Christian prophet, who, according to St. Paul, should speak unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort.† **Eloquenc**

* *Vide* Heb. xi. 33-38.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

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§ 5. The New Testament abounds in Hŏmiletical Material.

As from the Old Testament we pass to the New, no characteristic of the latter is more obvious than the directness and completeness of its instruction on the subject of preaching. Apart from the subject of doctrines, not now under consideration, the homiletical material of the New Testament may be conveniently classified as follows: 1. The instructions of Christ to his disciples; 2. The example of Christ as a preacher; 3. The precepts and examples of the apostles. The object of the following sections will be to point out to the student a proper course of investigating these rich themes, rather than to treat them in full.

Classification.

§ 6. The Precepts and Instructions of Christ to his Disciples.

Christ not only instituted the great work which was to be the chief agency for the establishment of his kingdom upon earth, but he became himself an instructor of preachers. To follow the order and observe the nature of the process by which Christ trained his disciples for the work of the ministry, cannot fail to be profitable to all who would seek instruction from the highest source. Those who for the first time study the Gospel history to see what light it throws upon this topic, will be surprised to observe how very prominent a feature of Christ's earthly mission was the course of instruction by which he prepared his disciples to be preachers of the word.

It is worthy of note that the first act recorded of Jesus, after his identification as the Messiah by John the Baptist, was the call of several of his disciples,

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to wit, John, Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathaniel. Not till after this event did he work his first miracle at Cana of Galilee, where his newly made disciples were invited with him to the marriage. After witnessing this beginning of miracles, in which he manifested forth his glory, it is recorded that his disciples believed on him (more perfectly.) John ii. 11.

We are now prepared to observe that the training of the first disciples necessarily involved a twofold design: first, their moral and spiritual culture, inclusive of their indoctrination in Christian truth; and, second, their instruction as to the mode of teaching others what they themselves had learned. **Instruction of the disciples.**

Although it is most satisfactory to study the two topics in connection, the present remarks must be confined to the latter. At a very early period of our Lord's ministry he intimated to Simon Peter and his companions his intention of employing them for high purposes of good to humanity. On the occasion of the miraculous draught of fishes he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." From that time "they forsook all and followed him," being admitted to personal and constant companionship with him as he went about teaching in the towns and synagogues of Galilee, and performing many glorious miracles. **Companionship.**

Following this period of probationary instruction, and during the early part of his second year's public ministry, our Lord made a formal appointment of his twelve apostles. The circumstances of that event were highly impressive. The place was a mountain summit, as if to overlook the world for which their mission was designed. The occasion had been preceded by a night of solemn prayer. The number **Appointment.**

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appointed identified the chosen band in glorious association with the patriarchs and the tribes of Israel, and the act of appointment indicated the original and divine authority of our Lord, "He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils."

Imagine the new thoughts and emotions that must have swelled the breasts of the disciples as the Saviour came down the mountain with them, and proceeded again to discourse to the multitudes and to heal their maladies. Like others of their countrymen, they at first had no just conception of the grandeur of the Messianic mission; and it was only by degrees, and by continued instruction on the part of Jesus, that they came to understand the magnitude of the work to which they were set apart.

Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount, which was delivered soon after the event alluded to, was designed to show the points of difference between the old and the new dispensations. If that sermon be read with attention to the circumstances of its delivery it will be seen to contain much homiletical instruction for the disciples, who were placed in the foreground as the primary objects of address, while at the same time it was adapted to enlighten the multitudes surrounding them.

From that time forward our Saviour's instructions to his disciples were more frequent and more specific. Observe the address recorded in Luke xii. 22—31: "And he said unto his disciples, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." By allusion to the ravens, the sparrows, and the lilies, he taught them the superiority

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of spiritual over all material interests, and urged them to "seek first the kingdom of God." He then exhorted them: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." Verses 35, 36.

When his parabolic teaching was introduced, what he uttered in the ears of the multitude, he in various instances explained to the disciples more fully in private; and what they heard in private they were to preach upon the house-tops or in the most public manner.

Ministry of the disciples begun.

After a time, deeming them competent to begin the work of public instruction and beneficence, he called together his twelve disciples, and with special precepts as to their work, sent them forth by two and two, not to the Gentiles, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The precepts given on this occasion may be read in Matt. x. 1-42, and also in part in each of the other evangelists. The key of the series is found in the command "As ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The word used was κηρυσσετε, *proclaim* or *publish abroad*, and their obedience to it was a glorious fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah lxi. 1, showing that not only the personal but the delegated office of the Messiah was to "preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the acceptable year of the Lord."

Precept and practice combined.

It is worthy of special remark that our Lord's method of instruction coupled precepts and practice together; and also that the effect of practice upon the disciples was to teach them humility, and to inspire them with an anxious desire for further qualifications. After failing in some of their efforts to cast out devils, and the direct power of Jesus

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having to be invoked, they neither gave up the task in discouragement nor cast any blame upon the Master. They rather sought him privately, and asked the Lord. "Why could not we cast him out?" "He said unto them, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Various modes were adopted by our Lord to illustrate to his disciples their duty and the style of character they should cultivate. A notable example is that of his taking a little child and setting him in the midst of them as the text of a discourse in which he illustrated to them the evil of disputing among themselves as to who should be greatest. (Mark ix. 34, 36.) The washing of the disciples' feet was another practical lesson designed to teach them true humility. (John xiii. 4.)

Teaching by examples.

In the transfiguration also a lesson of overwhelming sacredness and power was given to a select number of the disciples to assure them of the reality of things invisible, and of the connection of the Messiah's kingdom with the glory of the great God. By such means the twelve were gradually educated for their great mission. The instructions given to the seventy disciples, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Luke, correspond in all respects to those given to the twelve. Many of the precepts uttered on various occasions to his disciples contain in themselves volumes of instruction with reference to the duty of ministers of the Gospel, both in respect to their intellectual and moral qualifications. (See Matt. x. 16, 37.)

The transfiguration.

A very pregnant utterance of our Lord was made on the occasion when the disciples asked him to explain to them the parable of the tares of the field. Having done so by additional illustrations, he asked them: "Have ye understood all

The tares.

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these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe, which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matt. xiii. 51, 52.

Attention to these words of our Lord will show that he contemplated, 1. The instruction of religious teachers under the new dispensation. The term scribe, γραμματευς, implies a man of letters; and μαθητευθείς, rendered *instructed*, implies systematic teaching, or a term of discipleship. 2. The instruction contemplated should be specific; not merely general cultivation, but religious teaching in reference to the kingdom of heaven. 3. It should cover a familiar acquaintance with things that are old, as pertaining to former dispensations, and God's dealings with men in the past. But, 4. No well-instructed scribe or minister should content himself with any amount of knowledge of the past without also being able to bring forth new thoughts, and old facts and thoughts in new combinations.

Essential qualifications.

Thus it is that the kingdom of heaven is ever growing, and developing new beauties to minds that are active and thoughtful. The householder of the text primarily represents the collector of coins, curiosities, or valuables of any description, which he treasures up to exhibit for the instruction or entertainment of his friends. In objects that are old an intrinsic interest exists, which nevertheless is greatly heightened by comparison and contrast with what is new. So with respect to the treasures of knowledge, and especially with that relating to the kingdom of God on earth.

Our Lord's teaching in this and many other examples was specially characterized by containing the germs or seeds of truth—the inherent

The germs of truth.

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capacity of future and inexhaustible development. Probably in their first utterance they communicated all that the disciples were then capable of comprehending. Nevertheless, he intimated that subsequently they would see in them a new and higher significance. (Mark iv. 33; John xiv. 25, 26.)

Our Lord not only taught his disciples with reference to preaching, but also as to the duty and mode of prayer:* subjects of great importance for the minister of the Gospel in every period of the Church.

Prayer.

As the events of our Lord's brief pilgrimage upon earth hastened to a conclusion, the disciples were further enlightened by predictions concerning his impending death and promised resurrection. (Matt. xvi. 21.) As these were to be the great themes of their future testimony, it was fitting that they should be prepared in advance to witness them with a just appreciation of their grave import. Coupled with the trials which were predicted as inseparable from discipleship in the coming scenes of persecution, was the promise of the Comforter (John xiv. 16, 17) to dwell in his disciples and abide with them for ever. Apart from the consolation which this promise was calculated to give as an element of their religious experience, it could not fail to be full of encouragement with reference to their great work as evangelists.

The Comforter

Equally significant is the special prayer of Christ in behalf of his disciples, recorded in John xvii. 6-26. Through all this memorable and affecting prayer, the idea of the special qualification of the disciples for manifesting the word of God to the world runs like a golden thread. The detail with which it is reported

* Matt. v. vi; Luke xi. 1; xviii. 1

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by the beloved John clearly proves the deep impression it must have made upon his mind and that of his brethren. The fact also that the same aid and blessings supplicated for them were by special appropriation asked for their successors in the faith to the end of time, is full of encouragement to every Christian minister who has any just appreciation of the work to which he is called.

The agony of the garden, the last supper, the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of our Lord, were also scenes in the education of his disciples which they could never forget. By those events they were prepared to appreciate more fully his appearance among them after his resurrection from the dead, and the special teaching and commissioning which he had reserved for the period intervening between the resurrection and ascension. At that period his first object seems to have been to assure the disciples of his personal identity, and then to renew with special solemnity and authority his commission to them to preach the Gospel. In view of the great work to which they were now to be set apart, and as if to renew with undying power their recollection of his former instructions, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke xxiv. 27.

Gethsemane.

Exposition.

That they might better comprehend the great theme of their future teaching "opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke xxiv. 45.

Following this, he enjoined "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke xxiv. 47.

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It was at this period that he interrogated Peter, "Lovest thou me?" and gave him as the test of this thrice asserted love the solemn commands, "Feed my lambs," "feed my sheep."

Each one of the evangelists records in some form the great and crowning act of the final commission of the disciples, itself so important that the circumstances, however impressive, were almost overshadowed in the all-absorbing significance of the commission itself. Attention to the harmonized narrative shows that this event occurred in the presence of "above five hundred brethren at once, who went out into a mountain whence Jesus had appointed them."

"Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever, I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* Our Lord's parting blessing upon the disciples at the ascension fitly closed the course of his personal instructions, designed to qualify them for the great task of preaching the Gospel. For the benefit of succeeding preachers to the end of time, these outlines and indices of the homiletical instructions of Christ have been placed upon record by the pen of inspiration. Whatever else may receive the attention of candidates for the sacred office, these should be studied with careful anxiety and a teachable spirit.

Importance of Christ's teachings.

* See also 1 Cor. xv. 6; Matt. xxviii. 17-20; Acts i. 7; x. 42.

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§ 7. The Example of Christ as a Preacher.

The Saviour of the world might have founded preaching as an institution of the Church, and have commissioned preachers without having preached at all himself. But it entered into his plans of wisdom and benevolence to be himself the great preacher, an example, in many senses, of what all his ministerial servants should both be and do to the end of time.

It is obvious that, in several points, he was above the imitation even of the apostles. In all that relates to his divine character, he is to be admired and adored rather than imitated. In this light we are to regard, 1. The *authority* with which he taught. With him, although he appeared in the form of a servant, authority was original and supreme. With his apostles and ministers it is only delegated. Even the former, although inspired, could only teach in the *name* of Jesus. 2. His miraculous power. To a limited extent this power was delegated to the apostles; but subsequently an appeal to Christ's miracles was all that was permitted to Christian teachers.

In some respects above imitation.

Passing over such manifestations of divinity as are beyond the reach of our low estate, we come to a wide field in which the example of Christ is fully open to our imitation; in which, indeed, it was specially given that we might walk in his steps.

Characteristics of Christ's Preaching.

In seeking to delineate the characteristics of Christ's preaching, one is at a loss where to begin or to end. Nevertheless, a few points may be noted as of obvious importance.

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INSTRUCTIVENESS.

A high degree of *instructiveness* characterized his discourses. "*He taught the people.*" "He was a teacher sent from God," and he was ever about his Father's business. He specially exemplified his own illustration of the householder bringing forth "things new and old." He taught old truths in new forms, and new truths in the light of old institutions and analogies. At this point every preacher should imitate the Master. 1. He should have the material of instruction in his mind and heart. He cannot teach what he does not know. 2. He should be diligent and tireless in seeking to communicate knowledge.

At this point another branch of Christ's example challenges our imitation. *He taught from the Scriptures.* He not only repeatedly quoted the Jewish Scriptures and commented on their words as those of divine truth, but he went into the synagogues on the Sabbath-day and publicly read and expounded the law and the prophets. A striking example of "his custom" in this respect is recorded in Luke iv. 16-28, in which he took as the subject of his discourse the first verse of the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah.

ADAPTATION.

Adaptation was a striking feature of our Lord's preaching. His preaching was adapted alike to the times and circumstances, and to the individuals and communities among whom he ministered. This remark applies both to the state of the world at the period of our Lord's advent, and also to the particular condition of the Jewish nation and of the sects into which it was divided. Whoever attentively peruses the

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Gospel history will perceive that his various discourses were perfectly adapted to the wants and capacities of his hearers.

In verification of these views, the student is referred to the following remarks and discourses of our Lord, which severally deserve careful scrutiny with reference to the point indicated. **Illustrative examples.**

1. His address to the Samaritan woman. John iv. 7-42.

2. To Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. John iii. 1-21.

3. To the Syrophenician woman. Matt. xv. 22-28.

4. His Sermon to the multitude on the Mount. Matt. v. vi. vii.

5. In the synagogue at Capernaum. John vi. 25-65.

6. To his persecutors. John v. 19-47.

7. Various addresses to the Pharisees. Matt. xii. 1-8; xxiii. 2-37; Luke xiv. 1-15; John ix. 13-40.

8. To the Sadducees. Matt. xxii. 23-33.

9. To the chief priests and elders in the temple. Matt. xxi. 23-45.

10. At the house of Zaccheus. Luke xix. 2-10.

11. To the disciples on the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Matt xxiv. xxv.

VARIETY.

Christ's preaching was characterized by *variety*. We may first note the variety of *places* in which our Lord uttered his discourses. He not only preached in the temple and the synagogue, but also in the market-place, by the wayside and the waterside, on the mountain, in the private house, and at the public feast. His example in this respect should **Places.**

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instruct his ministers to sow beside all waters, and to be ready in all places to declare the wonderful works of God.

Subjects.

Variety of *subject* was equally characteristic of our Lord's preaching. While one great theme pervaded it, and while it tended to one great object, the topics it suggested and discussed were numerous. What interest of humanity, or what attribute of God, was not directly or indirectly treated by the great Preacher? Here, too, is instruction for us. We must not tire our hearers with the repetition of even sacred truth, reiterated perpetually in the same forms and connections. We must see in the vastness and variety of material creation an index to the still wider variety of revealed truth.

ILLUSTRATIVENESS.

The *illustrativeness* of Christ's preaching is a special characteristic in respect to manner. This feature stands out prominent in the teaching and preaching of Christ to a degree unequalled in any other high example of secular or religious oratory. Not only did Christ abstain from uttering truth in an abstract form: not only did he clothe great truths and principles with flesh and blood, and fill them with active life, but he made, as it were, every element of creation subservient to the elucidation and support of the truth he uttered.

Range of illustrations.

The sun, the moon, and stars; the air and the water; light and darkness; the grass and the lilies of the field; the tares and the wheat; the sower and the plowman; the sheep, the goats, and the shepherd; the husbandman and the vine; the birds of the air, the foxes of the desert, the judge and the widow, the child and the angel, things past, things

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present, and things to come, were alike made to elucidate the subjects of his discourse and his aims as a preacher. These varied and interesting topics were not introduced to amuse, nor merely to entertain his hearers; neither were they dwelt upon unduly nor for the mere ornamentation of discourse, but rather for the intrinsic purpose of a graphic delineation and a lively presentation of truth before the minds of his hearers. In this view they admirably subserved his objects and aims as a preacher in several important particulars, for example:

Advantages.

1. By gaining and fixing the attention of his hearers.
2. By stimulating their thoughtfulness.
3. By aiding their comprehension.
4. By assisting their memory.

If Christian ministers more closely followed Christ in the appropriate and lively illustration of their discourses, there would be fewer uninteresting and tedious sermons, and the Gospel would be commended with more attractiveness and power to the hearts of men.

DIRECTNESS.

Another characteristic of Christ's preaching was its *directness* or point. In a few instances he appears to have employed parables rather for the purpose of exciting further inquiry than of making a perfect explanation at first; but in general his teachings were not only perspicuous, but palpable. His addresses neither contained vague generalities nor ambiguous allusions. They left no one in doubt as to their meaning or their application. They were generally direct and personal, whether to disciples or rulers, scribes, Pharisees, or hypocrites. This directness contributed

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greatly to the energy of our Lord's discourse. It was imitated by the apostles, who used "great plainness of speech," and may be fitly regarded as an example for Christian ministers at all times, in opposition to the wordy mazes of professional rhetoric.

The student of homiletics should direct his careful and interested attention to the above-named and other characteristics of Christ's preaching as developed in the Gospels.

§ 8. The Examples and Precepts of the Apostles.

Following the ascension of the risen Saviour, the apostles became the highest examples of what preachers ought to be and to do. Notwithstanding all that had been secured for them by the privilege of being with Christ and learning of him, they still needed to "be endued with power from on high."* That glorious gift was imparted to them by the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost. From that memorable occasion, the tongue of fire became the emblem of the aggressive power of Christianity. Then from Jerusalem, as a radiating center, the apostolic work of preaching the Gospel began its outward course toward "the uttermost parts of the earth."

In the apostolic example we have the exact counterpart of the Saviour's instructions, and by it we are clearly taught that a special call, a divine commission, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are essential prerequisites to preaching the Gospel with apostolic power.

In respect to the personal labors of the apostles as preachers, we may be profited by considering, 1. Their prompt and tireless activity; 2. The varied circum-

* Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4-8.

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stances of their preaching; 3. The themes and character of their discourses.

1. If by any it should be imagined that the apostles would pause, after the ascent of their divine Lord, to compose elaborate discourses to be read under favourable circumstances to attentive or admiring audiences, attention to the scenes in which they acted will correct the error. No sooner had they received the gift of the Holy Ghost than "they *all* began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance." Peter's sermon, so far from being the only one publicly delivered on that occasion, is to be regarded as a sample of the discourses uttered by the apostles individually to the crowds which surrounded them. The conversion and baptism of three thousand in the same day cannot otherwise be accounted for. **Promptness.**

When the zeal of Peter and John, preaching in the temple, was rewarded by their arrest and examination before the rulers and elders, they were dismissed with the stern command not to "speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus." Acts iv. 18. Nevertheless, judging it right to hearken to God rather than men, they returned at once to their proper work and "spake the word of God with boldness." Acts v. 31. Their next interruption was followed by confinement "in the common prison." "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught." Acts v. 19, 20. On their next arraignment their accusation was: "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Acts v. 28. For this they were beaten, **Perseverance.**

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and again "commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus."

Notwithstanding all, they returned to the work whereunto they were appointed, "and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Persistent speech.

It is important to observe that in all these accounts of the early oppositions encountered by the apostles, the great source of trial to the high priests and elders was that they *would speak*. If they had only kept silence they would have been tolerated. The influence of their example was not feared; their prayers even might have been endured; but when they spoke or preached, the Sanhedrim trembled; when even the humble and holy Stephen opened his mouth, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Acts vi. 10.

When at length, by the murder of Stephen and the cruel persecution which it inaugurated, the disciples were absolutely driven out of Jerusalem, so far from keeping silence or awaiting a more favourable opportunity, "they went everywhere preaching the word." This brief phrase may be taken as the rule of their action ever afterward, whether in Judea and among the villages of the Samaritans, or in the surrounding countries when they turned to the Gentiles.

Lesson.

The lesson to be derived from the prompt and tireless labors of the apostles as preachers, is that those who would follow their example should be ready on all *occasions* to preach the word, however sudden the emergency, however severe the opposition.

Universality of their labours.

2. The duty of being prepared and willing to preach the Gospel in all *places* is equally

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taught by a consideration of the varied circumstances in which the apostles preached. No fastidious notions of the convenience or dignity of the pulpit (a wholly unapostolic institution) limited their efforts. Like their divine Master, they seized upon every fitting, not to say possible occasion to declare Christ and his Gospel to their fellow-men.

In the passages already cited, we have seen them preaching in the temple and in private houses. In repeated instances they uttered their testimony before public tribunals, both Jewish and Roman.* In one instance by the wayside, and to a single hearer, Philip preached with immediate effect.

Synagogues.

The Jewish synagogues were favorite places in which to exhibit to their countrymen the hope of Israel, and they successively preached in the synagogues of Damascus, at Antioch, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, and at Ephesus.† The prison at Philippi witnessed effective preaching from Paul and Silas.‡ Paul also declared the Gospel in the Areopagus at Athens and in the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus.§ He also proclaimed the truth from the stairs of the castle at Jerusalem, on board ship, and finally, in his own hired house at Rome.

Christ all in all.

3. Christ was the great theme of apostolic preaching. Not only did the apostles set forth the fact that Jesus was the Christ, but they proclaimed him in all his offices. They preached Christ crucified, Christ a risen Saviour, and through Christ the resurrection of the dead. They also set forth Christ as having power to forgive sins, as the Lord of all, and as the Judge of quick and dead.

* Acts vi. 12; xxiii. 1; xxiv. 10; xxvi. 1.

† Acts ix. 20; xiii. 5, 16; xvii. 2; xviii. 4; xix. 1, 8.

‡ Acts xvi. 31.

§ Acts xvii. 19, 22; xix. 9; xx. 31; xxi. 40; xxvii; xxviii. 31.

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Christ thus preached was the Gospel of the Son of God. Through him peace was offered "to them that were afar off." Auxiliary to their grand theme, righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come were topics on which their discourses fitly turned. As to the literary character of the apostolic preaching, we are authorized to say that it was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." It blended logical argument with earnest and powerful entreaty. As to its moral character, it was urgent with timely and earnest warnings. It was faithful, declaring the whole counsel of God. Again, not relying upon mere argumentation, it abounded in historical statements and illustrations. Finally, it was skilfully adapted to all classes of hearers, whether Jews or Greeks, barbarians, Scythians, bond or free. The inspired pen has placed on record examples of apostolic preaching in sufficient fullness to justify these remarks, and our careful study of the examples themselves. Observe Peter's sermon at the Pentecost, Acts ii. 14-40; Stephen's address before the council, vii. 2-56; Paul's sermon at Antioch, xiii., 14-46; Paul's address on Mars' Hill, xvii. 22-31; his address to the multitude at Jerusalem, xxii. 1-22; and his defence before Agrippa, xxvi. 1-28.

Characteristics.

In the preaching of the apostles we have a practical comment on the homilectical teachings of our Lord himself. In their course we may discern a happy conformity both to the precepts and example of Christ, coupled with the utmost freedom as it respects the personal characteristics of the several preachers. It was no part of our Lord's design that all preaching should be cast in a fixed mould, but rather that all the varied powers

Individuality.

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of his different disciples should be developed in such a manner as to provide for the varied wants of men. Hence we find that the impulsive eagerness of Peter, the melting tenderness of Stephen, the flaming zeal of Philip, the powerful reasoning of Paul, the silver accents of Apollos, the patriarchal wisdom of James, and the loving gentleness of John, each had their sphere of action, and result in propagation of a common Gospel. So it will ever be in the history of the Church. Diversified talents, consecrated to a single purpose, and developed by a similar training in the light of common examples, and yet left free to individual modes of action, will answer in the highest degree the purposes of the Gospel ministry.

Practical results.

Those purposes are illustrated in some of the prominent results of apostolic preaching. Of these it is proper to name, 1. The conversion of unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles. In this we may perceive the designed effect of the Gospel on individuals. 2. The establishment and edification of Churches, illustrating the provisions of the Gospel for communities. 3. The overthrow of idolatry, foreshadowing the effect of truth upon all systems of error. 4. The training of future evangelists.

It is specially interesting to observe the apostles in their office of instructors to the preachers who were to enter upon their labors. The leading apostles associated with themselves, in their pastoral and missionary tours, younger brethren, who became at once learners and assistants in the work of preaching. Thus Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, and others were successively the pupils and associates of Paul.

When they had made due proficiency, and attained proper experience, they were not only commissioned as evangelists, but also to teach and commission other

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evangelists "to commit the things they had heard from the apostles to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Thus it was designed that apostolic precept and example should descend to in-influence the preaching of successive generations. Happily those precepts were not all oral. A valuable series of them has been placed upon the inspired record, together with various remarks and allusions in the other epistles bearing more or less directly upon the same subject.

To the three epistles addressed by Paul to his sons in the Gospel, Timothy and Titus, the true Christian minister must ever turn with special interest for hints and instruction with reference to every department of his sacred duties. In the writings of St. Paul, preaching stands forth as the grand idea of his life, illustrated in all his words and actions. But in the Epistles to Timothy it becomes the subject of most frequent reference and of solemn appeal.

Example of Paul.

Let the homiletical student be diligent in searching out instruction from the life and writings of the great apostle to the Gentiles; and especially let him ever bear in mind, as addressed to himself, the concluding exhortation of Paul to Timothy: "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim iv. 1, 2, 5.

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CHAPTER III.

SOURCES AND MATERIALS OF HOMILETICAL SCIENCE CONTINUED.

PATRISTIC—SCHOLASTIC—MODERN.

§ 1. Patristic Literature of Homiletics.

In passing from the period of the apostles to that of the Church fathers, we need not be surprised at finding a very noticeable decline in the value of the materials of every description furnished to the homiletical student. The contrast between inspired literature and that which is uninspired is hardly greater than prevails here. Nevertheless we see the progress of the Church amid oppositions which would have crushed out any human institution, and we know the motive power which had been divinely appointed to urge it onward. From the days of the apostles there was a succession of faithful preachers, of whom the greater number have their only record on high. At this distance of time we can only take observation of those who are represented to a greater or less extent in the literary remains of their several ages. Such remains for the first three centuries are scanty at most, and it is not strange that we find the writings of the early fathers more occupied with the moral than the scholastic precepts which were appropriate for Christian and ministerial instruction. Articles of the latter class, which bear at least indirectly upon the duties of the preacher, have descended to us from

Scanty materials.

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Clemens, Romanus, Ignatius, and Dionysius, of the first century; Anicetus of the second, and Cyprian of the third. It was not, however, till the Church had passed through her severest persecutions that she entered upon what has been denominated her oratorical period, about the beginning of the fourth century. Then followed the labors of Ambrose, of Basil, of the Gregories, of Chrysostom and Augustine, the most distinguished preachers of the early ages of the Church.

Oratorical period.

From the fathers named, and also from Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, and several others, various discourses and homilies have descended to the present time. But the only authors of the Patristic Age who made direct contributions to the literature of homiletics are Chrysostom and Augustine, representing respectively the Greek and the Latin Churches.

The fame of Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed preacher of Antioch and Constantinople, has been scarcely less diffused than that of Demosthenes himself. It is peculiarly gratifying, therefore, that we have extant a work from the pen of Chrysostom entitled Περι Ιεροσυνης; or Concerning the Priesthood. *De Sacerdotio*, the Latin title, is more frequently quoted than the Greek.

Chrysostom.

The following abstract of the subjects of chapters will indicate the parts of the work of greatest value to the student of preaching. Indeed, they of themselves form a series of useful precepts worth attention in modern days.

CHRYSOSTOM'S PRECEPTS.

Book iii. chap. 12. A priest ought to be very wise (or learned.)

Book iv. chap. 3. A ready faculty of speaking, essential to a priest (or minister.)

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Book iv. chap. 4.. He should be thoroughly versed in the controversies of the Greeks and the Jews.

Book iv. chap. 5. He should also be skilled in dialectics.

Book iv. chap. 6. The blessed Paul excelled in that faculty.

Book iv. chap. 7. The same was not only renowned in wonderful deeds, but also in the art of speaking.

Book v. chap. 1. Much labor and study should be practised by those who would speak with effect to the people.

Book v. chap. 2. Those who are devoted to their work should despise human praise, and seek to become skilful in speaking.

Book v. chap. 6. All sermons should be moulded by judgment and study as a means of pleasing God the more.

This treatise of Chrysostom was written at an early period of his ministry, and may be fairly supposed to contain the precepts by which his life and habits as a preacher were governed. No preacher of the early Church was more largely gifted with the genius of oratory than he; no one was more thoroughly trained in accordance with the best models of the Greek schools, and yet he neither relied on his genius nor his training, but devoted himself with diligent and self-denying application to the task of preparation for his public ministry. His preaching drew and enraptured throngs of people, and yet, so far as we can judge from the numerous homilies reported in his works, it was plain and unostentatious, indeed, familiar and often homely in its phraseology in adaptation to the comprehension of the masses, yet always abounding in interesting and practical thoughts. His style is characterized by a profusion of figures and illustrations by which the most familiar topics are made instructive, and the most abstruse familiar. A large portion of the homilies of Chrysostom are consecutive expositions of Scripture. As a whole, the discourses of this father will better repay

Style.

Homilies.

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careful study than any other similiar remains of the Patristic Age.

While Chrysostom's treatise on the priesthood represents the preceptive literature of the Greek Church, two essays from the pen of Augustine hold a similar relation to the Latin Church. Augustine before his conversion was a teacher of rhetoric, and as he became a voluminous writer in the interest of Christianity it was but natural that he should treat upon the great work of Christian ministers. Accordingly, we find direct reference to it primarily in his tract entitled *De Doctrina Christiana*, concerning Christian Teaching; and more briefly in that entitled *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, on Catechizing the Ignorant.

Doctrina Christiana.

The first three books on Christian teaching are entitled *De Inveniendo*, on Invention, or the mode of ascertaining what should be taught. The fourth book is entitled *De Proferendo*, on Utterance, or setting forth. This only has special interest for the modern student of homiletics, but this is of so much importance as to deserve presentation in the form of a condensed abstract of all its essential points.*

SUMMARY OF AUGUSTINE'S VIEWS ON UTTERANCE, (PREACHING.)

§ 1. None are to expect in this connection mere precepts of rhetoric.

§ 2. Yet rhetoric is useful, and should be enlisted in behalf of the truth.

§ 3. The art of rhetoric should be acquired in youth, and chiefly by hearing good models. The study of ecclesiastical literature is of great benefit. It may make men able to speak well. But if not, it may do better and cause them to act well.

§ 4. The preachers, therefore, as a champion of the true faith

* This abstract is abridged from that of Moule.

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and an opponent of error, should bend all his efforts to teaching good and unteaching evil. To this end he may employ various styles of address; for example, narrative, entreaty, rebuke, and appeal, according as the hearer is to be instructed, or roused to a practical sense of what he knows already.

§ 5. It is far better to speak wisely than eloquently. And a man is said to speak with more or less of true knowledge as he has made a greater or less advance in the Study of the Scriptures. This Scripture knowledge may go a great way as a substitute for artistic eloquence. But a union of the two are preferable.

§ 6. The Scriptures exhibit an eloquence of their own as truly suited to their character as a young man's talk is suited to youth, and an old man's to age. So perfect is the congruity in passages recognized as eloquent, that the words seem less to have been chosen by the author than to have belonged by a kind of necessity to the subject.

§ 7. An examination of such passages of Scripture as Romans v. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 16; Amos vi. 1; prove the congruity above named, and illustrate the union between true knowledge and eloquence.

§ 8. Obscure parts of Scripture are not to be imitated by ministers. Perspicuity is to be the aim of him who would preach well.

§ 9. Intricate points not suitable to public assemblies may be expounded in private, provided that clearness, not artistic merit, be regarded in the exposition.

§ 10. The idea of clearness expanded in a series of practical remarks, the substance of which is that he is the best preacher who provides that his hearers hear the truth, and that what they hear they understand.

§ 11. The province of didactic eloquence is to bring to light what is hidden. Still some intellectual food must be served up with spices.

§§ 12, 13. Comment on Cicero's motto, "Convince the judgment, please the understanding, and bend the will," showing that the preacher's victory consists in bending the hearer to action.

§ 14. Attractiveness in preaching must always be tempered, 1. By sound doctrine; and, 2. By gravity.

§ 15. It is more by the Christian fervour of his sermons than by any endowment of his intellect that the minister must hope to inform the understanding, catch the affections, and bend the

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will of his hearers. The Holy Spirit promised to those who for Christ's sake were delivered over to persecution, (Matt. x. 19,) will not be withheld from those who are preaching Christ.

§ 16. Nothing, however, is more unwise in itself, and more alien to the spirit and letter of the divine economy, than to suppose that the gifts of the Spirit justify us in relaxing our own efforts.

The next ten sections of the book are chiefly devoted to distinctions between three kinds of style, manely: 1. The low and gentle; 2. The even and regulated; 3. The lofty and impressive. Examples illustrative of these different styles are adduced from the Scriptures, and from Ambrose and Cyprian. These styles are shown to be closely related to each other, and to be means to a common end, namely, persuasion of the right.

Finally, Augustine asserts that more important than anything else is the life of the preacher, and no rules of art will ever have the least chance of supplying the void which must result from an unsoundness in that. Moreover, prayer must not be forgotten. Did Esther pray for fitting words in her address to the king regarding the temporal safety of her people, and shall we neglect to do the same when the eternal welfare of mankind is at stake?

Catechetics

Augustine's tract on catechizing the ignorant was addressed to Deogratias, a deacon at Carthage. A considerable portion of it is composed of two specimen sermons. Although the remainder abounds with instructive and characteristic passages, yet they may rather be considered as confirming the positions quoted above than adding anything to them of great importance.

One of Jerome's letters, addressed to Nepotian, contains a bare allusion to the subject of preaching. Besides this, although several works relating to the priesthood appeared between the fourth and eight centuries, there is nothing more of any value in reference to the theory of preaching in all the literature of the ancient Church. Chrysostom and Augustine have therefore stood forth to all ages as the chief and

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almost sole representatives of the fathers in reference to this subject. As such they have been freely quoted. Augustine especially has been regarded as the great authority by Roman Catholic authors, several of whom, such as Fenelon, Rapin, and Rollin, enjoy high consideration among Protestants.

§ 2. Scholastic Literature of Homiletics.

After Augustine there followed an interval of seven hundred years without a single work of a homiletical character, at least that has come down to modern times. During the dreary centuries that followed the corruption of the Church and the decline of preaching, a few works on the priesthood were issued, chiefly manuals of common duties, in which preaching was practically ignored. In the eleventh century a slight intellectual movement commenced, which resulted in a style of thought and philosophy since known as scholasticism, from the schools in which it was taught. Scholasticism was characterized by the endeavor to reduce theology, then but a series of traditional dogmas, to a rigid and formal system. It employed as its chief agency the dialectics of Aristotle. It extended from about 1075 to the middle of the fourteenth century, and passed through three distinct periods, which have been denominated successively, 1. The Dialectic and Ecclesiastic; 2. The Dialectic and Mystic; 3. The Biblical and Dialectic. Scholasticism at length declined under the preliminary agencies of the Reformation; but notwithstanding the decline of its authority as a religious and philosophical system, its influence was felt upon the literature of succeeding ages. This influence is clearly traceable in the homiletical writings of the twelfth and sixteenth centuries inclusive, and to some extent even later.

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Hence the adoption in this connection of the term scholastic rather than medieval, since it is designed to embrace in one classification books of a particular type, although some of them appeared within the period usually denominated modern.

But few of the works of the scholastic period are now accessible, hence it is deemed proper to present to the student in the Appendix* such a notice or abstract of each one as will enable him to judge of its character and value.

One principal effect of scholasticism upon homiletics was the introduction into religious discourse of scientific formalities consisting of minute divisions and subdivisions. It is, however, to be confessed that the sermons of that period do not exhibit their use to so great a degree as those of later times, especially those of the English Puritans and the German homilists.

Another result was closer attention to the precepts of the ancient rhetoricians, which, while it had a tendency to polish style, nevertheless secularized preaching by making it little more than a rhetorical exercise.

§ 3. Modern Literature of Homiletics.

The last two centuries and a half have produced more valuable materials for homiletical students than the fifteen centuries preceding. This remark is applicable to every branch of study appropriate to the Christian minister. It embraces biblical criticism, systematic theology, the propagation of the Gospel by various agencies, clerical biography and published sermons, as well as direct authorship relating to the theory and practice of preaching.

As the latter theme of itself requires a much greater

* Appendix A.

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space than the present paragraph can allot to it, reference is made to article B of the Appendix, where the student will find a list of authors and books which will indicate to him the extent and value of the modern literature of homiletics, not only in the English, but also in other languages. **A prolific theme**

The following general statements deserve to be borne in mind: 1. As the evangelical idea of preaching has been restored to the Church, works on the subject have been multiplied. 2. The revival of true religion and that of correct theories and practice in preaching have to a large extent been reciprocal. 3. The tendency of discussion and investigation in reference to this subject has been to secure a higher recognition of the validity of Scripture precepts and example, and consequently an improvement in the general character of preaching by a return to its apostolical simplicity and power. 4. A comprehensive acquaintance with the best writers on this subject is extremely desirable to preachers. It tends to satisfy a reasonable curiosity on a subject of intrinsic importance; it points out the most profitable sources of improvement; it tends to enlarge the views of the reader, to stimulate diligence, to correct errors, and to suggest modes of improved and increasing usefulness. Ministers, like other men, need line upon line and precept upon precept, and these works often supply hints of the largest practical value. **Developments.** **Advantages.**

RELATIVE VALUE.

In connection with the present topic some further remarks are in place concerning the relative value of the homiletical literature of the different periods. Obviously that of the brief period illuminated by inspiration must ever remain the most instructive and

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authoritative to all who would understand the subject in the light of God's will.

Some would place next if not foremost in importance the example and precepts of the fathers. The error of such is obvious from various facts: 1. Our records of the early portion of the patristic era, when example was most authoritative, are extremely imperfect.

2. Notwithstanding all the splendor with which historians have sought to invest the oratorical period of the early Church, it is easy to discover amid great external prosperity the commencement and progress of that decline in spirituality which subsequently manifested itself in the complete subordination of preaching to ceremonial observances.

3. Although the treatises of Chrysostom and Augustine are to be prized for their intrinsic value, yet from their brevity and incompleteness they are practically inferior to various works of modern times.

Medieval literature has found some eulogists; but the common sense of mankind will place it in a rank far below even the patristic.

Modern homiletical literature now comes into view as next in importance to biblical. It indeed embraces much that is trivial and repetitious, but with some dross it contains no little pure gold. The best modern treatises on preaching have partaken of the vitality and power which, since the days of the Reformation, have in a greater degree pervaded preaching itself and brought it back to its original design and dignity. Besides they have been enriched with the influence of the increasing knowledge of mankind and by the cumulative advantages of multiplied experiment in the propagation of the Gospel, from which are deduced both principles and rules of practice adapted to the guidance of thoughtful men in the present age of the world.

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Fortunately those branches of homiletical literature which are of greatest value, both the biblical and the modern, are quite accessable; and while it is interesting to consult as far as we may be able the literature of other periods, it is both practicable and important to be well versed in that of our own day as well as in what comes to us from the days of the Saviour and his apostles.

§ 4. Other Sources of Homiletical Instruction.

PUBLISHED SERMONS.

An obvious distinction exists between works on preaching (homiletics proper) and those which have resulted from preaching as its products (sermonology.) The former only have been referred to in the foregoing sections, including, of course, such sermons as relate specifically to the work of preaching. Apart from the comparatively few of this class, printed homilies and sermons constitute a vast body of theological literature.

While in its original and complete sense a sermon cannot be printed, since nothing is strictly a sermon or speech which is not spoken, yet usage allows us to call that a sermon which has been written for delivery as a religious discourse, or which has been reported from the lips of a preacher. Of such value indeed is the preserving power of letters, that next to the living voice of the speaker we prize the record of his words. Moreover, letters give this advantage, that whereas we may hear the speaker but once; and in the public congregation, we may have the record of his words to read in private and to reperuse in following years.

Value of published sermons.

It must also be conceded that the structure and matter of a sermon may be better analyzed through the medium of the eye than of

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the ear, however the lack of delivery may weaken the power of its impression. It certainly is a source of peculiar satisfaction that in our homiletical studies we can have access to the record of sermons which represent every age of the Church and most of the distinguished preachers that have adorned its annals.

Truth and Style.

Published sermons may be studied for the sake of the truth they contain, and also with reference to the style in which that truth is communicated. For the latter object the perusal of sermons need not be extensive, and yet few liberal minded preachers would not prize the opportunity of investigating to a greater or less extent the sermonology of ancient and medieval as well as of modern times. From this point the topic under consideration coincides, in a great degree, with the two that follow.

MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHY.

A special interest attaches to the life of a great or a good preacher. From a proper delineation of his Christian character, his modes and extent of study, his style of preparation for the pulpit, his delivery, and the effects of his preaching, we learn by example what we ought to be or to do ourselves. If he has committed errors or suffered failures, we can note their cause and avoid them; and wherein he has had special success, we can learn to profit by his experience. While it may not be essential for the homiletical student to pursue in advance any extended course of biographical reading, yet it will be advantageous to him at every period of life to commune with those who have gone before him in the career of ministerial usefulness.

The apostles

It will be a profitable task for him to analyze from Scripture data the character and the peculiar gifts and graces of the several apos-

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tles. He may in the historical remains of the early Church find fragments that will throw light upon the preaching of the first three centuries. In reference to this period of ecclesiastical history, it is interesting to compare with the personal character of such fathers as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, the fragments of their writings and discourses which have come down to us. In respect to the fathers of the third and fourth centuries, materials of both kinds are abundant; and it is instructive to compare the lives and the discourses of such preachers as Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, the Gregories, Basil, Ambrose, and Jerome, as well as of Chrysostom and Augustine. In most if not all these cases we are to understand that the sermons and homilies of the fathers are less in their own writings than the accepted reports of their discourses, which were taken down by ready writers from their lips, and copied and passed about for reading by those who were interested in their preservation.

The fathers

Between the fifth century and the Reformation the annals of the Church furnish fewer characters of special interest to the preacher, although some rare examples may be named, such as the venerable Bede, Anthony of Padua, and Bernard of Clairvaux.

Medieval preachers

Since the days of the reformers this department of literature has grown apace, and has already become so voluminous as to be quite beyond the limits of just treatment, or even of adequate reference, in the text of a work like the present.

Reformers

Yet it cannot be passed over without an earnest recommendation to young preachers to make themselves familiar with the lives as well as the sermons

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Modern preachers.

of such men as Latimer, Knox, Jewell, Wesley, Benson, Richard Watson, Robert Hall, Chalmers, Jay, Bunting, Newton, of England; Reinhard, Krummacher, and Tholuck, of Germany; Saurin and Monod, not to speak of the great Catholic preachers, of France; John M. Mason, Dwight, Summerfield, Payson, Olin, and Alexander, of America; together with many others of various periods and countries.

THE HISTORY OF PREACHING.

An adequate history of preaching has never yet been written.* Such a history would involve facts and topics of the greatest interest. It would be a continued lesson of examples shown not only in the character and relations of individual preachers, but in the collective influence of bodies of men, and the working out of particular doctrines and principles, whether for good or evil. Such a history would be a practical comment upon true and false modes of preaching. It would illustrate the rapid progress of the Gospel, both in ancient and modern times, wherever preached in apostolic simplicity and power; while it would equally show the fatal decline of true godliness wherever the voice of evangelical truth has been muffled by the trappings of a ceremonial display, or stifled beneath a mass of errors and corruptions. Thus the facts of the past are calculated to impress upon the mind of the homiletical student negative as well as positive lessons of great value.

It is indeed a question of grave interest how far the

* Several attempts have been made by German writers which might in more evangelical hands prove the basis of something valuable on this subject. (*Vide* Appendix, p. 460.)

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gloom and ignorance of the dark ages actually resulted from a decline in the efficiency of preaching. There is certainly an obvious correspondence between the fact of that decline and the general decrease of intelligence and piety in the Church and the nations. When in the fifth and sixth centuries the system of ritual service began to be developed, in imitation of both heathen and Jewish ceremonies, preaching came to be regarded as of inferior importance. The mass became the great act of divine service; and the sermon, when not omitted altogether, was treated as a mere pendant to a showy ceremonial. During the dismal centuries which followed, preaching became degraded to the lowest degree. In some places it was well-nigh extinct, and in its stead the priests resorted to a species of plays in the churches, in which sacred events were dramatized for the edification of the people.

Preaching governs the character of the Church.

Not only do the annals of the medieval Church show the lack of the vitalizing power of the word, but they illustrate the fearful consequences of its perversion.

The Crusades were a result of preaching not of the Gospel of peace, but of bloody war; not of love, but of vengeance. The fanaticism aroused by the harangues of Peter the Hermit, and those who followed him in similar efforts to inflame the passions of Christian nations against the Moslems, raged through Europe and the East for the space of nearly three centuries, consigning to destruction millions of lives and treasure.

Perversion of preaching.

Not only in that instance, but also in connection with nearly every heresy that has originated since the days of Simon Magus, the agency of preaching has been resorted to as a means of propagation, and too often with success.

The great Reformation was the result of a revival

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The great Reformation.

of the preached word. It was not till the twelfth century that the dawn of better days began to throw its faint glimmer upon the darkness of the middle ages. Cotemporaneously with that event the Gospel trumpet, so long silent, was feebly heard among the wild valley and secluded fastnesses of the Alps. It was caught up and blown with a louder trill by Wiclif in England. Not long afterward its sound was echoed by Huss in Bohemia, and by Savonarola on the plains of Italy.

When the voices of these preachers had been extinguished in martyrdom, and the papacy vainly hoped that the truth was effectually silenced, the outspoken words of Luther sounded forth from the heart of Germany in tones of power that made the papal palaces of Rome tremble to their foundations. The truth could be bound no longer. Preaching, once more restored to its proper character and functions, became the grand agency for the spread of the Reformation.

It is interesting to observe its progress and effects in the fierce struggles of truth with error, and to mark its growing power during a century or two following, while employed with faithfulness and zeal by such men as Melancthon, Zwingle, Flavel, Latimer, Jewell, Calvin, and Knox. Great were the triumphs of preaching in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and full of instruction are the lives and labors of many, especially of the puritan divines of the last named century.

But when in the lapse of time the early and better fruits of the English reformation had become blighted by dead formalism, lifeless antinomianism, loose Arminianism, and other errors, the fruitful source of evil practice; in the early part of the eighteenth century God in mercy sent a revival of apostolic preaching by his chosen servants, Wesley and Whitfield. This

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glorious revival, after a hundred years of experiment, is now more active and prosperous than ever. The whole Protestant world has participated in it; while even the Roman Catholic Church, in proportion to the progress of Protestantism, has aroused itself to a degree of activity and earnestness in preaching unknown in its previous history.

Future mission of preaching.

Especially do the position and character of preaching in the nineteenth century challenge the attention of all who are interested in the promotion of the truth. The preaching of the Gospel has now been commenced in a large proportion of the languages of the earth, and in many mission fields, under circumstances of peculiar interest. In all enlightened countries it has auxiliaries unknown to the earlier ages of Christianity, such as a Sabbath of acknowledged sanctity, myriads of churches erected and filled with habitual hearers, and millions of Bibles in the hands of the people. It is safe to say that at no preceding time was ever the preaching of the Gospel so widely disseminated; and probably it would not be hazardous to affirm that, as a whole, the preaching of the present day excels that of any former age. It certainly ought to be so; and whatever excellence preaching may now have attained, as the result of the increased diffusion of knowledge and piety, each successive generation of preachers ought to labor, and to hope to carry it forward to still wider spheres of influence and still higher degrees of power.

Motives to study.

In order to this they should not be content with narrow views of its character and importance, or of the means necessary to a proper development of all the capacities that God has given them for its successful practice. Those who propose to satisfy themselves with the mere routine

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of a preacher's duties may perhaps feel indifferent to topics like the present; but all who regard their work as of supreme importance, and themselves engaged in an enterprise whose bearings are as wide as the world and as lasting as eternity, will wish to study the subject in its broadest aspects, and in the light of the maturest experience of the past as well as the most promising experiments of the present.

Although not as yet reduced to any single volume, yet the materials of the history of preaching may be found scattered through the annals of the Church, and may be gathered by each reader for himself. The homiletical student, therefore, will do well to have his eye open to whatever in ecclesiastical history, as well as clerical biography, has a bearing upon this department of study, and also to be observant of whatever facts are transpiring in his own period to illustrate the great principles involved in the proclamation of the word of life to dying men.

Lessons of history.

Most prominently will one great fact rise to view as the result of such observations: preaching becomes powerful in proportion to its connection with intelligent and evangelical piety. No scholastic forms, no literary adornments, no sallies of enthusiasm can supply the place of deep and abiding convictions of the supreme importance of scriptural truth, as a means of saving the souls of men. The true motive and ruling design of preaching must ever be the salvation of the lost and perishing. Wherever this is lost sight of, whether by an individual or by a religious community, the power of preaching declines and the word becomes a dead-letter; it is no longer the word of life. Hence it will be seen that wherever the Sun of righteousness has been obscured by mists of error, or the Gospel trumpet has been made

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to give forth an uncertain sound, there preaching has deteriorated and become powerless for good, though often fruitful of evil.

Let the student, therefore, be prepared to draw both positive and negative lessons of instruction from examples and from the history of preaching.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE VARIOUS PRODUCTS OF HOMILETICS.

The science of homiletics is not limited to one form of production. It comprehends not only the sermon, but also those various other forms and styles of religious discourse which have been publicly practised and recognized at different periods of the history of the Church, such as exhortations, homilies, postils, and platform addressess.*

§ 1. POSTILS.

During the middle ages the Roman mass was regarded as the principal part of divine service. If a discourse followed it was necessarily brief, and viewed in the light of a supplement; hence called a postilla or postil. The postil sustained a relation to the mass analogous to that of a postscript to a letter. Amid the published discourses of the later fathers postils are interspersed. The term itself is diminutive, and indicates a low estimate of preaching. Such an estimate prevailed during the medieval age, and with the progress of the Reformation both the idea and

* The eccentric Edward Irving in the earlier part of his ministry sought to popularize his pulpit addresses under the term *orations*. His first published volume was entitled, "For the Oracles of God; four Orations." His second was entitled, "For Missionaries after the Apostolic School; a series of Orations." The term, however, so far from having been adopted from him by others, was abandoned by himself at a later day, and the words, sermons, discourses, and homilies employed to designate his pulpit efforts.

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the practice of postillating were superseded by evangelical preaching.

§ 2. Homilies.

As explained in the first chapter, the term homily was in the early Church for a long period applied to ordinary Christian discourses. **Early origin.** Its derivation from ὁμίλεω, to *converse familiarly*, indicated the great freedom and plainness used by the early Christian preachers in distinction from the arts and ornaments of the rhetoricians. This term is definitely associated with the expository discourses of the fathers, both Greek and Latin, as in the case of the homilies of Chrysostom and Augustine. As illustrated by these examples, its character corresponds very nearly to that of the expository style of sermonizing. At a subsequent period homilies partook more of the nature of exhortations, or of the hortatory style of sermons.

ENGLISH BOOK OF HOMILIES.

The term homily in the English language has received a fixed signification from its attachment to a collection of plain discourses published officially for reading in the Church of England. This publication was made at an early period of the Reformation, when the clergy were very illiterate, and many of them incapable of writing suitable sermons for their congregations. These facts are illustrated by the following extract of the preface to the "Homilies appointed to be read in Churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth," and published in the year 1562:

> Considering how necessary it is that the word of God, which is the only food of the soul, and that most excellent light that we must walk by in this our most dangerous pilgrimage, should

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at all convenient times be preached unto the people. . . . and how that all they which are appointed ministers have not the gift of preaching sufficiently to instruct the people, which is committed unto them, whereof great inconveniences might rise and ignorance still be maintained, if some honest remedy be not speedily found and provided: the Queen's most excellent majesty, tendering the souls' health of her loving subjects and the quieting of their consciences in the chief and principal points of Christian religion. . . . hath, by the advice of her most honourable counselors, for her discharge in this behalf, caused a Book of Homilies, which heretofore was set forth by her most loving brother, a prince of most worthy memory, Edward the Sixth, to be printed anew.

The Queen's command.

All which homilies her majesty commandeth and straitly chargeth all Parsons, Vicars, Curates, and all others having spiritual care, every Sunday and holiday in the year. . . . in such order and place as is appointed in the Book of Common Prayers, to read and declare to their parishioners, plainly and distinctly, one of the said homilies in such order as they stand in the book, except there be a sermon . . . and then for that cause only, and for none other, the reading of the said homily to be deferred unto the next Sunday, or holiday following. And when the foresaid Book of Homilies is read over, her majesty's pleasure is that the same be repeated and read again in such like sort as was before prescribed.

These official injunctions to read the homilies have fixed the idiom of our language. Hence we always say read a homily, and not preach or speak a homily, although the latter terms are intrinsicially more appropriate to the original idea.

CONTINENTAL BOOKS OF HOMILIES.

The Church of England Homilies were by no means the first or only collection of the kind known to history. During the latter part of the medieval age collections of homilies for the whole Church year were in use, denominated Homiliarum. The selections were chiefly made from the ancient Church Fathers.

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A noted example is the Homiliarum of Charlemagne, which was not merely prepared by the order of that emperor, but was examined by him sheet by sheet as it was prepared by Alcuin and Paulus Diaconus, two leading divines of his day. The full title of this work, as translated from the Latin, reads as follows:

Homilies or Sermons; or, Addresses to the People from the most renowned Doctors of the Church, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Origen, Chrysostom and Bede; arranged in this order by Alcuin, a priest, by order of the Roman Emperor Charles Magnus, by whom also it was revised.

MODERN MODIFICATIONS OF THE HOMILY.

Without detracting in the least from the value of the homily in former days, it may now be considered obsolete as a form of pulpit instruction. With the general increase of knowledge no minister is tolerated, at least in any Protestant country, who is not competent to produce his own sermons, hence no book of homilies can release the minister from the task of preaching, while between formal sermons and informal platform addresses he has little call for homilies proper. That service which, in accordance with modern usages, most nearly resembles the homily is the week evening pastoral lecture, a service too often neglected by ministers and not appreciated by the people, but which, faithfully attended to, will usually prove of great advantage to both. In these exercises the different styles of homily are still appropriate.

1. The first may be designated as a running paraphase of the text, which may be a comprehensive portion of Scripture.

2. The second is a verbal commentary upon the text, with inferences.

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3. The third is a consecutive address founded upon a shorter passage of Scripture analogous to the textual sermon.

The first is sometimes practised with excellent results in the domestic reading of the Scriptures, and also regularly by some preachers, the English more especially, in the reading of their public Scripture lessons. In the latter case the homily is made introductory to the sermon.

For suggestions applicable to the second and third kind of homilies, the reader is referred to the subject of expository preaching.

§ 3. Platform Addresses.

Irregular forms of address.

In all ages of activity in the Church there must have been more or less call upon Christian ministers for irregular services, or addresses of various kinds, aside from the sermon or homily. Such would be the case in all the deliberative assemblies of the clergy, whether in diocesan conventions, synods, or councils. In the Roman Catholic Church, the custom of celebrating festivals in honour of the saints caused panegyrics upon the saints to be in constant demand. At some periods these panegyrics remained as almost the only substitutes for sermons. Their construction was usually simple, in the narrative form, after the style of the panegyrical oration of the Greeks and Romans. In Protestant Churches the panegyric, as such, is unknown, but finds its nearest resemblance in the funeral sermons of worthy Christians.

Demands of Christian enterprise.

During the last century the increased activity of the Church has made new claims upon the oratorical powers of the ministry. There has, in fact, sprung up in Protestant countries a

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style of Christian oratory unknown in former times. For lack of a better designation it may be indicated by the term platform addresses. This peculiar homiletical production of the nineteenth century owes its origin to the necessities of numerous benevolent agencies, for which funds required to be solicited, and by means of which the philanthropic interests of individuals and communities are promoted. To attain these objects most effectually the formalities of the pulpit are laid aside, and a greater freedom of address encouraged. Not only in the cause of Christian missions, and its auxiliary enterprises of Bible and tract distribution, has the platform address been highly popular and useful, but also in that of temperance, an essential but recently developed branch of moral reform. Widows and orphan asylums, Sunday-schools, societies for the relief of the poor, the aged, and the blind, and, in fact, every species of benevolent effort have demanded, and will hereafter continue to demand, clerical advocacy. Consequently no minister of the present age is properly prepared for his work who is not qualified to 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.

Demands on the minister.

The platform, therefore, as representing the auxiliaries and incidentals of an active Christianity, may be considered an important adjunct of the pulpit, deserving not only the respect, but the interested preparation of every Christian minister. Of platform addresses it may be said, that while all the essential qualities of sermons are appropriate to them, it is less

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essential that they be pervaded with evangelical power. Platform addresses are expected to exhibit a greater freedom of manner and variety of matter than sermons, while they demand less of thorough discussion and systematic arrangement. Nevertheless, good materials, a wise distribution, and a spirited delivery are essential to their largest success.

Qualities.

The Christian orator in a platform address should have special reference to the demands of the occasion and circumstances in which he speaks, involving the whole question of propriety as relating to his subject and audience. Mere excellences of thought or elegancies of diction are of little value without strict relevancy to the object in view, it being essentially necessary to employ force of argument and expression with reference to practical and immediate results. At this point Christian oratory gains some of the advantages which belong to judicial and forensic speaking, as well as to the demonstrative oratory of the ancients. An immediate practical issue is before both speaker and audience, and unless the issue is gained the address is a failure. Nevertheless, the speaker on a Christian platform should not confine himself to the immediate issue, but should aim beyond it, and hope to produce results of a good and lasting character in the future.

Immediate and ultimate issues.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS.

In order to success in this kind of speaking a preacher or a Christian layman requires particularly to cultivate, 1. Self-possession; 2. General knowledge; 3. Power of adaptation; 4. Felicity of illustration; 5. Power of condensation.

Long and prosy addresses are specially intolerable

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on the platform. In this view, as also with reference to variety, several speakers are usually engaged. It is not always possible for them to know in advance, or knowing, to avoid each other's track of thought. Hence that breadth of knowledge which will always supply pertinent facts and considerations, that self-possession which will rise superior to sudden embarrassments, and that power of adaptation and illustration which will secure the attention, awaken the interest, and grasp the sympathies of an audience, are beyond expression desirable to the platform speaker.

Brevity essential.

The prevailing error of this style of address is levity, and yet it is not to be denied that a fund of chastened humor is often highly conducive to the objects of platform speaking. While a just license may be allowed to humor on the platform, nothing is more important than that it be kept within due restraint, and made strictly subservient to the objects of the occasion. When it sinks to the low idea of merely furnishing amusement, both speaker and audience are degraded.*

§ 4. Exhortation.

Exhortation is a primary form of Christian address. In periods of religious decline it has been greatly

* The Rev. William Jay, of Bath, records in his autobiography certain untoward circumstances which caused him, after a few trials, to refuse all subsequent applications to appear on the platform. He nevertheless continued to preach anniversary and "charity" sermons to the end of his life. He says: "I the more readily adopted this resolution as I had a plenitude of other pressing claims. I was also afterward confirmed in the propriety of it by Dr. Chalmers, who, when I was at his house in Glasgow, remarked, 'The pulpit is the preacher's appropriate station, and he can there be most influential and useful by touching a number of springs which will set all in motion.' Observation also has kept me from repenting of my resolution. I have seen that ministers

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undervalued and often overlooked. Nevertheless, when suitably comprehended and practised it will remain of permanent utility in the Church.

Etymology. The English word exhort comes directly from the Latin *exhortor*, which signifies to excite, to encourage. By usage the word has come to signify to urge, to entreat, to compel with arguments. It is used most frequently, though not exclusively, in a religious sense. The scriptural use of the term exhortation is confined to the New Testament. It is first employed in Luke iii. 18, in reference to John the Baptist, of whom it is said, "many other things in his EXHORTATION *preached* he unto the people."

A species of preaching. Thus we have the term at once associated with preaching, and by its position defined to be a particular mode of preaching, or of heralding forth the Gospel. Preaching is the genus, exhortation the species. Preaching is the comprehensive term which embraces all modes of teaching and diffusing the truths of the Gospel by human speech. Exhortation

who as platform orators have figured much at these meetings have been sadly drawn off from keeping their own vineyards. Nor in general, on these occasions, are they the best or the most acceptable speakers. They are too professional, too sermonic. Laymen who speak more briefly, more simply, and apparently more from the heart, are commonly more effective, and are heard to more advantage."

REMARK.—While no countenance should be given to real or apparent neglect of the minister's own vineyard, and while it is not supposed that all will be equally successful in this branch of effort, still the opinion may be maintained that ministers generally should seek to qualify themselves for usefulness on the platform. The very effort to avoid the defects and to cultivate the good qualities indicated by Mr. Jay will be useful to them in all their ministrations, while by their presence and coöperation they ought to exert a most salutary influence upon the character of the popular assemblies in which they may mingle. The propriety of this course for ministers is much more obvious than that of becoming professional lecturers on miscellaneous subjects.

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is that branch or style of preaching in which appeal, entreaty, admonition, and consolation constitute the principal elements.

SCRIPTURAL IDEA OF EXHORTATION.

This view may be illustrated by some references to the original text. With two unimportant exceptions, the only Greek word of the New Testament which is rendered *exhort*, and the substantive of which is rendered *exhortation*, is παρακαλεω, *to call upon, call to, call for*, etc. Its use is frequent and its renderings are various, such as beseech, desire, entreat, comfort, and EXHORT. The substantive is rendered *comfort* and *consolation* as well as *entreaty* and *exhortation*. From the same verb is derived παράκλητος, the name frequently applied to the third person of the Holy Trinity and rendered *the Comforter*. Once it is applied to the Saviour himself, 1 John ii, 1: "We have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

APOSTOLIC EXAMPLES.

To illustrate more fully the scriptural idea of exhortation it may be well to collate a few of the passages in which the term *exhort* is used. Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost is an example of an apostolic exhortation. It makes several quotations of Scripture, but is based on no particular text. Acts ii, 14: "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." After this brief introduction he proceeded to quote the Prophet Joel and the Psalmist David, applying the words of prophecy to the events then transpiring, and giving his personal testimony to the wicked crucifixion

Exhortation of Peter.

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and glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In conclusion, Peter brought all the facts and reasoning of his discourse to a personal issue, saying: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . And with many other words did he testify and EXHORT, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

Another apostlic exhortation is reported in the Acts of the Apostles, xiii. 15. Paul and his company having arrived at Antioch, went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets, "the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, If ye have any word of *exhortation*, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." The brief historic exhortation which followed was the introduction of the word of God into Antioch, the Gentiles immediately thereafter beseeching that "these words might be preached unto them the next Sabbath."

Paul.

In the same chapter it is recorded that Paul and Barnabas returned from Derbe to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples. and *exhorting* them to continue in the faith." Acts xiv. 22.

In the following chapter it is stated that "Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, (that is, religious teachers probably of an incipient grade,) *exhorted* the brethren with many words, and confirmed them."

In the twentieth chapter of Acts, verse two, the whole of Paul's second missionary tour through Macedonia is represented to have been chiefly employed in exhortation.

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In the epistles the term *exhort* is frequently used; for example, Rom. xii. 8: "He that *exhorteth*, let him wait on *exhortation*." 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4: "For our *exhortation* was not of deceit, . . . but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." 1 Tim. iv. 13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to *exhortation*, to doctrine." 1 Tim. vi. 2: "These things teach and *exhort*." 2 Tim. iv. 2: "Preach the word; . . . reprove, rebuke, *exhort* with all longsuffering and doctrine." Titus i. 9; A bishop should "be able by sound doctrine both to *exhort* and convince gainsayers." Titus ii. 15: "These things speak, and *exhort*, and rebuke with all authority." Heb. iii. 13: "*Exhort* one another daily, while it is called To-day."

INFERENCES.

The above and numerous other passages of Scripture indicate several important particulars.

1. That it was not beneath the dignity or foreign to the office of the inspired apostles frequently to *exhort*.

2. That they enjoined a similar practice and the duty of exhortation upon young ministers of their day.

3. That exhortation, as separate from preaching was the special office of a certain class of religious teachers in the New Testament Church.

4. That mutual exhortation for their own profit and edification was enjoined by the apostles upon Christians generally.

THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION.

These scriptural examples and precepts remain on record for our instruction. It is not easy to determine

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to what extent they have been operative in the history of the past, although it is certain that they have been greatly overlooked during long periods of religious decline. It is no less certain that the primitive practice of religious exhortation has an intrinsic propriety adapted to all times and all circumstances of humanity. Even in the present day, when the platform address represents the march of progress, exhortation is also demanded as its spiritual counterpart. A certain element of secularity pervades the former. The latter, with its heart-appeals and holy energy, rings out like the clarion sound of the early Gospel. "As it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."*

Should be coveted.

Ministers should covet earnestly the good gift of exhortation as a means of increasing their moral and spiritual power. Laymen also desiring to be useful, should seek to qualify themselves to perform the same duty in their proper sphere.

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 Timothy: "Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."

Importance of early development.

Not only is the practice of exhortation conducive to early and legitimate usefulness, but it becomes very advantageous to the indi-

* 2 Cor. iv. 13.

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vidual practicing it, by calling into action those gifts and graces which are essential to success in riper years and larger fields of responsibility. To commence preaching too young is, in ordinary cases, greatly objectionable; but to wait in absolute inaction during the years necessary to acomplish a thorough education is still more so.

By the latter course many a young man of lively sensibilities and ready utterance, and who only needed guidance, cultivation, and practice to qualify him for free and powerful eloquence, has been dwarfed into habits of dry artificiality, for which no degree of intellectual culture can adequately compensate. On the other hand, by judicious and constant practice even moderate talents have been developed into powerful agencies of usefulness, always increasing in proportion to the degree of knowledge and piety with which they are associated.

The powers of ordinary speech are never so easily and properly developed as in childhood—nature's own time. So in the religious life, the tongue of the witness for Jesus is never so readily loosed as in spiritual childhood. Those, therefore, who are born into the kingdom of Christ are from the first to be encouraged to speak for God in all appropriate ways: and when the Church deems any young man a hopeful candidate for the ministry she does well to commission him to exhort, and to encourage him in the duty while pursuing a course of study.

His proper course.

The practical question now arises, How should such an exhorter proceed? His object is supposed to be identical with that of the minister of the Gospel, but his sphere is more limited. He does not wish to assume a character to which he has not yet attained, neither is he disposed to hide his light under a bushel. He should, therefore, be true to himself and

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his circumstances. He may safely assume that most men know much more of Christian truth than they practise. Hence it is appropriate for him by earnest exhortation to arouse them to action and to duty. In this view he may select subjects which are familiar and truths which are self-evident, and proceed at once to urge upon the hearts and consciences of the people their immediate practice.

Although not expected to take a text, as if to attempt a sermon, yet the exhorter is at full liberty to quote and apply portions of Scripture applicable to any topic of truth or duty. In fact the whole range of Scripture topics is before him, and he will find it a most appropriate and profitable exercise to collate and quote with pertinence the Scripture teachings on any subject he may take up. As the chief topics of Scripture are eminently practical, so the variety of subjects appropriate to exhortation is unlimited. They may be treated in social religious meetings as among Christian brethren, or in promiscuous assemblages. In the former case, consolation, quickening, and encouragement are the leading objects; in the latter, admonition, warning, and entreaty to flee from the wrath to come.

The exhorter should be a man of faith and of prayer, and should wait on his exhortation with that combined meekness and zeal which will alike win the confidence of the Church and the respect of the world. He should guard against rambling and incoherency of thought, but should never content himself without positive, if not immediate results of his labors.

Early and proper attention to exhortation, as now commended, will prove an excellent preparation for hortatory preaching, and also for those hortatory addresses which need to be intermingled with practical and even doctrinal discourses. Nor is exhorta-

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tion proper to be limited to laymen or intending ministers. It is demanded from ministers of the Gospel of every grade, in numberless forms, and on occasions that never cease to occur. In protracted meetings, at camp-meetings, in prayer-meetings, in class-meetings, and in all forms of extra efforts for the conversion of souls, a talent for exhortation is of inestimable value to the preacher and the pastor.

Exhortation should be retained in the Church.

OCCASIONS FOR EXHORTATIONS.

Nor is the custom, heretofore prevalent, of following the sermon of a ministerial brother with a soul-stirring exhortation to be discarded. Let the example be supposed of a stranger having preached and enunciated important truths, but that, for lack of a personal acquaintance with the congregation, he has been unable to make those special and pertinent applications of truth so necessary to secure the most desirable results. It becomes the pastor to be able to seize upon the occasion, and to apply the subject with pertinence and energy to the hearts of the people.

The case may be reversed. A pastor may have preached, and a stranger may be called on to exhort. To the latter is given a most interesting opportunity to enforce and illustrate truth from new points of view, and often congregations are greatly moved and edified by brief and timely addresses from visiting brethren. How puerile in such circumstances would seem the excuse, "I am not prepared." Indeed, how unworthy would it be of a Christian minister, a public teacher, not to be prepared, both by his education and his habits, to deliver an appropriate and pungent

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exhortation whenever in fitting circumstances called on to do so. Let candidates for the ministry then prepare themselves for such emergencies, and however they may seek to become qualified for the delivery of able and systematic sermons, let them seek to be also and always ready for fervent and powerful exhortations. Thus only may they worthily follow the example of the apostles.

§ 5. The Sermon.

The word sermon is derived from the Latin *sermo*, a speech. It has been adopted into the languages of all Christian nations to signify, as the original Latin word from the third century came to signify, a formal religious discourse founded upon the word of God.

The products of Christian oratory, thus far considered, are occasional; the sermon is regular. They rise or fall in importance with times and circumstances. Thus the days of homilies and postils have already passed away, while that of platform addresses is scarcely at its meridian; but the sermon belongs alike to all periods. It was instituted by the Saviour, it was practised by the apostles, and, having come down through the successive ages of the Church, is as important and as well adapted to the wants of the world to-day as it was in the beginning. Other homiletical products may be considered accessory, the sermon ultimate, as the great means of diffusing Christianity and of edifying the Church. The homily on a week-day evening may appropriately prepare the way for a sermon on the Sabbath, and an exhortation may fitly supplement the sermon; but the sermon itself will continue to occupy the position of central and substantial im-

The sermon belongs to all periods.

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portance. The sermon is especially adapted to the Sabbath day, and to Christian congregations. It is, however, no less appropriate on week-days, and before judicial or legislative assemblies. A sermon is in place where even a few are gathered together in the name of Christ, and equally so to the largest gatherings of men. Sermons may be delivered in the hut and in the cathedral, on the mountain side or by the sea-shore, on shipboard and in military camps, and may be adapted to the instruction and profit of the people in all possible circumstances. The great mass of religious teaching is communicated in the form of sermons, and the sermon always has been and ever must remain the essential complement of the idea of preaching.

The sermon a representative product of homiletics.

While, therefore, the Christian minister should understand the character and uses of the minor homiletical products, and frequently employ them as tributaries and accompaniments to his sermons, nevertheless he should regard preaching in its normal form as his standard work. The preparation and delivery of sermons is in fact to be the great business of his life. To this work he needs to devote his constant study and his diligent labor, his profoundest meditation and his most fervent prayers, that he may show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

In view of the great importance of the sermon, it is perhaps not surprising, that some authors have treated it as if it involved the whole of homiletics. The work of Claude, "On the Composition of a Sermon," is an instance in point, and represents a large class of treatises which only take cognizance of this single homiletical product.

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While taking exception to the technical impropriety of this treatment of a part of the subject for the whole, it may nevertheless be conceded that the sermon involves the most essential principles of Christian oratory.

In accordance with this view, space will now be allotted for the discussion of principles which have a definite bearing upon all branches of the subject, although their most direct application is to sermons as the representative product of homiletics.

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CHAPTER V.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE AS THE THEMES OF SERMONS.

§ 1. The Propriety of their Use.

If the question be asked whether a text of Scripture is essential to a sermon, a negative answer may readily be given. As the word sermon signifies in its broadest sense a religious discourse, so there may be a large variety of religious discourses with or without texts. As Vinet justly says: "A sermon may be Christian, edifying, instructive, without containing even one passage of Holy Scripture. It may be very biblical without a text, and with a text not biblical at all."

Nevertheless, the question of the propriety of taking texts as the themes of sermons may be emphatically answered in the affirmative.

It is first to be observed that the custom is already in existence. It has come down to us from antiquity. It has been regarded useful in the past, and it is sanctioned by general if not universal usage at the present. **Established custom.**

Some persons have urged against the custom that it is liable to sundry abuses; for example, that of transcendentalists and semi-infidels, who take texts only to emasculate or ridicule them; also of some preachers, who only make the text a point of departure. While it is obvious that such practices are abuses, it is not conceded that they are justly chargeable upon the custom itself. **Objections considered.**

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Others urge that a more symmetrical discourse may be written or preached without the trammel of a text. While the last assertion is doubted, it may be confidently remarked that mere symmetry is far from being the proper end of preaching. At the same time it may be conceded that whenever a preacher, having duly considered the object of a given discourse, and finding no suitable text in connection with which he can maintain the rhetorical unity or philosophic accuracy important to his object, he may feel at liberty to employ a discourse without a text, whether it most resembles a sermon, an oration, an essay, or an exhortation. Such cases, however, with evangelical preachers will be rare and exceptional.

ANALOGY OF JEWISH CUSTOM.

It has been customary with some to date the practice of discoursing on passages of the sacred word from the example of Nehemiah, (Neh. viii. 8,) heretofore referred to.* As that example sprang from a peculiar and unusual service, growing out of the return of the nation from captivity, it would be quite as correct to say that the custom in question was derived from a practice of the Jewish synagogues.

It seems impossible now to determine with certainty when synagogues originated. Some authors suppose as early as the days of Solomon; others, with more probability, from the period of the exile. It is certain that before the Saviour's advent they had become widely introduced; the Talmudists say whereever there were ten families.

As the object of these structures was to encourage spiritual worship apart from ceremonial observances, the reading of the law and the prophets appears to

* Chap. ii. § 4.

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have been a part of their service from the beginning. Various allusions in the New Testament confirm this view, but especially the statement of Paul in Acts xv. 21; "For Moses of old time (from the ancient generations) hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." In Acts xiii. 27, he speaks of the prophets in similar language as being "read every Sabbath day."

While preaching in any proper sense was not a part of the synagogue service, yet it was evidently customary for the elders of the Jews, after the reading of the Scriptures had closed, to speak to the people, and doubtless with reference to the sacred text which had been read in their hearing.

ANALOGY OF THE SAVIOUR'S EXAMPLE.

Our Saviour sanctioned this custom by regular attendance upon the synagogue and participation in the reading service. Witness the narrative in Luke iv. 16: "As *his custom was*, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor," etc. He then proceeded to identify the custom of reading a text of Scripture with his own glorious agency of preaching the Gospel. "And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

The fact also that Christ in his Sermon on the Mount, and many other of his discourses, freely quoted the Old Testament Scriptures, and commented upon them, is

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sufficient to sanction both the spirit and the letter of the present custom.

THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES AND FATHERS.

The example of the apostles bears upon the same point. For although we do not find them taking texts in precisely the modern style, yet in all their prominent religious addresses they appear to have introduced passages of Scripture as a basis of instruction, argument, and appeal. The example of Peter, reported Acts ii. 17; of Stephen, Acts vii. 2, 3; and of Paul, Acts xxvi. 22, may be fairly supposed to represent the habit of all the apostles.

There is no more satisfactory way of accounting for the general prevalence of a similar custom in the early Church than by supposing that it descended from the apostles to the fathers, and by them was handed down to the Church in later ages. Certain it is that the custom was thoroughly established at the earliest periods from which the sermons of the fathers have come down to us, and that it has prevailed at all succeeding periods.

THE INHERENT FITNESS OF THE CUSTOM.

The early and general prevalence of the custom, if it be not authoritative, is at least instructive. It shows us that there is an inherent fitness in the practice of using texts as the themes of sermons from which neither time nor circumstances can detract. Indeed, without texts there would have been no sermons. In other words, but for the essential basis of the word of God, Christian oratory would have been something entirely different from what it is.

The general principle that a portion of Scripture should be announced as embracing the subject of a

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sermon does not limit the preacher to a single passage but comprehends within itself the various forms which in practice texts assume, from a few words to a paragraph, or even a chapter. Nor is it necessary to be announced before commencing the sermon. Oftentimes an introduction preliminary to the text will awaken peculiar interest both in the text and the subject.

§ 2. The Object of employing Texts.

1. The first object proposed in the employment of a text is to make a suitable recognition of God's Word as the great theme of all Christian preaching. **Recognition of God's Word.**

When a preacher appears before an audience and announces a portion of Holy Writ as the subject of his discourse, in that very act he proclaims its authority. In exhibiting his own reverence for the sacred canon, he challenges the homage of his hearers for that which is superior to all human wisdom.

By this act he also strengthens his own position since there is a vast difference between coming before an audience in his own name and with a message of his own devising, and coming in God's name with a message from heaven.

2. By means of a Scripture text the preacher secures a valid basis for the instruction of men.

Instead of appearing to promulgate his own theories, or to announce merely the opinions of mortals like himself, he comes as a steward of the manifold mysteries of God. He comes as an ambassador of Christ, proclaiming terms of reconciliation to offending rebels. He comes to the slaves of lust and sin and offers them truth, which will make them free indeed. **The right basis of instruction.**

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It is not necessary that the subject of a sermon be strictly identical with the words of a text. The grand principle is, that the subject be found within the text and be legitimately deducible from it. The text is always greater than the subject; and as the greater contains the less, so the text usually embraces several subjects, whereas the sermon should always be confined to one. An illustration of the multiplicity of subjects or possible themes contained in a single text is given further along.*

3. The use of texts tends to variety in preaching.

The Word of God not only furnishes an unwasting supply of truth, but presents that truth in the most interesting and diversified forms. It may indeed be doubted whether any truth necessary to man's instruction in righteousness and the way of salvation has not some form of statement in the Holy Scriptures.

Texts tend to variety.

Although rarely given in abstract declarations, it may be found in narratives, historic statements, and even in those nice shades of character which the pen of inspiration has delineated with such inimitable grace.

To be impressed with the infinite variety which the Scriptures contain and suggest, one has only to reflect that, while for ages they have supplied the richest themes for human thought and instruction, they are now, like a living fountain or a boundless ocean, as exhaustless as ever. Who, then, would not resort for subjects of pulpit address to this well-spring of living waters rather than to that shallow source, his own ingenuity?

4. Texts aid the memory, and stimulate the future thoughtfulness of the hearer.

* Chap. vi. p. 148; chap. vii. p. 169.

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If according to a rhetorical maxim the discourse be the topic expanded, in like manner the topic is the discourse condensed. When, therefore, that topic is text of Scripture it serves as a rallying point to memory, a round which the instructions of the sermon will cluster. Thus the leading texts of Scripture become the foci of recollection, to which the teachings of scores of sermons converge, and from which they will radiate in application to practical life. Aid memory.

The above and many other considerations admonish the minister of the Lord Jesus to preach the *word* rather than topics of his own devising, and also never to introduce into his preaching anything out of harmony with the sacred text.

ABUSES OF TEXTS.

While the proper object of using texts of Scripture in preaching is invested with an importance so intrinsic, there are flippant modes of complying with the custom that deserve reprobation. One is that of making the text a point of departure, from which the preacher seeks to disembarrass himself as soon as possible; and another is that of prefacing the text as a mere motto to an essay, or a harangue independently prepared.

Such trifling with texts cannot be too severely censured. Nevertheless, there is a style of treatment in which a text, taken as a motto, may be most forcibly employed for instruction, illustration, and encouragement; in which, indeed, both the letter and spirit of the sacred motto may be so inwrought as to pervade and hallow the whole discourse.

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§ 3. Texts should be chosen with Care and Solicitude.

The choice of a text being the initial step in the construction and delivery of a sermon, it is an act which should be performed with deliberate thoughtfulness, and a devout anxiety for the divine guidance. Nothing is more appropriate at this earlier stage of effort than to seek direction from on high in devout and special prayer.

Carelessness rebuked.

A moment's reflection upon the eternal consequences that may issue from the preaching of a single sermon in the name of the great Author and Finisher of faith, should be sufficient to effectually rebuke the hap-hazard carelessness and the reckless self-conceit with which texts are sometimes taken and treated, and to impress every true minister of the Gospel with the duty of choosing his texts in such a frame of mind as may harmonize with the divine guidance as often as he may perform that important task.

It is not presumptuous to suppose that prayers for divine influence in a matter so accordant with the will of God may receive direct answers, either by a special quickening of the mind, a holy impulse upon the soul, or a sacred control of the judgment. Nevertheless, no one would be justified in relying on divine aid without making diligent use of the powers that God has given him for self-help. Hence the remark which follows.

§ 4. Judicious Habits of Selection should be Cultivated.

The practical question now arises, In what way may a minister, with the least loss of time, and with the

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greatest prospect of success, make his selection of texts for sermons?

There are cases in which well-intentioned men have fallen into habits of an opposite character, that have entailed upon them great indecision of mind, followed by loss of time and agonizing suspense; in short, causing them to consider the selection of a text more difficult than the preparation of a sermon. To guard against such habits, and the embarrassments most likely to arise in emergencies, it is necessary to make systematic preparation in advance.

Results of bad habits.

In answer, therefore, to the question above stated, the first thing to be commended is the special and habitual consultation of the Scriptures as the source of pulpit themes.

1. A minister's critical and devotional reading of the Bible, next to the spiritual profit of his own soul, should constantly contemplate the collection of themes for public discourse. Whatever interest, instruction, or profit we personally derive from the perusal or study of any portion of Scripture, may in all probability be made a means of instruction and profit to others.

2. In addition to being on the alert to find manna for the flock while seeking his own spiritual nourishment, a minister should search the Scriptures specially and frequently for the express object of finding passages that he may use as texts in preaching. Here is a department of Scripture study peculiar to the minister of the Gospel—the Bible as a book of themes for the preacher. By studying it as such, he will often make new and valuable discoveries in the very paths he has trod before as a student or a devotional reader, without having perceived the ores and gems which glittered at his feet.

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3. As a prudential and labor-saving process, he should classify and record from time to time the texts upon which his mind fixes as adapted to pulpit ministrations. Such a record, made by each preacher for himself, and as the fruit of his own study, may become to him invaluable as a source of reference in the future.*

Classification.

Some individuals prefer to avoid this labor, and to rely on the convenient compilations of others for assistance of this kind. It is not denied that an analytical concordance, and several printed classifications of Scripture, are often both convenient and useful to the preacher ; † but they are generally too vague and cumbrous for the special object now proposed. They are better adapted to aid in collecting proof-texts and in furnishing synoptical views of concurrent Scriptures ; whereas special benefit accrues to the preacher from the act of making his own selection and classification.

As a counterpart of the foregoing suggestions, it may be added that subjects sometimes occur to the mind in advance of texts. Frequently, indeed, special circumstances or providences dictate subjects to the preacher, and place him under the necessity of finding Scriptures which express the mind of the Spirit with reference to those subjects.

Thus death or sudden calamity, becoming a necessary topic of discourse, may suggest to one's mind

* "How do you obtain your texts?" said a friend to the seraphic Thomas Spencer, of Liverpool. He replied, "I keep a little book, in which I enter every text of Scripture which comes into my mind with power and sweetness. Were I to dream of a passage of Scripture I should enter it, and when I sit down to compose, I look over the book and have never found myself at a loss for a subject."

† Of these, Gaston's Collections, Locke's Commonplace-Book of Scripture, the Analytical Concordance, and the Law and the Testimony may be mentioned as excellent.

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texts which we would not have selected in advance. or may put us on a special search which seldom fails to be rewarded.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

Another practical question here arises: On what principles are we to choose a particular text or subject from the numerous possible ones that might be treated at a given time?

It may be answered negatively, 1. That we should not choose this or that subject merely because we happen to have a sermon written or prepared upon it. 2. Nor merely because it would seem easier to treat this or that text. Indeed, these circumstances may become strong reasons why we should take other subjects and different texts, and exercise ourselves to new and special preparations. No preacher should confine himself to a narrow range of familiar subjects, or allow himself to fall into particular ruts of thought outside of which he cannot move or act with freedom. Nor should any one be content to consult his own ease at the expense of that variety which is equally essential to impart vivacity to his own mental action and interest to the minds of his hearers.

On the other hand, 1. We may choose a particnlar subject because, from our best knowledge and judgment, it seems to be specially adapted to the circumstances and wants of our hearers. It is not improper to suppose that there may be, each particular Sabbath of the year, some subject or subjects which in the order of Providence are more particularly applicable to a given congregation than they ever will be at any other time. **Adaptation.**

To be able to determine with correctness what these special subjects are is the great desideratum, and should

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be the constant anxiety of the preacher. A faithful compliance with the following precepts will greatly conduce to the attainment of an ability so much to be desired.

Means of ascertaining adaptation.

By diligent pastoral intercourse, study the spiritual condition and necessities of your people.

By careful attention to the various events in which they are or ought to be interested, such as danger from a prevailing epidemic, or a religious awakening in its various stages, learn to discriminate closely, and fit the right topic to the right time.

By a careful study of your own heart learn what are the evils and the longings of the hearts around you, and wisely to apply the provisions of the Gospel.*

If in none of these ways a special subject is suggested,

2. We may have recourse to those general and standard topics of Christianity which can never be out of place, and in which all congregations need to be thoroughly instructed.

Standard topics.

In preaching to strange congregations we must almost of necessity be governed by this rule. And in our several congregations we should feel obligated to treat these subjects in due proportion, and systematically if possible, both for their good and in compliance with our duty, to declare the whole counsel of God.

With such resources at hand, and the whole Word of

* Said Robert Cecil: "a young minister must learn to separate and select his materials, A man who talks to himself will find out what suits the heart of man: some things respond; they ring again. Nothing of this sort is lost on mankind; it is worth its weight in gold for the service of the minister. He must remark, too, what it is that puzzles and distracts the mind: all this is to be avoided. It may wear the garb of deep research, great acumen, and extensive learning; but it is nothing to the mass of mankind."

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God open before him, it is difficult to imagine how any active and furnished mind can ever feel the lack of important themes adapted to any occasion. Equally difficult is it to understand how some preachers can content themselves to be laying over and over again the same foundations of familiar truth, as though none had ever built upon them, or need now to be carried up the progressive heights of Christian knowledge and experience.

3. With all else a preacher should have constant reference to the variety of subjects and matter needed by his hearers, not only from year to year and from month to month, but also from Sabbath to Sabbath, and even in successive services of the same Sabbath. **Variety.**

This principle shows that the old habit of preaching twice on the same text the same day, "concluding the subject in the afternoon" or evening, was highly objectionable. It is admissible now only in very rare circumstances. Equally objectionable is the practice of an undue subdivision of themes in serial discourses, like that of preaching ten or fifteen sermons consecutively on the Lord's prayer.

§ 5. Rules applicable to the Selection of Texts.

Certain general rules relating to this subject have long been current, and have not only received the sanction of the best writers on homiletics, but the approbation of all preachers of good judgment. Their substance may be briefly stated, as follows:

1. In all cases choose texts which make a complete sense.

2. Choose a text which embraces legitimately and, if possible, obviously the subject of the sermon.

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3. As to language, select those which are perspicuous, pertinent, full and yet simple.

4. Select those which are of medium length: neither too long, and consequently embracing too many subjects, nor abruptly short.

Corresponding to these rules preachers should avoid selecting texts which are odd, for the double reason that such a proceeding is beneath the dignity of a serious minister, and that the idea of quaintness is unfavourable to purity and depth of religious impression.

Avoid also, especially as young preachers, selecting texts which are very difficult, lest you should embarrass without profiting both yourself and your hearers.

By all means avoid using texts which are of doubtful occupation to the subject in hand, lest both your judgment and your religious integrity should be impeached by such a course.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that a preacher's character is in no small degree indicated by the class or classes of texts which he habitually selects. This principle is strikingly illustrated in a passage from Dr. Raffles's Memoir of Spencer:

> The passages of Scripture selected by Mr. Spencer as the subjects of his earliest discourses afford another demonstration, in addition to many others, of the general bias of his mind. They are such as one may well imagine a preacher panting for the salvation of his fellow-men would select for the commencement of his public labors.
>
> The topics which they suggest are of all others the most solemn, as they are the most simple and the most important in the whole range of inspired truth, and hence they were best adapted to the preacher's age and the unlettered character of his auditors.

Such texts are as available now as in the days of Spencer; and if the reader finds himself inclined to pass them by in his search for those that are merely curious

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and entertaining, or those on which he can make a display of his ingenuity or his learning, let him be admonished to a better course.

"Preach on great subjects," is the urgent advice of that excellent writer, Dr. J. W. Alexander. He says:

A man should begin early to grapple with great subjects. An athlete (2 Tim. ii. 5) gains might only by great exertions. So that a man does not overstrain his powers, the more he wrestles the better; but he *must* wrestle, and not merely take a great subject and dream over it or play with it. No two men will treat the same subject alike unless they borrow from one another.

The great themes are many. They are such as move the feelings; the great questions which have agitated the world—which agitate our own bosoms—which we should like to have settled before we die—which we should ask an apostle about 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 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, such as the deluge, the sacrifice intended for Isaac, the death of Absolom, and the parable of Lazarus. The Methodists constantly pick out these striking themes, and herein they gain a just advantage.

Let such advices be taken in due connection with those other principles which should govern the preacher's plans of labor and they cannot fail to be profitable.

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CHAPTER VI.

AGENCIES OF PULPIT PREPARATION.

§ 1. General Views of the Subject.

From ancient times systematic writers on rhetoric have divided the agencies of oratorical production into invention, disposition and elocution, meaning by the latter term what we now understand by style. In homiletics there is no sufficient reason for departing from this mode of division, any further than the peculiar nature of the subject requires.

The chief difference of this character arises at the threshold. The preacher is not at liberty to *invent*, or to say what he may please on themes furnished him by revelation. Here it is that God speaks, and man is simply an interpreter. This fact also modifies the task of invention, by making its principal work the illustration of what revelation teaches.

In a certain broad sense, that of "finding what is proper to be said," invention is sometimes not incorrectly represented to cover the whole process of oratorical preparation. In this sense invention finds the theme of discourse, and both the matter and the language of its treatment. Some writers go so far as even to include disposition under invention as a generic term.

To avoid a vagueness so unphilosophical, and at the same time to adopt an analysis of definite significance and practical utility, it is better to consider the whole subject of pulpit preparation, not including religious ex-

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perience, as divisible into two great branches: first, that relating to THOUGHT; second, that relating to LANGUAGE.

I. The mental preparation for preaching requires,
1. Interpretation. 2. Invention. 3. Disposition.

II. The lingual preparation for preaching requires,
1. The selection of the particular words in which to express the thoughts designed to be conveyed; or,
2. The acquisition of a capacity to clothe thoughts with fitting language at the moment when expression is desired.

Elocution, in the modern sense of the public delivery of discourse, is clearly distinct from preparation either of thought or of language. **Important distinction.** It is the executive act which attempts to secure the result of preparation. A sermon may be mentally prepared, but not composed in language. It may even be composed in language and yet not delivered. Thus far all is preparation. The idea of preaching is only realized in the delivery. Preaching is radically defective which lacks good matter for delivery, and poor delivery may render ineffective the best of matter.

Thus it may be seen that the act of preaching is highly complex, requiring thorough preparation in various forms.

The present chapter relates specifically to mental preparation.

Supposing the text to be selected as the general theme of a sermon, the next step on the part of the preacher is to gather materials for the construction of the discourse. As every sermon demands a theme, so every theme requires an elucidation. In the sense that the oak is latent in the acorn, the sermon may be considered latent in the text. The oak is not developed without the influence of external agencies, such as earth,

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moisture, warmth, and air; so a sermon is not produced without the application of suitable developing agencies to the text or theme.

The first and most important of these agencies is interpretation, by which we ascertain the meaning of the text, the "mind of the Spirit." The second is invention, by which the meaning of the text is elucidated both as to its internal and its external relations. The third is disposition, by which the materials gathered by interpretation and invention are arranged for the most effective presentation to the minds of others.

These several processes should precede verbal composition, except so far as words may be the necessary vehicles or retainers of thought. Some ideas, those of number, for example, are only held in the mind in a verbal form. Most other ideas are grasped and retained in that mentally visible form denominated conception. Ideas or facts are conceived, but not in definite association with words. Mental conceptions indeed may be latent, that is, unconsciously held in the mind until called forth by some association or effort which arrays them visibly before the mind's eye.

Ideas not always dependent on words.

The task of clothing such conceptions in words or forms of expression is subsequent and distinct. It may be differently performed at different times. The preacher should seek to perform it at the most favourable time for the unity and effectiveness of his discourse. This rarely if ever can be till the whole plan of the discourse is thoroughly digested. To employ another figure, when the matter is thoroughly fused in the mind it may be cast by a single turn in to the mould, and thus produce a form of uniform quality and just proportions. Whereas to cast a statue little by little, or in separate pieces

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requiring to be subsequently joined together, is to hazard the strength and endanger the proportions of the whole.

It is not only easier but far better to compose ideas first and words subsequently as the portraiture of the ideas. Hence it is a gross error to commence the composition of a sermon by merely adding words to words. Verbal associations are often fascinating, and their tendency is to lead the mind astray from the luminous track of thought, or to bewilder it with pleasing but incoherent fancies. Word-composition is important in its place, but that place is always in sequence of thought-composition.

Fuseli, in reference to painting, has said, "He alone can conceive and compose who sees the whole at once before him." So in sermonizing, no man can compose with the highest degree of vividness and power until his mind grasps the idea of his composition in its entirety. To form that idea materials are first wanted. The construction or arrangement of a plan ensues. Then follows the appopriate time for word-composition, which, like the last touches of the painter's pencil, finishes up the picture.

Let it not be objected that this is a mechanical process, or supposed that it is necessarily long and tedious. By suitable discipline and practice the interval between the several processes may be imperceptible; that is, the preacher may be enabled to see so clearly at a glance the whole outline of his subject as to be ready to commence word-composition at once. A rapid process.

But it is not usually so, certainly with beginners. Indeed, the cases are rare among the most practiced sermon-writers where advantages may not be gained, and the power of a discourse greatly increased, by

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thorough mental elaboration of the materials and the plan in advance of verbal composition. Hence it is safe to recommend careful attention to the usual elementary steps, which, however laboriously performed at first, will when familiar to habit be passed over with ease and celerity.

§ 2. Interpretation.

That interpretation is of primary and indispensable importance to every preacher of the word is obvious from the nature of the case.

1. His business is to proclaim the truth of God, and interpretation makes that truth known to him. He is not at liberty to substitute for God's teachings human science or the products of his own imagination. In respect to the matter of his preaching, he has simply to inquire what is the mind of the Spirit, what the will and teaching of the Lord is.

2. An opposite course would be inconsistent with suitable respect for the authority of God's Word. Practically it would not only throw contempt upon the sacred volume, but also close up the only avenue of true light upon all religious subjects.

A habit of reliance upon personal talent or human skill to supply the material of preaching rather than a devout study of the "living oracles" may in some instances tend to magnify one's self, but will uniformly tend to dishonor God and to darken his counsel with words.

The proper office of interpretation being recognized by the preacher, it becomes necessary for him to practise the rules which hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, has established. Here let it be distinctly stated that no preacher of the Gospel

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should content himself with limited and fragmentary studies of the Word of God. It is certainly his duty to make a special study of particular texts; but in order to do that with the greatest profit, he should have previously studied the Scriptures and the various books of Scripture connectedly. Especially should he have made himself familiar with the original tongues of the Bible, that he may not be wholly dependent on translators and commentators for the sense of a text. On the other hand, by habitually reading the sacred text in the original, he should have become prepared to transfuse into his preaching the idiom and spirit of the sacred writers.

Importance of biblical study.

No class of studies is more tributary to sacred eloquence than this; and if secular orators make it their habit to read over and over again in the original the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, in order to derive polish and inspiration from classic models, how much more important is it that preachers should familiarize themselves with both the letter and the spirit of the inspired writers. Even if the perfection of their style were a principle object this would be important, and it is vastly more so when the knowledge of the truth is involved.

RULES.

The following rules of interpretation, condensed from Angus's "Introduction to the Study of the Sacred Scriptures," will serve as an index to the preacher's course of duty at this point. They are equally applicable to the study of the original and of translations.

1. Ascertain the sense of the *words* of the text in their general or common usage, noting their idioms and peculiarities of application.

2. Ascertain the particular meaning of the words in

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the given text. For example, 1. Whether used literally or figuratively; 2. Their signification as limited by their connection.

3. Study the context, in which there may sometimes be found, 1. Definitions; 2. Limitations; 3. Explanatory examples; 4. Parallelisms; 5. Allusions; 6. Interpretation of figures.

4. Study the scope of the passage, the writer, the book, etc. This enables us to understand the design of the inspired author, and the general and special relations of the text.

5. Compare Scripture with Scripture to ascertain the analogy of faith, or the whole teaching, of the Word of God on the subject.

PRACTICAL ADVICES.

To these general rules for the investigation of a text preparatory to preaching, the following advices may be added.

Concordance and references.

Use concordances freely, not only the English, but also the Greek and Hebrew. It is only in this way that the spirit of rules 1, 2, and 5 can be complied with. The comparison of texts by aid of the common reference Bibles, although useful, is usually insufficient. Much more extended references, though not always pertinent, may be secured by means of Bagster's Scripture Treasury, which, taking up each chapter and verse of the Bible in order, illustrates words and phrases by references and parallel passages as fully as possible. But the references even in that work are usually based on the resemblances of the English translation, whereas the corresponding or contrasted uses of the original terms are often still more full of instruction.

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Copy and collate passages of Scripture for yourself. A great advantage is often gained by spreading out before one's eye, as in panoramic view, the whole teaching of God's word on a given subject. The object of the preacher at this stage of his preparation is to gain ideas, not only of the inherent, but also of the related meaning of his text. To this end the labor of special collation is highly tributary. Moody's "New Testament Illustrated by Scripture" is designed to lessen this species of labor, and is a useful help to the preacher; but it is insufficient, not only for the reason of its not illustrating any portion of the Old Testament, but because no help is so advantageous as to render unnecessary personal examinations and comparisons with a view to particular objects.

Collation.

In the whole process of interpretation be mindful of your dependence on God for light, and prayerful for the aid of the Holy Spirit.

When by these and any other appropriate means a preacher has ascertained the full meaning and the various bearings of his text, he is just prepared to enter upon an active use of his own powers of invention.

§ 3. Invention.

Before discussing the subject of invention, it is desirable to fix as definitely as possible the meaning of the term. Few terms have been more loosely employed by writers on rhetoric and homiletics. Some speak of invention as an art; others, as intimated above, treat it as a form or result of mental action covering the entire ground of oratorial preparation; while a third class speak of it as an "active spring," or "energy of the mind." The first signification is that of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians, and

The term.

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partakes of the vagueness which at their period obscured all philosophy: the second involves an equal degree of vagueness from too wide an application; while the third, which is in itself correct, has hitherto lacked that specific treatment which gives the inventive faculty its just classification among the recognized powers of the intellect.

Divergent views.

An apology for this neglect may be found in the hitherto unsettled state of mental science, and the conflicting forms of classification still prevalent among authors on that subject. Indeed, the nature of the subject seems to leave room for a perpetual divergence of views respecting the number and the exact character of the mental powers.

Sir William Hamilton says: "Mental powers are not like bodily organs. It is the same simple substance which exerts every energy and every faculty, however various, and which is affected in every mode, of every capacity, however opposite." Addison before him had said: "Although we divide the soul into several powers and faculties, there is no such division in the soul itself, since it is the *whole soul* that remembers, understands, wills, or imagines. Our manner of considering the memory, understanding, will, imagination, and the like faculties, is for the better enabling us to express ourselves in such abstracted subjects of speculation, not that there is any such division in the soul itself." In another part of the same paper Addison makes use of an expression which has been practically adopted as a definition by the best authors on mental philosophy. He says: "What we call the faculties of the soul are only the different ways or modes in which the soul can exert herself." Haven says: "A faculty of the mind is the mind's power of acting. The mind has as many distinct faculties as it has distinct powers of action, dis-

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tinct functions, distinct modes, and spheres of activity." Hamilton again says: "All mental powers are nothing more than names determined by various orders of mental phenomena."

Yet every author of a system of mental philosophy has deemed it important to classify and distinguish the leading faculties of the mind. The system of Hamilton is perhaps the most comprehensive, as it is the latest that has challenged the attention of the learned. It will serve as a convenient basis for the illustration of the present topic.

Having adopted the Kantian division of the mental faculties into those of knowledge, feeling, and conation, (will and desire,) Hamilton thus tabulates

THE SPECIAL FACULTIES OF KNOWLEDGE.

Cognitive Faculties.	I. Presentative	External	= Perception.
		Internal	= Self-consciousness.
	II. Conservative	= Memory.	
	III. Reproductive	Without will	= Suggestion.
		With will	= Reminiscence.
	IV. Representative	= Imagination.	
	V. Elaborative	= Comparison, Faculty of Relations.	
	VI. Regulative	= Reason	= Common sense.

RHETORICAL INVENTION.

No mention is here made of invention or of an inventive faculty, and yet for ages invention has been recognised as a mode of mental action, a sphere of mental activity. Let us now see in what manner invention is comprehended in the above scheme, or explainable in conformity with it.

Invention, in the rhetorical sense, is that energy of the mind by which we discern ideas and their relations. Vinet likens it to a divining rod, which enables some minds to discover riches of thought and beauties of language to which other minds are insensible. John

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Quincy Adams says: "It selects from the whole mass of ideas conceived or stored in the mind those which can most effectually promote the object of discourse, it gathers from the whole domain of real or apparent truth their inexhaustible subsidies to secure the triumph of persuasion." Thus it is seen to be not only an originating, but a constructive faculty. It not only seeks out that which was before unknown; it also seizes upon old truths, and blends them together in new combinations. It finds new pathways through old regions of thought. It never contents itself with what others have done, but insists upon fashioning what is new to itself—whatever uses other minds have made of the same material.

A constructive faculty.

In the accomplishment of such an office, rhetorical invention involves more or less directly the exercise of all the six faculties enumerated by Hamilton.

Perception, memory, suggestion, and imagination are the active agencies by which facts and truth are brought into mental control; while comparison and reason, or judgment, are the means of adapting them to the uses of the orator. Supposing that the acquisition of knowledge has been in a large degree attained by the timely and persevering employment of the presentative power, and that memory preserves for ready use all previously-acquired knowledge, the more usual sphere of invention is found in the *re*production, *re*presentation, and elaboration of ideas in new and pertinent forms. This work is most successfully accomplished under control of the reasoning or regulative faculty.

"Things new and old" were our Saviour's prescription of material for "the scribe well-instructed unto the kingdom of heaven;" and things new and old must ever be sought for by teachers of the Christian religion as the materials of their discourse. Which, now, of the cogni-

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tive faculties conduces most to the gathering of new materials for the preacher? Clearly the imagination; for while study enables us to perceive the truth elaborated by others, memory to conserve it, and comparison and reflection to weigh it and determine its fitness, it is only imagination which penetrates the region of the new. Imagination.

Imagination, therefore, must be regarded as the pioneer and leader of invention, without which the latter can only traverse familiar spheres, and those with a halting step. This fact has been too much overlooked by writers on rhetoric and homiletics, who have generally been content to surrender the imagination to artists and poets, as though it was not needed for oratorical invention. The truth is that neither artist nor poet needs so ready a use nor so perfect a control of the imagination as the public speaker. The former may polish and refine their conceptions in the privacy of the study; the latter will often attain, and must wisely manage the loftiest flights of the imagination in the midst of his addresses and in the very presence of the multitude. Essential to the preacher.

In this view the imagination should be called on to perform its appropriate office in the task of preparation as, indeed, one of the most powerful auxiliaries of invention. Hence some special attention will now be given to the nature of the imagination, and the mode of subordinating its functions to the aid of the preacher of the Gospel. Here, however, as elsewhere within the precincts of mental science, we shall scarcely find two authors exactly agreeing in the use of terms. Some make the imagination and the fancy two distinct faculties; others, including Hamilton, make them equivalents.

Wordsworth the poet, and Ruskin the artist, regard fancy and the imagination as distinct exercises of the

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imaginative faculty, the former being its playful and superficial action, the latter embracing both its higher and profounder movements. According to this view, which is here adopted, the orator leaves the lower walks of the imagination, those of the fancy, to poets and essayists; while, true to his calling, he never ceases to traverse its higher domain or plunge into its profounder depths.

The poet is equally at home in both, as is illustrated by Wordsworth's classification of his earlier productions into poems of the fancy and of the imagination.

Ruskin beautifully says:

> **Fancy.** Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but imagination is a pilgrim on earth, and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains, bar her from breathing their lofty sun-warmed air, and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the tower of famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.

Again he describes fancy as merely decorative and entertaining, whereas "the life of imagination is in the discovering of truth."

There is a freshness and power in Mr. Ruskin's treatment of the IMAGINATIVE FACULTY* that cannot fail to prove highly entertaining and instructive to all who desire to apprehend and master the oratorical process of invention.

His object in writing was to aid painters in the task of artistic composition. Let the student judge how far his hints may be useful to those engaged in the composition of sermons. The following is a brief but systematic abstract of the views he presents in the essay referred to.

Mr. Ruskin treats the imagination as acting in three

* Modern Painters, vol. ii.

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distinct forms, which he respectively designates as "imagination penetrative, imagination associative, and imagination contemplative." The first penetrates, analyses, and reaches truth, discoverable by no other faculty. The second combines truths already discovered, and by combination creates new forms. The third regards and examines both simple images and its own combinations with a view to completeness and adaptation.

The first, or imagination penetrative, in seizing its materials plunges "into the very heart of things."

IT SEIZES BY THE INNERMOST.

Nothing else will content its spirituality; whatever semblances and various outward shows, and phases its subject may possess go for nothing; it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks the very vital sap of that it deals with. Once there, it is at liberty to throw up what new shoots it will, so always that the true juice and sap be in them, and to prune and twist them at its pleasure, and bring them to fairer fruit than grew on the old tree; but all this pruning and twisting is work that it likes not, and often does ill; its function and gift are the getting at the root; its nature and dignity depend on its holding things alway by the heart. Take its hand from off the beating of that and it will prophesy no longer. It looks not in the eyes, it judges not by the voice, it describes not by outward features; all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms from within.

IT ACTS INTUITIVELY.

It may seem to the reader that I am incorrect in calling this penetrating, possession-taking faculty imagination. Be it so; the name is of little consequence; the faculty itself, called by what name we will, I insist upon as the highest intellectual power of man. There is no reasoning in it; it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus; it is a piercing, Pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into the very rock-heart; *no matter what be the subject* submitted to it, substance or spirit, all is alike divided asunder, joint, and marrow; whatever utmost

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truth, life, principle it has is laid bare, and that which has no truth, life, nor principle is dissipated into its original smoke at a touch. The whispers at men's ears it lifts into visible angels. Vials that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years it unseals and brings out of them genii. Every great conception of poet or painter (or orator) is held and treated by this faculty.

SIGNS OF IT IN LANGUAGE.

There is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful undercurrent of meaning and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come.

PROOFS OF ITS ABSENCE.

The imaginative writer, on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it. If he has to paint a passion he remembers the external signs of it; he collects expressions of it from other writers; he searches for similies; he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold disjointed heap; but it is all faggot and no fire; the breath of life is not in it. His passion has the form of Leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil; he fastens us all at anchor in the scally rind of it; our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

RELATIONS TO ORIGINALITY.

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after is not newness, as they vainly think, (there is nothing new;) it is only genuineness. It all depends upon this glorious faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that. It is the coolness and clearness and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick hot unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

ILLUSTRATIVE DISTINCTION.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.*

* Compare Aristotle's Rhetoric, iii. 11.

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The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted in its giving of outer detail.

Second. While the penetrative functions of the imagination are thus shown to be intuitive, its associative functions are in a certain sense mechanical. But they form "the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses." **Imagination associative.**

A powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant all the important ideas of its poem or picture, (or sermon) and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other.

The matter in which associative imagination can be shown is that which admits of great license and variety of arrangements, and in which a certain amount of relation alone is required.

The associative imagination exhibits its power in grouping resemblances, and in calling forth from the regions of the known whatever may illustrate the unknown.

Third. It is the office of the contemplative imagination to regard deliberately the conceptions which have been formed by intuition or combination, to select such of them, or such features of them, as it may choose for particular purposes, and to forge the selected qualities together in such groups and forms as it may desire. In this mode of action it shapes and creates by innumerable processes. It consolidates numbers into unity, and dissolves and separates unity into numbers; it shapes means to ends, and images of thought to the accomplishment of objects designed. It discovers and repairs defects, and finally contemplates and treats as realities its own creations. **Contemplative.**

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Although most writers have regarded the imagination as limited in its functions to the sphere of the ornamental, yet Ruskin is not alone in treating it as the great mental agency for the discovery of truth. Sir William Hamilton says:

If we were obliged to find a common word for every elementary process of our (mental) analysis, *Imagination* would be the term which, with the least violence to its meaning, could be accommodated to express the representative faculty. By the imagination thus limited you are not to suppose that the faculty of representing mere objects of sense alone is meant. On the contrary, a vigorous power of representation is as *Indispensable a condition of success in the abstract sciences* as in the poetical and plastic arts. It may accordingly be doubted whether Aristotle or Homer were possessed of the more powerful imagination.

He proceeds to quote as part of his text the following from Ancillon, a French philosophical writer:

Different kinds of imagination.

We may indeed affirm that there are as many different kinds of imagination as there are different kinds of intellectual activity. There is the imagination of abstraction, which represents to us certain phases of an object to the exclusion of others, and at the same time the sign by which the phases are united; the imagination of wit, which represents differences and contrasts, and the semblance by which these are again combined; the imagination of judgment, which represents the various qualities of an object, and binds them together under the relations of substance, of attribute, of mode; the imagination of reason, which represents a principle in connection with its consequences, the effect in dependence on its cause; the imagination of feeling, which represents the accessory images, kindred to some particular, and which therefore confer on it greater compass, depth, and intensity; the imagination of volition, which represents all the circumstances which concur to persuade or dissuade from a certain act of will; the imagination of the passions, which according to the nature of the affection, represents all that is homogeneous or analogous; finally, the imagination of the poet, which represents whatever is

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new, or beautiful, or sublime; whatever, in a word, it is determined to represent by any interest of art.

A peculiar kind of imagination, determined by a peculiar order of association, is usually found in every period of life, in every sex, in every country, in every religion. A knowledge of men principally consists in the knowledge of the principles by which their thoughts are linked and represented. The study of this is of importance to the instructor, in order to direct the character and intellect of his pupils; to the statesman, that he may exert his influence on the public opinion and manners of a people; to the poet, that he may give truth and reality to his dramatic representations; and to the orator, in order to convince and persuade.

In his further treatment of the subject Hamilton says:

Considering the representative faculty in subordination to its two determinants, the faculty of reproduction and the faculty of comparison or elaboration, we may distinguish three principal orders in which imagination represents ideas: 1. The natural order. 2. The logical order. 3. The poetical order. The natural order is that in which we receive the impression of external objects, or the order according to which our thoughts spontaneously group themselves. The logical order consists in presenting what is universal prior to what is contained under it as particular, or in presenting particulars first and then ascending to the universal, which they constitute. The former is the order of deduction, the latter that of induction. The poetical order consists in seizing individual circumstances and in grouping them in such a manner that the imagination shall represent them so as they might be offered by the sense. The natural order is involuntary; the logical is the child of art, it is the result of our will, conformed to the laws of intelligence; the poetical order is exclusively calculated on effect.

Three orders.

Making due allowance for the difference of phraseology between the artist and the philosopher, it will be seen that their ideas of the imaginative power are substantially alike. The imagination penetrative seizes

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facts and thoughts in their natural order, the imagination associative arranges them in logical order, while the imagination contemplative or elaborative adapts them to poetical or oratorical use.

These various processes are all included in the rhetorical idea of invention, and just descriptions of them are well calculated to indicate to students of oratory the line of development and cultivation they ought to pursue.

Like other talents, the inventive power is possessed in different degrees by different persons, and is susceptible both of direction and of improvement. A high degree of inventiveness in any department of art or science is denominated genius; but if, according to Buffon, "genius is labour," those who naturally possess it in but a moderate degree need not despair of securing its ample development by means of suitable effort.

Rhetorical invention is limited to the real, at least to the possible; but in both there is literally endless scope for its employment. Upon its active and judicious exercise depends, in a greater degree than is usually supposed, the interest and usefulness of preaching. The power of the human mind in this respect was doubtless contemplated in the original appointment of preaching as the great agency for the diffusion of the Gospel. It was never designed that triteness or iteration should render the proclamation of divine truth prosy and powerless. On the other hand, it was designed, and it is ever reasonably demanded, that with the varying temperaments and capacities of men, the changing circumstances of society, and the inexhaustible resources of knowledge and truth, preaching should be so varied as ever to be interesting to those who hear it and hear it constantly.

Limited to the possible.

Invention is essential to this result, and without it

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no degree of learning and no amount of talent can make a preacher interesting. Invention, indeed, must kindle the glow of interest in one's own mind, or he will be utterly incapable of interesting others. Hence any style of pulpit preparation deserving to be recommended should contemplate not only the present, but the continued employment of the inventive powers. It often happens that successive examinations of the same subject, with intervening intervals for the growth of the mind and its increase in knowledge, will widen the breadth of view which one may take of any given subject, and thus more than compensate for the disadvantage of familiarity with the subject and its treatment.

It is on this plan, and on this plan only, that a preacher can hope to be increasingly interesting and useful as he advances in life. In his earlier sermons the interest of novelty may stimulate his thoughts and give freshness to his utterances. But whoever contents himself with first thoughts and original preparations foregoes the finest opportunity of mental progress, and dooms himself to be the organ of stale repetitions, which having lost their power over his own mind, can only be presented to others with tameness, or at best with affected vivacity.

Let it then be adopted as a fundamental principle of pulpit preparation, that within the limits prescribed by the Word of God the inventive powers of the mind must be fully developed, and constantly exercised in the investigation and communication of truth.

Constant exercise.

There are several important tasks to which in the preparation of religious discourse the invention must be earnestly addressed.

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GENERALIZATION

In homiletics, generalization may be defined as the act of deducing special themes from general subjects or texts. It has two forms of application analogous to induction and deduction in logic. In the first there is the summing up of particulars in such a form of statement as will embrace them all. In the second there is the withdrawing or extraction of some particular idea from a general subject in a form adapted to become the germ of discourse.

Every subject admits of treatment from different aspects, and every text of Scripture contains two or more subjects from which in preaching a specific theme may be chosen. Even in the briefest logical propositions there is room for selection between the subject and the predicate, and sometimes even the copula, as to the prominence to be given to one or the other.

For an illustration take the text 1 John iv. 16: "God is love."

This most simple and logical proposition may be generalized in different forms, so that very different discourses as to plan and matter would be preached from the particular theme which might be chosen.

If the mind of the preacher were most deeply impressed with the proposition as a whole, he would generalize it in its broadest form, and probably choose as his specific theme, *The love of God.*

If the subject of the proposition were fixed upon as indicating the leading thought to be developed, God is love, the specific theme might be stated in this form: *By eminence above all other beings God is love.*

If the copula were regarded as peculiarly significant, God is love, this theme might be adopted: *God's existence inseparable from love.*

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Again if the predicate were to be chosen as the special topic of thought, God is LOVE, the text might be generalized as follows: *Love the glory of the divine character.*

Texts embodying compound propositions necessarily admit of still more varied generalizations, and it is the task of invention to present them all before the mind as a means of choosing the best. This is the primary work of invention, from which it may proceed in the accumulation of material by other steps.

ANALYSIS.

When a subject is specifically before the mind, inventive reflection should penetrate its essence and discover its component parts. These parts should be laid out one by one, and examined both in their relations and in their details. This process is denominated analysis, and is peculiarly fruitful of suggestions to an inventive mind.

HYPOTHESIS.

Invention is often greatly stimulated by conjecture. When by analysis we have discovered what is within a subject, hypothesis will often lead us forth on the track of its relations to the universe without. Hypothesis is one of the most common elements of mathematical demonstration. To it in science the most brilliant discoveries are to be credited, and to it literature owes its brightest gems. Hypothetical invention in oratory corresponds to what Ruskin says of the imagination in literature: "It takes a thousand forms, according to the matter it has to treat, and becomes, like the princess of the Arabian tale, sword, eagle, or fire, according to the war it wages, sometimes piercing, sometimes soaring, sometimes illumining."

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Without restraint, this employment of the mind might lead to wild and profitless vagaries. It is therefore only recommended within just limits, as a means of searching out sterling material not secured by tamer processes.

COMPARISON.

When the penetrative or tentative imagination has brought new thoughts, or combinations of thoughts, within the field of mental vision, it is the task of association and contemplation to test their value and, if possible, increase their utility. Comparison may be said to embrace this whole class of mental operations, and comparison demands knowledge as the basis of its action. Things conjectured must be compared with things known; and the more extensive one's knowledge is, the more profitably he may conduct the process of invention, whether for the development, the illustration, or the ornamentation of his subject.

The right use of knowledge contributes to originality. In this sphere the laws of association have their legitimate action; but without extensive knowledge the range of the associative imagination must be narrow. Give it material on which to act, and there is no limit to the new combinations it may form. Thus science, history, and literature may all be rendered subservient to the proclamations of pure Gospel truth.

EXERCISE.

The inventive powers of the mind gain strength from exertion. Habits of thinking and of expressing thought enlarge the mental grasp and increase one's readiness both of perceiving facts and relations, and of utilizing them for didactic purposes.

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There is a vast difference between the conditions of a mind that acquires knowledge for the mere pleasure of its possession, and of one that learns and thinks with the design of turning its acquisitions to a high practical account. The one is like a pent-up lake which receives but never gives, unless by the slow process of evaporation. The other is like the sparkling waters of a running stream, carrying fertility and beauty wherever it flows.

The object and practice of communicating knowledge give new motive and stimulus to its acquisition, and no one can have higher motives for both than the minister of the Gospel. Hence, while he should study diligently to know the truth of God, he should be equally diligent in learning to express it with readiness and power.

Habitual and laborious composition, therefore, is an essential preparation for the task of preaching. In this exercise invention is stimulated by its own action, and seldom fails to gather even a redundancy of materials. In every such case its power of discrimination is called into play in the selection of only those materials which are best and in the highest degree effective. Ruskin's description of artistic composition well illustrates the process of composing a sermon:

Composition.

> The mind summons up before it those images which it supposes to be of the kind wanted. Of these it takes the one which it supposes to be the fittest and tries it. If it will not answer it tries another, until it has obtained such an association as pleases it.
>
> This process will be more rapid and effective in proportion to the artist's (preacher's) powers of conception and association, these in their turn depending on his knowledge and experience. The distinctness of his powers of conception will give value, point, and truth to every fragment that he draws from memory. His powers of association and his knowledge of nature (and revelation) will pour out before him, in greater or less number, the images from which to choose. His experience guides him

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to quick discernment in the combination, when made, of the parts that are offensive and require change.

By association images apposite or resemblant, or of whatever kind wanted, are called up quickly and in multitudes, Great differences of power are manifested among artists (preachers) in this respect, some having hosts of distinct images always at their command, and rapidly discerning resemblance or contrast; others having few images and obscure at their disposal, nor readily governing those they have.

PRACTICAL RULES.

It may be well to subjoin a few practical suggestions in reference to homiletical invention in the form of rules :

1. Address your mind to the invention of thoughts, not words. Words may be employed, but only as auxiliaries.

5. 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.

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6. Use former studies and preparations as helps to invention rather than as substitutes for it.

Invention as thus practised will always strengthen but never exhaust itself. It will become a most delightful exercise, causing the mind to glow with rapture at its new creations and combinations. While one thus muses (inventively meditates) the fire of inspiration burns within him, and he becomes prepared to speak with his tongue.*

§ 4. Disposition.

When by active and elaborate invention, following in the track of interpretation, ample trains of thought are secured for the materials of a discourse, the importance of disposition becomes obvious.

Disposition signifies arrangement in its most comprehensive sense. Its office is to put thoughts in their right places. It is the necessary complement of invention. 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.

Its nature and office.

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. It does not take airy mouldings to construct the framework of a building, nor ornament doors and windows with beams and heavy timbers. It distinguishes between the foundation-stones and the coping.

Relations to Invention.

* Psalm xxxix. 3.

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Distributing every variety of material to its appropriate position and use, it drives every nail in a sure place, and fits hinges and ornaments where they belong.

If in the process of construction anything small or great is found to be wanting, invention is dispatched in search of it; and often when invention is most busily at work disposition takes materials directly from her hand and places them where they are to be used.

Thus in practice invention and disposition are often simultaneous. They should never be widely separated. Still it is best for students to consider them separately or in their distinct functions.

As invention is to a large extent the work of the imagination, so disposition is correspondingly the work of the judgment. Although the imagination sometimes acts in logical order, yet oftener it requires the control of the regulative faculties, reason and common sense. This control results in disposition.

Some writers have confounded disposition with division, and thus have failed to discern its true character. Disposition is the genus. Division is a subordinate species or branch of disposition. Disposition covers the arrangement of the entire discourse from the introduction to the conclusion. Division is technically applied to the argument of a discourse.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPOSITION.

Vinet has strongly set forth the importance of disposition. He says: "It is disposition, it is order, which *constitutes* discourse. There is no discourse without it. The difference between a common orator and an eloquent man is often nothing but a difference in respect to disposition." "Good thoughts are abundant; the art of organizing them is not so common."

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Disposition is essential to both instruction and persuasion, those important objects of pulpit discourse. "We are instructed only so far as we comprehend and retain, but we comprehend and retain only in the proportion in which the matters presented to our understanding are consecutive and connected. A discourse badly ordered is obscure, and that which is obscure is weak and powerless over the will."

The work of disposition is also of very great importance, since it completes and perfects that of invention. Its office in this respect is threefold: 1. It determines and reduces to strict unity the meaning of the proposition. 2. It aids us in discovering what the subject contains. 3. It gives to each element of the subject its real and proportionate importance. **Perfects invention.**

Again, the orator must experience in himself the effect he would produce. This is what is called inspiration. Now without a plan, and a plan strongly conceived, one cannot write or speak with a true inspiration. He proceeds at hazard, gropes in the dark, advances and recedes, continually breaking the thread he is trying to unravel. This uncertain, hesitating, out-of-breath procedure is most contrary to inspiration and that continuous movement which should be as one single expiration from a powerful chest.*

Other authors have also expressed themselves strongly on this point. Bautain says: "He who knows not how to form a well-conceived deeply considered, and seriously elaborated plan will never speak in a living or an effective manner. He may become a rhetorician, he will never be an an orator."

Herder declares "I readily forgive all faults except those which relate to disposition."

* Condensed from Vinet.

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Quintilian's illustration of the importance of disposition is well known, but will bear repetition:

> If you cast or fashion all the limbs of a statue it will not be a statue unless these limbs are properly put together; and if you change or transpose any part of the human body or of other animals, though all other parts remain in their due proportion, it will notwithstanding be a monster. Mislocated limbs lose the use of their wonted exertions, and actions in confusion are an impediment to any just manœuvre.
>
> They are far, I think, from being mistaken who have said that the universe is maintained by the order and symmetry of its parts, and that all would perish if this order was disturbed. In like manner a speech wanting this quality must run into extreme confusion, wandering about without a steersman, incoherent with itself, full of repetitions and omissions, losing its way, as by night, in unknown paths, and without proposing to itself any proper beginning or end, following rather the guidance of chance than reason.

GENERAL OFFICES OF DISPOSITION.

There are two principal kinds of disposition, which may be denominated logical and oratorical.

Logical disposition has simple reference to order and symmetry. Oratorical disposition aims to produce an effect upon the mind and the will of the hearer. The former is governed by strict rules either of analysis or synthesis. The latter determines whether analysis or synthesis shall be employed, or a combination of both.

Logical disposition is the basis of oratorical. Oratorical disposition is not at liberty to violate logical principles, but it may choose between different forms of logical action. It may determine whether the process shall be inductive or deductive, whether analytic or synthetic, and if analytic, the point at which the analysis shall commence; whether at the top or at the

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bottom of the scale, whether from within or from without the subject. Still more, oratorical disposition determines whether to exhibit the logical frame-work of the discourse in whole or in part, or to conceal it beneath the drapery of language or the living organism of ideas.

Exact and repeated practice in logical disposition is an excellent preparation for oratorical success, but in speaking a rigid conformity to logical forms and minutiæ would chill the very soul of eloquence. In short, logic is essential to oratory, but oratory is superior to logic. Just so far as logic convinces the understanding, it prepares the way of access to the soul. Oratory seeks to enter the very chambers of the soul, and to awaken within them echoes that will stir the will to action. Indeed, the logic of the orator should be that of the soul itself, harmonizing not only with the action of the intellect, but of the sensibilities and the will.

Relations of logic.

It is this which produces that continual movement of the soul which Cicero denominates eloquence itself.* This movement begins with the hearer in a state of indifference. It first awakens his attention, then conquers his prejudices, and proceeds to enlist his sympathies, arouse his feelings, secure the decision of his will, and to demand action. To commence and maintain this movement till the appropriate result is attained is the object of oratory, and of disposition, as one of its most important auxiliaries. To this end continuity and progress are both essential.

Oratorical progress has often been likened to a flowing stream, whose volume is continually augmenting from its tributaries. Vinet compares it to the increasing momentum of falling bodies

Oratorical progress.

* Quid aliud est eloquentia nisi motus animæ continuus?—CICERO DE ORATORE.

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in respect to intensity, not acceleration of movement. His rules for securing oratorical progress are practically these:

1. Advance from that which effects the understanding only to that which effects the will.

2. Advance from abstract to concrete, from *a priori* to *a posteriori*.

2. Advance from the weaker argument to the stronger, considering that to be the stronger which addresses itself most powerfully to the understanding and will of the hearer.

Such rules recognise the legitimate action of the mind in the communication and reception of truth as ever onward, and forbid its being turned back upon itself, or cut short in its progress toward a just result.

It is the office of disposition in oratory to arrange ideas in accordance with the demands of our mental and moral nature; and as truth is adapted to move the mind, and the mind is constituted to be moved by truth, so an arrangement for the most appropriate and effective application of truth must always be considered of vital importance to the orator.

That this is not always an easy task may be inferred from the language of Theremin:

> In the plan of the oration as it is first presented to the mind, the thoughts are never (seldom) found already arranged in this constant progressive flow, but must be wrought into it. As they first present themselves they are hard, brittle, and separate particles; the mind must seize them, and by grinding them incessantly upon each other crush them, until friction kindles the mass and it runs like molten ore. The higher ideas, thrown, as it were, into this solution, take up the thoughts which belong to them, and which, now that they are fluid, obey the mystic power that attracts like to like, so that they form themselves into a firm chain.

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To attain the power of readily fusing ideas and combining them for the highest oratorical effect is an object worthy of the earnest and diligent endeavors of the intending or actual public speaker. For this he should determine to put forth zealous and continued efforts.

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CHAPTER VII.

DISPOSITION APPLIED TO THE PRINCIPAL PARTS OF A DISCOURSE.

ANCIENT SYSTEMS OF DISPOSITION.

From ancient times rhetoricians have recognized various distinct parts of a discourse, designated according to the order of their use and the design of the speaker. But neither among ancient nor modern writers has there been exact agreement as to the number of distinct parts of which a discourse should be composed. Aristotle enumerated four: introduction, proposition, proof, and conclusion. Quintilian prescribed five: introduction, narration, proof, refutation, and conclusion. Cicero extended the enumeration to six, under the names of introduction, narration, proposition, proof, refutation, and conclusion. To this ample list the more minute writers and teachers of the ancient schools added partition, transition, and digression.

The greater number of modern writers have followed Cicero, but at present the tendency is to simplify disposition by throwing out parts which are non-essential or of little value.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS.

Brief explanations of the terms employed in the systems alluded to will lead the way to a just estimate of their propriety and value.

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The *introduction* was designed to begin or introduce the discourse.

The *narration*, which was chiefly employed in judicial orations, stated the circumstances of the case.

The *proposition* stated what the speaker designed to prove.

The *partition* exhibited the form and order of his arguments.

Transition was the passage from one part of the discourse to another, or, practically, the ligament which bound each part to another.

Proof embraced the testimony and reasoning.

Refutation answered objections.

Digression embraced side remarks, or issues not comprehended in any regular part.

The *conclusion* ended the discourse.

COMPREHENSIVE CHARACTER OF THE ARGUMENT.

A comparison of the different systems of disposition enumerated will show that of Aristotle to have been the germ from which the latest systems were expanded. But even those ancient rhetoricians who sought to reduce everything to rule, and to resolve oratory into a species of clockwork, did not absolutely require every oration to contain all the parts they enumerated. Even they allowed certain variations in accordance with circumstances. Hence it is certainly proper for us to inquire to what extent in homiletics we may dispense with any of the technical forms of ancient oratory. It is obvious that partition, transition, and digression need not be retained: while the term argument may fitly sum up what intervenes between the introduction and the conclusion.

Variations admissible.

An argument demands a proposition in some form:

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a statement if it relates to facts, proof if it is doubted, confirmation if the proposition is but partially or faintly believed, and refutation if objections lie against it. Hence in homiletics it conduces greatly to unity to consider the whole discussion of the subject of a discourse under the single idea of an argument, which as just explained is sufficiently comprehensive.

Circumstances sometimes occur which limit a discourse exclusively to the argument. Still, as every argument must have both a beginning and an end, so the discourse which comprises but that single part has for its introduction the beginning of the argument, and the end of the argument for its conclusion.

Strictly, then, it may be asserted that the argument, with or without a text, is the only essential part of a discourse. Nevertheless, in common cases the law of disposition or method distributes the matter of a discourse or a sermon into at least three parts, the introduction, the argument, and the conclusion. These several parts will now be treated in their natural order.

§ 1. The Introduction.

Introductions may be of two kinds, formal and informal. The term *formal* is here used in a good sense, and applies simply to introductions which appear in due form distinct from the body of the discourse. An *informal* introduction is an actual commencement with the subject itself.

OCCASIONS FOR INFORMAL.

An informal introduction is in place when the subject is a familiar one, and when the hearers need no preparation to enable them to understand or appreciate it.

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Even on subjects of this character a judicious speaker will commence with elementary views, and proceed by natural gradations to those more abstruse. Hence, although omitting an introduction proper, he uses introductory matter, or matter in an introductory form. In taking soundings of his subject he does not plunge into measureless depths at once, but through the shallows nearest shore he advances, lengthening his line by degrees until he measures the deepest waters. As to progress he imitates the locomotive, which does not start off at full speed, but rather by a slow beginning and measured motion at the introduction of its course gradually attains its full velocity.

Analogies.

Another class of circumstances requires, or at least frequently justifies, the omission of any formal introduction, and an unceremonious dash into the merits of the question. To this class belong occasions of great excitement, in which both the attention and the feelings of the audience are thoroughly roused. Formal introductions at such times are not only useless, but injurious exciting the disgust of the hearers and throwing away the opportunity of the speaker.

But even in these cases the speaker should so arrange his matter that he may advance to higher and higher results; otherwise, striking on too high a key he will be doomed to descend, and perhaps fall flat before reaching his conclusion. Great skill is necessary for successful management in such cases.

Another occasion for omitting a formal introduction is haste, when much is to be said in a little time. This is true of many sermons, but of more exhortations and addresses. Formal introductions in platform addresses are usually tedious and inopportune. If employed they should be extremely brief.

With reference, however, to the sermon generally, as

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well as to an oration, in ordinary circumstances a formal introduction, or an exordium in proper form, may be considered appropriate, often essential.

DESIGN OF AN INTRODUCTION.

The design of an introduction is to prepare the mind of the hearer to understand and appreciate the subject of a discourse. The terms used in various languages to designate it embody the same idea. Thus *prologue* meaning *foreword* in the Greek, an *exordium* or *beginning* in the Latin, both point to the common necessity which the human mind has, in ordinary circumstances, to be prepared for new thoughts and permanent impressions. This necessity has its basis in our mental constitution. It is also supported by numerous analogies of nature. Thus the dawn introduces the day, the mellow light the blaze of the sun, the cloud the storm, the spring the summer, and autumn the winter.

Since, therefore, men have a natural shrinking from abruptness, either in manner or in speech, and demand a certain preparation for the influence the orator hopes to exert upon them, the introduction often becomes a very important part of a discourse. It is consequently desirable for the public speaker so to dispose his thoughts, as to use in his introduction only such matter as is strictly adapted to its design. To say first what should be said last or intermediately is a serious error.

KINDS AND QUALITIES OF INTRODUCTIONS.

Rhetoricians have been very minute in their treatment of this topic. Whately enumerates five kinds of introductions; namely, the inquisitive, the paradoxical, the

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corrective, the preparatory, and the narrative. He moreover states that two or more of these kinds may be advantageously combined.

Other writers have designated introductions as explanatory, conciliatory, argumentative, apologetic, etc. The truth is that there is no limit to the variety that good speakers may employ in the introductions to their discourses. While, therefore, attempts to designate by special terms every style of introduction may savor more of the curious than the useful; it is nevertheless highly important that every speaker should seek to acquire the talent of preparing introductions characterized by variety and all other good qualities.

Authors have been very profuse in ther rules respecting introductions. Blair and others following Cicero, have urged that introductions should be,

1. Easy and natural;
2. Correct without the appearance of artificiality;
3. Modest, but dignified;
4. Calm in manner; and,
5. Not anticipating any material part of the subject.

Claude, with special reference to a sermon prescribes, 1. That the introduction should grow out of the subject and be in harmony with it; and, 2. That it should conduct the hearers gradually to the topic of discussion. He further enjoins as essential qualities of an introduction that it be, 1. Brief; 2. Clear; 3. Cool and grave; 4. Engaging and agreeable; 5. Naturally connected with the text; and, 6. Simple or literal not figurative. The same author also censures the use of personal allusions and far-fetched historical statements in an introduction.

Theremin objects urgently to long introductions, especially in sacred oratory. He says:

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Time spent in merely paving the way for the idea (of the discourse) might better be employed in the development of the idea itself. In the second place, the preliminary statements by which the orator would prepare the way for the theme are often as remote from the minds of the hearers as the theme itself, so that he might just as well employ that as to introduce the former. In the third place, since the mere desire for knowledge should be subordinate to the moral interest, the orator can hardly fail to interest the hearer in his main idea if he connects it immediately with one of the higher moral ideas, namely, truth, happiness, or duty, which can be done without a long circumlocution.

While some of the above rules are not without important exceptions, yet most of them will prove useful to the student, who will in addition be still more profited by such a generalization of the subject as will guide him correctly without burdening his mind with too many details.

Pertinence.

The one comprehensive quality suggestive of nearly all minor good qualities, and opposed to the more common vices of an exordium, is *pertinence*, the quality of strict relevancy or fitness. The introduction of a discourse should be pertinent to the text, pertinent to the subject and style of discussion, pertinent to the occasion and its demands, pertinent to the speaker and the audience, and pertinent to its own design. This controlling idea of strict pertinency will sometimes suggest the idea of stimulating curiosity, sometimes of conciliating prejudice, sometimes of making a brief explanation of the text or context, and so on through the endless variety of possible introductions. The same idea will guard against prolixity, irrelevance, triteness, and other faults.

MATERIALS.

The materials for introductions are abundant. They

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may be drawn from the context, from a kindred subject, from the importance of the subject itself, from an opposite subject by contrast, or from the surrounding circumstances of speaker or hearers. The chief difficulty is to select rightly, and skilfully adapt the thought chosen to the object in view.

As to style, an introduction should never fail to be perspicuous, so that every hearer may comprehend it. Unity in an introduction requires that it embrace but one leading thought, and usually excludes divisions. The same principle, when applied to the whole discourse, demands that the introduction blend harmoniously with the discussion, and be so naturally and skilfully joined to the argument that it may tend directly to the same result.

ORDER OF PREPARATION.

It has long been taught, that although the first to be used, the introduction is the last part of an oration or sermon to be prepared. There may be cases in which this course will secure the best result, but in common practice it is of more than doubtful propriety. To say the least, it is unnatural. A better rule is, "Everything in its own order." The course of thought which leads the mind of the speaker to his subject will usually be the best for his hearers. He should certainly claim the right of revision, improvement, and even of reconstruction, to the last. But if in commencing the arrangement of a discourse the mind, as it often will, should seize at once upon the appropriate initiatory matter, it is best to consider the introduction provided for, and advance with a firm tread to the argument.

A still greater error is that of regarding an introduction as something apart from the discourse itself,

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Introductions should be special.

to be put on or taken off at pleasure. From this mistaken view arose the practice of preparing introductions of various kinds in advance, from which selections might be made and used from time to time. The absurdity of this practice was illustrated long ago by the custom of those small sculptors who keep heads ready made, to be fitted on to different bodies as their piece-work statuary may be constructed.

Every discourse should have its own introduction, and on different occasions the same discourse may require to be differently prefaced.

The reader should bear in mind that this subject is here treated under the head of disposition, and that the present work in no case recommends detailed composition in words until the whole thought-work of the discourse is planned. That being done, there appears no valid objection to the subsequent composition of the entire discourse in the appropriate order of its parts.

The objection of Cicero, repeated by various writers on the subject from his day to the present, against composing the introduction prior to the argument, is equally valid against the composition of any part before the plan of the whole is arranged.

Nothing tends more to weakness of structure, verbosity of language, and inefficiency of result than word-composition in advance of well-digested thought-composition, toward which the act of disposition largely contributes.

§ 2. The Argument.

As now to be considered, the argument is the body or principal part of a discourse—that to which the introduction leads and which the conclusion follows. In

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cases where formal introductions and conclusions, however brief, are omitted, it is the discourse itself.

CONFUSED EMPLOYMENT OF TERMS.

In the treatment of this subject great diversity, and even confusion, appears among writers on homiletics. Claude, and those who have expanded his system, seemed to have overlooked the difference between disposition and division. Mistaking the latter for the former, the less for the greater, they have treated largely of the division of sermons, and with equal impropriety they have confounded the classification of sermons both with division and the various modes of treatment. Witness an extract from Sturtevant, whose work, entitled the Preacher's Manual, is a voluminous commentary on Claude's Essay:

> DIFFERENT METHODS OF DIVISION.—The various kinds of division to which I shall have occasion to advert I will now present to you. They are textual or topical. The textual are such as fall into, 1. The *natural kind* of division. 2. The *accommodational.* 3. The *expository.* 4. The *distributive.* 5. The *regular.* 6. The *interrogative.* 7. The *observational.* 8. The *propositional.* 9. That of *continued application.* The topical kinds of division are extremely numerous.

Reference is here made to the twenty-seven topics of Claude, which correspond in design with the twenty-eight *Loci communes,* or commonplaces of Aristotle. Intermingled with his treatment of his multitudinous kinds of division, this author speaks of "propositional discourses" and "descriptive discourses." Other authors speak of textual discourses and topical discourses; as though the mere form of division were any just basis for the classification of discourses.

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The Rev. Daniel Moore, "in order to guard against disorderly sermonizing," enumerates without reference to division "ten methods of discussion:" 1. By direct illustration. 2. By implication. 3. Observation. 4. Confirmation. 5. The argumentative method. 6. By the didactic method. 7. Investigation. 8. Perpetual application. 9. Antithesis or contrast. 10. By a method partly discussional and partly hortatory.

Although presenting very just views on most subjects, this author seems to have no just conception of a systematic classification of sermons. He treats as supplemental topics of "Expository preaching," "Sermons to children," "Sermons for charitable occasions," and "Open-air preaching," showing that he has no place for them in his classification.

Another class of writers, for example, Gresley in England, followed by Ripley in New England, have taken the opposite but equally unphilosophical course of dividing all sermons into two classes, namely, text-sermons and subject-sermons. The basis of this distinction is nothing more nor less than the difference between textual and topical division. Its absurdity is seen in the implied supposition that a text-sermon may be without a subject and a subject-sermon without a text, whereas every proper sermon has both a text and a subject.

PROPER RELATIONS OF THE TEXT AND SUBJECT.

To reduce this whole matter to an intelligible and systematic form, let attention be first directed to the difference between the text and the theme of a sermon. The text should always contain the specific theme of any sermon based upon it. But most texts contain more themes than one, and the preacher should deter-

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mine which particular theme contained in the text or suggested by it he will treat in any particular sermon.

Thus the text, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii. 16,) contains various important themes. Some of them may be thus stated:

a. God's great love for the world.

b. God's gift of his only begotten Son to save sinners.

c. God's gift of eternal life through the Son of his love.

d. The perishing condition of the world without a Saviour.

e. The necessity of faith in Christ as a means of salvation.

Now whichever of these or of other topics contained in the text is selected by the preacher for any given occasion, becomes the theme or subject of his discourse.

To that specific subject his introduction should lead, and his treatment or discussion of that subject becomes the argument of his sermon. In the case of an expository discourse, in which he seeks to give an exegesis of all that the text contains, his subject should be stated in a generalization so broad as to include all the minor topics. For other objects, a generalization of a more specific character, usually bringing out some one of the minor topics, will be in place. But whatever be the subject and design of the discourse should be clearly apprehended from the beginning of one's preparation.

From the different classes of subjects and the corresponding designs of sermons, arise certain different kinds of discussion or modes of treatment. Each of these kinds of discussion may sometmes require a division of the subject, while at other times the subject may be more satisfactorily discussed without any formal division.

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If division is thought desirable, choice may be made between textual and topical, in each of which one of several practicable kinds may be found preferable. To guard against misconception in the use of terms that have been so often and so long employed without a just perception of their relations to each other, the following *tabular view* is introduced.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE involve

The Subjects of Sermons.

IN THE ARGUMENT, or development of the subject,

SUBJECTS may have various kinds of discussion, or modes of treatment; *e.g.*,
1. Explanatory.
2. Observational.
3. Propositional.
4. Applicatory.

Either KIND OF DISCUSSION may be conducted by (or without) *Division*.
1. *Textual*,
(1. Natural,
(2. Analytical,
(3. Synthetical;
or,
2. *Topical*,
1.) By analysis,
2.) relations,
3.) illustration,
4.) exhibition of motives,
5.) statement of proofs.

Whatever form of sermon is thus produced may be classified, not according to the mode of treatment adopted or the style of division employed, but according to the subject and design of the discourse as a whole. Thus sermons may be classified as 1. Expository. 2. Hortatory. 3. Doctrinal. 4. Practical. 5. Miscellaneous.

From the above it will be seen that modes of treatment are subordinate to subjects, and styles of division are subordinate to modes of treatment; while the classification of sermons, rises higher than all these, and is controlled by a combined view of their subject and design.

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The following is a tabulated view of the sermon as a whole, showing the mutual relation of all its parts:

The SERMON embraces

The TEXT, The INTRODUCTION, The ARGUMENT, and the CONCLUSION.

The INTRODUCTION leads from the text to the argument.

The ARGUMENT develops the subject by DISCUSSION, often facilitated by *division*.

The argument is supplemented, applied or followed by

The CONCLUSION.

The distribution of matter, with reference to its adaptation to the several parts, is the task of disposition. The office of disposition, as applied to the argument, is to determine on the kind of discussion and the style of division that may be most appropiately employed.

To promote facility in deciding on these points, some further considerations will be presented in reference to the nature and importance of the argument of a discourse. It should be borne in mind that the term argument, in a rhetorical sense, is generic, embracing the idea of logical argument as a species. Whately says: "The art of inventing and arranging (disposing) arguments is the immediate and proper province of rhetoric, and of that alone. The business of logic is to judge of arguments, not to invent them."

DIFFERENT MODES OF DISCUSSION DISTINGUISHED.

Rhetorical address always contemplates influence upon the minds of the hearers. A clear conception of the nature of the influence to be produced is a prime essential to the mind of the speaker. Next to that is a knowledge of the means best adapted to produce the influence desired. Vagueness in conceiving

Essential object.

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of an explicit object for any sermon will lead to looseness of construction and inefficiency of result. Dulness in the invention, and unskilfulness in the disposition of materials, conduce to a similar end. Preachers should, therefore, accustom themselves to see the end from the beginning of their sermons, and to make all their preparations converge to a given point, and that point the impression of truth or duty on the minds of their hearers.

With reference to the ancient division of oratory into three kinds, deliberative, judicial, and demonstrative, Aristotle showed that each kind had its specific end. He said: "That of the statesman is *utility;* that of the pleader, *justice;* whereas *glory* occupies almost solely the wide field of demonstration or panegyric."

When now we consider the end of the Gospel ministry to rise higher than all these secular ends, and to contemplate nothing less then the salvation of the souls of men, we perceive the ultimate object at which every sermon should aim. But as there are various steps intermediate to the attainment of this ultimate object, the preacher may primarily contemplate either the declaration and illustration of the truth of revelation, or the persuasion of men to its experience and practice; or, indeed, such a combination of declaration, illustration, and persuasion as may result most favorably in the immediate or ultimate welfare of his hearers.

The preacher's work differs from that of the secular orator, or that of the mere rhetorician, in that he is furnished authoritatively with the burden of his message.

Proper means. Having, then, his message given him in the Word of God, his primary task may be announced as that of *explanation*, designed to make plain to his hearers the truth of revelation. The field covered by explanation is very broad. As treated in a recent

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practical work on rhetoric, it includes narration, description, analysis, exemplification, comparison and contrast. In homiletics it is quite as well to confine the term *explanation* to its direct and primary signification, and according to established custom introduce, as the preacher's second task, *observation*. Observation is employed as a means of illustrating truths which are obvious or familiar, but which nevertheless need to be presented in new combinations and for special objects.

Again, many of the truths which the preacher has to announce are controverted, and he has to demonstrate them by reasoning and testimony. Hence, as all formal reasoning demands a proposition and proofs, we have as another kind of discussion the *propositional*. Finally, as in preaching nothing avails which is not brought home to the conscience and life of the hearers, a fourth form of discussion arises, which is called the *applicatory*, or that of continued application.

Which of these kinds of discussion should be employed in a sermon may be determined in view of:

1. The nature of the subject.
2. The character of the audience.
3. The special design of the discourse.

In reference to the first point it is obvious that obscure and difficult subjects require explanation, and also that many plain subjects need to be made plainer and more familiar by means of observation.

Again, if the subject be involved in doubt or controversy, it may often be most appropriately discussed under the logical form of proposition and proof, while subjects of a deeply-affecting and practical character are suited to progressive or continued application.

Again, a subject that would demand explanation or proof before one audience, may be adapted to the most

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direct application when presented to another. Finally, sermons on the same subject and to the same audience may differ greatly in their design. For instance, it would be proper to treat before any congregation the subject of faith in a series of discourses on the following themes, adapted to call out in turn the four principal kinds of discussion:

1. The nature of faith.
2. The happy influence of faith on the Christian life.
3. The reasonableness of faith as a condition of salvation.
4. The duty and necessity of believing.

It is not necessary that the several kinds of discussion be kept strictly separate from each other, nor is it asserted that they cover every form of rhetorical development. It is sufficient to present them as the leading practical modes of treatment, and to illustrate them severally in order.

EXPLANATORY DISCUSSION.

The term *explanatory* is preferred in this connection to *explicatory*, as used by Claude and Vinet, and to *expository*, as employed by some others. Both these terms are too limited in their signification for generic use. The first, according to its etymology, (L. *explicare*,) signifies unfolding that which is bound together or intricate. Expository, from *exponere*, to lay out, applies by specific use to laying out or expounding the meaning of the Scriptures. The term *explanatory* includes both these meanings, and still more. It indicates not only the design of making plain the Word of God, but also the various subjects appropriately related to it.

Direct explanation is specially applicable to difficult texts and to doctrines, both of which need to be placed

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before the minds of the people in all the light and plainness of the truth.

In treating easy texts a sufficient exposition may often be given in the introduction, but in many passages of the Bible there is a deep meaning which can only be brought out by full and explicit presentation after long and careful study. No preacher will wish to be constantly reiterating familiar truths, but rather will often desire to make plain to his hearers the "deep things of God."

For this object patient investigation, and industrious labor to interpret correctly and express worthily "the mind of the Spirit," will need to be the rule of his ministerial life.

A few cautions will be appropriate as to the frame of mind with which we should approach the explanation of the Scriptures.

1. We should avoid magnifying difficulties, lest we discourage our hearers and make them dread rather than love the study of the word of God.

2. We should equally avoid overlooking or slighting difficulties, but should fairly state and candidly explain those that we attempt to treat.

3. We should not pretend to discover new and rare meanings in every text that we endeavour to expound, lest we seem to be aiming at a display of our learning or ingenuity.

Rather, we should devoutly and reverently take the divine word as we find it, and by modest but earnest and prayerful efforts strive to bring its utmost, or at least its most important meaning to the understanding and hearts of our hearers.

DEFINITION.

The first subject of explanation in a text is its terms. These should be defined and illustrated as modestly and

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pertinently as possible. It is desirable to avoid any parade of etymological lore in the pulpit, although it may be sometimes necessary to state briefly the derivation of words, or their precise meaning in the original. As a general rule, it is better to illustrate their signification by reference to their uses in Scripture and common language.

From the explanation of terms we proceed to that of things, or the subject of discourse. Sometimes a subject may be approached negatively, by showing what it is not, or by removing erroneous conceptions with reference to it.

Proposing to treat a subject affirmatively, the preacher has at his command either direct statement or the various resources of division; for details of which, with illustrative examples, the reader is referred to the ensuing chapter.

In explanatory discourse, the object being to inform and instruct, it is essentially important to secure the attention of the minds addressed. This must be done by the presentation of agreeable images in a pleasing order.

NARRATION.

Events are explained by narration, which is a continuous statement of facts, real or imagined, either in the order of time or of cause and effect. Not only events, but many abstract and spiritual subjects, may be treated in conformity with the laws of succession or of causal sequence.

DESCRIPTION.

Description is another form of explanation in which subjects are represented under the relations of space. Material objects exist in space, and are therefore the subjects of direct description. An example may be

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quoted from Psalm xlviii. 2: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north." Spiritual subjects may be conceived of under relations analogous to those of space. Thus the Revelator, portraying the future glory of the redeemed Church, says: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

It is essential in description that the view presented be continuous. The principle of juxtaposition must govern the arrangement of topics. That is, topics must be described in the order of their connection, and the point of commencement should be taken with reference to continuous and instructive progression. **Continuity.**

In order to a vivid description the speaker must have before his mind a clear conception of the object he would delineate. Especially is it important to all who would succeed in portraying abstract subjects clearly before the minds of others, first to array them with great clearness of outline before their own mental view. **Vivid conception.**

EXEMPLIFICATION.

Exemplification is another process of explanation by which a whole theme is represented through some one of its parts as an example. Exemplification conducts the hearer from the known to the unknown, and enables him by easy advances to reach high and definite conceptions of very difficult or abstruse subjects. In this way general truths are made familiar by reference to particular truths already comprehended, and the great laws of nature and providence by instances of every-day observation.

Skill and good taste should always be manifest in the

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selection of examples, so that hearers may be at the same time interested and instructed.

Historical examples are of great value in exemplifying the character and results of human actions.

The parables of our Lord illustrate nearly every principle taught in the present chapter. Desiring to explain to his disciples the principles of truth and righteousness, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, he taught them in parables. He thus embodied in his explanatory discourses definition, narration, description, and exemplification.

Explanatory discussion may sometimes be appropriately blended with propositional. For instance, the preacher may explain an entire paragraph or chapter, and after due attention to the terms and minor details, may appropriately condense into one or more propositions the principal teachings of the passage.

While explanatory treatment is specially adapted to expository discourse, it may also be fitly employed in doctrinal and practical sermons. For example, a preacher selects the doctrine of Christian perfection, or that of the atonement, as his theme in a congregation where the doctrines are theoretically received but imperfectly understood. It is obvious that explanation would be his principal task.

Again, he may think it proper to discuss the duty of brotherly love in a congregation where no one doubts the obligation or the importance of that duty, but where many fail rightly to comprehend the nature and the special application of it. In this case equally his task is that of explanation, and to that the argument or body of his discourse should be devoted.

Where the different kinds of discussion are more or less combined, that which predominates will govern the classification.

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OBSERVATIONAL DISCUSSION.

The observational mode of treatment was largely and prominently developed by Claude, and since his day has been extensively practised by English and American preachers. His hints respecting it are practically these:

Observational discussion is applicable to,

1. Clear texts, which do not require explanation; that is, in its proper sense of having difficulties or obscurities removed.

2. Historical subjects.

3. Observations may be appropriately mingled with explanations. In that case explanations have precedence.

4. Observations should be theological or religious, as opposed to the merely historical, critical, or philosophical.

5. They should neither be scholastic nor commonplace, but dignified, urbane, and adapted to the comprehension of the people.

6. They should not be dry, spiritless, or formal.

The last three remarks are equally applicable to every other style of treatment.

As an example of observational discussion upon a plain text, the following outline plan is adduced from Beddome:

Text. Acts ix. 14: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

SUBJECT. *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 Christ considers done to himself.

IV. Christ's call to the persecutor was to convince him of sin as the first step to conversion.

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V. The calls of Christ are earnest and particular: "Saul, Saul?"

VI. Christ condescends to reason with Saul: "Why persecutest thou?" etc.

This style of discussion admits of a greater enumeration of particulars than any other, and yet it needs to be guarded by careful attention to the following rules:

1. Let the application of the several observations to the subject in hand be obvious.

2. Let them have unity and converge to a given point, so as to make a forcible impression.

Observational treatment unskilfully employed becomes puerile; used with discretion and ingenuity it becomes highly interesting. The undivided essay style of many modern sermons is an abuse, or at best a poorly managed excess of observational discussion. It rambles hither and thither, having no apparent object in view, and accomplishing nothing beyond the stringing together of an indefinite number of inorganic miscellanies. No small ridicule has been expended upon those punctilious old preachers who occasionally reached their fifty-sixthly, and in one case, it is said, even his one hundred and seventy-sixthly; but even their error, if they maintained a logical connection of ideas, was not more gross than that of ignoring connection altogether. Let those who treat subjects observationally beware of rambling and incoherence.

Another example is subjoined to illustrate the application of this kind of discussion to historical subjects.

The aim of the preacher in all such plans should be to eliminate principles of truth, and deduce practical admonitions from each prominent fact in the course of the history.

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Text. 1 Kings xv. 34: And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

SUBJECT. *The Power and Consequences of Evil Example.*

INTRODUCTION. The early history of Jeroboam.

OBSERVATION 1. His political success was followed by an ambition to perpetuate his sovereignty. Possessed of this he became unscrupulous. Chap. xii. 26.

2. He made a plan to subvert the religion of his country. He set up idolatrous establishments, and induced a compliance of the people with his iniquity. xii. 27—33.

3. He encountered fearful rebukes at the hand of the Lord. xiii. 1—6; xiv. 7—16.

4. He at length died in defeat by providential visitation. 2 Chron. xiii. 15—20. Also within a year his son and family were slain by one who had followed his own idolatrous example.

5. Notwithstanding these terrible judgments his example was followed by the kings of Israel (including Baasha) for two centuries and a half, until the sins of the nation had provoked God to utterly overthrow and scatter so corrupt and rebellious a people.

CONCLUSION. The danger and responsibility of persons in authority. The ruinous and endless consequences of causing others to sin.

PROPOSITIONAL DISCUSSION.

This mode of treatment requires the principal truths of the text or subject to be stated in the form of one or more propositions for demonstration. It appeals to the reasoning faculties of an audience, and demands connected argumentation from the speaker. It applies especially to the refutation of errors, the establishment of truth, the confirmation of faith, and the proof and enforcement of duties. It involves the right use of all the material of logic. It employs every species of evidence, whether of testimony, of experience, of authority, of probability, or of analogy. It addresses every form of motive.

Reference to logic.

The theory of argumentation is so fully developed in

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works on logic and rhetoric as not to require minute statement here. It may be well, however, to observe that in all our pulpit reasonings we should aim to be models of candor, never attempting to pass off for sound arguments those which are weak or specious. A prime requisite in this kind of discussion is clearness of statement. Propositions should be brief and transparent, seldom if ever couched in long or involved sentences. An old maxim relating to this subject deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance. State your proposition *clearly* and prove it *powerfully;* then you will be prepared to persuade *impressively.*

Example of treatment with a single proposition:

Text. Psalm xiv. 1: The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

SUBJECT. *The Absurdity of Atheism.*

That atheism is absurd is proved,

1. By its assertion that creation is without a cause.
2. By its contradiction of the universal consciousness of men.
3. By its being the utterance only of the heart (not the judgment) even of fools.

An example of two consecutive propositions from Claude:

Text. Rom. viii. 13: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

SUBJECT. *The Death and Life of the Soul.*

I. The damnation of sinners is inevitable.

II. A life formed by the Spirit of holiness cannot fail to issue in eternal happiness.

Sometimes this kind of discussion calls out a regular series of propositions, each successive member of the series bearing more and more forcibly upon the point to which it is designed to carry the hearer's convictions.

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The following is an example from Rev. J. Parsons, an English preacher of celebrity :

Text. Luke xvi. 27—31 : Dialogue between the rich man and Abraham.

SUBJECT. *The Claims of Revealed Truth.*

INTRODUCTION. The narrative applied to an illustration of our future state.

I. There exists a revelation from God, designed for the guidance and salvation of man.

II. This revelation is fully qualified to accomplish the purpose for which it was given.

III. On the rejection of revelation it is not to be expected that any supernatural visitations would produce a saving impression on the heart.

IV. The rejection of divine revelation is the cause of future condemnation and misery.

In this style of treatment it is not necessary to notify your hearers in advance of the object contemplated in your discussion. You may argue inductively, and state your result at the conclusion of your argument. Such a result would be eminently proper where prejudices would be excited by a premature announcement of your proposition. Neither is it essential to number your arguments and state them in a formal manner. Nevertheless, it is essential to arrange them properly as well as state them clearly, since the force of reasoning depends hardly less on the order than on the matter of proofs. **Non-essentials.**

The rules of rhetoricians on this subject usually make the following points :

1. Avoid blending arguments that are distinct in their nature.

2. Let arguments of different degrees of strength advance in the order of climax.

3. Display clearly and distinctly arguments that are

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strong and conclusive ; those that are doubtful may run into one another for mutual support.

4. Do not extend arguments too far, nor multiply them too much.

Day, in his Elements of Rhetoric, states the principles involved in the subject in terms specially worthy of attention :

> The arrangement of arguments depends mainly on two principles. The first respects the state of mind addressed. The second respects the dependence of proofs on one another.
>
> In reference to the first, if there be already a state of belief, and the object of the discourse is to confirm and strengthen it, then the weaker arguments will generally need to be placed first and the stronger ones last.
>
> If there be an opposing belief to be set aside it will be better to advance the stronger first, in order to overthrow opposition at once. The weaker may follow, which may serve to confirm, though they would be of no avail in the first assault. In order to leave, however, a strong impression, some of the stronger should be reserved to the close, or, what is equivalent, the arguments recapitulated in the reverse order.
>
> In reference to the second principle, some proofs are explained by others, which must be previously exhibited in order to the full effect of the reasoning. Some proofs presuppose others. Some have great weight if preceded by certain others, and are of little moment unless preceded by them.
>
> This principle requires, in the first place, that analytic proofs precede all others ; in the second place, that arguments of antecedent probability precede examples and signs.

It is quite possible to lessen the popular estimation of propositional discussion by technical formalities or by excessive use. Nevertheless, its intrinsic value is very great.

When Paul, though a prisoner, stood before Felix and *reasoned* of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Let there be more thorough and solid reasoning in our pulpits of the present

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day on the great and impressive themes of the Gospel, and fewer pretty orations, popular essays, and commonplace exhortations, and more sinners will be convinced and made to tremble and bow before the majesty of truth.

APPLICATORY DISCUSSION.

This is one of the most important forms of pulpit address, and that for which much of the preceding instruction is preparatory. "The distinctive agency of the orator," says Theremin, "consists in giving a powerful impulse and direction to the mind, and he is not equal to this unless the goal to which he would direct them is plainly in his eye, and unless he earnestly desires to reach it himself."

If this be the characteristic of oratory, as distinguished from poetry and all those branches of literature which merely aim to please or to entertain, it is emphatically true of preaching, which, more than any other branch of oratory, demands positive influence, both moral and spiritual, as its result.

An explanation may make a truth very intelligible, an observation may show it to be interesting and important, a well-argued, proposition may demonstrate it beyond controversy, and yet a special application may be necessary to bring it home to the heart and conscience of the hearer. Explanation may exhibit the learning or good understanding of the preacher; observation may indicate his wisdom and argumentation his talent; but without close and direct address he will make but a poor and feeble manifestation of Christian feeling. No sermon can be expected to answer any high religious end without direct address in some form.

Direct address.

Sermons constructed rigidly on either of the foregoing modes of treatment should make their application in the

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conclusion. Perorations require applicatory address throughout. But there is oftentimes danger of failure in withholding the application of truth too long. Its edge may be blunted by suspense, and its glowing, burning power may cool off with delay. What is perhaps worse, if the application is habitually reserved for the conclusion, wary hearers, to whom severe truth is unacceptable, also form the habit of evading its power. It is the office of emotion as well as of judgment to induce decisions of the will; and as mental acts are closely related to each other, if not concurrent, the preacher must ever be on the alert for the golden moment of persuasion.

Whatever mode of treatment predominates in a well-planned discourse may frequently require to have direct address intermingled with it, and the skill of the preacher is indicated by his capacity to interblend it in fitting proportions. Applicatory discussion fuses readily with each of the other kinds. For example, when we explain the meaning of a given text, how natural and appropriate to apply, at least briefly or by inference, that meaning to the condition and immediate duties of our hearers. When we make an observation upon Scripture truth, or upon man's relations, as indicated by the word of God, how fitting is it also to apply the moral lesson to personal obligation and the circumstances which surround us. Again, when we prove a Scripture doctrine or duty, how essential is it to show its application to the daily life of our hearers, and not to leave them to vague inferences or unguided conjectures.

But in addition to these uses of direct address, there are many cases in which it should predominate—should itself take the lead, and employ explanation, observation, and argumentation, one or all, as subsidiaries. Such is generally the case in hortatory sermons.

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The Bible abounds in direct address. It specially and repeatedly addresses persons, characters, Churches, communities, and nations. It therefore becomes the preacher often to take up the Word of God in this form, and to echo it in the name and authority of the divine Master to the hearts and consciences of men. The continued application of Christian truth is one of the noblest results to which a preacher can hope to attain. It involves engaging both the attention and the feelings of an audience from the first, and maintaining an increasing interest in the subject to the last.

Important object.

Whoever can thus bring the truth into living contact with the souls of men may be sure that it will perform its own office upon them.

To encourage practice in applicatory discussion a plain example is subjoined.

Text. Acts xvii. 30: But now commandeth all men every where to repent.

SUBJECT. *The Duty of Repentance.*

I. The present audience is included in this command. "All men every where."

II. The duty of repentance is to every one of us essential to salvation. God commands it in this and other Scriptures.

III. The imperative duty of every sinner is to repent "now."

This example shows that applicatory address may appropriately assume the form of a series of observations or propositions in which the first makes a direct appeal to the hearer, and each succeeding one presses that appeal with augmented force.

But it is not limited to any set forms. Indeed, it may often be accomplished almost unconsciously to the hearer. In numerous cases this is the better way, since many hearers shrink away from the form of direct

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Skill needed.

address. Hence the preacher should seek to interest men in religious truth for the truth's sake, even though they are not interested in religion for its intrinsic importance or in view of their own welfare.

Such persons may often be led gently along toward the cross, and by degrees they may be prepared for all the solemnities of direct appeal with reference to life, death, the judgment, and eternity. A skilful preacher, contemplating this style of address, will always seek to have the way duly prepared for it, whether in one or many discourses.

The lack of such a preparation will sometimes neutralize the influence of a sermon which would have been at the appropriate moment greatly efficacious for good.

While, therefore, the great necessity of direct application is urged, its skilful use should be deemed equally important. The gentle shower prepares the way for the heavy rain. So the preacher, from indirect and informal applications of truth, should rise gradually to the point where, if necessary, his hearers will welcome the driving storm, and not be startled with even the rushing tempest.

The style of discussion now commended rejects vague generalities; for, as Jeremy Taylor says, "generals not explicated do fill people's heads with empty notions, and their mouths with perpetual unintelligible talk, but their hearts remain empty, and themselves are not edified." Hence the preacher who would apply his subject must be specific, and often minute, in detail. He should seek the golden mean between vulgarity and an affected indifference to the common realities of life. Like the apostle, he should use great plainness of speech, and yet he should carefully maintain both the dignity of his subject and of his office.

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In all circumstances let him avoid personalities. To quote again from Bishop Taylor in his advice to his clergy: "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 cause him to be suspected. He that doeth otherwise maketh his sermon a libel, and the ministry of repentance an instrument of revenge, and in so doing he shall exasperate the man, but never amend the sinner."

For lack of that just combination of skilfulness and faithfulness which the preaching of the Gospel requires, the pulpit has been rendered comparatively powerless during whole ages of its history. For successive centuries it was shackled with scholastic forms, trite in subject and wearisome in manner. The reaction against forms and enumerated points has not unfrequently degenerated into irrelevance and feebleness. With dull and pointless preaching religion has invariably declined; while reformations have ever followed a direct and pungent utterance of evangelical truth.

Indeed directness in preaching is the only just exponent of evangelical doctrine or of true religious feeling. This quality of preaching was specially characteristic of the Wesleyan reformation, and during the last hundred years it has become widely diffused throughout Protestant Christendom. Breaking over the hoary restraints of scholasticism, it has disturbed the torpor of spiritual death, and roused the world to a new religious activity.

The age in which we live, more than any preceding one, demands direct address on religious subjects. In the bustle and excitements of the present day, and especially in our own country, men have neither time nor disposition for vague hints or round-about communications on any subject, and especially on a subject to

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which, though they perceive its importance, they have a natural and habitual disinclination. Consequently the preacher especially has need to study both directness of thought and of utterance in order reasonably to cherish the most distant hope of success.*

God's message is direct.

Some there may be, even in these times, who go through a certain routine of pulpit and pastoral service without even sufficiently waking up to think what their responsibilities do most demand; others content themselves with preparing brilliant essays and fine orations for pulpit delivery; but the true preacher must feel that he has a message from God to the souls of the people, and must be studious of the most effective manner of its presentation. Whatever his particular subject may be, he will not feel that his work with it is done until he has in such a manner applied it to the people as to alarm their fears, quicken their hopes, excite their devotions, and prompt their religious efforts.

In this great work he will find that however much the mind may be enlightened and the judgment regulated in other ways, the persuasion of direct address must be employed to control the will and the affections. Indeed the superiority of persuasion has been conceded in all ages. The ancients regarded it as embodying so nearly the whole of the orator's work that they defined oratory to be the art of persuasion.

* Vinet well says: "The use of the allocutive form, or that of direct address to the hearers, is a means of retaining the direct style. Without this a discourse is not a discourse, but a book. The use of this form compels us constantly to recur to the direct style, which is the truly powerful, truly oratorical style. For two reasons I commend this form: first, because the constant use of it will make you almost sure of attaining the direct style, which is so rare and so difficult; next, because in discourse properly so called it is the only true form, and whatever is false is feeble."—*Skinner's Translation*, p. 451.

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Certainly its application to Christianity does not detract from this its essential feature. True Christian ministers in all ages can say with the apostle, "Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men."

What a vast and important field opens before them for this work of persuasion! The conscience, the will, the affections, and the passions of men are the legitimate objects of their address. They may by a right use of the material given them arouse fear and inspire hope, they may excite love to God and Christ and men. They may excite the highest and noblest joys, and promote within the souls of their fellow-mortals every Christian grace and virtue.

The field of persuasion.

To such a glorious work the truths of the Gospel are perfectly adapted. They are sufficient for all the varying circumstances, wants, trials, hopes and fears, sympathies and responsibilities of men.

But in order to use them with due effect, a deep and heartfelt experience in the things of God is essential to the Christian minister. This alone enables him to speak as the common phrase has it, "*from* the heart *to* the heart." Scarcely less does a minister need, as a means of successful direct address, a large practical acquaintance with mankind. Without it he will be in danger of perpetual mistake. He needs not only to study his own heart, as did Massillon, but to study his congregation and the community in which he lives, their modes of thought, feeling, excuse and temptation.

With these prerequisites he may undertake often, and in all its forms, the applicatory treatment of the various appropriate themes of his ministry.

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CHAPTER VIII.

HOMILETICAL PRAXIS ON THE ARGUMENT.

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF PRAXIS.

STUDENTS in homiletics should not content themselves with merely comprehending a correct theory for the construction of sermons. They should make themselves familiar by repeated practice with the various kinds of discussion, and also with the styles of division which logicians and orators have elaborated as a means of developing and impressing truth.

Praxis for this object, as in mathematical studies, is to be commended as an excellent mental discipline, and if extended over a variety of forms, and continued for a sufficient length of time, will secure to the intending preacher a facility of invention and disposition which will be an invaluable aid to him in the conposition of sermons.

A lack of the necessary instruction and drill at this point has caused many well-meaning men to be miserably dependent on others for the plans of their sermons. It is this which has created a demand for books of skeletons, and has caused thousands of preachers to content themselves with being mere copyists, not to say plagiarists, when they ought to have been both independent and progressive in their capacity of sermonizing.

The object of the present chapter is to furnish an outline of example and practice from which a student

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may acquire a correct knowledge of the principles involved in practical dispositions, and may thus be enabled to employ technical forms correctly when it is desirable to use them, and also to know when to dispense with them to advantage.

It is a blind prejudice that would enjoin a total rejection of forms because forms have been abused; and it is a dull servility that will enslave itself to forms for forms' sake. A good mechanic needs to know the use of every tool belonging to his craft, and yet it is possible that the best mechanics will use the fewest implements. So every one of the Gospel ministry desiring to become a workman that needeth not to be ashamed should endeavour to acquaint himself with all the agencies that have contributed to excellence in preaching, that he may employ them readily whenever they may subserve a good purpose, or lay them aside gracefully whenever he can attain a better result without them.*

Proper use of forms.

In practical sermonizing the process of invention in outline, as heretofore described, is first in order, as

* To corroborate the position taken in this chapter, and illustrate the importance of homiletical praxis, the following extract is condensed and copied from Vinet's remarks on *Self-culture with reference to disposition:*

"To attain to the best possible, more and better practice and experience are necessary. Practice should be accompanied by and should provoke meditation; we should give thought to our modes of procedure, remark our faults, turn them to our advantage, interrogate our intellectual conscience.

"I would say to those who have time, Be not vain of a foolish rapidity. Do again what you have done. Regard a first effort only as a trial of your strength, a rough draft of what you have in hand. By one trial after another see how you may better arrange, better fuse together the different elements of your work.

"Finally, study models: analyse their method; endeavor to rival them. On the same subjects compare models with models."

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a means of ascertaining the fruitfulness of a subject and the most available lines of thought. Next in order, and the first legitimate work of disposition, is

GENERALIZATION.

Sir William Hamilton defines generalization as "the process of evolving the general or one out of the individual and manifold."

In homiletics it is the deduction of a specific theme from a text of Scripture. In its broadest sense, and generally for the purpose of exposition, it seeks the meaning of the text as a whole. Disregarding for the time those differences which may exist in the elements of a passage, it proceeds to group together all its essential ideas, and to condense them into a comprehensive form of statement denominated a categorical or direct proposition. For the purpose of deducing specific themes adapted to topical preaching minor generalizations may be made, as shown on page 171, chapter vii.

Essential to unity.

Nothing is so indispensable to unity as practice of generalization. If attended to in its proper order it prescribes the just limits of a discourse, and often suggest its most appropriate mode of treatment. If omitted, then the preparation is likely to become vague, and generalization will with difficulty be applied afterward. In the neglect of this simple but fundamental principle, thousands of so-called sermons have been preached, of which it would puzzle both preacher and hearers to name the exact subject.

It is therefore recommended as an invariable rule to employ generalization upon the text as a primary process of disposition, and as a means of fixing upon the precise subject of the sermon proposed.

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DIVISION.

When the subject is determined upon, and the kind of discussion chosen, the next step in order is analysis, which is practically equivalent to division.

As heretofore explained, disposition arranges the whole matter of a sermon from the introduction to the conclusion. Division is applied in the construction and disposition of the argument.

Partition, as used by the ancients, was the formal statement of division, in which sense there is no longer any use for the term. Some modern writers have sought to assign it to an office coördinate with division, in the idea that division separates a theme into similar parts and partition into constituent parts. In other words, they would have division divide and partition subdivide. This is to maintain a distinction without an essential difference. It is better to say that division both divides and subdivides. Hence in this work, division will be treated as a single topic, and if the term partition be used it will be as a synonym of division.

Division for rhetorical purposes is practically a systematic mode of definition. It shows us what belongs to a subject by bringing into distinct view its several elements. The process of division is exactly opposite to that of generalization. Generalization disregards the differences between individual parts or elements, and embraces only the properties they have in common. Division resolves the generalization into individual parts, and sets forth their respective differences.

A mode of definition.

As we know things or subjects only by the conceptions we form of them, we can of course only define them by the statement of those conceptions. To define anything, therefore, is to give in analysis the conception we have

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of it. We thus enable others to form similar conceptions, and this is the process of instruction.

Logic teaches that a conception cannot be conveyed or transferred from one mind to another as a whole. Hence the necessity of such an analysis as will exhibit in the most striking manner the essential resemblances and differences of the included parts. It is the work of all instructors so to plan and exhibit analyses of their subjects as to engage the attention and aid the comprehension of learners. Instruction is often rendered more complete by reversing the process after the conception is properly transferred, and by synthesis enabling the learner to gather up the elements into a whole, and remember them in the form of the original generalization.

The inverse processes of generalization and division may be illustrated by a simple logical scheme, which may be applied to any subject and extended almost indefinitely.

GENERALIZATION.

This and that particular, This or that particular, This or that particular, Individual.

whether *White, Red, or Black.* — whether *Hard or Soft,* — whether *Summer, Fall, or Winter,* *Variety.*

OAK, MAPLE, APPLE, SPECIES.

is comprehended in the one idea of a TREE. GENUS.

DIVISION.

A TREE may be either GENUS.

OAK, MAPLE, APPLE, SPECIES.

White, Red, or Black. *Hard or Soft.* *Summer, Fall, or Winter.* *Variety.*

This or that Individual W. R. and B. Oaks. This Individual H. and S. M. This or that Individual. Individuals.

Thus it will be seen that generalization traces affinities downward or inward to a common centre, while

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division from a common centre traces differences outward.

It is not within the design of this volume to give minute instructions in methodology. The author must therefore content himself with recommending students to make themselves very familiar with its processes as taught by logicians and applied in the systematic classification of the various sciences and branches of human knowledge. Not that it is desirable to introduce its technicalities into homiletics, but that it is very important for the homiletical student to profit by the mental discipline to be derived from this study, and by the nice distinctions it will enable him to make.

The following rules of division are specially appropriate to the construction of sermons.

RULES OF DIVISION.

1. Let the theme to be divided be single, and let but a single principle of division be followed.

2. Employ that principle of division which is best adapted to the special design of the address.

2. Let the divisions be few in number, and expressed with clearness and brevity.

4. Nevertheless, the divisions of a subject should be comprehensive, and if practicable exhaustive, that is, embracing parts which equal the whole.

5. Divisions should be coördinate, that is, of the same rank or class, avoiding the confusion of particulars with generals or species with genera; for example, oaks and elms with trees, roses with flowers, etc.

6. Divisions should be well arranged; not always in the same order, but always in correspondence to each other, and with a view to mutual dependence and support.

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The following may be stated as the leading principles of arrangement:

1.) The order of nature, including time, contiguity, progress, etc.

2.) The order of climax, and occasionally anticlimax.

3.) The order of augmenting force.

Departures from these principles invariably tend to confuse thought and weaken expression.

In homiletics two leading styles of division are recognized, the textual and the topical. Authors have greatly differed in their treatment of these branches of division, and as a consequence many persons have failed to comprehend their mutual relations, if not the true character of both. The object will now be to exhibit briefly the true character and the proper uses of each.

Two kinds.

§ 1. Textual Division.

Textual division resolves the *words of a text* into the principal heads of discourse. It regards the text itself as the theme of the sermon. It employs generalization chiefly as a means of reducing the theme to its briefest form of statement.

While in topical division the subject is divided, in textual the elements of division are furnished in the words of Scripture found in the text or their equivalents.

Many reject this style of division on account of its simplicity, and yet it is often beautiful in its application, and more than any other adapted to aid in the lucid declaration of the truth of God. It is specially applicable to texts containing precepts; commands, promises, warnings, and facts; also, to exposition.

Uses.

Textual division is not limited to any set number of

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forms, and yet there are three principal forms which are found to comprehend all the most important examples. They are, 1. That of the natural order; 2. That of analysis; 3. That of synthesis. For the sake of brevity they may be denominated,

1. Textual Natural. 2. Textual Analytical. 3. Textual Synthetical.

1. The NATURAL ORDER of textual division suits those texts in which distinctions of ideas already exist, and require only to be noted.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Rom. xii. 12. SUBJECT. *Qualities of Christian Character.*
I. Rejoicing in hope.
II. Patient in tribulation.
III. Continuing instant in prayer.

Text. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. SUBJECT. *The Abiding Graces.*
I. Faith.
II. Hope.
III. Charity.

Text. James iv. 2, 3. SUBJECT. *The Sterility of our Prayers.*
I. We have not, because we ask not.
II. We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss.
—BOURDALOUE.

Text. 1 John ii. 16. SUBJECT. *The Elements of Worldliness.*
I. The lust of the flesh.
II. The lust of the eyes.
III. The pride of life.—BOSSUET.

The natural order is also appropriately observed in many texts in which slight additions to the words will construct a series of propositions.

EXAMPLE.

Burder's division of Titus ii. 11, 12: For the Grace of God, etc.
SUBJECT. *Characteristics of the Gospel.*
I. It is the gift or grace of God.
II. It brings salvation.

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III. It has appeared unto all men.

IV. It teaches us to live a holy life. 1. Denying ourselves. 2. Living soberly. 3. Living righteously. 4. Living godly.

The natural order may be followed with great convenience and pertinence in large numbers of expository discourses, both when short and long texts are taken.

EXAMPLES.

Text. John i. 17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

SUBJECT. *The Grand Agencies of Religious Instruction.*

I. The Law. 1. Given by Moses. 2. Designed, etc.

II. The Gospel in its prime elements. 1. Of grace. 2. Of truth.

Text. Psalm i. SUBJECT. *Two Characters, two Destinies.*

I. Blessedness of the righteous man.

1. Who avoids evil;

(1. By walking not, etc. (2. By standing not, etc. (3. By sitting not, etc.

2. Who conforms to God's will;

(1. By delighting in his law. (2. By meditating upon his truth. 1.) Day. 2.) Night.

3. Who is prospered in all things;

(1. Like a well-planted tree. (2. Fruitful. (3. Unwithering.

II. Contrasted condition of the ungodly.

Not so. But, 1. Like the chaff, etc.
2. Not to stand in the judgment, etc.; but,
3. Finally to perish.

TEXTUAL ANALYTICAL.

In this method interrogation is the solvent, or instrument of analysis, by means of which the important points of a text are brought strikingly into view.

Interrogation is the key of knowledge, which, perseveringly applied, will unlock the most intricate labyrinths of truth. An excellent mode of investigating many

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passages of Scripture is to apply to them the simple interrogatories, Who? what? when? where? how? why? etc.

Who brings out the actor or speaker; what the act or subject; when, the time; where, the place; how, the manner; and why, the reason.

Upon the strict relevancy of the answers to two or more of such questions, and that in the words of the text or nearly so, depends the propriety of employing upon that text the interrogative or analytical division. In no instance should many questions be employed: and if in any case the textual answers are not adapted to become the heads of discourse, some other kind of division should be adopted.

Relevancy.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Matt. vi. 33: Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

SUBJECT. *The Supreme Object of Human Endeavor.*

I. What should men seek? "The kingdom of God and his righteousness."

II. How should it be sought? "First" in order of time, of importance, etc.

III. Why?

1. Our Lord commands, "Seek ye."

2. He also promises, "All these things shall be added unto you."

The above plan is altered from Jay.

Text. 1 Peter ii. 9: But ye are a chosen generation, etc.

SUBJECT. *The True Election.*

I. Who are here addressed? Genuine Christians, whom God has called, and who have come "out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II. What are their privileges? They "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."

III. For what purposes are such privileges given them? That they "should show forth the praises of him who hath called" them.

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TEXTUAL SYNTHETICAL.

The foregoing are the most obvious and practical modes of dividing textually, but a third mode may be designated as the synthetic. It results from a statement of the meaning or subject of different parts of the text in other words than those the text employs, and without reference to apparent analysis, yet having a real basis in the words of the text. The term *synthetic* may be vindicated as the opposite of *analytic*. Strictly speaking, there can be no synthesis without a previous analysis. That here referred to is employed when the analysis is so easy or so obvious that formal questions are unnecessary. Following the synthesis, it is often well to quote the word or words on which it is based.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Hosea viii. 12: I have written to him the great things of my law, etc.

SUBJECT. *The Scriptures.*

The text exhibits,

I. Their author: God says, "I have written."

II. Their subject: The great things of his law.

III. Their reception: "They were counted as a strange thing."

—JAY.

It will be readily perceived that the above heads result from the implied question, 1. Who wrote? 2. What 3. How received?

Text. John vi. 68: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

SUBJECT. *The Important Question.*

I. The being addressed: The "Lord" Jesus Christ.

II. The object of the inquiry: "Eternal life."

III. The mode of securing that object: "Going to Christ," etc.

Text. Ezek. xi. 19, 20: And I will give them one heart, etc.

SUBJECT. *Genuine Religion* is here developed in four particulars:

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I. Its author.
II. The disposition it produces.
III. The obedience it demands.
IV. The blessedness it insures.—JAY.

Remark.—In textual, analytical or synthetical division the preacher is at liberty to transpose the natural arrangement whenever the logical order requires a different collocation of ideas.

EXAMPLE.

Text. Luke xxiii. 43: Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

SUBJECT. *Christ's Promise to the Dying Penitent.*

I. Matter of the promise: To be "with him in paradise."
II. To whom given: The thief on the cross.
III. Time of realisation: "To-day."
IV. Assurance of realisation: "Verily, I say unto thee," etc.

§ 2. TOPICAL DIVISIONS.

There is an objection to the use of the term *topical* to designate a class of sermonal divisions on the ground of its association with the topics or *loci communes* of the old rhetoricians. This objection seems to have led some writers to adopt the compound terms *text-divisions* and *subject divisions*, thus throwing out both the terms *textual* and *topical*. There are, however, many reasons for preferring to retain both as employed in the present chapter. But the use of the term *topical* must be understood to relate to the subject of discourse rather than to any formal list of topics.

Topics of rhetoricians.

Nevertheless, as the topics of the rhetoricians have been so long employed, not only in the three great branches of secular oratory, but also as aids in the composition of sermons, it may be well to explain both their uses and abuses.

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The term *topic* is derived from the Greek word τοπος, *a place*. Its technical use in rhetoric arose from the idea of mapping out the whole field of argument, and fixing the localities to which speakers might resort for thoughts and modes of address. Hence another Latin name for them, *sedes argumentorum*.

The topics, therefore, were aids to invention rather than to disposition. They were alike open to all speakers and to the opposite parties in any controversy. They were supposed to furnish or suggest material available for the treatment of every possible subject, although not equally adapted to all subjects.

There was no positive agreement as to the number or order of the topics. Some writers divided them into two classes, internal and external. The internal topics arose from the bosom of the subject itself. External topics arose from any source without the subject, but applicable to it.

Aristotle, without classification, enumerated twenty-eight topics as belonging to demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial oratory. Claude, to aid in "the composition of a sermon," employed twenty-seven, not very dissimilar to those of Aristotle, and which his commentators have continued to elaborate. Even as recent a writer as Gresley has stated sixteen, which for an example are condensed and copied, namely:

1. Preliminaries, prejudices, etc. 2. Circumstances. 3. Manner. 4. Branches. 5. Objections. 6. Limitations. 7. Causes or reasons. 8. Bearings, tendencies, and effects. 9. Relations, inferences, and corollaries. 10. Connections. 11. Different views. 12. Chances of misunderstanding. 13. Chances of strengthening. 14. Contrasts and comparisons. 15. Persons to whom the subject applies. 16. Manner of deepening impressions.

The bare perusal of such a list shows how exceed-

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ingly artificial and cumbrous the system is, even in its modern garb.

An abridged and practical scheme of topics has recently found considerable favor as a help to study and the examination of scholars in Sunday-schools. It embraces six particulars for query and suggestion: 1. Persons; 2. Places; 3. Dates; 4. Doings; 5. Doctrines; 6. Duties. It is, perhaps, as available to preachers as Sunday-school teachers, although its frequent use would tend to an undesirable sameness in the construction of sermons. **Condensed scheme.**

While it need not be denied that occasional advantages might arise from an acquaintance with an elaborated system of topics, it may be seriously questioned whether preachers of the Gospel will not usually be more injured than benefited by any attempt to think and speak in accordance with so artificial a plan. The description above given is designed as an introduction to a more excellent way.

Let the reader understand that topical division, as now treated, is simply that in which the topic derived from a text is made the subject of division, without reference to the words of which the text is composed.

ADVANTAGES OF TOPICAL DIVISION.

Two leading considerations commend this style of division:

1. It conduces to a large and agreeable variety in preaching.

2. It tends to unity of discourse.

Wherever in textual division there is danger of violating essential unity by the introduction of numerous particulars, or the complication or displacement of coordinate ideas, or wherever the doctrine of a text may

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be more briefly or more strikingly set forth than in the language of the text itself, it is well to resort to topical division.

Many texts may be treated with equal facility either textually or topically. Other texts and portions of Scripture are more adapted to one style of division than the other. Preachers should qualify themselves by study and practice to discern quickly and clearly the adaptations and capacities of any texts that may come under their observation, and that in view of special objects. In studying a given text, it is sometimes well to experiment upon both modes of division, and then to select the one best adapted to his present design and to the free action of his thoughts. This can readily be done while disposing the outline of his sermon.

Both kinds practicable.

For reasons heretofore given, it is essential that generalization precede any attempt at topical division. Without it there is no topic to be divided. Skill is also needed in stating generalizations, or reducing texts to propositions adapted to oratorical treatment.

PRINCIPAL MODES.

If a subject is to be treated topically there are various modes of procedure. A few will be enumerated, one or more of which will be found applicable to the majority of subjects.

1. Analyze the topic by interrogation or otherwise.
2. Exhibit the idea in its appropriate relations.
3. Illustrate the facts or duties.
4. Exhibit the motives.
5. State the proofs.

More briefly, topical: 1. By Analysis; 2. By Relations; 3. By Illustration; 4. By Motives; 5. By Proofs.

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It is not taught that these five modes are all that may be fitly practised in topical division. It is conceded that the possible variety of treatment in religious discourse is infinite. Indeed, it needs to be so to suit the ever-changing circumstances of mankind, and the ever-varying capacities and mental constitutions of Christian ministers and their audiences. Hence, while on the one hand any stereotyped method of enunciating truth should be repudiated, on the other, the vagueness of a lack of system should be equally avoided. The object of the examples now to be given is, if possible, to mark out the golden mean between no system and all systems that are so multiform as to be impracticable.

TOPICAL BY ANALYSIS.

This style of division applies to a large class of themes: for example, the faithfulness of God; the excellence of truth; the efficacy of prayer.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Rom. v. 1: Therefore being justified by faith, etc.
SUBJECT. *Justification by Faith.*
I. Its Nature.
II. Its Grounds.
III. Its Results.

Text. Acts ii. 42: And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
SUBJECT. *Duties of Church Membership.*
I. To be well grounded in Christian doctrine.
II. To be joined to our brethren in true fellowship.
III. To partake regularly of the sacraments.
IV. To lead a prayerful life.
V. To continue steadfastly in all these duties.

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TOPICAL BY RELATIONS.

This form of division is applicable to conceded truths and uncontroverted principles.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Deut. iv. 35: Know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.

SUBJECT. *God is Infinitely and Gloriously Perfect.*

Consider this great truth in respect to, 1. His eternity. 2. His omnipresence. 3. His omnipotence. 4. His wisdom.

Text. 1 Peter i. 19: The precious blood of Christ.

SUBJECT. *Christ's Blood is Precious.*

I. Comparatively.
II. Intrinsically.
III. Superlatively.—PULPIT ENCYCLOPEDIA.

TOPICAL BY ILLUSTRATION.

This third form of topical division applies specially to facts and duties which are not denied, but which need to be more fully understood.

EXAMPLES.

Text. John xvii. 17: Thy Word is truth.

SUBJECT. *The Truthfulness of God's Word.*

Illustrated from,

I. Human history.
II. All established science.
III. Its descriptions of character.
IV. Its adaptation to the wants of men.

Text. Exodus xx. 8: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

SUBJECT. *The Sanctification of the Sabbath.*

This duty may be accomplished by,

I. Abstaining from worldly labor.
II. Public worship.
III. Private devotions and sacred studies.
IV. Self-denying labors in behalf of the souls of men.

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Text. Luke xiv. 7: He marked how they chose out the chief rooms.

SUBJECT. *Ambition.*

I. Ambition is blind in its aims.

II. It is presumptuous in its disposition.

III. It is odious in its results.—BOURDALOUE.

Text. Matt. vii. 12: Whatsoever ye would that men, etc.

SUBJECT. *The Golden Rule.*

This important precept of our Saviour may be complied with,

I. By a due consideration of the wants and woes of our fellow-men.

II. By cultivating a lively sympathy for the afflicted.

III. By faithful endeavors to mitigate the sorrows of the distressed.

TOPICAL BY EXHIBITION OF MOTIVES.

The rule to exhibit motives presupposes for its subject a duty which, though comprehended, is not performed with sufficient regularity or faithfulness. It needs, therefore, to be urged upon the people, as, in fact, do most religious duties.

EXAMPLES.

Text. Josh. xxiv. 15: Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

SUBJECT. *The Duty of Instant Choice to Serve God.*

This duty may be urged upon all,

I. Because God enjoins it.

II. Because our own interest demands the choice.

III. Because there is infinite peril in delay.

Text. Matt. vi. 14: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

SUBJECT. *The Duty of Forgiveness.*

Christianity clearly and emphatically enjoins this duty, and we may be urged to its practice by many motives.

I. Because an unforgiving spirit is injurious to ourselves.

II. It is unjust to our fellow-men.

III. It is offensive to God.

IV. Because Christ specially requires us to forgive injuries.

V. Because he makes our forgiveness of others the condition of being forgiven ourselves.

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TOPICAL BY PROOFS.

The rule to state the proofs obviously applies to propositions in behalf of which argument is necessary. It is a rule of wide application, since it is not only proper for a preacher to convince the unbelieving of the truth of Christianity, but also to confirm believers by a frequent rehearsal of arguments in support of the important truths which they already receive and cherish. Besides, our congregations are mixed, and it is often necessary to state the proofs of, to us, old and familiar truths for the benefit of those to whom they are new.

While this mode of division harmonizes perfectly with propositional discussion, and is perhaps most frequently tributary to it, yet it does not essentially require a logical proposition as its basis.

EXAMPLE.

Text. Matt. vii. 13: Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, etc.

SUBJECT. *The Danger of a Course of Sin.*

Proved from,

I. The ease and attractiveness of its entrance.

II. Its agreeableness, accommodated to every one's inclinations.

III. Its popularity. "Many go in thereat," thus influencing each other.

IV. Its certain issue in destruction.

Should the question arise whether some one of the foregoing modes of division *must* be applied to every text or employed in every sermon, a negative answer may be emphatically given. The styles of division above exemplified are simply representative, embracing indeed those most usually employed, but by no means all that might be found

These modes merely representative.

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available. Before leaving topical division, it may be observed that two or more of the styles illustrated may sometimes be combined in the subdivisions of the principal heads.

EXAMPLE.

Text. Acts xvii. 30: But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

SUBJECT. *Repentance.*

I. The nature of repentance explained.

1. Genuine sorrow for sin. 2. Evidenced by forsaking sin.

II. The duty of repentance proved,

1. From man's sinfulness. 2. From God's commands.

III. The motives for repentance stated.

1. Sin is destructive of happiness. 2. It is offensive to God. 3. Without repentance true faith in Christ is impossible.

RELATIONS BETWEEN DIVISION AND DISCUSSION.

The leading varieties of division having now been illustrated, their proper relation as auxiliary to discussion is obvious. Division should never be employed for the mere sake or from the mere habit of division. It should not be rejected when it will secure greater clearness or unity to the discussion.

The following are the more usual combinations between discussion and division:

1. Explanatory discussion employes textual division in all its forms, and topical division by analysis.

2. Observational discussion employs topical division by relations and by illustration.

3. Propositional discussion employs topical division by the statement of proofs and the exhibition of motives.

4. Applicatory discussion combines readily with every form of division.

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At this point the student will be prepared to form a correct judgment of the proper uses as well as the abuses of division in homiletics.

THE USES OF DIVISION.

1. Division is a branch and agency of disposition which also aids in completing the task of invention.

It is specially advantageous, if not indispensable, in forming logical plans of discourse; for however some affect to discard the name, they are obliged to avail themselves of what the name represents, or produce that against which Paley admonished young preachers, "a bewildered rhapsody without aim or effect, order or conclusion."

Facility in division enables the preacher to map out rapidly the region of thought he proposes to traverse, and to construct the whole framework of his argument before the labor of verbal composition is undertaken. By this means he can discover any weakness or lack of proportion, and readjust and improve at pleasure his plan of discourse without unnecessary labor or loss of time.

2. Division, thus employed in advance, contributes greatly to the facility and correctness of composition, whether in writing or in speaking.

3. It is specially important to the extemporaneous speaker, as giving him an easy grasp of his subject, and preventing him, when in the presence of an audience, from getting lost in a wilderness of words. Among the ancients memory was regarded as one of the essentials of oratory, and classed with invention, disposition and elocution. "Yet," says Cicero, "it is chiefly order that gives distinctness to memory;" and "there is scarcely any one of so strong

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a memory as to retain the order of his language and thoughts without a previous arrangement and observation of heads."

4. While the above considerations are urged in behalf of the speaker, it must not be overlooked that the hearer may derive corresponding advantages from well-constructed "heads of discourse," which Paley significantly calls "helps to perspicuity."

Unless an audience is enabled to perceive clearly the design of a speaker, and to comprehend his execution of that design, its time is worse than wasted; its disgust is often excited. Speakers being familiar with subjects in advance, may easily delude themselves with the supposition that they are understood, when their hearers gather no connected ideas from what they say. Well-expressed divisions tend to fix the attention of a hearer, and to assist his comprehension of a discourse. They also, in the language of Blair, following the idea of Quintilian, "give him pauses and resting-places where he can reflect on what has been said, and look forward to what is to follow."

5. Division also aids the memory of hearers by giving them points of association, around which they can assemble in review thoughts which, in the absence of such connections, would have vanished with their utterance.

A sermon that is not worth remembering is not worth preaching; and one so constructed that it cannot be remembered, however it may please in the moment of delivery, must be very poor.

Notwithstanding these and other excellent uses of division, it is capable of being so misemployed or mismanaged as to become highly objectionable.

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ABUSES OF DIVISION.

1. The most common misuse of division in former days was too great minuteness. By this the progress of discourse was checked, and attention directed to unimportant particulars.

2. Corresponding to this was excessive enumeration, calculated to overburden the memory. This fault has been the foundation of a great part of the ridicule hitherto expended upon this subject.

3. Inherent defects, such as,

1.) An oft-recurring and tedious sameness.

2.) A lack of unity, tending to one organic whole.

3.) A lack of symmetry.

4. A diffuse statement of the plan forming an epitome of the discourse. This necessarily makes all that follows seem repetitions.

THE STATEMENT OF DIVISIONS.

The propriety of employing divisions in sermons has been warmly discussed since the days of Fenelon, who strenuously opposed them, although his chief objections are only valid against their abuses.

Question at issue.

Nearly every writer on the subject of preaching seems to have thought it necessary to take sides either for or against divisions, overlooking the fact that their value may entirely change with a change of circumstances. Among those who in any proper sense appreciate disposition, the only proper question of debate is that relating to the enunciation of divisions. It does not follow, because divisions are important in the construction of a discourse, that in every case they should be stated, or at least formally announced. A scaffolding necessary to the erection of a house may be very much out of place if

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retained when the house is finished. So oftentimes in the preparation of a discourse the plan may be so thoroughly wrought into its structure, and so obvious in its delivery, that any separate statement would be redundant.

The question of stating divisions in a sermon must be determined purely on the ground of rhetorical propriety. Will the statement be advantageous to the design of a discourse? If so, it is called for. If not, it should be omitted. Fortunately, the essential variety of both subjects and occasions conduces to a sufficient variety of practice in this respect. The same remark applies equally to the manner of announcement. Moore describes three styles as comprehending the principal methods of introducing a subject. They are, "1. The elaborate and partially-developed announcement; 2. The less artificial, but still divisional announcement; 3. The flowing, or slightly-indicated announcement."

Modes of statement.

This author's treatment of the question now under consideration is so judicious as to deserve reproduction:

1. By the elaborate and highly artificial announcement, we mean one in which not only every division and subdivision must be advertised beforehand, but in which a largely-expanded syllabus of the intended course of thought is made to precede.

2. The less artificial but still divisional form of announcement, under one or other of its modifications, is adopted almost universally by the continental preachers, by the Nonconformists, and by a large proportion of the preachers of the Church of England, especially in the delivery of unwritten sermons. By Vinet and Claude and Simeon it is assumed to be the normal type of homiletical composition, all departures from it being tolerated only as an exceptional variety. By some of the French divines there is added to the first announcement, and antecedently to the general discussion of the subject, a more extended outline. The danger

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in this method is, that the second stage of development should encroach on the province of the third and give the appearance of repetition.

3. The last kind of announcement we have called the flowing or slightly-indicated announcement. It is rarely adopted by extemporaneous preachers, but is to be found in the sermons of those who always read from a manuscript.

An example of the last is given from Chalmer's sermon on the "Expulsive Power of a New Affection." Mr. Moore further says:

As a rule we strongly incline to some form of announced division. It may be set forth either in a continuous sentence, or by the more strongly-marked numerical breaks, as the nature of the subject may require; but it should always be with sufficient distinctness for the hearer to understand the general drift of the argument—what is the lesson to be enforced, or what is the truth to be proved.

In the case of the extemporaneous preacher especially, a well-staked-out course of thought seems almost indispensable. Unpremeditated forms of illustration are sure to suggest themselves in the course of preaching which it were a very bondage not to yield to. Yet he must not suffer them to carry him too far away. And the taking up of one of his announced heads both facilitates and indicates his coming back.

Nevertheless, for the sake of perspicuity the reader of a sermon has even greater need of halting-places and guides for the comprehension of his hearers.

Moore closes his remarks on this question by hinting at two extremes to be avoided:

The first is the danger of falling into a pedantic mannerism: of thinking ourselves obliged to accommodate every subject we take in hand to the same rigid external framework; so many chief heads first, and these duly waited on by a symmetrical train of satellites. The practice of some preachers of casting every text they preach from into a tripliform mould—with only such permutations as they can operate upon the statement, the

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doctrine, the inference; the instruction, the encouragement, the warning; the fact to be illustrated, the lesson to be taught, the principle to be applied—is found after a time to be very wearisome.

But, secondly, in relation to modern practice, and as far as the written sermon is concerned, we incline to think our danger is from the other side; the danger, lest in our anxiety to keep clear of all formality and stiffness in our announcement of a subject, we should leave people in the dark as to what our subject is. This fault is fairly chargeable upon some of the great writers who have supplied us with examples of what we have called the flowing or faintly indicated announcement. Their indications are often too faint to be observed. And in reading we sometimes find ourselves half through the sermon before the *quorsum tendit* of the discourse strikes us—whither the preacher is going to take us, or to what propositions we are expected to assent.

In addition to the above remarks, the following hints on this branch of the subject may prove practically useful:

RULES.

1. On plain topics, where the minds of hearers can readily follow the course of thought, the announcement of divisions is superfluous.

2. In treating upon abstract and difficult subjects it is essential to define our intended course, and often at least to erect landmarks to enable our hearers to know the progress they are making, and in due time to retrace their steps.

3. Granting that in given cases announcement is called for, we must choose between the different kinds in view of the principle of rhetorical adaptation, having due reference also to that of variety.

4. We should study to make our divisions tend to moral and spiritual ends as well as merely rhetorical results.

That this is practicable appears from an example given

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in the life of that eminently useful Scotch minister, M'Cheyne. "The heads of his sermons," said a friend, "were not the milestones that tell you how near you are to your journey's end, but they were nails that fixed and fastened all he said. Divisions are often dry; but not so *his* divisions—they were so textual and so feeling, and they brought out the spirit of a passage so surprisingly."

M'Cheyne himself remarked to a friend: "I used to despise Dr. Welsh's rules, (for dividing sermons,) but now I feel that I *must use* them, for nothing is more needful for making a sermon memorable and impressive than a logical arrangement."

5. Finally, if we err at all in this matter of announcing divisions it is better to err on the side of plainness and logical simplicity rather than on that of mazy indefiniteness. We had better make our points clearly and in a homely manner rather than make no points at all.

But there is no need of violating good taste either on one side or the other. Let the aim be to produce a correct and powerful impression, dispensing with whatever will weaken and adopting whatever will augment it.

A good motto with respect to the various subjects treated in this chapter is, *be guided by rules, but be not bound by them.*

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CHAPTER IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

ITS IMPORTANCE.

From the days of the earliest rhetoricians to the present time, *the conclusion* has been regarded as an important part of public discourse. As between different authors and different kinds of public speaking, there has been less divergence of view as to what belongs to a conclusion than with reference to most other parts of an oration. It has ever been deemed important that a discourse should end well—should leave upon the minds of its hearers a clear, agreeable, and powerful impression, an impression tending to a practical result.

If this is important in secular oratory, it is still more important in preaching the Gospel. Addresses before deliberative bodies and judicial tribunals are followed by immediate action. The members of a religious audience usually go their way, and long periods sometimes intervene before they are specially called to put in practice what they have heard in a sermon. Its impression, therefore, upon their memory and their convictions ought to be definite and lasting.

Greatest of all in preaching.

A sermon without application is worthless. The conclusion is the proper place for application in every style of treatment except the applicatory itself. Where continued application has been maintained throughout a discourse, a formal or separate conclusion is less called

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for; nevertheless, in that case a recapitulation may be appropriate, or the last applied argument in a series which, in view of its position, ought to be the most impressive, may itself become the conclusion. In cases of extreme brevity the last words of a discourse, whatever their form, are to be regarded as the conclusion.

DESIGN.

The proper design of a conclusion is to appropriately finish a discourse. The last impression produced by a speaker is that likely to be longest remembered. If it be good it may do much to atone for preceding deficiencies, or it may heighten preceding excellences. On the other hand, a faulty conclusion may destroy the impression of the best exordium, and do much to neutralize the effect of the best argument.

The design of a conclusion embraces several distinct ideas. 1. The avoidance of an abrupt termination. A preacher should always seek to leave in the mind an impression of completeness; of his having finished the work he took in hand. Without this the contrary idea will present itself unpleasantly to the mind, suggesting failure and incompleteness in a manner very likely to prejudice the effect of the discourse. Sometimes, however, a sermon may be terminated with a species of designed abruptness intended to stimulate thought and awaken feeling. This species of conclusion requires great skill and discretion, but when well executed secures happy results, in harmony with the highest objects of preaching.

2. Another design of a conclusion is to express thoughts which do not belong to any other part of the discourse. In the elaboration of a plan, disposition usually distributes to the conclusion pertinent and im-

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portant matter that has no place in either the exordium or the argument. When this is not the case, the preacher is at liberty to select matter that can be spared from the previous parts of a discourse, and which he can more effectively employ in the conclusion.

3. Summarily, it may be said that the design of a conclusion is to apply to the grand object of the discourse whatever has been said in the foregoing parts, and to intensify its effect by an emphasis peculiar to itself. Whatever design, therefore, the preacher cherished in the preparation and delivery of his discourse should be palpable in the conclusion, and, if possible, should be thoroughly accomplished before its close.

§ 1. The Matter appropriate to Conclusions.

The matter or themes of the conclusion may appropriately be various.

1. *Inferences.* At the end of a logical argument one or more inferences from the points proved are strictly in order. This style of conclusion has at some periods been carried to excess, but now is comparatively little practised. Nevertheless, it is not to be entirely rejected either in explanatory or observational discussion, although perhaps it has a closer affinity with propositional.

2. *Recapitulation* is well adapted to explanatory, observational, and applicatory discussion. It enables the preacher, by rehearsing his leading thoughts in a summary form, to impress them upon the memory of his hearers, and to make them converge more powerfully upon the great object of persuasion. Recapitulation, when employed in conclusion, need not occupy the whole space. Indeed, it may often be most fitly used

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as a species of transition, a connecting link between the argument and the ultimate or crowning impression.

3. *Appeal*, including specific addresses to different classes and characters; for instance, to the aged and the young, parents and children, penitent and impenitent, Christians, backsliders, etc. Great care must be taken to avoid sameness in the order or matter of appeal.

4. *Exhortation.* Hortatory conclusions are frequently called for on nearly every class of subjects, and following every style of discussion.

Exhortation may be either general or specific. It may relate to immediate or remote action. It may be applied to the sinner or the saint. It may avail itself of alternatives, of admonitions, of promises, and even of pertinent and impressive anecdotes. In short, the whole field of fact, of experience, and of Scripture is open to supply choice material for a concluding exhortation.

RHETORICAL ADVICES.

With this and with the preceding topic, the student should associate in his mind the more valuable suggestions which rhetoricians have recorded with reference to excitation and addresses to the feelings and the passions. They are summarily these:

1. The audience must have been gradually prepared in advance for pathetic address. Appeals to the passions not founded on knowledge or conviction are worse than fruitless. They react against the speaker. Hence discussion should precede them, producing conceptions and judgments preparatory to those feeling and purposes which result in action.

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2. The speaker must avoid indicating his purpose to move the feelings. "Never set apart a head of discourse in form for raising any passion; never give warning that you are about to be pathetic, and call upon your hearers, as is sometimes done, to follow you in the attempt. This almost never fails to prove a refrigerant to passion. It puts the hearers immediately on their guard, and disposes them for criticising much more than being moved."*

3. The speaker must himself be possessed of real feeling. His mind must so participate in the results of his own argumentation that at the appropriate moment his emotions rise and assume a leadership over the emotions of his congregation. "There are a thousand interesting circumstances suggested by real passion which no art can imitate and no refinement can supply. There is a contagion among the passions. The internal emotion of the speaker adds a pathos to his words, his looks, his gestures, and his whole manner, which exerts a power almost irresistible over those who hear him."†

4. Corresponding to this state of his own feelings, the speaker must employ only the appropriate thoughts and language of emotion.

(1.) He should present particular rather than general views of his subject. Whole audiences are sometimes moved to tears by statements of individual sufferings on a field of battle, when general statements of the most dreadful carnage awaken little or no emotion.

(2.) The speaker should select only those points and features of the subject which are adapted to produce the sentiments he desires to awaken. These will generally be those more prominent and striking features which imply others of minor importance.

* Jamieson, following Blair. † Ibid.

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(3.) His language should be simple and unaffected, yet animated and glowing, calculated to stimulate the imagination of his hearers and to give it scope for action.

5. Finally. "Beware of straining passion too far, of attempting to raise it to unnatural heights. Preserve always a due regard to what the hearers will bear; and remember that he who stops not at the proper point, who attempts to carry them further in passion than they will follow him, destroys his whole design. By endeavoring to warm them too much he takes the most effectual method of freezing them completely."*

DEVOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS.

As it is of great importance to maintain in a discourse, when practicable, the principle of climax, preachers often find it well to use for their closing expressions some form of devotional utterance. The following is a classification of the principal forms of this style of conclusion:

1. *A striking passage of Scripture.* It is sometimes highly fitting for the preacher to end as he began, with his text. But often other passages of the divine word occur to him as even more appropriate. For instance, a sermon on repentance might be concluded with Ezekiel's thrilling appeal: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" A sermon on the plan of salvation might emphatically and suggestively terminate in St. Paul's exclamation: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

2. *Prayer.* A supplicatory expression may often be

* Jamieson.

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used at the closing sentence of a discourse. Well employed words of prayer at the crisis of a sermon not only give dignity to the subject, but seem to array it in all its force between the hearer and his God.

A prayerful utterance at the conclusion of a sermon often assumes the form of a benediction. Quotations of Scripture and benedictions are often mingled together, as in the following examples from Richard Watson.

Watson's sermon on "The Coming of the King of Zion" closes with these words:

As the redeemed of the Lord, let us "return and go to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads," and then at last we "shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away!" God grant us this grace, for Christ's sake! Amen!

That on "The Knowledge of Christ" concludes thus:

While millions of mankind are actually "perishing for lack of" this "knowledge," let us incessantly pray that God would "send forth his light and truth," and that his "way may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations."

3. *A doxology.* This may be a direct quotation, or a paraphrase of some of the inspired ascriptions of praise to God. Of the latter a somewhat artificial, but nevertheless striking example may be given from Bishop Heber's sermon on "The Existence of Spirits:"

To Him, the seed of the woman and bruiser of the serpent's head; to Him, from the inhabitants of every world and element, and sun and star; from all that dwell on the earth, above and under it, be ascribed as is most due, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, all might and all honour, glory and dominion, now and forever."

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A more harmonious and triumphant example is found in the conclusion of Dr. Mason's celebrated sermon on "Messiah's Throne:"

The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent; when the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine shall call upon the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile, and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one alleluiah, Salvation! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Comfort one another with this faith and with these words: "Now blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious Name forever. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!"

§ 2. Essential Characteristics of Conclusions.

Variety.

The foregoing precepts and examples will suffice to indicate the appropriate material of conclusions, and also to point out *variety* as a leading principle which should govern in their structure. No preacher should form the habit of closing his sermons in any uniform mode, for however impressive a given style may be, it will by iteration lose its effect. While this principle demands habitual variation of mode, and sometimes may even dictate the seeming abruptness heretofore described, yet it will never authorize in a conclusion the use of new matter, or that which is not appropriately connected with the main subject of discourse.

Brevity.

Another important characteristic of conclusions should be *brevity*. Nothing can exceed the ill taste or the bad effect of long-drawn perambulatory conclusions. Yet excessive length is a common fault of the conclusions of extemporaneous

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preachers and writers; in fact, of all who do not govern themselves both in the preparation and delivery of sermons by well-defined plans. New thoughts occur to them, and they are hitched on to what has gone before. What is worse, sometimes the preacher becomes conscious that he has failed to accomplish the object of his discourse, or to awaken the degree of interest he ought to have excited, and he struggles on in the vain endeavor to compensate the fault, until at last he is forced to terminate further from his object than when his conclusion began. Few things are more tiresome to hearer or preacher than the undue continuance or the endless circling about of an indefinite and protracted conclusion.

Avoid languor.

Next to this in the catalogue of faults is dullness, or languor of delivery; indeed any subsidence of oratorical power which enfeebles the final impression. The best remedy for these faults is to condense the foregoing parts of the discourse into their appropriate time and space. For although the conclusion should be brief, it cannot with impunity be jostled out of the position due to it. It has its own office to fill, and the wise preacher will not allow it to be displaced or rendered nugatory. Neither will he continue his discourse till his voice is weakened, or his strength is exhausted. He will aim to close with life and energy, even though his energy may appear somewhat subdued, as more tributary to solemnity and moral power.

Power in a conclusion is not so much attained by startling words and loudness of voice, as by a certain concentration of thought, which brings the whole weight of the discourse to bear at a single point, and thus results in a strong and lasting impression. How different is such a result from that of an indefiniteness

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which loses sight of the main object at the very moment when that object should be made most palpable, and also of that feebleness which exhausts itself before the object is reached.

To attain the highest excellence in executing the conclusion of a discourse is perhaps the most difficult as well as the most important task of an orator. But the elements of success are within the reach of every one. They are, a careful study of the proper design, the appropriate material, and the just limits of this branch of discourse; a close observation of the results of different modes in application to different subjects, and a persevering determination to attain excellence at whatever expense of effort.

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CHAPTER X.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF THE SERMON AS A WHOLE.

Having considered the entire work of disposition in its distribution of the materials of a sermon and in the structure of each principal part, it is now important to ascertain what is necessary to a sermon as an organic whole.

If hitherto we have been occupied to some degree with the anatomical framework, without which no organized body can exist, we are now to consider the body as clothed in flesh and pervaded with life. We are to investigate its character, and determine its fitness or unfitness for the work to which it is appointed. We are not merely to consider whether it has life, but whether "the life is for the light of men." Character and fitness.

In general terms it may be asserted that there are at least four qualities which ought to pervade every sermon as essential elements of its character.

Every sermon should be at once evangelical, interesting, instructive, and effective or powerful for good.

Neither of these qualities, except the last, necessarily implies the existence of the others. A sermon thoroughly evangelical in sentiment may be dry, intricate, uninteresting, uninstructive, and powerless.

Again, a sermon may be in many senses interesting, and yet wholly void of evangelical truth or spirit, equally uninstructive, and entirely inefficient for religious good.

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Still again, a sermon may contain much instruction, and impart valuable knowledge on divers subjects, without being evangelical or Christian in any proper sense.

The qualities of sermons necessarily depend both upon the choice of subjects and the manner of their treatment. It will be very difficult, if not impossible to render any subject interesting in which the proper elements of interest do not inhere. It will be equally impracticable to be instructive on any topic which the speaker does not, at least in some of its aspects, understand better than his audience.

Effectiveness, in a Christian sense, demands all the preceding qualities in due combinations, and superadds such an utterance of them as results in accomplishing the spiritual ends whereunto the word of God is sent. These qualities severally deserve consideration.

§ 1. Evangelical Character.

An evangelical character must be regarded as strictly fundamental to all true preaching. This quality involves the truth proclaimed and the spirit in which it is expressed.

As to truth, evangelical preaching demands a full and frequent declaration of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; such as the depravity of man, the divinity of Christ, the necessity and provisions of the atonement, the essentiality of repentance and conversion, justification by faith, and sanctification by the Spirit.

All truth may be evangelically applied.

This quality of preaching also requires that all other truth when employed should be the subject of evangelical application. For that purpose the whole range of truth is at the disposal of the Christian minister. He may with that end in view

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set forth the truths of natural religion, of Judaism, and and even of philosophy, history, and science. To dwell on such truths principally, or to the exclusion of the foregoing class, would necessarily destroy or neutralize the evangelical character of preaching—would be to announce another Gospel. Still the truths comprehended under the various systems alluded to, are neither to be ignored nor slighted. They are indeed to be regarded as the necessary compliment of the Gospel system. But they are to be held as subordinate, and chiefly used for illustration.

As to the spirit of preaching, there are modes of declaring even pure evangelical truth not in harmony with its design. Such, on the one hand, would be a harsh denunciatory manner; on the other a formal, careless, or trivial style.

The spirit of the Gospel essentially requires love, meekness, earnestness, solemnity, and zeal to be blended together in the communication of the truths belonging to it, and by which it seeks to win the hearts of men. The spirit of evangelical preaching especially demands purity of motive and singleness of purpose to glorify God, even at the expense of oratorical ambition or wordly renown.

In these respects it differs signally from every other kind of public speaking. Here is the reason why Christian experience is essentially necessary to the right preaching of the Gospel, and why it is impossible for an unbeliever, however learned or ingenious, to be successful in the work, even though he were to make use of evangelical truth as his material. These considerations may also enable us to discover one great cause of the difference of success among preachers, and also the difference of success on the part of the same preacher at different periods of his

Characteristic difference.

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life, and in accordance with different degrees of piety and different kinds of effort.

As our Saviour said of casting out evil spirits, "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting," so in respect to the great work of preaching Christ and him crucified, no man can successfully accomplish it if he have not "the spirit of Christ."

"A man cannot," said M'Cheyne, "be a faithful minister until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake." In a similar view Cecil remarked: "God puts peculiar honor on the preaching of Christ crucified. Men may preach Christ ignorantly, blunderingly, absurdly; yet (if they know no better and do it in the right spirit) God will give it efficacy, because he is determined to magnify his own ordinance."

On the other hand, vain is the highest intellectual effort, even of pious men, if it be misdirected, if it seek to lift men to heaven by any other power than that of the cross. This fact is strongly set forth in a sermon by Rev. Dr. Todd, of Pittsfield, on "The Tendencies of Intellectual Preaching." The following extracts are in point:

Intellectualism insufficient.

Mere exhortation will soon become vapid and powerless; and to bring men into a light merely intellectual, however strong, will leave the heart unreached. The Churches under such preaching might not know what ailed them, but they would feel that their wants are not met. The light of the Aurora Borealis may stream up and tremble and fill the heavens, pure as the flashes of joy or sorrow flitting over an angel's face, but you grow cold while you gaze at it.

There may be the most beautiful productions of the imagination, of the taste, and the creations of an earnest and lofty spirit, but the soul may starve while she seems to be feasting on the very confectionery of the intellect. The tree may seem as if reared in the garden of the Lord; it may spread wide, and be

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loaded with a superabundance of foliage and flowers, fresh as ever-blooming exotics; but the fruits of the Spirit will not grow thereon. Honestly, faithfully the workman may task his powers to bring out what is new, bold, original, and great; but he mourns, and the people mourn, that the results are no greater than if he had a life-lease of what is felt to be the dreary domain of commonplace.

Is it not a melancholy fact that the pulpits that have been the most renowned for talents, that were brilliant and lofty, have been far from being successful in proportion, the conversion of sinners and the spirituality of the Church being the standard?

We can conceive of a genius with power to take you to the rings of Saturn and turn them inside out, but that genius would not reach the heart. Talents elsewhere may produce results in proportion to their greatness, but not so here. The undue exaltation of the intellect is sure to be punished by at least an equal destitution of vital piety.

We must remember that men are made up of intellect and of emotion, or heart; that the intellect predominates only in a very few with whom we have to do; that the great body of men are not intellectual; and it is an ordained law of God that his preached word shall reach the heart only when it comes through the heart, so as to be shaded and even colored by the heart. Eloquence may soar on a sublime wing on other subjects, and may carry men even to frenzy; but in the Gospel, the eloquence of the heart only can come into communication with the heart, and this does and must and will.

If these views are correct, with what fervency should every preacher offer the prayer: "Create within me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me!"

Demonstrations of history.

The history of the Church during successive ages proves that the progress of true religion in the world has ever depended upon the evangelical character of preaching as an essential agency.

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The preaching of the apostles was the Gospel itself, and glorious were the results. During the first and second centuries the example of the apostles was generally followed, with similar results, notwitstanding widespread and bloody persecutions.

In the third century allegorical and mystical methods of treating religious doctrines, and even Scripture facts, spread their baleful influence over the pulpit of centuries following. A little later, as the vitality of Christianity declined, preaching by some of the leading Fathers began to be modelled servilely after the precepts of the Grecian rhetoricians. Between these two classes of errors, preaching gradually lost its power, and finally, during the medieval ages, became for the greater part a ceremony, but sometimes an instrumentality of evil. As a consequence the truth of God was obscured, and its light nearly withdrawn from the world.

Pointed evangelical preaching was the prime source of power among the reformers, enabling them with the blessing of God to refute and banish from large portions of the Church the accumulated errors of centuries.

So again in England, when not only the ministers of the so-called reformed Church, but even the Puritans themselves, fell into a style of preaching in which metaphysical and philosophic divinity predominated over the plain and pungent doctrines of evangelical truth, vital piety declined to such a degree that the Church lost confidence in the scriptural means of grace, and resorted in vain to "moral societies" as a means of checking the tide of public profligacy and corruption. It was in this emergency that God raised up Wesley, Whitefield, and their coadjutors, as flaming heralds of evangelical truth, under whose ministrations a glorious revival of pure and undefiled religion was caused to spread over both England and America.

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From that period to the present this principle has been illustrated. True religion has been revived and established wherever evangelical truth has been faithfully preached by a ministry who, having experienced its power, have also exemplified its excellence; while it has declined and the ways of Zion have mourned wherever this essential characteristic of Gospel preaching has been wanting.

The evangelical character of preaching now commended will do much to redeem a sermon from other and serious defects. The truth itself has force, and so also has the spirit of love and meekness. Let them be joined together, and although they may be to some degree depressed and neutralized by the counteracting effect of dull conceptions and feeble utterances, yet they will do good, and often accomplish glorious results unaided by more brilliant qualifications.

Inherent power of truth.

Happily, we live at a period and in circumstances in which evangelical truth is widely appreciated. The revivals, the missionary efforts, and the rapid progress of the truth during the last hundred years, have proceeded as direct results from a style of preaching more generally evangelical than has been previously known since the earliest centuries of the Christian era.

Demands of the present and future.

Although the present times are not without alarming tendencies of departure from both the spirit and form of evangelical truth, yet there are powerful agencies at work to counteract those tendencies, and to make the Gospel more than ever the power of God unto salvation.

May every reader of this volume be enabled to cast the weight of his life and influence into the scale of a pure evangelism, and thus hasten the day of the Gospel's final triumph!

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§ 2. Interest.

It is due to the excellence and intrinsic importance of evangelical truth that it be proclaimed in an interesting manner. No preacher has a right to mask the glorious Gospel in dry, vague, prosy, or enigmatic utterances; neither to caricature it with formality or bombast.

Definition. Interest, as a quality of discourse, is an inherent power of engaging and holding the attention of those to whom the language is addressed. Its essential importance is seen in the fact that no mind can be profited unless its attention is both arrested and occupied. Memory is also dependent upon the fact and the degree of attention; while there is little hope of the heart being affected by any discourse in which the mind does not become deeply interested.

NECESSITY OF AWAKENING INTEREST.

The preacher must remember that in a large class of his hearers there is a native aversion to the Gospel which he preaches; an aversion strengthened by habits of sin and the pride of rebellious hearts. This aversion it is his duty and necessity, as far as possible, to overcome by awakening in their minds a lively interest in his subject.

Petty surprises and startling paradoxes fall entirely beneath what is demanded for this object. Such artifices, however commended and practiced by some, are usually regarded by intelligent hearers as signals of mental weakness or poverty of resource, which excite pity for the speaker rather than interest in his subject.

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MEANS.

It is doubtless impossible to reduce to a systematic form of statement all the elements which may be made to contribute to the essential object of making Christian truth interesting. Much more is it impossible to describe the infinitely diversified forms in which different minds will apply interesting phases of truth to the countless varieties of subjects and circumstances.

A few practical hints may nevertheless be found useful in guiding the efforts of young preachers to make their discourses interesting.

BE INTERESTED YOURSELF, IF YOU WOULD INTEREST OTHERS.

Shams avail nothing here. It is impossible to awaken the interested attention of auditors, if the speaker is not interested himself. This is equally true of writing and of speaking. Hence the reciprocal influence of composition and delivery. No elocution can atone for the dullness or other grave defects of the matter it enunciates. In like manner the effect of the most perfect composition may be neutralized by a bad delivery.

To accomplish the object now proposed, a discourse must not only contain interesting matter, but must set that matter forth in interesting combinations of thought and delivery. It requires no practiced ear to discern the difference between the mischievous cry of fire in the streets, and the sharp, true ring of *fire!* FIRE! as the words are uttered by one who sees and feels the danger of a conflagration. So the preacher has no need to inform his hearers that he feels interested in his subject. If such be the fact they will either become aware of it, or, what is more

True feeling.

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important, will find a similar feeling awakened in their own bosoms.

The principle here stated is incidentally instructive in reference to various modes of pulpit preparation. It shows emphatically the danger of relying upon old sermons and plans of discourse, as well as that of the too frequent repetition of sermons. There is something in the genesis of thought which not only causes the the mind to glow with interest, but which kindles a similiar glow in the minds of others. That glow having once expired in the speaker's breast, it is difficult, if not impossible, to rekindle it. The "threadbare story," or the "thrice-told tale," may drag its length along; but no matter how well chosen the language, or how well adjusted the periods, no enthusiasm marks the utterance, and that which originally sparkled and vivified is now dull and stale.

Whoever supposes that a stock of old sermons will avail him as well as new where they have not been heard, deceives himself. It is only when the preacher can, by special review, bring back to his own mind the original feeling of interest that he will succeed with the productions of the past. And if his mind be at all progressive this will be exceedingly difficult, unless he can blend new things with the old in such a manner as to increase the interest of both.

As well might the man of middle years expect to recover his original interest in the trifles that amused his boyhood, as the preacher in advanced life to be thoroughly interested in the best compositions of his school-days or his incipient ministry. The themes may be equally interesting, but his comprehension of them and his capacity to illustrate them should have grown with his advance in years and increased with his constant practice.

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If these views are correct, it may be safely remarked that no style of pulpit preparation, however elaborate, is sufficient to answer the highest ends of preaching for a great length of time. Hence the rule should be to make special preparation for every occasion of preaching, at least to an extent that will thoroughly enlist the thoughts and interested feelings of the preacher. Only thus will he be in a position to interest others.

Some preachers when they have prepared a choice sermon count it as a substantial addition to their stock in trade, to be carefully hoarded for future use. Not so the great preachers of the day, who, having confidence in their own powers to produce as good sermons in the future as they have done in the past, and indeed better than any of their past productions would be in the future, do not hesitate to give their sermons promptly to the press.

Interest progressive.

Thus they put themselves under the necessity of constant and increasing mental activity, and the result is that they acquire additional strength with increasing effort. Other preachers may safely imitate their habits in this respect; remembering that though novelty is not an essential element of interest, freshness is.

CULTIVATE CLEARNESS AND VIVIDNESS OF EXPRESSION.

Without pausing now to consider in detail the qualities of style adapted to pulpit address, it may be asserted that the perspicuous utterance of definite thoughts is essential to an awakening of interest in the minds of others. Hence misty conceptions, involved sentences, ill-chosen words, and whatever else might tend to befog or bewilder the mind of the hearer, should be carefully avoided as barriers in the way of exciting a true interest in any subject.

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It is difficult to say which audiences most dislike, prosy and lifeless sermons, or those pretentious discourses which are above their comprehension or aside from it. It is impossible for them to be interested in either class. Hence preachers must know what language is comprehensible to their hearers, and learn to wield it with directness and power.

Guthrie, the great preacher of the Free Scotch Church, illustrates this subject at the same time that he indicates his view of its importance. Witness the following brief extract from the introduction to his sermon on "Neglected Warnings:"

> 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.

No audience would mistake the meaning of such language, or fail to perceive clearly the object the preacher had in view.

ACQUIRE FELICITY AND PRACTISE FREQUENCY OF ILLUSTRATION.

The example of the great preacher is authoritative on this point. Comparatively few people are capable of following long trains of abstract reasoning, or of comprehending condensed or protracted statements of profound moral and religious truth. Hence the preacher must come down to the point of view occupied by the masses of men, take them by the hand and lead them by easy steps to the higher ground of enlarged conception. In such endeavors nothing serves more efficiently than well chosen and familiar illustrations.

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Materials of illustration lie thick before the preacher throughout the great worlds, 1. Of nature. 2. Of history, sacred and profane. 3. Of experience and observation. With all these he should make himself familiar for the express purpose of gathering from them whatever fact or resemblance may be turned to the high account of aiding men to relish and comprehend religious truth.

Some men possess by nature a special talent for comparison, which inclines them to the excessive use of figurative language. With them the task is to restrain and chasten their fondness for analogy. Others, and by far the greater number, need to cultivate systematically and assiduously the power of perceiving and stating analogies. But as preachers of the Gospel none should content themselves without introducing into their discourses, in greater or less abundance, what an old minister called *the likes;* meaning those resemblances or figurative illustrations by which, if well managed, audiences never fail to be interested.

Should be cultivated.

The frequent use of familiar and striking illustrations constituted one of the principal charms of the preaching of Chrysostom, and there is no one trait more common to the most popular preachers of the present day. Those who have heard or read the sermons of Guthrie, Spurgeon, Beecher, and Simpson will recognise the correctness of this statement.

Let none be discouraged by supposing that the talent of illustration is extremely difficult to be acquired. Any one who will sit down with a little child, or a class of children, and apply himself to the task of entertaining and instructing them for half an hour, will find himself instinctively resorting to comparisons, narratives, and the kindred means of illustration, which have only to be adapted to children of a larger growth to answer the very end now proposed. If he desires higher and

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better examples he has only to open his Bible and observe how the great Teacher, and nearly all the inspired writers, employ the various objects of nature, and the events of life and of providence, to elucidate and embellish religious truth.

Whoever is deeply convinced of the importance of appropriate illustrations as an element of interest in a religious discourse, should study carefully and practically the laws of figurative language as defined by the best rhetoricians. By means of this study three important things are to be learned:

1. What belongs appropriately to the several recognized forms of figure. 2. How to avoid the serious fault of mixed metaphor. 3. What forms of figure are most appropriate either for instruction or impression.

The latter class, such as apostrophe, interrogation, hyperbole, vision, climax, etc., although often employed to arouse and fix attention, are more properly embraced in the department of style.

1. The figures most available for purposes of instruction are simile and metaphor, the one being a direct and formal comparison, the other an informal and abbreviated comparison. These figures not only excite the attention of hearers, but occupy their thoughts, and thus add permanent interest to a discourse.

A few examples are subjoined from Guthrie's small volume of sermons entitled "Speaking to the Heart:"

SIMILES.

It is a dreadful thing to see the happiness of a human being, like a brittle vase, shattered at a blow, the fair fabric collapse in an instant into a heap of ruins.

Among the rudest pagans death never quenched the hope of immortality. That hope rose over the grave, shining to weeping

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eyes like the evening star above the place where the sun had gone down.

Flowing through the earth like streams amid desert-sands; shining in life's darkest nights like stars in a wintry sky; throwing a bright bow over every cloud of fortune; to *love* more than to anything else this world owes what blessedness it enjoys.

A fruit-tree in early summer, covered with a sheet of flowers, topped by a thrush that pours forth a flood of song, standing on a sward enamelled with flowers, and under calm blue skies that ring with music, offers a striking contrast to the same tree as it appears in autumn, with the ground around it strewed with withered leaves, and only a few fruits of all those rich blossoms hanging on its naked branches. Still greater the contrast between this world as it presents itself to the eyes of youth and as it appears to those of age. How rarely are its expectations of happiness fulfilled! Of its blossoms how few ever ripen into fruit.

SIMILE AND METAPHOR.

Our Lord found many a topic of discourse in the scenes around him; even the humblest objects shone in his hands, as I have seen a fragment of broken glass or earthen ware, as it caught the sunbeam, light up, flashing like a diamond.

With the stone of Jacob's well for a pulpit and its water for a text, he preached salvation to the Samaritan woman. A little child, which he takes from his mother's side and holds up blushing in his arms before the astonished audience, is his text for a sermon on humility.

METAPHOR.

It is by an altar and through a victim that there is forgiveness with God; pardon flows to men in a stream of blood. But here the altar is a cross, and its victim is the Son of the Highest.

2. Next to the formal tropes exemplified, *illustrations from analogy* add interest to discourse.

Of these there are two classes: 1. Analogies of fact, such as the phenomena of nature and historical ex-

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amples. 2. Hypothetical analogies, based upon fancy or supposition.

Did space allow, most interesting and instructive examples of the first class might be adduced from the best authors. It must suffice, however, to present a brief description of the habits of a preacher who excelled in historical illustration.

A writer* in "Sprague's Memorials" says of Dr. Porter, of Andover:

> I have often gone from his preaching with my heart wrung, literally wrung by the grasp he had laid upon it, and it was some time before the blood flowed freely in its channels. For making this impression he possessed two qualifications, the first of which I think especially demands attention, because it is valuable and because it can be acquired.
>
> It was the habit of illustrating and enforcing his doctrine by examples, chiefly by grave historical or biographical anecdotes. He seemed to me to have read history and biography with this view—to have read them as a preacher—to have read them as I imagine Cicero would have recommended, who would have the orator know everything, but subordinate all knowledge to his life-task as orator.
>
> I think Dr. Porter must have had a commonplace-book for the record and classification of facts and anecdotes drawn from his whole reading. Out of his treasury, wherever it was, he was always bringing some pertinent illustrations; some words from Baxter or Milton, uttered in appropriate circumstances; some incident from the life of Boerhaave or of Oberlin, or some grand historical anecdote which fell upon the point to which it was applied with astonishing force. It carried irresistible conviction; it drove the nail to the quick. It was light and power; it was lightning that rent the hardest obstruction in its way.
>
> The other qualification was strong religious emotion.

Corresponding to this conjecture the biographer of Dr. Porter says:

* Dr. Orville Dewey.

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He read and thought as a preacher, and all his intellectual exercises had reference to this one grand business of his life. He was accustomed in his general reading to keep memoranda of interesting facts in a blank book always at hand for the purpose, with the view of increasing the richness and instructiveness of his sermons.

He once himself remarked that

If there was anything attractive in his sermons it was chiefly owing, in his view, to the variety and appropriateness of illustration, which by this process he had acquired the ability to employ.

Hypothetical analogies, in the absence of facts exactly adapted to meet particular circumstances, may be readily constructed by *suppositions* of the preacher's own mind.

The following is an example from Dr. Payson :

Suppose you wished to separate a quantity of brass and steel filings mixed together in one vessel, how would you effect this separation? Apply a loadstone and immediately every particle of iron will attach itself to it, while the brass filings remain behind.

Thus, if we see a company of true and false professors of religion we may not be able to distinguish between them ; but let Christ come among them and all his sincere followers will be attracted toward him, as the steel is drawn to the magnet, while those who have none of his spirit will remain at a distance.

Readiness, and skill in framing pertinent hypotheses, often prove of great service to preachers and pastors. Suppositions were a favorite instrumentality of Payson for awakening an interest in religious truth, and for impressing it indelibly upon the memory of those who heard him. He employed them freely in sermons, in conversation, and in the instruction of his Bible class.

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To the members of his Bible class the following was addressed:

Suppose a man builds a temple, with one seat in it very high and much ornamented, and another very far below it. You ask him for whom those seats are designed, and he replies: "Why the most elevated one is for me, and the one below it is for God." Now in this case you can all see the horrible absurdity and impiety of such conduct, and yet each of you who continues impenitent is doing this. You have given yourselves the first place in your affections, you have thought more of yourselves than of God, and have done more to please yourselves than to please God; in short, you have in everything preferred yourselves before him.

Appropriate *scriptural and historical allusions* add much to the interest of religious discourse.

Well chosen classical allusions have always been thought to lend a charm to modern literature. So in preaching, a peculiar charm arises from those scriptural allusions which illustrate present subjects by suggesting vivid ideas of past scenes or events. By such allusions, Scripture history is kept familiarly before the minds of the people, and the endless applications of God's Word are made manifest to all hearts.

The habit of employing Scripture allusions with taste and effect, is one that with most persons needs to be diligently cultivated, while all should carefully guard against applying them to low or trifling themes, so as in any degree to degrade the word of God.

Purely historical allusions should be introduced with caution into sermons, lest they be too secular for the Sabbath, or not understood by the hearers. But a just combination of the historical and biblical, in other words, pertinent allusions to Scripture history, constitute a high excellence, and add much to the intrinsic interest of any sermon.

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The subjoined EXAMPLES will represent to some extent the peculiar styles of their several authors:

In that day, the idle pretensions of enthusiasts shall no more influence believers to reject the Holy Spirit, than the vain pretensions of those false Christs who formerly appeared among the Jews, could influence the faithful to reject their only Lord and Saviour. The dispensation of the Spirit shall then appear as glorious to the eyes of admiring Christians, as the dispensation of the Son once appeared to ravished Simeon; and every apostolic pastor shall conduct his flock from the dispensation of the Father through that of the Son to that of the Holy Spirit, in as rapid a manner as St. Peter is reported to have done in his first discourse.—FLETCHER: "*Portrait of St. Paul.*"

Our Lord supplied proofs of his divinity in his works of power. He was full of healing virtue, so that even to touch the hem of his garment was sufficient to remove diseases otherwise incurable. The "come forth" which awakened Lazarus was but a softened accent of the voice, which, rolling through the caverns of the earth, shall awaken all the dead. But the apostles saw his concealed glory in his transfiguration, when "the fashion of his countenance was altered;" "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was light and glistening;" "white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them."

They saw his glory in his resurrection, for he rose having "life in himself;" and in his ascension to heaven, when "a cloud received him out of their sight."—RICHARD WATSON: *Sermon on the "Incarnation of the Eternal Word."*

Prayer can bring an instant Saviour near, and this wheresoever you are. It needs not that you ascend some special Pisgah or Moriah. It needs not that should enter some awful shrine, or put off your shoes on some holy ground.

Could a memento be reared on every spot from which an acceptable prayer has passed away, and on which a prompt answer has come, we should find *Jehovah-shammah*, "the Lord hath been here," inscribed on many a cottage hearth and many a dungeon floor. We should find it not only in Jerusalem's proud temple and David's cedar-galleries, but in the fisherman's cot-

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tage by the brink of Gennesaret, and in the upper chamber where Pentecost began.

And whether it be the field where Isaac went to meditate, or the rocky knoll where Jacob lay down to sleep, or the brook where Israel wrestled, or the den where Daniel gazed on the hungry lions and the lions gazed on him, or on the hill-sides where the Man of sorrows prayed all night, we should still discern the prints of the ladder's feet let down from heaven—the landing-place of mercies, because the starting-point of prayers.—JAMES HAMILTON: *Fourth Lecture on the "Mount of Olives."*

So it is everywhere with nature! The Pharaohs sleep in their stony sepulchers, and Moses in his lone mountain-grave; but the Nile rolls on as in the day when the Hebrew mother committed her child to its waters and to the providence of her God.

David's harp is broken, and his skilful hand is dust; but the snows of Salmon shine as white as when he sang their praises. Kedron runs murmuring through the valley of Jehoshaphat, as on the night our Saviour waded it to enter on his agony in the garden. Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida! the place that once knew them knows them now no more; but the mountains of Galilee stand around her lake as they presented themselves to Jesus's eye.—THOMAS GUTHRIE: *Sermon on "The Undecaying Power and Grace of God."*

Owing to variety in taste, different preachers will select different fields as most attractive for analogical research. Yet it is not usually best for any one to confine himself to a favorite topic, or branch of topics, lest his illustrations be characterized by too great sameness. Variety is as essential here as in any part of the preacher's work.

The following general rules will lead to a safe and useful practice in reference to this means of adding interest to religious discourse.

1. Whoever would acquire the power of felicitous illustration, must not only learn what kind of illustrations to employ, but must be constantly on the alert for

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material. He should cultivate the habit of close observation upon the characters and actions of men and the phenomena of nature. He should read much, and especially historical works, with the same object in view.

2. He should actively employ his inventive powers to perceive and institute analogies between abstract truth and facts of every kind.

3. He should feel at liberty to appropriate and adapt for pulpit use the most striking facts and analogies he can gather from all sources, whether from nature, books, newspapers, or his own experience:

4. He should not copy from others, at least without giving due credit, but should construct his own illustrations in accordance with the laws of taste.

5. He should avoid carrying his analogies too far, rarely attempting to illustrate more than a single point at once. He should content himself with brief and vivid indications of his ideas, adapted to stimulate rather than weary the minds of his hearers, and to become accessory to his main design rather than to assume primary importance.

Never lose sight of the principle object.

Illustrations too elaborately drawn, or of disproportionate length, violate the rule last given, and become hinderances to the progress of an oration.

The story of the Spanish painter of the Lord's Supper illustrates the tendency of this error:

It was his object to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Saviour; but on the table, in the foreground of the picture, he painted some chaste cups, so exceedingly beautiful and so skilfully 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

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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.

So we should dash from our sermons every illustration and ornament which would divert attention from the main design rather than become auxiliary to it.

§ 3. Instruction.

Whatever interest may be awakened in a religious subject should be made tributary to instruction. No preaching can be permanently useful which does not impart knowledge.

Knowledge indeed is the foundation of all true religious experience and practice. The great fault of sinners is that "they know not God."

"Moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still *taught* the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs." Eccles. xii. 9.

This was the example and the rule of Solomon. But a greater than Solomon has taught that a primary design of the Christian ministry is the instruction of mankind.

"Go TEACH all nations," is the great command of the Saviour.

1. In order to a right compliance with this command, ministers of the Gospel should at all times be learners. They should constantly collect instructive facts for sermons from all accessible sources.

Auxiliary to the design of being public teachers, habits of classification and well-planned common-place books will prove serviceable in enabling them to use

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at short notice whatever they have read or observed or otherwise learned.

2. Ministers should form systematic and comprehensive plans for the instruction of their congregations, and should steadily persevere in carrying them on to completion.

A pastor should endeavour to give in every congregation a sufficiently thorough course of instruction for the religious education and the complete salvation of the people, whatever advantages they may enjoy or lack after he shall have passed away. In this manner only can he discharge his individual responsibilities.

One sermon in a systematic course each Sabbath will usually be sufficient, and on this plan there will always be opportunity for introducing the special subjects suggested by passing events. Every sermon, however, whether systematic or occasional, should be instructive as well as evangelical and interesting.

Knowledge is the food of the soul. "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." Prov. xix. 2. By its communication the Church and the individual Christian are nourished into an ample spiritual growth; without it they are dwarfed and weakened, however much excited or stimulated by false appliances, although in the highest degree specious or entertaining.

"FEED my sheep" is the reiterated command of Christ, and one to which the faithful shepherd will give good heed, seeking to lead out his flock into all the green pastures of truth. In order to furnish them ample sustenance and nourishment he will need to sow beside all waters, and to dig diligently about the tree of knowledge that he may secure abundant fruit.

His sermons must be rich in thought and in facts, and the people can hardly fail to become both interested and wise as a result of hearing them.

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§ 4. Efficiency.

The true test.

The Gospel has an object. Its publication is not a ceremony. The real test of preaching, therefore, as to its highest excellence, must be its adaptation to accomplish its great ends, some of which deserve to be specially considered in this connection.

OBJECTS OF PREACHING.

1. The diffusion of truth and the consequent overthrow of error.

For this object the Christian minister shoud be ever anxious and active. And while he should be untiring in his efforts to inculcate positive truth in all its most important phases, he should also be on the alert watching against the developments and influences of error whether new or old, whether sporadic or systematic.

While it is undesirable to occupy the pulpit largely with controversy, yet it must not be forgotten that the pulpit has a most important work to accomplish, in forming and correcting individual and public opinion on all subjects relating to "life and godliness." Especially on all moral and religious questions it should utter clear, correct, and convincing speech.

2. The conversion of souls.

In this great and peculiar result of Christian preaching the most ardent hopes and the most zealous labors of the true minister fitly culminate, and in anything short of this he should not long be satisfied to rest. True, it is God alone that giveth the increase; yet as we know God's willingness to crown his own word with his blessing, we must labor diligently and hopefully to produce such sermons as will be owned of him for the salvation of souls.

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3. The practice of righteousness.

Under this head, preaching may be said to aim at universal morality and godliness, teaching and enforcing the duties of men, women, and children in every possible circumstance of humanity.

Not only does it inculcate the principles and precepts of the whole law of God, but it entreats and persuades men to their observance by all the highest motives that can address the human mind.

4. The establishment and upbuilding of the Church of Christ.

The Christian Church is the great conservatory of the truth and ordinances of God. It is the appointed agent of the world's evangelization. It is the peculiar object of the Saviour's love and sacrifice. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water *by the Word*, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27.

The interests of the Church must therefore be dear to every faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, and to promote its purity and progress he must preach as well as pray without ceasing.

Here, then, is the final test to which our best pulpit efforts must be brought. Whatever minor excellencies it may combine, no preaching is truly good, is worthy of its name and design, which does not accomplish some or all of the foregoing objects. If a sermon be weighed in the balance of efficiency and found wanting it is poor indeed, however it may challenge the world's applause.

How trifling a matter is the mere entertainment or the ceremonial occupation of men compared with that influence upon their lives which

The practice of righteousness.

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enables them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, and upon their hearts, which prepares them for the judgment seat of Christ. To such ends as these the preacher must aim in every sermon, and be content with no rhetoric or logic, no imagery or pathos, which falls short of this result. "With me," said Dr. Adam Clarke, "this is a maxim: The sermon that does good is a good sermon." "I would rather beg my bread," said M'Cheyne, "than preach without success."

These are mottoes worthy of being remembered by every minister.

What have been described as the preceding essential qualities are chiefly valuable as preparing the way for efficiency as an ultimate and crowning excellence. As a general rule, efficiency may be said to result from a due combination of those other good qualities which minister to it, and from which it is rarely separated. Yet it has antagonisms and elements of its own. Efficiency in preaching is strictly incompatible with vagueness of conception and consequently of speech. It cannot coexist with insincerity of purpose, with imperfect religious experience, or with a vain and worldly ambition.

Essential qualities of character.

On the other hand, efficiency as a quality of religious discourse is specially promoted by a strong desire to be useful, by an unwavering faith in God's Word, and an inflexible but sanctified determination to accomplish the objects of preaching through the divine aid and blessing.

It is not to be doubted that many a well-meant and otherwise good sermon has been wholly inefficient for lack of that energy of purpose which is necessary to impress other minds.

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ELEMENTS OF EFFICIENCY.

1. *Earnestness* must be claimed as an essential element of efficiency. The nature and power of earnestness have been so eloquently set forth by John Angell James in his work on an "Earnest Ministry the Want of the Times," that the following paragraphs are quoted as specially pertinent in this connection:

There is something in the aspect and power of earnestness, whatever be its object, that is impressive and commanding. To see a man selecting some one object of pursuit, and then yielding up his soul to the desire of its attainment, with a surrender which admits of no reserve, a steadiness of aim which allows of no diversion, and a diligence which consents neither to rest nor intermission; which is so uppermost in his heart as to fill his conversation, and so entirely and constantly before his mind as to throw into its broad shadow every other subject of consideration; and which borrows from the intensity of his own feeling a strange fascination to engage the feelings of others—such an instance of decision, amounting to a ruling passion, exerts over us while witnessing it, an influence which we feel to be contagious. We involuntarily, to a certain extent, sympathize with the individual who is thus carried away by his own fervor; and if at the same time all this be an earnestness for promoting our own interests, its effect is absolutely irresistible. That man must be a stone, and destitute of the ordinary feelings of humanity, who can see another interested, active, and 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 often going on in the mind 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

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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 cannot 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."

Earnestness implies that the subject has not only been selected, but that it has taken full possession of the mind and has kindled toward it an intense desire of the heart. It is something more than the correctness of theory and the deductions of logic; more than the cool calculation of the judgment and the play of the imagination. Earnestness means that the understanding, having selected and appreciated its object, has pressed all the faculities of both mind and body into its pursuit. It urges the soul onward in its career of action at such a speed that it is set on fire by the velocity of its own motion.

By the earnest minister the salvation of souls is sought with the obligation of a principle and the ardor of a passion. When the congregations go to hear him, they know what to expect, and consequently do not look for the flowers of rhetoric, but for the fruit of the tree of life; not for a dry crust of philosophy, not for a meatless, marrowless bone of criticism, but for the bread which cometh down from heaven; not for a display of religious fire-works, splendid but useless, but for the holding up of the torch of eternal truth in all its clear shining light, to guide the wandering and benighted souls to the refuge of the lost.

It is only when the love of Christ constraineth us, and beareth us away with the force of a torrent, that we shall speak with a manner befitting our great theme. If we are not intensely real we shall be but indifferent preachers. This shows us the vast moment of our living under the powerful impression of the truths we preach. We cannot, like the actor, have a stage-dress and character to put on for the occasion and put off when the curtain drops. There may, indeed, be a factitious earnestness excited by the sounds of our own voice and by the solemnities of public worship; but this will usually be fitful, feeble, oratorical, and very different from that burning ardor which is the result of eminent piety, and which imparts its own intensity of emotion to the words and tones of the speaker. Our animation must

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be the earnestness, not of rhetoric, but of religion; not of art, but of renewed nature; and not designed to astound, but to move; not the manner studied and intended merely to attract a crowd and to excite applause, but to save the souls of men from death. For this purpose, whatever means we employ, and whatever rules we lay down, to cure the vices of a bad elocution and to acquire the advantages of a graceful one—and such an aim is quite lawful—we must ever remember that the basis of a powerful and effective pulpit oratory will consist of a deep and fervent piety, in the absence of which the most commanding gift of public speaking will be but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

To these impressive words it is only necessary to add, that ministerial earnestness should be definitely applied to the appropriate objects of a preacher's labor, as, for instance, the conversion of souls. It has been well remarked that those who keep their eye fixed and their powers concentrated on this great object never labor in vain.

As in human pursuits success usually follows the tireless prosecution of specific purposes, so the history of ministers proves that the Saviour has never withheld his blessings from the labors of those whose supreme object, whose first, last, and absorbing desire has been the salvation of their fellow-men.

2. *Sympathy.* The oldest theories of eloquence demand sympathy in the speaker who would arouse the feelings of his hearers. The maxim of the Latin poet Horace, to the effect that you must weep yourself* if you would see others weep, states but the universal experience of speakers and audiences. But the maxim has its highest application to Christian oratory.

Preaching indeed addresses the intellect, but chiefly

* "Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi."

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as a means of reaching its highest sphere of influence—the sensibilities and the moral powers, of the soul. As, therefore, no one can profitably occupy the thoughts of others who does not himself think, so it is idle for any one to hope to arouse the religious emotions of an audience when his own emotions are not enkindled.

One has well said, "Who can resist, who would resist the fascination of a loving nature?" Men possessing it "blow whithersoever they list," and men follow them. "They bear mankind in their arms, and are ever the prophets and pioneers of a more loving time. No man is fitted for the pulpit unless gifted with this sympathetic nature." "All power with the speaker depends upon his capability of arresting the sympathies of his audience."*

Happily, true religion inspires this very spirit of love, and the legitimate work of the minister is to give it expression, and thus "win souls" to Christ. But let him beware of pretence, or of any affectation of feeling which he does not possess. On the other hand, let him seek first to experience deeply within his own soul the power of divine grace, and then to make every sermon its organ of communication to the souls of others.

Genuine emotion is the charm of all speaking upon moral and religious subjects, in the absence of which the most measured and stately elocution, whatever pleasure it may impart to the ear, will have little power to affect the heart. We have sometimes listened to lofty and well-composed music; to an overture, for instance, which we could not but admire; but it was still cold admiration, for the whole piece had not a note of passion from beginning to end; but some simple melody followed it,

* Shadows from the Lights of the Modern Pulpit.

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which, by the pathos of its notes, or the power of its associations, touched every chord in our hearts, and raised in us a tumult of emotion. Thus it is with different preachers: we listen to one, whose excellent composition, and sonorous, perhaps even musical voice command our admiration; but not a passion stirs; all within is cold, quiet, and without emotion; the speaking is good, but it does not move us. But there is another, with perhaps less talent, yea, less oratory, in one sense, but his tone, his looks, his manner throughout are full of earnest feeling; it is a strain, every word of which comes from the heart, and every word of which awakens by sympathy a correspondent state of feeling in our hearts.—JAMES.

3. *Unction* is another important element of efficiency in preaching. Unction is kindred to sympathy, but is of a higher and holier type. The true idea of it arises from those scriptural expressions which liken the Holy Spirit's influence to an anointing from on high.* Unction in preaching, therefore, may be considered the joint product of the Spirit's influence on the heart of the speaker, and of his sanctified efforts on the hearts of the hearers.

Thus far French writers have treated this subject more satisfactorily than the English, although many of the former have taken quite too low a view of it, regarding it as merely the equivalent of pathos. Maury is one of this kind, and his section on *L'Onction* has been rendered by his English translator under the head of *Pathos*. Blair has endeavoured to explain the idea by calling it "the union of gravity and warmth;" or more fully, that "affecting, penetrating, interesting manner flowing from a strong sensibility of heart in the preacher to the importance of those truths which he delivers, and an earnest desire that they may make a full impression on the hearts of his hearers." Johnson has much better defined unction as "that fervour

* See 1 John ii. 20, 27; 2 Cor. i. 21; Heb. i. 9.

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and tenderness of address which excites piety and devotion."

But the subject has been best elaborated by Vinet and the author from whom he so frequently quotes, Dutoit Membrini. The following paragraphs are from Dr. Skinner's translation of Vinet's Homiletics:

Unction seems to me to be the total character of the Gospel; to be recognized, doubtless, in each of its parts, but especially apprehensible in their assemblage. It is the general savor of Christianity; it is a gravity accompanied by tenderness, a severity tempered with sweetness, a majesty associated with intimacy, the true contemperature of the Christian dispensation, in which, according to the Psalmist's expression, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psa. lxxxv. 10. It is so proper a thing to Christianity and to Christian matters that we scarcely can think of transferring the term to other spheres, and when we meet with it applied to other things than Christian discourse or Christian actions we are astonished, and can only regard it as an analogy or a metphor. There is no work of antiquity that awakens this idea.

M. Dutoit Membrini thinks that in order to define unction, an intimate and mysterious quality, we must guard against formal definition and analysis. It is by the effects of unction and by analogies that he would explain it, or, to speak better, give us a taste of it.

Unction is a mild warmth which causes itself to be felt in the powers of the soul. It produces in the spiritual sphere the same effects as the sun in the physical; it enlightens and it warms. It puts light in the soul; it puts warmth in the heart. It causes us to know and to love; it fills us with emotion!

Its only source is a regenerate and gracious spirit. It is a gift which exhausts itself and is lost if we do not renew this sacred fire, which we must always keep burning; that which feeds it is the internal cross, self-denial, prayer, and penitence. Unction in religious subjects is what in the poets is called enthusiasm. Thus unction is the heart and the power of the soul, nourished, kindled by the sweet influence of grace. It is a soft, delicious, lively, inward, profound, mellifluous feeling.

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Unction, then, is that mild, soft, nourishing, and at the same time luminous heat which illumines the spirit, penetrates the heart, moves it, transports it, and which he who has received it conveys to the souls and the hearts which are prepared to receive it also!

Unction is felt, is experienced; it cannot be analyzed. It makes its impression silently, and without the aid of reflection. It is conveyed in simplicity, and received in the same way by the heart, into which the warmth of the preacher passes. Ordinarily, it produces its effect while as yet the taste of it is not developed in us, without our being able to give a reason to ourselves of what has made the impression. We feel, we experience, we are touched, we can hardly say why!

Unction may be very unequal in two preachers, equal in piety; but it is too closely related to Christianity to be absolutely wanting to truly Christian preaching. Certain obstacles, some natural, others of error or of habit, may do injury to unction, and obstruct, so to speak, the passage of this soft and holy oil, which should always flow, to lubricate all the articulations of thought, to render all the movements of discourse easy and just, to penetrate, to nourish speech. There is no artificial method of obtaining unction. The oil flows of itself from the olive; the most forcible pressure will not produce a drop from the earth, or from a flint; but there are means, if I may say so, by which we may keep without unction even a good basis of piety, or of dissembling the unction which is in us, and of restraining it from flowing without. There are things incompatible with unction. Such are wit, analysis too strict, a tone too dictatorial, logic too formal; irony, the use of too secular or too abstract language, a form too literary; finally, a style too compact and too close.

From these indications of the character of unction and the hinderances to it, we may readily perceive that as a quality of discourse, it flows out directly from the well-spring of a living Christian experience. It is not necessary to suppose that every minister whose discourses lack unction is absolutely deficient in piety. It is safer to believe that the false theories and the bad habits of some preachers put a check upon the

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outgush of their religious sympathies to an extent which neutralizes in no small degree the power of the truth they utter, and even grieves the holy Spirit, whereby their preaching needs to be sanctified before it can be of any avail.

To the attainment of a true unction in preaching, nothing is more essential than fervent prayer for the divine assistance. The Holy Spirit's aid should be invoked from the first act of preparation to the last moment of delivery, with an unwavering confidence in those promises of God which assure us that we shall receive power to be witnesses for Jesus after that the Holy Ghost has come upon us. (See Acts i. 8.)

The blessed Saviour, in accordance with prophetic announcement, was *anointed* "to preach the Gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv. 18, 19.

The apostles preached the Gospel by aid of the "Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." 1 Pet. i. 12.

In these examples the preachers of modern times should see their own supreme necessity of the divine anointing, and also encouragement to hope for the "unction of the Holy One" while putting forth their own best exertions.

In striving to attain this highest species of pulpit power, nothing is so essential as to cultivate that intimate communion with God, which will enable us to feel every moment that we are "workers together with him," while the Divine Spirit also worketh mightily in us to enable us to speak to the hearts of men.

Thus it is that God will be glorified by the tender but efficient power of his own word.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SERMONS.

ADVANTAGES OF CLASSIFICATION.

SEVERAL advantages arise from a good system of classifying sermons:

1. Such a system conduces to the orderly arrangement of a preacher's material for pulpit use, enabling him to avail himself of the accumulations of his past labor and study without loss of time.

2. A judicious classification of sermons and material tends to a desirable variety in preaching, inasmuch as no minister will wish to confine himself to a particular class of sermons, but rather to present to his people a suitable alternation of the various classes.

3. The principle of classification equally tends to secure unity in each sermon, since, having determined to what class a given sermon should belong, the preacher can more easily guard himself against not employing matter or treatment belonging to other classes.

4. On the basis of a good classification preachers can better appreciate and apply just principles of criticism, since the styles of language and of treatment which are applicable to some classes of sermons are quite inadmissible in others.

Some writers and preachers have erroneously attempted to classify sermons according to the style of discussion or plan of division adopted in their construction. Hence the confused and obviously improper

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designation of observational sermons, propositional sermons, topical sermons, etc.

BASIS OF CLASSIFICATION.

Design. The only proper basis for a correct and comprehensive classification of sermons is found in the governing design of the preacher.

The mere idea of subjects is inadequate, because the same subject may be distributed into different classes at pleasure. For example, the subject of repentance may be the leading topic of an expository discourse. Again, it may be treated with exclusive reference to Scripture doctrine. At another time the duty of repentance may be practically enforced, and finally the same subject may be found adapted to any one of several occasions, such as a funeral or an appalling disaster. Hence we must return to the design of a preacher in employing subjects, and here, provided he is accustomed to have specific designs, will be found a correct guide.

There is an obvious propriety and an equal convenience in distributing sermons into the following general classes:

1. Expository. 2. Hortatory. 3. Doctrinal. 4. Practical. 5. Miscellaneous or Occasional.

Some other heads of classification have been proposed, for instance, experimental and doctrino-practical. But it will be readily seen that experimental godliness is included under the more general head of practical, having reference to the subjective character or religious state of the individual who is disposed to an outward exemplification of God's law.

It is admitted that various combinations are possible, and sometimes desirable, in the design of particular sermons, as in the blending of doctrine and practice,

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but it is not wise on that account to create innumerable composite classes of sermons. The simple rule to be observed is to classify each sermon according to its predominant design, leaving subordinate and auxiliary purposes out of view in deference to the principal object.

It will now be proper to consider the several classes of sermons in order, as a means of estimating correctly their intrinsic and relative importance, and also for the purpose of adding specific suggestions respecting some of the topics involved.

§ 1. Expository Discourses.

This class includes all sermons and lectures which are specially devoted to the exegesis of Scripture, whether in single or connected passages. Although exposition may be confined to brief texts, yet it is customary, and generally more appropriate, to take larger portions of Scripture as the basis of discussion, ranging from paragraphs to chapters, and often extending in serial order to whole books of the Bible.

It must be conceded that expository preaching has been too much neglected of late years, and yet its primary importance must be perceived by every one who will reflect upon its special design to make the word of God better understood.

Chrysostom was accustomed to say that in this mode "God speaks much and man little." In the early Church, exposition in homilies and sermons was the rule, and discourses upon set topics and brief texts were the exceptions. As the custom of modern times has gone to the opposite extreme, there is certainly room for improvement by returning at least to the medium ground of more frequent expositions of Scripture. More-

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over, this mode of preaching is commended by the best writers.

Rev. Thomas Jackson, the biographer of Watson and Newton, says:

> The most useful kind of preaching, we think, is the expository, giving the just meaning of God's own word, and applying it to the consciences of the people, so as to convince them of sin, to bring them to the Saviour, and to enforce Christian duty in all its branches, because God's word has an authority above every other.

Rev. Daniel Moore, in his "Thoughts on Preaching," says:

> Many and great are the advantages of exposition. To the preacher it may be very beneficial. It furnishes him with a new variety of pulpit address. It compels him to a more accurate and synthetical study of large portions of the word of God. It spares him all the hesitation and indecision and loss of time often attendant upon the choice of a text. And, above all, it keeps him from being too much wedded to the narrowness of human systems, by the fuller conspectus he is obliged to take of the whole counsel of God. To the people, also, the style has many advantages. It brings before them a larger field of divine truth at one view. It affords them a better opportunity for seeing the doctrines of the Christian system in their related order and dependence. It admits of the bringing in of many collateral, but still far from unimportant topics, which if left for a set subject of discourse might never have been enforced at all. It helps to fix marked passages of Scripture more permanently upon the memory, and it assists them in the formation of devout and intelligent habits in their own private reading of the word.

In view of these and many similar considerations it may be asserted that every minister ought to be capable, and indeed fond of taking up connected portions of Scripture and expounding them in a manner adapted to interest and edify the people. If circumstances pre-

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vent his doing this as systematically as he would desire in every appointment, they will scarcely prevent his doing it to a considerable extent.

To attain skill and power in expository preaching, much study and persevering practice are necessary. This style of pulpit labor demands, in the first place, a thorough knowledge of the principles and applications of exegesis, superadded to which there must be "a painstaking process of generalization; a skilled habit of separating all mere accessories from what we consider to be the parent thought; a discriminative grouping of scattered elements, to make them bear on some one conclusion, and a facile power of transition from one part of the subject to another without the jarring sense of abruptness and without injury to the general unity of the subject." * Study and practice.

There is no lack of excellent examples of this style of preaching, beginning back with the works of the fathers and coming down through the Puritan divines of England to John Wesley, whose discourses on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount may be commended as a model for comprehensiveness and conciseness.

All good commentaries furnish material for expository preaching, but many of them are far from being models for pulpit style.

Preachers attempting courses of expository sermons should guard against being tedious, and hence should as carefully study what to omit as what to say. Apart from the continuous exposition of chapters and books, there are numerous Scripture themes which may be profitably treated by themselves, and which will usually extend to a sufficient length for the interest of a public ministry.

The following are samples of the topics referred to:

* Moore.

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the decalogue; the character of Moses, Peter, or Paul; prophecy, the beatitudes, the miracles, the panoply of God, the works of the flesh, and the fruits of the Spirit.

§ 2. Hortatory Sermons.

These may be fitly introduced in the sequel of expositions of Scripture or of doctrine. They are also appropriate in numerous circumstances where doctrine or duties are understood, but need to be better practised.

In revivals of religion and services designed to promote them, hortatory preaching is much called for; but in order to have its best effect it should be well based upon Scripture and upon clear statements of doctrinal truth.

As heretofore intimated, the gift of exhortation is greatly to be desired and cultivated; still no mistake would be greater than that of supposing that all the preaching needed in any congregation may be comprised under this head. Hortatory preaching is indispensable in its proper place, but indiscretion in its use or continuance is only equalled by the error of neglecting it when it is demanded.

It would not be difficult to select from authoritative sources numerous strong commendations of this style of preaching. The following extracts from James must suffice :*

> It appears to me that a want of powerful, eloquent, yet simple and unaffected exhortation is one of the greatest deficiencies of the modern pulpit.
>
> We have to do not only with a dark intellect that needs to be instructed, but with a hard heart that needs to be impressed, and a torpid conscience that needs to be awakened; and have to

* Earnest Ministry.

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make our hearers feel that in the great business of religion there is much to be done as well as much to be known. We must give knowledge, for light is as essential to the growth of piety in the spiritual world, as it is to the growth of vegetation in the natural one; and then the analogy holds good in another point, for we must not only let in light, but add great and vigorous labor to carry on the culture. We must, therefore, rise from exegesis into exhortation, warning, and expostulation. The apostle's manner is the right one: "Whom we preach, *warning* every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." There must not only be the directive, but the impulsive manner. All our hearers know far more of the Bible than they practice; the head is far in advance of the heart; and our great business is to persuade, to entreat, to beseech. We have to deal with a dead, heavy *vis inertiæ* of mind; yea, more, we have to overcome a stout resistance and to move a reluctant heart. If all that was necessary to secure the ends of our ministry was to lay the truth open to the mind; if the heart was already predisposed to the subject of our preaching, then, like the lecturer on science, we might dispense with the hortatory manner, and confine ourselves exclusively to explanation; logic unaccompanied by rhetoric would suffice. But when we find in every sinner we address an individual acting in opposition to the dictates of his judgment and the warnings of his conscience, as well as to the testimony of Scripture: an individual who is sacrificing the interests of his immortal soul to vanities of the world and the corruptions of his heart; an individual who is madly bent upon his ruin, and rushing to the precipice from which he will take his fatal leap into perdition, can we in that case be satisfied with merely explaining, however clearly, and demonstrating, however conclusively, the truth of revelation? To borrow the allusion which I have already made, should we think it enough coldly to unfold the sin of suicide, and logically to arrange the proofs of its criminality before the man who had in his hand the pistol or the poison with which he was just about to destroy himself? Would exegesis, however clear and accurate, be enough in this case? Should we not entreat, expostulate, beseech? Should we not lay hold of the arm uplifted for destruction, and snatch the poison cup from the hand that was about to apply it to the lips? What is the case with the impenitent sinners to whom we preach but that of individuals bent upon self-destruction, not, indeed, the present de-

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struction of their bodies, but of their souls? There they are before our eyes, rushing in their sins and their impenitence to the precipice that overhangs the pit of destruction; and shall we content ourselves with sermons, however excellent for elegance, for logic, for perspicuity, and even for evangelism, but which have no hortatory power, no restraining tendency, none of the apostle's beseeching entreaty? Shall we merely lecture on theology, and deal out religious science to men who, amid a flood of light already pouring over them, care for none of these things.

§ 3. Doctrinal Discourses.

Doctrine literally signifies whatever is taught; and as a great object of preaching is to teach the truths and principles of Christianity, so doctrinal preaching should be common in all pulpits, and the object of much thought and preparation on the part of every minister. If it be objected that many congregations are prejudiced against doctrinal preaching, it may be replied that the preacher should seek to remove their prejudices by more interesting and vivacious modes of stating and illustrating Scripture doctrines, than those under which such prejudices originated.

Christianity has made but little real progress in a community in which its doctrines have not been so taught as to be understood and believed. Every preacher, therefore, should aim to do his full share in the indoctrination of his hearers in all Christian truth. He should not be content with irregular and occasional presentations of the important and leading features of the Gospel system. He should endeavor to present them all in their appropriate connections, and that in a manner adapted to the audiences before which he may appear. In some circumstances it may not be best for the preacher to disclose in advance his design of following out a systematic course. In other cases it may awaken a greater interest and secure

Doctrines fundamental.

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a larger attendance, together with preparatory or collateral reading, that will greatly contribute to its success.

Dr. Skinner has defined doctrinal preaching to be "that which shows the reason of things." In this sense all preaching should be doctrinal. But the present theme requires more than this. It demands the elaborative and argumentative development of Scripture in its systematic connections.

Important as this task is, it is to be confessed that between the superficial tastes of many hearers, and the disinclination to thorough study on the part of many preachers, there is at the present time great danger of its being too much neglected.

Dr. J. W. Alexander makes the following just allusions to this subject:

> The attempt to edify the Church without doctrinal instruction is like the attempt to build a house without foundation or framework. Let any in derision call the 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. They should even blend with and vitally penetrate each other, and be pervaded by the unction of the Holy One. No sane man will contend for mere dogmatic abstractions in the pulpit. Much less should it be a theater for philosophic or metaphysical disquisitions. But it should be a theater for unfolding, illustrating, enforcing divine truth, proved by the testimony of Him for whom it is impossible to lie, to be apprehended by the intellect, and vouched for by the conscience of man.
>
> Better far to take a theological topic and popularize it than the reverse, namely, to take a hortatory topic and thicken it by doctrine. Argument made red-hot is what interests people. Generally speaking, nothing interests so much as argument.

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People are accustomed to argument in such a country as ours. Argument admits of great vehemence and fire; argument may be made plain; argument may be made ornate; argument may be beaten out and thinned down to any degree of perspicuity.

It is a shame for a minister not to be acquainted with all the heads of theology, all the great schools of opinion, and all the famous distinctions; and he will not learn them well unless he preaches upon them.

The stimulus to this pursuit will be best kept up if a man accustom himself to give a doctrinal tinge to all his preaching. Then he will read on these subjects. It is a great matter for a preacher to have the habit of deriving his entertainment, day by day, from the perusal of argumentative theology. Let him continually advance into new fields and attack new adversaries. Let him continually revolve the terms of former controversies.

§ 4. Practical Discourses.

A practical sermon is one which specially and predominantly aims at the enforcement of some Christian duty, or to secure the practise of some Christian obligation or privilege.

In a subordinate but by no means unimportant sense all preaching should be practical, for what avails any theory that is followed by no desirable result? "Be ye doers of the word," says the Apostle James, "and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." But as the duties enjoined by the word are numerous and particular, they require to be separately and minutely explained. They need to be set forth in their applications to individual, social and public life

Each class in community needs to be enlightened as to the specific duties belonging to it, and the Scripture motto of "line upon line and precept upon precept" has a special application to this branch of the preacher's work.

Practice is the great test of the power of precept, and

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few faithful pastors will not have occasion with earnestness and tearful solicitude to urge upon the people to keep the statutes and walk in the ordinances of the Lord.

But as the heart is the fountain of obedience or of disobedience, and as true piety is more the result of an inner life than of any set of opinions, it becomes necessary for the practical preacher to dwell much and forcibly upon the duties of repentance and faith and hope and love, as well as those of prayer, almsgiving, and attendance upon the services and ordinances of God's house.

He seeks, indeed, to realize a practical effect from his own example and preaching in the lives of all his hearers.

He looks that the Word of God be quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow. He looks that under every sermon souls should be begotten by the word of truth. He watches for the answer of Christ's prayer, that the people may be sanctified through the truth. He exerts himself for the "pricking of the heart," and for the inquiry "what must I do to be saved?" *

The idea of preaching a sermon that will be admired, or that will merely entertain an audience, is far beneath his plans and his aspirations. He constantly aims at efficiency, and he hopes in every sermon to realize the encouraging promise of the Saviour: "Lo, I am with you."

Whatever may be said of some other kinds of discourse, practical preaching is within the range of every minister called of God, and all ministers should endeavor in the best and highest sense to be practical in

* Adams: "Minister for the Times."

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their ministrations. On the experimental aspect of this subject an English writer has well said :

Whatever your subject, whatever the occasion on which your ministry is exercised, let it be apparent that what you advance is the result of experience ; that you are not descanting on themes with which you are unacquainted, or acquainted only as matters of speculation and discussion, which come before you in the course of professional duty ; but let it be obvious that you have "tasted" that the Lord is gracious, that "you have seen with your eyes, and that your hands have handled the Word of Life."

When preaching is experimental in its character it is peculiarly interesting to a devout audience. They enjoy it exceedingly. It fixes their attention, secures their edification, benefits their hearts. And such preaching comes with power to the generality of hearers. Besides, when preachers preach experimentally, how pleasant it is to themselves when out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks ; when the subjects on which they dilate are appreciated by themselves ; when the sentiments which they utter are connected with deep emotions ; when they can say to the truly pious in their congregations, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" Psalm xxxiv. iii.

How superior, in the judgment at least of the more devout, and for all the great ends of the ministry, is an experimental style of preaching to that which is merely intellectual—essay-like! The latter may be argumentative, philosophical, abounding in large and enlightened views, in beautiful displays of thought and expression ; still, if there be no heart put into it, if it be seen that the minister preaches what he does not understand by experience, what he does not appreciate and feel himself, what interest is awakened? What spiritual benefit is reaped? What power on the hearts of the people is realized?—WALLACE.

§ 5. MISCELLANEOUS OR OCCASIONAL DISCOURSES.

This class is designed to comprise all sermons that do not appropriately belong to any of the foregoing classes. It is based on the general idea of adaptation to occasions, although it is designed to include certain serial sermons which take their name rather from sub-

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jects than occasions, such as historical discourses, astronomical discourses, etc.

Some of the more important occasions and topics of miscellaneous discourses will now be considered.

FUNERALS.

Death is God's voice by which he speaks to the living. Ministers must hear this voice, and echo it to the hearts of the people.

A great point has been won by the religion of Christ in the universal concession of the propriety of inviting ministers of the Gospel to officiate in connection with the last offices rendered to mortality. As funerals are constantly occurring, they secure to ministers access to numerous individuals whom they would rarely if ever reach in the ordinary course of their duties. Generally, too, they preoccupy the minds of mourners and friends with sentiments favorable to religious impressions.

These circumstances increase the obligations of ministers to improve such sad occasions in accordance with the highest designs of the sacred office.

In cities and populous districts, the instances are comparatively rare in which formal funeral sermons are required. Informal funeral addresses, however, are scarcely less important; and although often delivered to small audiences and in private houses, should nevertheless be regarded by ministers as a very responsible part of their work. The words of life, fitly spoken on these occasions, will sink deeply into the hearts of the bereaved and their sympathizing friends, and will often be instrumental in leading them directly to the true source of consolation.

Great tenderness and Christian sympathy, together with unshrinking faithfulness in declaring the truth of God, are necessary to render funeral addresses in the

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highest degree instrumental of good. They should be followed, moreover, by kind words and pastoral attentions, which, like gentle showers, will water the seed sown, causing it to grow and produce fruit.

When ministers of the Gospel, aged members of the Church, or prominent citizens in a community are summoned away by death, appropriate custom demands the full funeral sermon. The matter and the manner appropriate to such occasions will usually be dictated by the principle of adaptation better than by any set rules. Opportunities of doing good have often been wasted, if not perverted to evil, by ministers consenting to make funeral sermons the vehicles of fulsome eulogy, or mere parts of an ostentatious ceremony void of any powerful religious application.

They ought always, on the other hand, unmasked by either the fear or favor of man, to be luminous with truth, and pointed with application to the hearts and consciences of the people.

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.

The task of preaching or delivering addresses at the funerals of impenitent and immoral men is one of proverbial delicacy, but from which no minister should shrink when duty demands the effort. A keen sense of discretion, mingled with unwavering fidelity to truth, will seldom or never fail to dictate what is proper to be said on such occasions, and will often lead the minister through threatened embarrassments to unlooked-for success.

On all subjects relating to life, death, judgment, and

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eternity, the servant of God is furnished with the strongest declarations of divine truth, at once directing what should be the burden of his discourse, and shielding him, if faithful to his message, from all suspicion of speaking his own words.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCES.

The occurence of unusual events, such as a pestilence, an earthquake, a tornado, a conflagration, a great public calamity or blessing of any kind, will usually suggest to the thoughtful minister lessons of instruction which it would be wrong for him to withhold, and which, by diligent preparation and faithful delivery on his part, may be rendered of lasting benefit to his people. It is thus that ministers may become the interpreters of Providence and the agents of instruction to many who without their guidance would fail to perceive the moral lessons which God is continually teaching in the events of the world.

MISSIONS AND BENEVOLENCE.

Discourses relating to benevolent enterprises in various forms multiply as Churches become organized and efficient. It becomes Christian ministers to take the lead in all good works, and to develop with system and energy the moral power of the Church.

This cannot be done without thought, sympathy, and labor. A primary effort must always be to indoctrinate a congregation into the true principles of benevolence, so that they may regard giving a privilege to be desired rather than a hardship to be shunned. The general principles of benevolence cover numerous branches of Christian and philanthropic effort. Hence if properly taught in advance they will not need to be elaborated

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on every special occasion, although they can hardly be summarily stated in too many forms. For this preliminary teaching no inconsiderable aid may be derived from the perusal of "Mammon," "Gold and the Gospel," and various other prize essays on systematic beneficence.

Among benevolent enterprises Christian missions stand foremost. In fact, they embrace within their legitimate agencies nearly every form of benevolent activity, such as writing and distributing religious tracts, and printing and circulating the word of God.

To how many noble and impressive efforts of the pulpit have these sacred enterprises given rise within the last half century! Indeed, how much of all that has been accomplished in modern times toward the evangelization of the world is due to that truly evangelical preaching which has proclaimed the world to be the field of Christian effort, and every human being a proper subject of Christian hope and labor!

One has only to read the sermons of Richard Watson, of Robert Newton, of John M. Mason, of Stephen Olin, and many other honored preachers on the glorious themes relating to the spread of the Messiah's kingdom and promised glory, to be transported to the loftiest regions of thought and sublime emotion.

Are these subjects confined to the special advocates of benevolent enterprises, and must the pastor waive their treatment in favor of expected visits from secretaries or agents? Nay, for his own sake and for the sake of the Gospel let every minister, and especially every pastor, make himself familiar with the themes and facts of every enterprise of Christian benevolence, that in his proper place and at the fitting time he may be their consistent and powerful advocate.

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FESTIVAL OCCASIONS.

The annals of the Church show that from the earliest times preaching has accompanied those commemorative observances designed to mark great events in the Gospel history, such as the birth and the resurrection of Christ.

In the corruption of the Church these commemorative festivals were multiplied to excess, and the number of festivals were still augmented by the addition of days of commemoration for hundreds of saints and martyrs. The eulogies prescribed for the latter, and the routine of topics dictated by the former, combined to displace more important topics and induce a decline in the faithfulness and power of preaching from which the Roman Church has never recovered.

Still, to a limited and proper extent the festivals of the Christian Church deserve the notice of the pulpit. With them must also be classed days of national observance, such as fast days and days of thanksgiving.

Dedications and anniversaries of churches partake of the same festival character, and often give rise to impressive discourses.

Watch-nights, held on the eve of the new year, are often rendered peculiarly solemn by the delivery of appropriate sermons.

Preachers should not hesitate to avail themselves both of regular and irregular occurences of this kind as a means of securing attention to the truth, or of making a deeper impression upon the minds of men.

TEMPERANCE.

The great sin of drunkenness, and the systematic efforts made to check its progress and rescue its

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victims, have given rise to many powerful sermons. Wherever similar necessities exist, and it is to be feared that they will not soon cease, the faithful minister is called upon to lift up his voice, to cry aloud and to spare not.

The Scriptures abound with terrible denunciations against the crime of intemperance, and the guilt of even complicity with its indulgence. Let every minister, then, be instant in season and out of season, warning and teaching both young and old to avoid the inebriating glass.

EDUCATION AND SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

The enterprise of Christian education, both in the work of secular instruction under Christian influence and in the religious training of the young by means of Sunday-schools, demands frequent effort and tireless coöperation from the sacred desk. Parents need to be aroused to a sense of their responsibilities, the young stimulated to effort in the right, and teachers encouraged and guided in their efforts.

No pastor should omit to denounce ignorance, and set forth the attractions and advantages of knowledge, or to prompt Christian men and Churches to enlarged philanthropy in founding and maintaining institutions of sanctified learning.

PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

In addition to that preaching which is auxiliary to Sunday-schools in the way of enlisting teachers, securing books and appliances, and gathering together men, women, and children "to learn the law of the Lord," there is the duty of preaching directly to children themselves. Now that Sunday-schools are established,

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they furnish the occasions and the audiences; but the duty of preaching to children would exist if there were no Sunday-schools. "Feed my lambs" is an ever-binding command of the Saviour. And how can ministers worthily obey this command except by breaking to children "the bread of life," by dispensing to them "the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."

And yet many professed ministers of Christ think that preaching to children is too small business for them. As though anything could be small which involes the interests of immortal souls. Others decline the task on the plea that they have no gift for it. If it be a duty, they should "covet earnestly" the gift which will enable them to perform it. An idea seems to have gained great prevalence among ministers that a special talent is necessary in order to address children successfully. When this idea is so entertained as to deter any one from doing his full duty to the lambs of Christ's flock it deserves severe reprobation; but when received by a minister, as an admonition to stir up the gift that is in him and to cultivate the talent needed and desired, it is to be regarded as in harmony with the truth. It is beyond question that for this, as well as certain other departments of the preacher's work, some men possess a greater natural adaptation than others. Nevertheless, it is equally true that any man possessing the ordinary qualifications of a minister of the Gospel, and an anxious solicitude to enter this open door of usefulness, may acquire the talent of preaching interestingly and successfully to children; while all will improve by practice, and by giving due attention to the importance of the task and the elements of success.

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CHILDREN SHOULD BE THE SPECIAL SUBJECTS OF PREACHING.

1. Because they are included in Christ's command, Go teach all nations."

2. Because when properly addressed they are, as a class, the most susceptible and hopeful of all Christian hearers.

3. Their hearts are tender, their minds are not preoccupied with error, and they are not confirmed in habits of sin. Besides, their sympathies are easily enlisted by examples of truth and goodness.

4. They are the subjects of special divine promises. Consult Prov. viii. 17; Isa. liv. 13; Acts ii. 39, and numerous other passages of Scripture.

Conformably to the encouragements of the divine word, the experience of the Church within a quarter of a century past, to the full extent that correct ideas have prevailed concerning juvenile conversions, has fully justified the belief that special labor in behalf of children is more sure of success than in behalf of any other class of society.

Two modes.

There are two modes of preaching to children that deserve commendation. The first is by the introduction of what may be called the *children's department* into the regular sermon. Every minister would certainly wish to encourage the attendance of children upon the services of the sanctuary, and it is to be expected that in every Christian congregation there will be a fair proportion of juvenile hearers. Now is it right to withhold from this most hopeful part of the audience all recognition or address adapted to their tastes and capacities? And yet many ministers, from month to month and from year to year, seem to never remember that the children of their congregations, as well as others,

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are, by the special appointment of the Lord, entitled to "their portion of meat in due season."

Is not such a course of obvious neglect precisely calculated to create in the minds of the young a life-long distaste for religious worship as tedious, partial, or unmeaning? Is not the great Shepherd justly offended by such treatment of his lambs?

This culpable neglect may be easily remedied by the children's department in a sermon, or the introduction of more or less passages specially addressed to the young. No doubt many a grave divine will be startled at the mention of such a departure from antiquated custom, and at the possible violation of rhetorical unity! But what avails rhetorical unity if our proper work is not accomplished? And what ancient custom is of higher authority than the example of our divine Lord, who in the midst of his public ministry repeatedly took special notice of little children, even to the amazement of some of his disciples.*

Let no one be alarmed lest the occasional introduction of passages and illustrations adapted to the comprehension of children should detract from the interest which older people of good sense will take in their discourses. The truth is, that most adult persons will find plain and familiar explanations of truth quite as interesting as do children: while the common tendency to monotony in speaking and dullness in hearing is greatly relieved by an occasional effort to arouse and enlist the attention of childhood.

These very passages addressed to the children, when fitly introduced, are not only approved by older persons as appropriate, but are often remembered by them with tenacity when the more pretentious portions of the ser-

* Matt. xix. 13, 14; Mark ix. 36, 37; x. 13-16; Luke xviii. 15-17.

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mon are all forgotten. At the same time their great object is realized in those definite and timely impressions which they make upon the hearts and memory of those who, in many cases, will live and act important parts upon the stage of life when the preacher shall have gone to his reward.

While the introduction into sermons of episodes or diversions in behalf of children will subserve most excellent purposes, it will by no means accomplish the full duty of the pastor to the children of his flock.

Special sermons should also be prepared and preached to assemblies of children. Notwithstanding all the occasional addresses that are made to them in Sunday-schools, it is well for the minister to appoint preaching services particularly for children several times a year.

On these occasions the children should be seated in a body, and in close proximity to the speaker. If adults are present they should be considered as having no claims upon the time or attention of the preacher. Everything should be arranged with reference to the interest and profit of the children, and for the time being the preacher should surrender himself wholly to the sympathies which the presence of childhood will awaken.

In no other way can justice be done to such occasions. In no other way can a preacher determine to what extent it is possible for him to interest and benefit companies of children.

The very effort to do this will prove profitable to preachers themselves, and will often enable them to improve their habits of preaching to adults. As elements of success in preaching to children it is well to observe,

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1. That by the nature of the case long sermons are inadmissible.

2. Plain subjects are demanded.

3. Familiarity of language and a conversational tone of voice must be employed. While words of learned length should be avoided, it is a needless affectation of simplicity to confine the address to monosyllables. No such restraint is put upon the language of the nursery, and children will be far more puzzled with rare monosyllables than with common polysyllables. While illustrations should be frequent, care should be taken not to protract them with too much detail.

4. The indispensable condition of success is to secure and keep the attention. To this end great liberties may and often must be taken. Questions may be introduced and answers demanded. The tone of voice may be suddenly varied, and the subject apparently changed; nevertheless the unity of address must be maintained, and its essential point never lost sight of.

In all cases the preacher must remember, that though he is called on by these occasions to be child*like* in expression and action, he must never allow himself to be or appear child*ish*. Some persons have imagined that mere story-telling is sufficient for addresses to children. Stories fitly selected and well told have important uses in awakening the interest of the young; but they should always be pointed with pertinent application, and made to tell upon the high religious objects which alone will justify formal attempts to bring the Gospel home to the hearts of children. This is an important and fruitful theme, but its consideration must not be protracted further than to insert the following judicious remarks from Moore:

No doubt the failures in addresses to children are more frequent than the successes; but most commonly, as we believe, from one

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cause. The men have never laid themselves out to succeed. They have thought that the process of descending to the lower ledges of childish thought must follow the facile laws of other descents; have allowed themselves to imagine that the entire difficulty was a mere affair of the spelling-book, and that if they only kept from the use of any long or hard words they might be quite sure of being understood. But no supposition can be more fallacious than this. If the line of thought be simple, and the method of illustration lively, and the images and appeals and arguments be all in unison with the mental habitudes of childhood, the preacher of a sermon to children may be betrayed into the use of a hard word here and there with very little prejudice to the understanding of his subject, and with none whatever to the general interest of his address. But let this special adaptation to the mental organisation of the young be overlooked, and what will be the consequence? Why the speaker will not have gone on far before on the countenances of all present will be seen nothing but blank, vacant, uneasy listlessness. He perceives that with all his picking of "small words" he is too high for them. He has been putting matured thoughts into children's language. And the things agree not together, any more than would a new piece of cloth when sewed on to an old garment. And so, in despair, he betakes himself to the other extreme, tasks his inspiration to supply him with some extemporaneous juvenilities, when in all probability he will stumble upon illustrations intellectually on a par with those of "the indestructible primer," to the wonderment, it may be, of the very infantile section of his auditory, but to the offended and sublime disgust of every child above six years of age.

To come down to the intellectual processes of children, therefore, we repeat, is no "*facilis descensus.*" A man must read books for it, study minds for it, write carefully for it. He may dispense with his manuscript in delivery; but he will not, in preparation, do wisely to dispense with his pen. Especially should he guard against being *too* juvenile. Children are more sensitive even than the poor to condescensions of this sort; and therefore, in preparing his subject, the preacher should have before him some model mind. A sermon addressed to the average intelligence of children, say at the age of eight years, would take in as wide a range of mental sympathies on either side the line as sermons of this kind are expected to influence.

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Such sermons, judiciously managed, will interest others besides children, especially the *poor*, who always like illustrative preaching better than any other; and *parents*, who are not sorry, by means of these addresses, to learn how to become teachers themselves.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE STYLE OF SERMONS.

STYLE in sermons, as involving the quality of language in which religious truth is expressed, must never be overlooked as a topic of minor importance. Nevertheless, style in preaching is to be regarded as a means, not as an end. Whoever makes the sermon an occasion for displaying fine language rather than exhibiting truth; for pleasing the ears and cultivating the taste of an audience, rather than convincing their judgment and moving their hearts, radically mistakes the design of preaching, or wrongly seeks to pervert an appointed means of doing good into an agency for securing applause. He preaches himself or his own contrivings, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. And yet whoever would preach Christ crucified is called upon by everything that is dignified in truth or sacred in religion to do it in fitting words.

GERERAL QUALITIES OF A GOOD STYLE.

The established laws of rhetoric clearly prescribe those general qualities of language which are indispensable in every good sermon. A simple enumeration must suffice. They are,

1. *Purity* and *propriety*, which require accredited words of the English language in their appropriate usage.

2. *Precision.* The use of words in their exact meaning, and without redundancy.

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3. *Perspicuity.* Perfect clearness, without obscurity, ambiguity, or long sentences.

4. *Unity.* Singleness of aim and expression.

3. *Strength.* That use and arrangement of words which will make the most forcible impression.

On the other hand, Christian discourse sternly rejects all those faults of style which are condemned by the laws of rhetoric; such as tautology, dryness, floridity, and bombast.

The general qualities of style, both good and bad, are so ably treated in numerous text-books on rhetoric and language as to need no special notice here. There are, however, certain qualities and combinations demanded by a good style for the pulpit which deserve to be pointed out.

§ 1. Special Qualities required in a Good Style for the Pulpit.

DIGNIFIED SIMPLICITY.

The didactic character of pulpit address requires uniformly such a choice of language as will tend to make wise the simple, and at the same time to elevate the conceptions and the taste of all grades of hearers. In the effort to be plain, the minister must carefully avoid triviality. He must employ words and present images which correspond to the grandeur of the truths which he proclaims, and yet which may be understood by the unlearned. Simplicity in this connection is opposed to the affectation of elegance, and the straining after pompous words or unusual expressions. It accepts the language of the people, to whom it seeks to communicate truth, and makes it the instrument of elevating their thoughts and of ennobling their character. Preachers cultivating this quality of language are by no means

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restricted to a narrow vocabulary. They may even use words not familiar to their audience with proper explanations, but they will carefully avoid all display of learning.

It is a miserable vanity which delights itself in aggregating far-fetched terms or phrases in the idea that pulpit discourse is thereby improved in quality. Equally at fault is the weak ambition to excel in prettiness; to tickle the ears or amuse the fancy of an audience when the interests of immortal souls are at stake.

This lisping poetry, this mincing elegance of diction, this trumpery and moonshine of superficial rhetoric, this would-be eloquence, which is uttered only be admired, how impious the impertinence!*

An elaboration that is betrayed in every part of the discourse, and which makes it but too evident to any serious or observant mind that it was the preacher's aim not to convert souls, but to catch applause; which, in the view of the fashionable, the giddy, and the frivolous, entitles the sermonizer to the highest rank among pulpit orators; which fills the discourse with flowery diction and gaudy metaphors, with elegant declamation and fanciful descriptions, with tasteful addresses and beautiful pictures; which, though it takes the cross for its subject, almost instantly leaves it and runs out into the fields of poesy, or the labyrinths of metaphysics, for its subtle arguments or its sparkling and splendid illustrations; which, to sum up all, engages the judgment or amuses the imagination, but never moves the heart, or calls the conscience to discharge its severe and awful functions; such preaching may render a minister popular, secure him large congregations, and procure for him the plaudits of the multitude; but where are the sinners converted from the error of their way, and the souls saved from death? Verily, I say unto you, if such a preacher has his reward only in the applause of the multitude, whose object and aim were as low as his own, it was what he sought and all he sought, and let him not com-

* Professor Park, in Biblical Repository.

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plain if he have this and nothing else. From such preachers may God Almighty preserve our Churches, and may he give us men who better know their business in the pulpit and better do it!—JAMES.

Even the severity of this language should not be abated toward those who knowingly and wilfully indulge in such abuses of pulpit style. But are there not many who have fallen into them in some degree from sheer ignorance of what is better? It is a proverbial weakness of partially educated minds to be delighted with sound rather than sense, and usually the best remedy for a sophomoric style is found in thorough mental development.

Possible cause of the error.

A man who is conscious of knowledge can afford to be simple; one who would appear to be learned is perpetually straining after that which he cannot reach.

The philosophy of the errors above indicated is well stated by Theremin:

The orator should never rise into expressions, phrases, and images that are above the language of cultivated society, even before an auditory that would be able to follow a higher style of thought, and to understand more exquisite modes of speech. I mention this for the sake of those who think they impart a peculiar dignity and force to their discourse by the use of poetic ornament, by employing words which they bring forth from the dust of past centuries, and by constructions which are foreign to pure prose. But this is always only a cold show without power. In the throng of active life, amid heartrending misfortunes, during the silent hours of contemplation, does the hearer make known his thoughts and feelings to himself and to others in a highly flowery style, and in strange, unusual phraseology? Certainly not. The style of expression which spontaneously associates itself with the silent emotions of our heart when they come forth into consciousness, is always as noble as it is simple. If, therefore, the orator would penetrate into our inner life, and renew again the traces of forgotten thoughts and feelings; if he would actually *address* us, he must employ the very same well-

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known and customary language in which we are wont to commune with ourselves. Every strange expression, nay, every unusual phrase, tears us away from ourselves, instead of leading us back into ourselves; and the stream of inward harmonies, which perhaps was on the point of flowing forth, suddenly breaks upon such unexpected obstacles and is dissipated. Moreover, with the disturbance of this flow is connected displeasure toward a man who decks himself out in a showy costume of sounding phrases, which, after all, are not so very difficut to collect together, instead of employing my common, every-day language along with me, to his own true advantage as well as mine. Those very rare instances when the speaker selects an unusual expression for an unusual thought are, of course, excepted here; but to allow one's self in even the slightest departure from ordinary language, unless there is some particular reason to justify it, seems to me to be unadapted to the oration, and contrary to its aim; and is therefore, according to the theory of eloquence here laid down, morally blameworthy.

SCRIPTURAL CONGRUITY.

A happy use of scriptural quotations adds much to the impressiveness of pulpit discourse, and yet a sermon cannot be made up of Scripture phrases. But as it is founded on Scripture, and makes frequent use of the language of inspiration, it should be in constant harmony with it. Vinet applies the term *scriptural tone* to the quality now commended, and thinks he sees in it a union of everything that is excellent in pulpit style. He would have the imagination of the preacher imbued with scriptural scenes, and all his thoughts in harmony with the spirit of the sacred volume.

Nothing will more improve the style of a preacher than this essential harmony between his language and that of the Divine Word. The Bible is emphatically the book of the people, and familiarity with it has prepared most Christian audiences to appreciate not only those beauties and sublimities in which it abounds, but all which are kindred to them.

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I would recommend (says Theremin) to all sacred orators the frequent employment of the expressions and images of the sacred Scriptures as a highly adapted and effectual means of exciting affection, provided only they be not brought in merely to fill up empty space, but are fused into the discourse, retaining their whole dignity and force. They are highly adapted, for the language of the Bible can never become antiquated, because it affords so many highly significant expressions for the manifold conditions of human life and states of the human heart, many of which appear as proverbial phrases in the language of common intercourse; and however much religious education and the reading of the Bible may have been neglected, the orator may yet, in the case of the generality of hearers, reckon with certainty upon a thought being understood sooner in a biblical than in a philosophical dress. But the great power of Bible language in awakening affection consists principally in this, that in it the expression for the understanding and the expression for the feelings are not so different as in merely human representations, but are always one and the same. The figures so frequent in the Bible, while they have all the precision of an abstract terminology, at the same time transfer the idea into the web of human relationships, and clothe it with all that can exert influence upon the mind; they are a ray which unites in one both light and heat and passes over from the mind into the heart, thus kindling the whole man. If, now, as is often the case, a sentence from the Bible, on our first meeting with it, or upon after occasions has awakened a whole series of pious emotions, the orator, by citing it as he passes on, can evoke anew the affection which has already become connected with it, and can apply it to the purposes of his oration.

Skill required.

But while the clerical student seeks to imbue his mind with scriptural truth, and to infuse the spirit of the Gospel into all his public utterances, he must guard against a theological dialect, or an unskilful amalgamation of sacred with common phraseology. A few paragraphs from one of Dr. Porter's lectures will illustrate this fault:

It is found sometimes in single words, as *peradventure*, used

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for *perhaps*; *tribulation* for *affliction* or *distress*; *sensuality* and *carnality* for *sinful affections*; and *edification* for *instruction* or *improvement*. So a *phrase* is often employed in a manner which requires a commentary to give it significance in current language, as when licentious conduct is called "chambering and wantonness."

Sometimes this peculiar cast of stye arises from using familiar terms in an abstract or mystical sense, as *walk* and *conversation* for *actions* or *deportment*. Sometimes a peculiar combination of words makes a sort of *spiritual phrase*, as "mind and will of God;" "a sense of divine things;" and when intensive expression is necessary, "a *realizing* sense of divine things" is extremely common in the pulpit dialect. In some portions of our country, and at some periods, a great fondness has prevailed for compound words, such as "*God-provoking*, *heaven-offending*, *Christ-despising*, *land-defiling*." Some of these awkward Anglo-ecclesiastical combinations have struggled hard for a standing in good style both here and in Great Britain, such as *unspeakableness*, *worldly-mindedness*, *spiritual-mindedness*. Men of correct taste will a thousand times rather dispense with all the advantages of these terms than mar their native tongue by multiplying such unseemly compounds. There is the more need of guarding against such terms, because if they are formed from words which belong to the language they escape the reproach of barbarism, and therefore may be multiplied without end if the tendency of writers to these combinations shall be subject to no control but the dictates of caprice or affectation. The man who has the command of language may easily find other words equivalent in sense, or sufficiently so to substitute for such complex phrases. Instead of *worldly-mindedness* we may say *attachment to the world*. Instead of *spiritual-mindedness*, a *spirit of devotion*, or *a spirit of habitual piety*.

The same general fault in the preacher's style may be increased by his *necessary familiarity with theological writers of past times*. The excellent sentiments which these often contain, expressed, perhaps, in quaint and antiquated phraseology, imperceptibly give a cast to his own diction, resembling, in its influence on other minds, the stiffness and peculiarity which would appear in his *garb* if it were confirmed to the fashion of the sixteenth century.

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EARNEST DIRECTNESS.

It is the province of poetry to circle round and round, exhibiting for mere entertainment various phases of a beautiful idea. On the other hand, it is characteristic of oratory to have an object in view, and to concentrate all its power on the accomplishment of that object.

Hence not only the thoughts must be earnest and pertinent, but the language must partake of the same quality. Here is an indispensable requisite of a good pulpit style, and one which causes it to reject the indirectness of the essay and the circumlocutions of mere rhetorical embellishment. Not only the form, but the spirit of the language must be direct, appealing pointedly to the hearer, and causing him to perceive continually that he is the man addressed. A good portrait looks every beholder in the eye, and yet it does not stare. So a good sermon, without any rude appeal, seems to say to every hearer, "Here is a message for you." Its expressions, as well as the thoughts it utters, find their way to his heart, and claim him as a trophy for the Gospel.

In a high moral sense the preacher is a painter. His business is to spread out for the perception of an audience scenes of the past and the future relating to this life and the life to come. But in order to make his delineations graphic he must himself behold the scenes he describes with a clear and direct view. Then he can portray them with an expressiveness that makes them real and present to others.

Language is not only the vehicle of thought and emotion, but an agent of the will, appealing with persuasive and sometimes commanding power to the moral purposes of others. Earnest directness is the

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anguage of persuasion. But this language cannot be feigned. It must be the truthful expression of the soul of the speaker. As such it finds its way to the soul of the hearer and answers the design of its utterance.

ENERGY.

In this quality may be found the culmination of a truly oratorical style.

It is the life of eloquence, that which gives it breath and fire and power. Without it the most finished rhetoric is formal and cold. The people love it, and it is for them we preach. It is a sign of honesty in the speaker. He would subdue us by a mastery he acknowledges himself. It is not he, but the truth, which makes us captive. He is but the instrument, though a willing, ardent one. Men have a strong passion for excitement, and energy always produces it. We yield more readily to sympathy than to logic or persuasion.

It does not necessarily imply vehemence. There is energy in deep pathos, in simple description, nay, sometimes in silence itself. Whatever subdues us makes us feel, impels our passions, has energy.*

Well-managed dialogue, especially in argumentative discourse, often imparts a life-like energy to style.

Apostrophe, employed for a similar object, greatly stimulates the imagination of hearers by bringing, as it were, before their eyes the objects and characters apostrophized.

To be energetic the apostrophe should appear unstudied, and from the impulse of the moment. It should be perfectly within our power. Nothing is more ridiculous than a preacher appealing in words to an invisible being while he keeps his eyes fixed upon the paper, speaks on in his ordinary tone, and perhaps hesitates until he turns the leaf. An apostrophe is better brief. It should very rarely be long. It is impossible to maintain the illusion

* Bethune

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beyond a few moments. The best orator would fail in continuing the effort. Some should never attempt apostrophe. They have not imagination enough to conceive it well, or, if it be conceived, not the voice nor the command of action to execute it. Failure in either disgraces us. If we be not sure of success it were far better to let it alone.*

Even though successful, apostrophe must not be too frequent, lest it lower its own dignity and distract the attention of hearers.

Energy of style demands skill in the choice of words and the construction of sentences. No rules are sufficient to guide the speaker here. Sometimes brevity is needed to secure force, and sometimes fullness to give the sweep of a majestic idea. "A brief sentence sometimes flashes truth like lightning." But a discourse made up of brief sentences lacks a bond of connection and becomes a rope of sand.

Well-chosen figures, if briefly and strikingly portrayed, add greatly to the energy of style. But when a speaker shows a disposition to linger upon a figure and dress it out in too much detail, he wastes his strength and excites the impatience of his hearers.

Energy should increase with the progress of a discourse. Its rise should be natural, and its movement calm and regular, culminating, if possible, in unanswerable demonstrations and resistless appeals. Energy of style, as here recommended, should be the offspring of clear thought and true Christian feeling. As such it becomes a powerful exponent of truth, and never fails to awaken responsive thrills in the breasts of hearers.

Such being the functions of language with reference to sacred oratory, the minister of the word should

* Bethune.

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cultivate its right use, and acquire the habit of its most effective employment.

§ 2. Means of Cultivating a good Pulpit Style.

A person's habit of language is his style, and, like other habits, this is usually of gradual growth. In giving directions, therefore, for the acquisition of a good pulpit style, it is necessary to begin at the foundation.

CONVERSATION.

Here is the school in which our first lessons of speech are taken; and here, unfortunately, many habits prejudicial to oratory are acquired.

Nevertheless, when one's attention is aroused to the importance of a correct use of language, conversation continues to be a school invaluable for its opportunities of practice. Whatever examples are given by his associates, the person who would acquire a good conversational style must resolve always to speak correctly, and to eschew the faults which he observes in the conversation of others. When opportunities occur for listening to instructive conversation, he should be an attentive hearer; and in all cases where it is proper for him to guide the conversation in which he participates, he should seek to turn it to good intellectual or spiritual account. Whoever seeks by such means to improve the language of his thoughts and his daily life will hardly fail to succeed.

Self-discipline.

The next step beyond personal improvement is to make conversation an agency of good to others, and to its use for this object there is no limit. In ancient times "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" and under the Christian dispensation direct religious

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conversation has ever proved an instrumentality of good, second only to public preaching.

What is to be thought of the Christian minister who carelessly abandons himself to the loose conversational habits of the thoughtless or ignorant people that may be around him? He seems to forget that by so doing he exerts the influence of a bad example, at the same time that he entails upon himself the liability of marring his public services by objectionable forms of speech. No person can expect to form a style of language worthy of the pulpit who does not first become critical upon himself and his most familiar expressions. Not that the formalities of public address are to be introduced into conversation, but that every one contemplating the office of a preacher should carefully avoid those provincialisms, those inaccurate and loose expressions with which colloquial language is usually more or less corrupted.

When, on the other hand, a young man has learned to use language with ease and strict propriety in all the varied phases of conversation, he has established a point of departure from which he may rise to the highest power of eloquence.

STUDY OF ONE'S NATIVE LANGUAGE.

Obvious as is the necessity of a careful study of the elements and lexicography of his native language, it is sometimes sadly neglected even by those who have made some attainments in the classics. The study of the ancient languages lays the only true foundation for complete success in mastering the English, but it forms no sufficient apology for the neglect of close and protracted study of the English itself by the aid of the multiplied helps now accessible.

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READING AND STUDY OF THE BEST AUTHORS.

Here opens a broad and interesting field in which improvement of style may be blended with the acquisition of knowledge.

No young preacher should content himself without reading extensively those printed sermons which have come down from the great and good men of former generations, and he should prize the opportunity of reading, at least occasionally, the sermons of cotemporary preachers. He should read, not to copy nor to imitate in any plagiaristic sense, but to follow the track of other men's thoughts, to observe their language, and to expand his own mind to just ideas of what sermons ought to be or ought not to be.

Critical reading.

Indeed, this kind of reading, in order to be profitable, must be critical, and it must be limited to the best selections. So vast is the extent of sermon literature at the present day, that no one need hope to be familiar with any more than the best specimens of the best authors. But with these he should be familiar. He should so analyze and dissect them as to perceive their frame-work, and so enter into their spirit as to refresh and invigorate his soul. So far as he perceive them to be models of style, he may safely imitate their essential excellencies. "Such imitation," said Longinus, "is not to be looked upon as plagiarism, but as lifting our souls to the standard of the genius of others and filling us with their lofty ideas and energy."

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 Quincy. To such men the style of Barrow, which the great Pitt

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made his daily study, is a myth. The simple but nervous style of Wesley, the majestic diction and massive beauties of Richard Watson are quite overlooked, while the inflated magniloquence of Bascom makes them stare with delight. As a consequence their pulpit style is miserably vitiated, and they become vain of its very defects and blemishes.

The only hope for such men is in an abandonment of their false guides, and a prompt return not merely to good authors, but to the Bible itself, as the proper model for their imitation. Here, indeed, is instruction for the wisest and best of preachers, not merely as to the matter of truth, but as to the style of its communication. Here will be seen that perfectness of adaptation, that beautiful blending of familiarity with the loftiest dignity, the most powerful arguments with the tenderest appeals; in short, models of style in all its varieties and its highest perfections.

We are not to imitate even Scripture language in its minutiæ, but rather in its spirit and tone, as heretofore explained.

WRITING.

No person should trust to verbal practice, however extensive, for the formation of style. On the other hand, writing should be a constant exercise. Original composition on various subjects should be practised with zeal and industry, and followed with the most careful corrections and thorough criticism. The habit also of reading good authors, and then reproducing with the pen one's own version of their thoughts, is greatly to be commended.

As the subject of writing will be more fully discussed in the chapter on habits of preparation for the pulpit, it is here passed over without further remark.

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Adaptation.

It only remains to add that style is not a fixed, but a variable quality. No style is adapted to all subjects or occasions. On the other hand, the character of a sermon prescribes in a great degree the style in which it should be written or delivered. Thus, expository, doctrinal, and practical sermons should be plain and didactic in their style. Funeral discourses should be characterized by solemnity, and hortatory sermons by energy and pathos. In short, style must be the combined expression of thought and feeling adapted to occasions, and every preacher should feel himself called upon to cultivate to a high degree and for all possible circumstances the powers of expression which God has given him.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE DELIVERY OF SERMONS.

§ 1. Possible Modes.

In public speaking three distinct modes are possible. The first is a recitation from memory of a previously composed discourse. The second is the reading of such a discourse from manuscript. The third is the extemporaneous utterance of language composed in the act of speaking. These several modes are sometimes blended in greater or less proportions, as in reciting part of a sermon and reading the rest, or in reading some parts and extemporizing others. The propriety of blending the three modes occasionally or habitually will be discussed further along. Our present task will be to consider them separately, remarking in advance that each mode has strenuous advocates, and some special advantages as well as disadvantages. It consequently becomes young preachers to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the whole subject before forming habits which in after life they may regret, but find difficult, if not impossible, to be changed.

RECITATION.

On the supposition that a discourse is well composed and perfectly committed to memory, the speaker can come before his audience with the advantage of knowing precisely what he is to say, and prepared to give himself wholly to the task of delivery and the perfection of his elocution. Hence in set orations, and especially those

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which are to be repeated many times, this mode of preparation will enable a speaker to utter the most polished diction in the most artistic manner. These were results which the Grecian system of oratory aimed to accomplish. Under that system it was even customary for some of the great masters, like Isocrates and Demosthenes, to compose orations for minor orators to declaim. Recitation was the general practice of the most eminent orators of antiquity, although the most able critics doubt whether Demosthenes and Cicero recited their orations word for word, since there are many proofs that at times they employed both words and thoughts suggested by occasions. Recitation has also been adopted by many orators of modern times, including not a few celebrated preachers. Recitation may be said to have been the general practice of Roman Catholic preachers.

We are now to consider recitation from memory in reference to its habitual practice by preachers of the Gospel. In this view it is subject to many and serious objections.

Objections.

1. It has a greater tendency to exhibit the orator than to carry conviction of truth to the hearts of his hearers. Hearers instinctively perceive the difference between a discourse uttered at the moment and one which is recited from memory. The latter seldom if ever commands the same degree of attention or respect; while it frequently excites the suspicion of plagiarism, and the feelings of contempt that are cherished toward the finesse and trickery of art.

2. Except in cases of extraordinary memory, it requires nearly double the time of preparation, and consequently must be an intolerable tax upon the time of any one who preaches often and with suitable variety. How profitless such a tax will prove is strikingly illustrated

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by Dr. Beattie, who in his Essay on Memory estimates that two days will ordinarily be required to thoroughly memorize a discourse; without taking into account the necessity of preaching two, three, or more sermons each week, as is the necessary habit of most American ministers. On the supposition that a minister has to preach one sermon a week, and that to memorize each sermon will require two days' labor, he remarks:

> Two days every week are almost a third part of human life. And when one considers that the sermons thus committed to memory are forgotten as soon as delivered, which is also a common case, who would not regret such a waste of time? At this rate, of thirty years employed in the ministry there are almost ten consumed—in what? In drudgery more laborious and far more unprofitable than that of a school-boy, in loading the memory with words which are not remembered for three days together.

3. Recitation from memory subjects a preacher to a painful liability to error and failure. Even the omission or displacement of a word will sometimes destroy the propriety of a sentence, and utterly confuse a speaker. Such occurrences are not only painful to an audience, but destructive of self-possession in the preacher, often filling him with exciting apprehensions, which harass his nerves and unfit him for the proper delivery of his message by diverting his attention from his subject to himself and his fears. If the preacher's memory is tenacious it will have a tendency to confuse the language of one sermon with that of another, or the different passages of one sermon with each other. Thus every additional sermon committed, threatens a preacher of advancing years with an ever-growing incubus, and an ever-decreasing power to throw it off.

4. Nothing so effectually as this habit cripples all power of self-reliance in circumstances which demand

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spontaneous utterance, and renders the before triumphant orator powerless in an emergency.

5. This habit not only involves tedious preparation, but renders preaching impracticable in those states of health which forbid protracted application of the mind to verbal expression.

READING.

This style of delivery is peculiar to the modern pulpit and lecture-room. It was unknown among ancient orators, it was never commended by any celebrated rhetorician, nor officially by any Christian denomination, council, presbytery, association, convention, or conference, at least of any high authority.

Nevertheless, during the last two centuries it has been extensively adopted in England and the United States of America, the only two countries where it is known or practised to any considerable extent. A historic statement of its origin is given further along.* The object of this section is simply to state its theoretic advantages and disadvantages. The following ADVANTAGES are claimed in behalf of reading as a mode of delivering sermons:

1. That it necessitates the habit of thorough preparation for preaching.

2. It secures by means of the requisite preparation elegance and finish of style.

3. It conduces to exactness in the statement of truth and duty, and hence is specially important in doctrinal discourses.

4. That as compared with recitation it is a great saving of time.

5. That it is specially adapted to relieve the fears and

* Vide page 305, also Appendix C.

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prevent the failures of persons of great diffidence, and also of those who only preach occasionally.

6. That in many cases, as that of Chalmers for example, it serves as a wholesome check on extreme volubility.

7. That although attended with some disadvantages, it is, on the whole, a means of elevating the character of a minister's preaching and of increasing the weight of his influence.

On the other hand, numerous OBJECTIONS are urged against the reading of sermons:

1. That it is a modern innovation, wholly inconsistent with the example of the Saviour, the apostles, and the fathers of the Church.

2. That it is a "supine and slothful way of preaching."

3. That the confined attitude of a reader is incompatible with the freedom and power of an effective delivery.

4. That the occupation of the eye with a manuscript deprives a speaker of one of the most significant and effective means of engaging the attention and enlisting the sympathies of his hearers; also, that the voice in reading can never be so natural or expressive as in free speaking.

5. That even more than recitation it prevents the preacher from uttering new thoughts, or availing himself of the inspiration of the occasion or of the Holy Spirit.

6. That it is unfavorable to the highest degree of eloquence and of usefulness in the pulpit.

7. That it is, in fact, no guard against indolence of preparation, but often tends to that by the necessity it involves of repeating sermons, and that without adaptation to change of circumstances.

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8. That it involves a great waste of time and energy by appropriating to mere verbal composition a large portion of life which ought to be devoted to thought and liberalizing study.

EXTEMPORANEOUS DELIVERY.

This must be pronounced the normal method of human speech. Man is endowed alike with powers of thought and of utterance; and so intimate is the union between the two classes of powers that ordinarily one is regarded as the measure of the other.

Circumstances of education and habit, however, sometimes derange the appropriate balance between these classes of faculties, cultivating one at the expense of its counterpart. This fact is exemplified equally in the cases of persons who by boldness and practice acquire great fluency of speech without corresponding knowledge, and of those who acquire much knowledge without the capacity of correctly and freely communicating it in speech.

The only just use of words is to serve as vehicles of thought. A judicious advocacy of extemporaneous delivery must therefore always be based upon an appropriate preliminary education of both clases of faculties, as well as specific provision of thought in advance of verbal utterance. As well may a man who cannot construct grammatical sentences be advised to write sermons, as one to speak extemporaneously who has no adequate thoughts to express. The quality of extemporaneousness, therefore, must be considered as applying exclusively to language. It consists in the ready or instantaneous expression of thought in fitting words.

Objections.

The objections urged against extemporaneous delivery are chiefly based upon its abuses, or upon inadequate preparation for its successful

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accomplishment. The most prominent are the following:

1. That it tends to repetition, verbosity, looseness of construction, and many other faults of style.

2. That a ready utterance of words is apt to be substituted for solidity and profundity of thought.

3. That the confidence of speaking easily or fluently predisposes preachers to indolence of mental and spiritual preparation; in other words, to make extempore speech the vehicle of extempore thought.

4. It is also objected to extempore preaching that it lowers the dignity of the Gospel message by making its utterance mediocre and commonplace.

Intelligent advocates of extemporaneous delivery should never apologize for any such faults or abuses, but should rather insist upon that previous discipline of the powers of thought and of speech which will effectually guard against them.

5. It is further alleged, with truth, that the excellence of extemporaneous preaching is variable. If it sometimes, under favorable circumstances, rises above a given standard, at other times it falls below. This, however, is true, at least in some degree, of the other modes of delivery, since it often happens that when a sermon must be composed, the preacher may not be in a favorable state of health or frame of mind for writing; while the best written productions, whether read or recited, often fail entirely of adaptation to the circumstances of a preacher or his congregation.

Advantages.

In favor of extemporaneous delivery are several important considerations:

1. As the natural mode of speech, it is that to which a speaker feels originally prompted and that which the hearer demands.

2. It most readily secures and fixes attention.

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3. If preceded by suitable preparation it is favorable to the most spirited, if not the most polished composition.

4. It avoids the mechanical dryness of recitation and the prosy dullness of reading, while it arouses in the highest degree the interested sympathy of both speaker and hearer.

5. It enables the speaker to take advantage of the thoughts and impressions of the hour, and especially of the inspiration of impressive scenes.

6. It places him in the true and only position to receive aid from on high while speaking, either by a general quickening of his powers, or the special suggestion of thoughts or words.

7. It is sanctioned and commended by the best examples of preaching, and by the most perfect specimens of ancient and modern eloquence.

A COMPOSITE MODE OF DELIVERY.

It is a matter of legitimate inquiry whether a preacher may not so blend the several modes of delivery just described as to avoid the defects and secure the advantages of all. Without doubt some concession should be made to circumstances, and also to mental or physical constitutions. Hence any preacher who, sincerely desiring to make the most of his talents in the service of God, finds on careful experiment that either mode of preaching is better adapted to render him useful than the others, should feel at liberty to adopt and practice that in preference. Whichever general style of delivery he may adopt, it is unquestionably his duty to render it as free as possible from objections. If he recite from memory he should seek to be able to introduce new and pertinent passages, or to omit those which are irrelevant, at pleasure. If he read, the more nearly his reading

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approaches free delivery the more effectual it will be. If, again, he practice extempore speech he should cultivate a terse and accurate style of diction and solidity of thought, as well as warmth of feeling. While, therefore, circumstances may sometimes enable an extempore preacher readily to remember and naturally to recite some passages of his written preparation, so they may at other times suggest valuable additions to the recited or read discourse.

It must nevertheless be regarded as a general rule, that any composite style of delivery will exhibit patchwork, and lack that symmetry essential to a perfect impression. On this subject Dr. J. W. Alexander says in his "Thoughts on Preaching:"

> 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." And this is, I suppose, the reason why Dr. Chalmers cautions his students against every attempt to mingle reading with free speaking. 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.

Nevertheless, it may be done, but usually only by those who have first acquired readiness and correctness of extemporaneous speech.

§ 2. Historical View of the Practice and Theory of Preachers in different Ages and Countries in reference to the Mode of Delivery.

If the present were a topic of ordinary importance it might be dismissed with the foregoing general considerations, leaving students and young ministers to choose between conflicting theories in accordance with

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their inclinations. But it has happened that on this subject, more than any other within the range of homiletics, different theories and divergent practice have prevailed.

It therefore seems important that students of the present day should be furnished with the means of judging for themselves as to the value of the lessons to be derived from the experience and discussions of the past. This indeed seems the more important in view of the strange constructions that have been put upon history by some of the advocates of reading sermons. Even the excellent Dr. Porter, of Andover, makes use of the following statements:

> How far the practice of preaching extemporary discourses prevailed among the fathers cannot be determined with certainty. Origen is supposed to be the first who introduced this method. This, however, he did not attempt, as Eusebius affirms, till he was more than sixty years of age, and had acquired by experience great freedom in the pulpit.

This passage would seem to indicate that down to the third century reading had been the rule, and that Origen at an advanced age introduced extemporaneous delivery as an exception. The same writer again asserts: "Though there were in the primitive ages many exceptions, it seems plainly to have been the general usage that sermons were written." The reader shall be enabled to judge of the facts in chronological order.

1. *Scripture history gives no countenance to the idea that sermons were read previous to the close of the apostolic era.*

From the earlier chapters of this work the reader will have learned in what sense certain worthies of the Old Testament are to be regarded as preachers. But who can imagine anything more absurd than the idea that Enoch, or Noah, or Moses, or Solomon, or the Jewish

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prophets, appeared before the people whom they addressed with manuscripts from which to read, or even with memorized orations to recite. No less absurd would be any similar supposition respecting the manner observed by our Lord in his preaching and teaching. "Then he opened his mouth and taught then, saying," is Matthew's brief description of the manner in which Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount. Equally significant are the words of Luke, describing our Lord's sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth. When he had closed the book and sat down, and the eyes of all them in the synagogue were fastened on him, "he began to *say* unto them," etc. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

An examination of all the accounts we have of the preaching of those great evangelists, Peter and Paul, as well as the other apostles, will lead us to a similar conclusion with respect to their mode of address. While we cannot doubt the anxiety of thought and study which they devoted to the great subjects of their Gospel message, all allusions to their preaching and teaching, whether among the Jews or Gentiles, indicate that they spoke off-hand, and were ever ready for a correct and forcible utterance of the truth in language adapted to the circumstances in which they were placed.

2. *The habit of extemporaneous discourse was handed down by the apostles to their immediate successors in the ministry of the Word, and was exclusively practised during the early ages of the Church.*

As a convenient mode of proving this, the following quotation is inserted from the Hulsean Prize Essay of 1858, by the Rev. H. M. Moule, of Cambridge, entitled "Christian Oratory; and Inquiry into its History during the First Five Centuries:"

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The early preachers followed, with apparently very rare exceptions, the practice of extemporaneous preaching; understanding by that general term all kinds of delivery short of reading from a complete MS., or from very full notes. It was reckoned a desirable if not an essential requisite in a preacher that he should be able to discourse to the congregation on a part of Holy Scripture from the pure inspiration of the moment.

Owing to the prevalence of this custom, we owe nearly all the discourses that have come down to us from the early fathers, not to their own pens, but to those of notaries, (note-takers,) or short-hand writers, who reported ther homilies and sermons for the use of their friends and posterity. Of these notaries there were two kinds: the one class so far authorized as to be considered professional, the other consisting of amateurs, persons who either love the Gospel or the preacher so much as to wish to preserve the words which fell from the lips of the latter. In the works of the fathers we find numerous proofs of the custom of reporting. Gregory Nazianzen, in a sermon preached at Constantinople, alluded publicly to the two classes mentioned above. Gaudentius of Brescia, in a preface to his sermons, mentions that the note-takers had inaccurately reported his words. According to Neander and others the recensions found necessary among the homilies of the fathers were owing to the differences and errors of the tachygraphs. A remark made of Origen by Eusebius, Book VI, Chapter xxxvi. illustrates both the custom of preaching and reporting prevalent in the period referred to:

Then, as was to be expected, our religion spreading more and more, and our brethren beginning to converse more freely with all, Origen, who they say was now more than sixty years of age, and who from long practice had acquired great facility in discoursing, permitted his discourses to be taken down by ready writers, a thing which he had never allowed before.

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This passage of Eusebius is quoted in full, that the reader may judge of the extreme misapprehension of its meaning indicated by the language of Dr. P., heretofore quoted. The truth is that a man who had practised reading or reciting his sermons till he was more than sixty years old would hardly then think of learning to practice extempore speech. Whereas, having undoubtedly practised that style of speech for long years. and thus acquired great facility in discoursing, he threw off his youthful diffidence, and allowed the ready writers to report his discourses for posterity, which would have been unnecessary had they been already written.

If further proof is needed that the custom of the fathers was to preach extemporaneously, it is to be found in the character and structure of their discourses, which are for the greater part familiar expositions of the Scriptures, in which any other than freely-spoken address would have been out of place. Besides, they contain various passages which owed their origin to passing events, and consequently could not have been precomposed. The following from Chrysostom are examples:

Examples from Chrysostom.

The concourse of clouds (he says on the appearance of a sudden storm) has made it somewhat overcast for us to-day. But the presence of our teacher, the Bishop Flavin, has rendered it brighter. For the sun, when he darts his beams from the midst of the central summit of heaven, casts no such light upon our bodies as the presence of paternal affection pours a brilliance into our souls, darting its beams from the midst of the (episcopal) throne.

The fourth sermon, on texts from Genesis, has in it the curious passage about lighting the lamps during divine service:

Let me beg you to arouse yourselves, and to put away that sluggishness of mind. But why do I say this? At the very

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time when I am setting forth before you the Scriptures, you are turning your eyes away from me and fixing them on the lamps, and upon the man who is lighting the lamps. O, of what a sluggish soul is this the mark, to leave the preacher and turn to him! I too am kindling the fire of the Sriptures; and upon my tongue there is burning a taper—the taper of sound doctrine. Greater is this light, and better, than the light that is yonder. For, unlike that man, it is no wick steeped in oil that I am lighting up. I am rather inflaming souls, moistened with piety, by the desire of heavenly discourse.

Again, in the third homily on David and Saul, having perceived among the audience some persons who had attended the theater instead of the Church the Sunday before, he opens the discourse by expressing his regret that he could not distinguish them with certainty, that so he might exclude them from a participation in the Holy Communion.

3. *The custom of* RECITING *sermons in whole or in part was introduced probably during the fourth century.* It was adopted partly as a means of a more showy style of oratory, and partly as an accommodation to the incapacity of some ecclesiastics who were not capable of preaching edifying sermons of their own, but could recite those of other men.

It is well known that some of the more prominent fathers of the fourth century took lessons in oratory from the teachers of their day, and studied the works of the Grecian rhetoricians, which embodied most of the learning then extant upon critical and literary topics. This was true not only of the pompous Gregory, but of the ascetic Jerome; while Augustine, both before and after his conversion, taught rhetoric as a profession. Neander thinks that the character even of Chrysostom was somewhat injured by this cause. He says, (Life, p. 7):

The prejudicial effect which the prevailing system of rhetoric

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had upon him as a preacher cannot be overlooked, although in him, more than in Gregory Nazianzen, it was softened down by a Christian simplicity of character and by a depth of mind.

Augustine, in his work on Christian Teaching, formally justifies the practice of reciting sermons in behalf of "those who are destitute of invention, but can speak well provided they select well-written discourses of another man, and commit them to memory for the instruction of their hearers." Nevertheless, his recommendation is very guarded. "They will not do badly (*non improbe faciant*) if they take this course;" which, however, he only seems to approve in view of the necessity of having the people instructed in the truth by some method or other.

Having made this concession, he proceeds to illustrate a more excellent way by admonishing the preacher of the absolute importance of making his hearers comprehend what he utters, and enjoining upon him "to read in the eyes and countenances of his auditors whether they understand him or not, and to repeat the same thing by giving it different terms, till he perceives it is understood; an advantage which those cannot have who, by a servile dependence on their memories, learn their sermons by heart, and repeat them as so many lessons."

Notwithstanding these wholesome counsels of Augustine, the habit of reciting, once introduced, spread widely, being fostered at once by the ignorance of centuries following, and the decline of pulpit zeal and power. In fact it became, and has since remained, the prevailing custom of both the Greek and Roman Churches.

4. *Recitation has been retained as the prevailing custom of the Continental Churches of different nations, Protestant as well as Catholic.* Influential efforts have

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been made from time to time in both Churches to induce a return to the primitive mode free of delivery, but in no case has the reading of sermons been authoritatively vindicated or practised on the continent.

Fenelon's dialogues may be regarded as stating the very best opinions derived from an enlightened Roman Catholic view. That work discusses but two methods of preaching: first, that of reciting discourses memoriter, "word for word," to which it opposes numerous pertinent objections; and, second, that of the speaker "who fills his mind with the subject he is to talk of." He says:

> In short, a man who has considered all the principles and parts of the subject he is to handle, and has a comprehensive view of them in all their extent; who has reduced his thoughts to a proper method, and prepared the strongest expressions to explain and enforce them in a sensible manner; who arranges all his arguments, and has a sufficient number of affecting figures; such a man certainly knows everything he ought to say and the order in which the whole should be placed; to succeed, therefore, in his delivery he wants nothing but those common expressions that must make the bulk of his discourse. Do you believe now that such a person would have any difficulty in finding easy and familiar expressions?

In these views Fenelon practically followed his great master, Augustine, who having demonstrated the superior importance of subjects or things to words says: "Let not the preacher become a servant of words; rather let words be servants to the preacher. This is what the apostle says, 'not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect.'"

In our own day we find Adolphe Monod, the most celebrated Protestant preacher of France, expressing similar views, more tolerant indeed toward recitation, but with specific objections to reading. He says:

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If we read, it is almost impossible to assume a tone entirely natural; either because the art of reading well is perhaps more difficult than that of speaking well, or because the preacher who reads, when he is supposed to be speaking, places himself thereby in a kind of false position, of which he must undergo the penalty.

He subsequently adds:

Finally, will it be possible to avoid the inconveniences just mentioned, and shall we certainly attain a simple delivery by abandoning ourselves to *extempore* speaking? I believe, indeed, that this is the method in which one may hope for the best delivery; provided always that the speaker has so great a facility, or so complete a preparation, or, what is better, both at once, as to be freed from the necessity of a painful search for thoughts and words. Without this it is the worst of all methods for matter as well as for form.*

5. *The custom of reading sermons arose in England about the middle of the sixteenth century, during the troubles of the Reformation.*

Bishop Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, gives the following account of its origin about 1542:

Now that the Reformation made a greater progress, much pains was taken to send eminent preachers over the nation; not confining them to particular charges, but sending them with the king's license up and down to many places. Many of these licenses are enrolled, and it is likely that many were granted that were not so carefully preserved. But provision was also made for people's daily instruction; and because in that ignorant time, there could not be found a sufficient number of good preachers, and in a time of so much juggling, they would not trust the instruction of the people to every one, therefore none was to preach except he had gotten a particular license for it from the king or his diocesan. But to qualify this a book of homilies was printed, in which the Gospels and Epistles of all the Sundays and holidays of the year were set down, with a homily

* A. Monod on the Delivery of Sermons. See Appendix to Select Discourses, published by Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., New York.

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to every one of these, which is a plain and practical paraphrase on these parcels of Scripture. To these are added many serious exhortations, and some short explanations of the most obvious difficulties, that show the compiler of them was a man both of good judgment and learning. To these were also added sermons upon several occasions; as for weddings, christenings, and funerals; and these were to be read to the people by such as were not licensed to preach. But those who were licensed to preach, being oft accused for their sermons, and complaints being made to the king by hot men on both sides, they came generally to write and read their sermons. From thence the reading of sermons grew into a practice in this Church; in which, if there was not that heat and fire which the friars had showed in their declamations, so that the passions of the hearers were not so much wrought on by it, yet it has produced the greatest treasure of weighty, grave, and solid sermons that ever the Church of God had; which does in a great measure compensate that seeming flatness to vulgar ears that is in the delivery of them.

The same author in another connection says:

The practice of reading sermons commenced among us a long time after the Reformation, and its introduction excited general alarm, indignation, and disgust.

During the reign of Charles the Second the following royal order was published against the custom:

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

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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.

October 8, 1674. MONMOUTH.

6. *Notwithstanding all opposition, this custom of reading sermons has continued to a certain extent ever since, and has given rise to a voluminous controversy, for the marrow of which the reader is referred to the Appendix of this volume.*

Readers of the controversy can hardly fail to perceive that the best of the argument has always been in opposition to reading. Nevertheless, the custom has always found adherents, and that among the learned, who ought to have been most capable of dispensing with it.

7. *After three hundred years of discussion and experiment with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of reading, 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.*

The extracts of the Appendix are submitted in part proof of this important proposition. From them it will appear, that however much is conceded to the importance of writing as a means of self-culture to the minister, and as an agency for perpetuating ministerial influence through the aid of the press, yet that the most effective public speaking has always been extemporaneous, and that every active Christian denomination of the present day is making strenuous exertion to induce its rising ministers to qualify themselves for effective and powerful extemporaneous address. At least prominent individuals or periodicals representing the evangelical portion of the Church of England, the English Independents, the Baptists of England and America, the Unitarians,

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Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Protestant Episcopalians of this country, appear now to be striving with one accord toward the accomplishment of this important object. In all quarters it seems to be conceded that revivals of religion have been and are to be chiefly promoted by the extemporaneous delivery of truly evangelical sermons.*

The Wesleyan Churches both of Europe and America have from the beginning maintained a uniform and consistent record on the subject. They attribute their rapid progress and glorious successes in no small degree to the blessing of God upon their consistent adherence to this primitive mode of proclaiming the Gospel.

Our fathers expected to see men awaken and converted under their sermons, and the expectation led to an adaptation of their discourses to this end. A sermon that had not some visible effect was never satisfactory, whatever might be the hope of its future results. It was usual with them to end the discourse with a home-directed and overwhelming application, and often to follow it immediately with exercises of prayer, that they might gather up the shaken fruit on the spot. Hence revivals flamed along their extensive circuits. They were *workmen*, and workmen that needed not to be ashamed.

Extemporaneous preaching was, until lately, the universal usage of our ministry. It was more than this; it was, as we have intimated, a *necessary* characteristic of the kind of preaching we have attributed to them. We cannot, indeed, *conceive* of

* Corresponding to these movements among the Protestants of England and America, a similar one is in progress among the Catholics of France. M. Bautain, Vicar-General and Professor at the Sorbonne, the oldest theological school in Paris, has recently published an entire volume on extempore speaking, urging its general adoption by the clergy. This indicates that the French are becoming tired of recited sermons. The American translation of Bautain has already been adopted as a text-book in certain Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal institutions of this country, and will doubtless exert a wide influence in promoting prompt and effective habits of eloquence.

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the preaching we have described as other than extemporaneous. Reading never could be preaching, in this sense, any more than the letters of the one word spell the other. How those heroic men could have gone thundering through the land, prostrating multitudes to the earth, or melting them to tears, by the reading of manuscripts, is a problem which certainly no experiment ever solved and no logic can show. They would have been an entirely different class of men, and Methodism a quite different affair, if they had been readers instead of what they preëminently were —preachers.*

Not only the loftiest oratory, but the largest success has always attended upon the speaking ministry; not only Christianity in its infancy, but every revival of it since its first corruption made its early and only advances under the speaking ministry; and Methodism, therefore, which is the latest revival, and the recovery of the original ideal of this glorious work, has achieved its triumphs, and spread itself into if not over every quarter of the globe, by following that style of speaking which the science and art of oratory, in their profoundest productions and most illustrious examples, have always recognized as based on the nature of things, and the natural tastes and judgment of mankind.†

It is certainly therefore to be hoped that with increasing facilities for education there will, by these Churches in the future, be no abandonment of this truly apostolic mode of preaching. Let the standard be elevated by all legitimate means. Let the pen be a constant auxiliary; but let the experience of the past be considered as having demonstrated this to be the most excellent way.

* Stevens's "Preaching Required by the Times," pp. 131-140.

† Tefft's "Methodism Successful," p. 477.

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CHAPTER XIV.

PULPIT ELOCUTION.

§1. Nature and Importance of Elocution.

Anciently the term *elocution* was used to signify style, and whatever belonged to verbal expression. At that period the term *pronunciation* was employed as the equivalent of vocal delivery.

Even in the English language a similar use of the terms has continued till recently. Of late a change has become fairly established by which pronunciation is limited to the utterance of syllables and words, and elocution is employed to signify vocal utterance and whatever belongs to oratorical delivery. According to the ancient nomenclature pratical rhetoric embraced invention, disposition, elocution, and pronunciation. In modern phrase it embraces invention, disposition, style, and elocution.

In this sense elocution has been quite too much overlooked by writers on homiletics, and also by preachers. Indeed, some able writers, Whately, for example, have urgently opposed the study of elocution on the ground that it produced artificiality of manner. "Be natural," say they, "and the whole end is gained." But their use of the term *natural* is equivocal. For man to be natural in the absolute sense is to be a savage, occupying but a single grade above the brutes. For elevated and cultivated manhood to be natural is quite another thing. It is to set up a standard of the highest excellence attainable, and to reach as near to it as possible by all legitimate efforts and means.

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"It requires all our learning," said Baxter, "to make things plain." So it requires the best education to be natural in the noblest sense. It is a very inconsistent philosophy which would educate the eye, the ear, the hand, and the brain, and yet refuse training and culture to the voice. Every true theory of education seeks to maintain a just balance between the powers of expression and those of acquisition. Otherwise the mind becomes a mere absorbent, useless for any positive agency. If, however, a parallel cultivation is maintained, every acquisition may be employed for the good of others.

The whole theory of homiletics presupposes this. It demands, indeed, a power of utterance equal to an effective expression of all the ideas which Christian experience and intellectual effort, aided by the spirit of grace, may have furnished the preacher. With anything less than this his work cannot be accomplished. For moral ends superior knowledge and even divine truth avail nothing if they can have no expression. But while written words are capable of expressing both to the eye of intelligent readers, the voice is the organ of expression to the ears of them that can hear. Who can estimate the value of the human voice as the agent of communication between the heart of the preacher and the souls of immortal beings? The power of speech, in close alliance with that of reason, distinguishes man from all orders of beings below him. And infinite wisdom has seen fit to appoint this peculiar power as the instrumentality by which men are to be convinced of the truth, and saved from their sins.

Essentiality of expression.

Now, is any man called of God to preach the Gospel justified in so using or neglecting his powers of speech that they will be incapable of performing their intended office? There is a positive sin in this matter, by which

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some men weaken their lungs and shorten their lives, and a negative sin of nearly equal flagrancy, by which others make their speech like the croaking of ravens or the cooing of doves, instead of that noble, manly utterance which is at once pleasant and powerful, conveying, not to tens or hundreds only, but even to thousands, the overwhelming influences of vital truth.

The voice, like every other power of the body or mind, is strengthened by appropriate exercise. Hence it is possible to make the work of preaching both agreeable and healthful to the speaker, instead of exhausting and destructive of life. One office of good elocution is to guide the speaker's efforts aright in this respect. Another is to secure the maximum of impresiveness and power in public address. In both respects its importance is inestimable.

Pulpit elocution is to be regarded as the executive branch of homiletics. It is the divinely-appointed channel of communication between a preacher and his hearers. By means of a good delivery the preacher may apply the results of his own studies and the full power of Gospel truth to the hearts and consciences of men. For lack of it the best preparation may be rendered nugatory, and the Gospel itself a subject of scoffing and reproach. The proper office of a book like the present is rather to indicate the nature and breadth of the subject of elocution than to elaborate its details. Fortunately, there is no lack of elementary works or of good instructors at the present day, by whose aid correct principles and practice may be acquired. Ministers of the Gospel, however, should not content themselves with the routine of class-instruction, or with the mere perusal of text-books. Securing all the valuable aid they can from such sources, they should enter upon a well-planned and far-reaching course of self-discipline, aiming at the

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highest excellence, and not being content to stop short of it. If tempted to flag in the pursuit, let them remember Demosthenes. In the first instance they should aim to secure just views of the subject in its various relations, remembering that instead of being confined to the mere cultivation of the voice, it requires the enlistment and subjection of every noble power of manhood to the one idea of EXPRESSION.

§ 2. FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED.

In considering this subject it is well to be admonished of some of the leading faults of manner against which the minister should be on his guard.

AWKWARDNESS.

It is always distressing to an intelligent audience to witness clumsy movements, awkward gestures, or any species of ungainliness in manner on the part of a speaker, and especially of a preacher. The publicity of his office makes him the observed of all observers, and there are seldom wanting those who are glad to be relieved of attention to important subjects by anything so legitimately within their field of criticism. Besides, it is usually understood that the refining influences of education and religion should elevate the preacher above this fault, or any special liability to it.

CARELESSNESS.

Whether real or affected, careless actions or modes of speech are a great fault in public speakers, and especially in the pulpit. They belong properly to the clown, never to the orator. They usually excite the disgust of hearers, who can never bear to be trifled with. Whatever apology may be offered for awkwardness, carelessness in a preacher,

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whether in reference to pronunciation, verbiage, statements, or general demeanor, admits of none.

HAUGHTINESS AND HARSHNESS.

The first of these faults pertains to manner and bearing, the second to speech. The one indicates an evil heart, the other a vicious or uncontrolled temper. And yet they unfortunately attach themselves to some preachers to an extent which greatly prejudices the effect of their ministrations.

No men have greater need than ministers to wish to "see themselves as others see them;" and in order to do so as much as possible they should look often into the Gospel glass, and also elicit from capable and judicious friends, at proper times, free and candid criticisms.

FORMALITY.

It is possible, in the endeavor to avoid awkwardness and carelessness, to go to an extreme of preciseness which appears stiff and artificial. Formality suggests to an audience that a speaker thinks more of himself than of his message. It is a scabbard on the sword of the Spirit; it is a cloak of tinsel thrown over the offensive armor of a Christian warrior, and should be put off as sure to embarrass the freedom and power of his movements.

LEVITY.

Some men have to struggle with a natural lightness of character which greatly weakens their ministerial influence, and often mars the propriety of the most solemn services in which they participate. When such men find their way into the pulpit there is but one remedy for their tendency to make light, often unintentionally, of sacred things. It is to be found in a

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habitual contemplation of the solemnities of the sacred office, and in devout prayer for a proper sense of its proprieties. Minds naturally or by habit addicted to trivial thoughts and grotesque associations, will require persevering effort and great assistance of divine grace to avoid a lightness of manner which will greatly detract from the influence of their public addresses, especially in behalf of religion.

MONOTONY AND DULLNESS.

The former attaches itself to tones of voice, similarity of expression, and sameness of thought. The latter follows as an inevitable sequence. Both are offensive to taste and grievous hindrances to the success of the Gospel. It is a legitimate object of elocutionary training to break up monotony of pitch and of inflections, and to induce those variations of voice and accent which are necessary to express the ever-varying thoughts and emotions of the human mind. Activity of mind and vitality of Christian experience should equally break up and destroy monotony of thought and expression.

§ 3. Excellences to be Acquired.

Opposite and to some extent parallel to the above-named faults are numerous graces to be acquired, which belong to the department of elocution, although never developed in their highest phase except under the influence of religious sentiment. They will scarcely need more than a bare enumeration in order to be appreciated.

1. Ease, naturalness, and refinement of manners.
2. Self-possession and serenity of mind.
3. Gravity.
4. Affectionate anxiety for the welfare of men.
5. Deep, abiding, and powerful earnestness.

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§ 4. Means of Attaining a Good Pulpit Elocution.

In order to the attainment of a good, not to say perfect, pulpit elocution, three things are necessary:

I. Thorough mental cultivation.

II. Systematic training of the physical powers.

III. A proper discipline of the heart, resulting in a complete development of the moral powers and susceptibilities of the speaker.

I. On the first head words are unnecessary. No man can be an effective public speaker who does not know what to say and how to say it. A vacant or a shallow brain cannot pour forth a stream of eloquence. Furthermore, no precepts can enable an ignorant man to put off the faults and put on the graces of a complete elocution. Most of the latter are only to be attained as the result of long-continued mental development and thought upon sacred subjects.

II. Elocution demands physical training for three important purposes.

1. The proper cultivation of the vocal powers. Although not all of elocution, this is a very important branch of it. Language, as the medium of intelligent speech, has in the course of ages become voluminous and complicated. Whatever may be said of instructive capacities for conversation, it is unreasonable to suppose that any person can develop the oratorical power of a complete modern language without laborious vocal drill upon the elements. Here indeed is a point of vital importance, and one too much neglected. It involves the essential matter of complete articulation, without which there can be no perfect speech; without which indeed every word spoken is marred and made an offence to the ear.

Happy are those who have not the necessity of

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remedying habits of bad articulation; still more so those who by diligent and persevering practice, have gained such a perfect mastery of the elements of language as to use them with precision and force, and yet without thought or effort.

From articulation the speaker advances to pronunciation, and thence to inflection, melody, and compass of voice. Since the publication of Dr. Rush's great work on the philosophy of the human voice, there have appeared various elementary treatises on elocution based upon its demonstrations, some one of which should certainly be mastered by every clerical student of the present day.*

By the aid of suitable instruction and a reasonable amount of study and persevering exercise, students may hope to acquire excellent qualities of voice, rapidity of modulation, delicacy of expression, and all desirable force of utterance. These attainments should ever be considered as merely elementary to the task of public speaking. But they should, by diligent training, by correct criticism, and habitual use, be so incorporated into the second or cultivated nature of the speaker that in the act of preaching they will perform their respective offices without apparent effort or thought; so that the whole energy of the preacher may be embodied in his discourse, and in the act of its delivery.

2. The entire physical frame needs discipline with reference to elocution. If the art of penmanship requires a long discipline of the muscles; if the attainment of any mechanical art, or the ability to play skilfully upon instruments of music requires years of practice, is it not preposterous to suppose that the proper bearing,

* One of the best of these is "Vocal Culture," by Russell and Murdock, to which "Pulpit Elocution," by William Russell, is an excellent sequel.

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attitudes, and gestures of an orator can be assumed without study and practice?

It is quite probable that in systems of gesticulation too great stress has sometimes been laid upon minutiæ, and that undue importance has been attached to the *finesse* of a speaker's manner; but even such errors should not become a pretext for the neglect of that legitimate training which may enable the entire body, from the expression of the eye to the posture of the foot, to become an animated organ of expression, co-working with the mind as promptly and often as powerfully as the voice itself.

3. Proper physical training with reference to health and vigor is essential to freshness and power of elocution. Our fathers obtained it in their long rides on horseback, and in occasional manual labor, more effectually than do their sons in the best appointed gymnasia. Nevertheless, if gymnastic exercises are necessary as a means of strengthening the body or the voice let them be practised diligently. In some form let the prevailing tendencies of sedentary life to languor and feebleness be broken up. Otherwise a brief and feeble ministry will be the most that can be hoped for as the sequel of any form or degree of preparation.

Proper and persevering exercise has often been the means of arresting disease and prolonging life. If in every case it cannot do this, yet the certainty of its increasing the muscular power of the system, and adding to the prospects of life and usefulness, is sufficient to enjoin its systematic and constant practice upon any minister of the Gospel.

Ministers, therefore, should endeavor in their plans of exercise to provide for attaining simultaneously all three of the objects named above. The practice of vocal music, of reading aloud, of declaiming to woods

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and shores, of gesticulating with the axe, saw, or hoe, and any other means of economizing, time or utilizing energy, may be profitable if intelligently directed to the attainment of the objects now recommended. But with all its advantages for such purposes, when governed by a holy motive, bodily exercise will profit but little toward the sublime ends of the Gospel ministry without a corresponding cultivation of the moral nature. Whatever may be true of secular oratory, pulpit elocution demands.

III. A proper discipline of the heart, as an essential means of developing the moral power of the preacher. It may not be usual to insist upon this fact in this connection, yet reflection will show that the connection is legitimate. Of what avail are intellectual attainments, and all the external graces of the orator toward communicating the peculiar ideas of religion, if unaccompanied by a true spiritual discernment? No man can express that which he does not know. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Here, then, is a necessity never to be overlooked. It is inherent in the primary design of preaching, and must be kept in view in every form of preparation. The preacher must first have learned "the joyful sound" of the Gospel. His own moral susceptibilities must have been awakened by its thrill; otherwise, though desiring to be a teacher of the law, he will understand neither what he says nor whereof he affirms. Religious experience.

Equally incapable will he be of reaching the hearts and consciences of other men if his own moral powers are not quickened by the truth of God. While, there-

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fore, a true religious experience is to be commended on vastly higher grounds than those of elocutionary necessity, yet it is proper to urge it even on this ground as indispensable to the preacher of the word. Such an experience will lend a charm to every species of toil necessary to the accomplishment of its longings. It will impart additional gracefulness to every movement of the frame, a higher significance to every expression of the countenance, and a greater weight to every word of the lips. Thus it is that a deep and lively religious experience becomes the crowning grace of pulpit elocution.

Happily, therefore, may the grand essentials of spiritual life and progress be made tributary to the glorious object of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ to a perishing world.

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CHAPTER XV.

HABITS OF PREPARATION FOR PREACHING.

IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT VIEWS.

RIGHT views of this subject must ever be of the greatest importance to ministers, and especially to those who are near the commencement of their public career. It has sometimes been supposed that the advocates of extemporaneous delivery disclaim the necessity of any preparation for preaching. On the other hand, they urge not only that preparation is important, but that the very best kind of preparation should be ascertained and laboriously practised.

It is but just to concede excellence to a variety of modes; hence the preacher should be able so far to understand them all as to determine in any given case which is best.

Not only in the pulpit, but in preparation for its duties, ministers should recognize and judiciously cultivate individuality of character. There are infinite diversities of pulpit gifts, and nearly equal differences of administrations, for the same spiritual result. It is extremely interesting to study the varieties of human talent as applied to this one great business of preaching. There is scarcely an object of beauty or sublimity in nature which has not its counterpart in the varied phases of human eloquence. The balmy zephyr, the rushing storm, the murmuring brook, the raging cataract, the modest violet, the stately oak, the refreshing dew, the rolling ocean, the

Individuality should be maintained.

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sunlight and the darkness, each, all, have their place in the gentle offices or the grand movements of the material universe. So in the world of mind, God has given talents which in their appropriate action create influences as varied and yet as useful in their several spheres.

Inherently wrong, therefore, would be any system which should seek to recast all varieties of talent in one mould, or to reduce all preaching or preparation to a fixed and unalterable style. Nevertheless, there are certain great principles not to be lost sight of, and within the range of which all varieties of talent have ample room for the most efficient action.

Viewing this subject in a broader aspect than that presented in chapter six, preparation for preaching may be said to be of three kinds, preliminary, general, and special.

§ 1. Preliminary Preparation is of two Kinds, Moral and Educational.

1. Moral preparation, which can hardly be insisted on too urgently or too frequently, includes the following essentials:

1.) A genuine conversion.

2.) An established religious life.

3.) A personal call of the Holy Ghost recognized by the Church.

These are important preliminaries, but preliminaries only. God performs his work, but leaves man to do his own. It may be regarded as an invariable rule that God never calls men to the ministry who have not talent sufficient for the discharge of its duties. But the duty of cultivating that talent is left with themselves. Neglect or misappropriation of their talent

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may neutralize their call and render them unfit for the work.

2. Educational preparation. Whatever of general education may have been previously secured should now be consecrated to the special service of the divine Master, and all practicable efforts for attaining more should be resolved upon in the strength of grace. Thenceforth life and all its energies should be regarded as subject to the one controlling purpose of preparing in the most effectual manner to be a herald of God's truth.

It should be accepted as a primary principle that the minister of the Gospel must surpass in educational acquirements the community to which he may be called to minister, and this in an enlightened age and country implies no limited range of study.

Education, in the broad sense demanded by the ministers of the present day, should embrace:

1.) An ample course of mental discipline preparatory to the successful investigation of truth.

2.) Large stores of knowledge in the departments of science, history, language, and THEOLOGY.*

3.) A special development of the powers of expression, both by aid of the pen and by habits of free and correct utterance.

It is only necessary here to dwell upon the latter, which has been extensively and injuriously ignored and displaced from its proper position. As a result of this

* Often in his days of most successful preaching, when next to his own soul his parish and his flock were his only care, he has been known to express a regret that he had not laid up in former days more stores of all useful knowledge; for he found himself able to use the jewels of the Egyptians in the service of Christ. His previous studies would sometimes flash into his mind some happy illustration of divine truth at the very moment when he was most solemnly applying to the Gospel. —*Memoir of M' Cheyne.*

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error thousands of ministers, when they have thought themselves ready to become public teachers, have, in fact, had "need that some one teach them again which be the first principles" of public speaking. Radically erroneous are those systems of instruction which postpone efforts in actual speaking till the close of a course of professional study, and then teach the young preacher to confine himself to his manuscript until he gradually acquires confidence to speak extemporaneously. Youth is nature's time for learning to speak, whether in private or in public; and any preacher who does not cultivate freedom of utterance, in fact does not acquire a mastery of spoken language in early life, will strive in vain for it in later years. That acquired, the speaker has at once the basis and the opportunity for attaining the higher graces of oratory, and for advancing from strength to strength until he becomes a powerful preacher of the word.

Power of expression to be acquired early.

As these views may be questioned by some, it may be well to show how strongly they are supported by the advice and practice of the great masters in oratory. It is said of that powerful speaker, Mr. Pitt, of England, that no man carried to a higher degree of perfection the talent of using the right word in the right place. Having been asked,

By what means—by what course of study—he had acquired that admirable readiness of speech, that aptness of finding the right word, Mr. Pitt replied, that whatever readiness he might be thought to possess in that respect, he believed he derived very much from a practice his father, the great Lord Chatham, had enjoined on him. Lord Chatham had bid him take up any book in some foreign language with which he was well acquainted —in Latin, Greek, or French, for example. Lord Chatham then enjoined him to read out of this work a passage in English, stopping, where he was not sure of the word, until the right one came, and then proceed. Mr. Pitt states that he had assiduously

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followed this practice. At first he had often to stop for a while before he could find the proper word; but he found the difficulties gradually disappear, until what was a toil to him at first became at last an easy and familiar task.

Not dissimilar to the above is the advice of Lord Brougham, written to the father of Macaulay, the historian, for the benefit of his son:

The first point is this: the beginning of the art is to acquire a habit of easy speaking; and in whatever way this can be had (which individual inclination or accident will generally direct, and may safely be allowed to do) it must be had. Now I differ from all other doctors of rhetoric in this: I say, let him first of all learn to speak easily and fluently, as well and as sensibly as he can, no doubt, but at any rate let him learn to speak. This is to eloquence or good public speaking what the being able to talk, in a child, is to correct grammatical speech. It is the requisite foundation, and on it you must build. Moreover, it can only be acquired young; therefore let it by all means, and at any sacrifice, be gotten hold of forthwith.

Henry Clay, the celebrated orator of the American Senate, near the close of his public career stated that his attainments in the use of spoken language were attributable to no ordinary cost in the way of labor and painstaking; that from an early period of his life he had been accustomed to the exercise of declaiming when alone on questions selected for the occasion; that he sometimes addressed the stock on his farm, at other times a tree in the forest. He urgently recommended similar efforts to young men desiring to qualify themselves for public speaking.

Bautain reiterates this doctrine, as a few expressions taken from his pages will show. He says:

If you want orators you must teach them how to speak. . . . To know how to speak, you must first know how to think and also to write.

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He urges long and repeated praxis in both as a branch of preliminary education :

> There is but one time for acquirement, the time of youth. . . . In youth all the faculties are wondrously adapted to receive and retain.
>
> *Fit fabricando faber*,* says the adage ; and it is the same with the journeyman of words and forger of eloquence. The iron must be often beaten, especially while it is hot, to give it shape ; so we must continually hammer language to become masters of it and to fashion it if we would become capable of speaking in public. It is not enough to learn the rules of style, the tropes and figures of rhetoric ; the use and proper application of them must be known ; and this cannot be learned except by much speaking and much writing under the direction of an able master, who knows how to write and speak himself ; for in this both precept and example are necessary, and example is better than precept.

The reader will now perceive the absurdity of the idea that he is to become a speaker as an ultimate result of reading written discourses. Apart from the danger of fixing upon himself the habit of dependence upon a manuscript, and of fearing to face an audience, which that theory entails, there results from it an inevitable loss of the best opportunity life affords for acquiring a mastery of spoken language.

Whenever, therefore, a young man adopts the conviction of duty to preach the Gospel, whatever may have been his previous advantages or lack of advantages, he must devote himself with iron will to the task of learning and perfecting the art of speaking ; that is, of uttering thoughts in his own words. This task is not to be isolated from general education, but to be constantly blended with it, and to make progress in proportion to

* A man becomes a workman by working. *Ergo*, a speaker by speaking

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all mental acquisitions. The rule should be, *first, acquire readiness of speech; second, correctness; third, force.* Order of progress.

If the student or preacher at first be too fastidious, unwilling, or afraid to speak until every word is precomposed and every sentence pruned, he becomes a candidate for life-long hesitation and slowness of speech. It is better a thousandfold to acquire fluency at the expense of blunders and solecisms than to have one's speech drag and limp through fear of committing mistakes. But when fluency is acquired, or being rapidly acquired by free and early efforts, then is the time for attention to correctness; and when fluency and correctness are well combined the cultivation of beauty and strength of style appropriately follows. Let the tree be fairly started to grow before it is too severely pruned. But when making a substantial growth leave it not to the wildness of nature; lop its useless branches, shorten in its excrescent shoots, and guide the nourishment of its roots where form is well developed and strength is wanted. The idea that a talent for speaking is natural and not acquired has operated very unfavorably to the cultivation of eloquence. Many teachers and students, even at this day, seem insensible of the importance of systematic exertions to develop and improve their natural gifts for oratory.

A common illusion on the part of hearers respecting the most perfect speaking, is to suppose that with little effort they might accomplish the same or even greater things. The work of the true orator is done so easily, so gracefully, and so naturally that the supposition of laborious antecedent preparations seems almost impossible.

In this very mistake, and the practical neglect which follows it, we may discover the reasons why many who

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would become orators fail. Some on making the effort to speak in public become so conscious of failure that they yield to premature discouragement. Others are so readily satisfied with their own imperfect efforts, and so prompt to imagine themselves either possessed of the genius of oratory or of the acquired ability that they deem futher special exertions unnecessary, and consequently lapse into the mediocrity usually coupled with moderate exertions.

Let it not be thought strange that well-directed and persistent efforts are necessary to the acquirement of readiness, elegance, and force in extemporaneous speech. 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 never let it be said that any any one called of God to preach the Gospel is unable or unwilling to put forth equal exertions to attain proficiency in effective speaking.

§ 2. General Preparation should be Continuous and Habitual.

General preparation differs from preliminary in breadth of extent and length of continuance. We must always be learners, but we must not put off the duty of teaching till every thing is learned. The truth is, that we never learn so fast as when endeavoring to teach. We then see more clearly the object of learning, and are stimulated to more powerful efforts. Hence, so far from considering his education completed, even by the fullest course of institutional training, the minister should regard his entrance upon public life as the commencement of an

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enlarged career of study for a special object. If he has profited rightly by institutional advantages, he has now mastered the elements of general learning. The whole field of knowledge lies mapped out before him, and he is qualified to enter where he may choose and cull its treasures for immediate or future use. Besides, as the boundaries of that field are ever extending, he needs to follow them, and acquaint himself with the new territory which they embrace.

The man who ceases to learn when he commences to preach will soon be like an unsupplied fountain, incapable of sending forth fresh and sparkling waters.

The experience of the best orators and preachers the world has known indicates the necessity of constant progress in general knowledge. The circumstances of different individuals may prescribe different means of attaining it. One of the most obvious and feasible is a systematic course of solid reading. Another is to maintain an active practice in mental gymnastics by mathematical or philosophical study. It is well, if possible, by a rigid distribution of time to accomplish both, and then also to derive similar results from intercourse with society and from wisely-planned habits of special preparation to preach, requiring a continual enlargement of doctrinal and exegetical study.

§ 3. Special Preparation Requires the Study of Subjects for Particular Occasions.

Special preparation is demanded for each sermon, each occasion of public ministry. The time for such preparation may sometimes be very brief and the means inadequate; still it should be made, if only in the silent chambers of thought. Embarrassments from this cause will dimish in proportion to the thoroughness of one's

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previous preliminary and general preparation. In fact, general and special preparation perpetually demand and involve each other. To use a warlike illustration, general preparation fills the magazine, or stores the arsenal with powder, ball, and shell; special preparation manipulates the cartridge and charges the ordnance, whether with solid or explosive shot, or grape and canister. Whenever, too, for special objects, the shot require to be heated, that is the work of special preparation. While early years are the proper period for general preparation, yet at no period of life should it be neglected. "Never too old to learn," is a motto as useful to the preacher as any other man. None, however, in advanced life will learn so fast as those who have been diligent students in their youth. Correspondingly, in reference to special preparation, it is absolutely essential in the earlier years of one's ministry; and in the more advanced periods, when possible, it is by no means to be omitted.

Order and relations.

THE CAREFUL ELABORATION OF A PLAN OF DISCOURSE.

Habits of preparation for preaching should be judiciously planned and fully established. Serious mistakes have been made at this point. Many have assumed that writing a sermon was equivalent to preparing to preach, whereas it is quite possible to write sermons without being duly prepared either to preach or to write.

Most meagre and defective is that theory of preparation which enjoins simply the selection of a text and then writing upon it. No employment of the mind is more unphilosophical or more profitless than that of word-building or word-spinning without a previous acquisition and arrangement of thought. And yet the greater portion of some men's lives is spent in this

Mere writing insufficient.

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employment. They write in private and read in public, and imagine that because they write their sermons are better, more profound indeed than if, as to language, they were extemporized. Every one ought to understand that if choice must be made between extemporaneous writing and extemporaneous speaking, the latter has decided grounds of advantage, since the presence of an audience prompts a greater activity and power of thought that can usually be controlled in the vacancy of one's private room.

Writing itself is simply the act of extemporizing on paper. In order to accomplish it with any effect the writer must imagine an audience present or future, and the sole advantage to compensate for this defect is the opportunity it gives for revision, enlargement, retrenchment, and repetition in the best possible form. But this advantage is very great, sufficient indeed to make writing an essential agency of preparation for every style of preaching.

Nevertheless, a correct mode of writing will always enjoin a previous study of the subject, resulting in a logical plan. To either write or speak without a plan is to write or speak at random. Occasionally the mark may be hit, but usually the thoughts will straggle and words will lead astray from the merits of the case. Hence special preparation, alike for writing a sermon and for preaching extemporaneously, demands a plan as an essential prerequisite. But the proper construction of a plan demands invention, and disposition in all the penetrating and discursive power of the former and in all the detailed comprehensiveness of the latter.

Here, then, at the threshold is the great private task of the preacher. It is to study and master his subject. Agglomerating words, either by means of the pen or

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the tongue and calling them a sermon, is a libel on the name, and an insult to a Christian audience. Professor Park has well said "the eloquence of the pulpit is the eloquence of thought;" and Baxter has with equal significance said, "I never thought that I understood anything till I could anatomize it and see the parts distinctly, and the union of the parts as they make up the whole." These remarks jointly illustrate the nature of special preparation. Its object is to enlist the whole energy of the mind, not only in analyzing the subject chosen, but in creating from its elements and applications a new organic whole.

Interpretation and invention.

It is well in the outset to let the mind grapple unaided with the subject and its difficulties, so as to strike out a new, at least an original track of thought. Until this is made sure of it is unsafe to go for help beyond the study of the Scriptures. The primary effort must be to learn for one's self exactly what God would teach through his holy word. To this end the text, the context, and related passages may be thoroughly studied in the original and translations. There is danger in consulting commentators and authors too soon lest the mind unconsciously fall into the beaten paths of other men and be unable to emerge into a true originality.

But when an original and satisfactory plan is sketched, all appropriate helps may be employed in its elaboration. The period of the plan, moreover, is that in which external helps should be consulted, rather than during any stage of composition.

No one should commence composition while under the necessity of interrupting his own trains of thought in order to consult authors and read up on collateral topics. Nothing more effectually breaks up essential unity of design and execution. The mind is like the

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fabled chameleon. It takes a hue from the last object it touches, and hence may tinge unconsciously, but erroneously, its own creations.

Ordinarily time is an important element of success in the meditative stages of preparation. Bautain has not inaptly likened this meditative process to incubation, by which the idea is made to pass from one stage of life to another, until at length, "sufficiently mature to be trusted to the light of day, it will spontaneously strive to break from confinement and to issue forth to view—then comes the moment for writing." The same author says:

> In general one must not be in a hurry to form his plan. In nature, life always needs a definite time for self-organization; and it is only ephemeral beings which are quickly formed, and they quickly pass away. Everything destined to be durable is of slow growth, and both the solidity and the strength of existing things bear a direct ratio to the length of their increase and the matureness of their production.

Since time is usually necessary for the successful elaboration of the preacher's plan he should begin in season. But it is not necessary to keep the mind in constant contact with the theme. Intervals of rest are refreshing. Besides, they enable one to approach his subject from different directions, and to assimilate to a harmonious whole the divergent views which may at different times and from different points flash upon his mind.

Begin early.

Dr. Skinner has with great truthfulness sketched the practical difficulties which have sometimes to be overcome in this stage of preparation:

> With different preachers, and with the same preacher at different times, there is a great difference as to speed and rapidity in the preparation of the matter. Sometimes it is accomplished with a celerity almost equal to that of lightning. But generally its movement is a contrast to this electrical swiftness; often it

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is the extreme opposite. The first view of the subject is commonly confused, chaotic, without the slightest perception of method or order; a process of intellectual gestation ensues, including deep, intense, protracted thinking; struggles with obscurity and confusion; with objections, with half-truths and indecisive arguments, with erroneous or false prejudgments, with bad or imperfect disposition, with disproportion, disunity, disharmony, complication in organizing the material. Such, for the most part, is the toil of preparation, the condition of thoroughness and success in the work. When this is finished the preacher by examining it may anticipate the estimation of his pulpit performance. If he would therefore be sure of preaching well, he should be sure of doing well in the work of preparation. He ought to revise and scrutinize exactly what he has done, whether it was by the rapid or the slower movement. His swift preparations, especially, should be subjected to criticism. They may be less pleasing to him if he return to them after a day or an hour or two. Perhaps their rapidity was from want of breadth, or depth, or gravity of thought. But his most elaborate schemes may be susceptible of substantial improvement. After the severest labour, the best plan sometimes remains to be discovered.

Bautain compares the speaker's preparation to the work of the bee in gathering sweets from flowers, first nourishing itself with its extracts, then digesting and transmuting them into honey. So should the speaker carefully digest whatever thoughts he may cull from the fields of literature in order that there may be a real transformation, and an oratorical production fraught with life. Another figure will illustrate the same idea. We may lawfully use the gold and silver which other men have quarried, but we should pass them through the furnace of the brain and bring them out anew, either in molten and glowing streams, or stamped with a fresh coinage.

DETAILED COMPOSITION IN WRITING.

So far thought-preparation alone has been contemplated. If words have been used they have been the

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fewest possible, mere wheels and fastenings of thought. There has been a calm confidence that when the moment for expression came there would be no lack of words; indeed, that the act of expression would call out words more pertinent than could be called up in advance. Such processes as these prepare, according to Bautain, a sort of oratorical form or mould into which the diction or word-composition may be cast by a single effort.

The whole subject may now be summed up briefly. Special preparation to preach consists in securing a mental mastery of the subject in conformity with a perfected plan of address. Where these conditions coexist with a perfect command of language and a right state of religious feeling nothing more is to be desired. But these conditions cannot be pronounced easy of attainment. Indeed, who can say that he has mastered any of the great subjects of divine revelation, or absolutely perfected a plan of discourse? The preacher will reach nearest those points who conceives most worthily of the greatness of the task, and who strives most earnestly to reach the goal of perfection.

To this end, sketching and rewriting the plan will largely conduce. When that is done, and not before, writing the sermon comes in as an additional and important auxiliary of preparation. At this stage the act of writing contributes more than anything else to the great objects in view. It tends to complete a mastery of the subject, to perfect the plan, to insure a command of language, and, if rightly performed, to increase the religious fervor of the preacher. It is in fact only by this protracted labor, at least in reference to many subjects, that the preacher can secure in a sufficient degree the essential conditions of preparation.

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ADVANTAGES OF WRITING.

The pen, though a simple instrument, posseses magic power. From the remotest ages its ready use has been regarded a high accomplishment.* Amid the changes of time and of society the pen has undergone fewer modifications than most instruments employed by man. The student of the nineteenth century, like the prophet of the earliest ages, has to wield the pen with his own right hand. The press has rendered unnecessary the toil of the copyist; but writing, as an act of composition, can only be performed by personal labor and fixed attention.

From this necessity the chief advantages of writing will ever spring. Of these a few may be enumerated:

1. Writing is a means of self-discipline and an aid to thought. Cicero understood this when he pronounced the pen "the best teacher of eloquence;" and Bacon also when he said, "writing makes an exact man." To both these ends the preacher should school himself with earnest effort, not merely to prune and polish his style, but to acquire power and accuracy of thought.

By means of writing the thinker may draw the portrait of his own mind, may take the gauge of his own mental powers, and may map out his tract through the fields of the invisible. He who pretends to think much but does not write is a wanderer, not knowing whither he goeth. His movements are usually fitful and unguided, or else languid and feeble. He essays to rise, but having nothing on which to rest for self-support, he sinks as often as he rises. Whereas a thought penned becomes a sure stepping-place to thoughts beyond. No man is safe in supposing that he fully understands any subject until he is capable of writing intelligently upon it.

* See Judges v. 14; Psalm xlv. 1.

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Reading and study accumulate materials for discourse. Thought enables us to make them our own, and composition reduces them to a homogeneous form and incorporates them with our own mental creations. The pen is a powerful auxiliary in this work, enabling us to see what we do and to hold fast whereunto we have attained.

2. The practice of writing is specially important to an extemporaneous preacher. It secures to him both copiousness and reticence. It increases his vocabulary and teaches him what words to omit. Speakers who do not write almost invariably contract looseness and redundancy of style; whereas writing portrays before their eyes various faults, which when seen may be corrected. Besides, where one does not require of himself the habitual use of the pen, there is great danger that full and suitable preparation for preaching will be neglected. An occasional success in preaching without previous preparation, in circumstances, perhaps, when the use of the pen was impracticable, is no argument against its diligent use when it is practicable. Those who have most thoroughly accustomed themselves to laborious preparation in ordinary cases will be best prepared for emergencies when they occur. Indeed, the greatness of the work, the overwhelmingly important interest it contemplates, its divine appointment, and everything connected with the character and objects of the sermon, demand for it the most thorough and habitual preparation which can be made.

3. Writing secures to the preacher the means of profiting by his past labors. It is, in fact, the only means of preserving to him his own mental products. In preaching he will need from time to time to avail himself of all the acumulations of his mental activity and labor in former days in order to give the highest efficiency to his own present efforts.

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Just provision for the future.

While no preacher should content himself with old preparations merely, every one will find frequent occasions to use the result of his past studies if they have been diligent and successful. No one but a mental imbecile will content himself to be reading all his life the old, stale, and feeble preparations of his youth. On the other hand, he who does not habituate himself to thorough preparation in his early ministry will never rise to the full stature of a messenger of God. But by a judicious use of past preparations, whether of plans or of full written sermons, modelling them to meet occasions that arise, and improving upon them by renewed efforts, a preacher may go on attaining an ever-increasing power in the pulpit. Nor is it to be forgotten in early and middle life, that feebleness and old age may in time be the lot of the preacher. Hence it is wise to make preparations that may avail in those extremities when mental power declines and memory becomes feeble.

4. The right use of the pen in sermonizing will often extend the influence of the preacher, beyond the narrow walls of the church in which he preaches, to an unlimited field of influence through the press. Every minister ought to be competent, and to expect to have occasion, to prepare sermons for publication. Every one ought to labor in hope to leave behind him sermons or other written productions which will tell upon the destinies of the world when he has passed away. And it may often occur in the future as in the past, that matter well elaborated for the pulpit is already practically prepared for the press. The contents of some of the most valuable books in our language were first preached, then printed with suitable changes as to form.

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WRONG HABITS OF WRITING.

The advantages of writing are sometimes greatly curtailed, if not neutralized, by wrong habits.

1. One of these has been already censured, that of writing without previous thought and plan.

2. Another is that of arranging patchwork, grouping together scraps and extracts from other authors, or even from one's own previous compositions, without the process of recasting and assimilation. In authorship verbal quotations are often necessary. In preaching rarely.

3. Writing as a word-exercise, in which the production of fine sentences becomes a leading object.

4. Writing carelessly, and omitting to revise, correct, and copy.

RULES TO AID IN FORMING CORRECT HABITS.

1. Take time for preliminary study and thought. Ply diligently the rules for invention and disposition.

2. When ready, write rapidly and as continuously as possible.

3. Let your whole soul enter into the subject, and while you aim at correctness, leave the finishing process to the period of review.

4. Write as nearly as possible in the style of extemporaneous speaking. Dr. Skinner's remarks on this point are excellent:

> In its ideal, preaching is extemporaneous as to its language; the extemporaneous sermon, therefore, abstracting its faults, is the model, as to style and diction, of one which is to be written; it gives command in the verbal construction of the sermon. The pen, in composition, should as much as possible do the very office of the tongue in its unpremeditated utterances. It should intend the words it writes, not for the eye but the ear. The preacher should imagine the assembly he is to address present

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with him where he is writing, and make his silent sentences and words as a tongue or a living voice, wherewith he speaks to it. He must write in a style analogous, not to a miniature, but to the bold representations of scene-painting. He has lost the idea of preaching if he thinks it realizable in a composition suited peculiarly to the press. The composition of a sermon should, if possible, be made perfect in its kind; but its kind is its own, and unchangeable. The style of the sermon, like its matter and its purpose, is individual and unique.

When it was once said in compliment to a sermon, "It would read well in print," a judge of preaching replied, "Then it must have been a very poor sermon." Nevertheless, when readers have learned to appreciate directness of address, and to imagine themselves under the sound of the preacher's voice, sermons properly written will read well, though not as essays.

5. Writing, as a means of pulpit preparation, like preaching itself, should be preceded by prayer, and conducted under the direct influence and aid of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Skinner again says:

There is special danger of being unspiritual in this part of the labor; the danger of the undue pursuit of ornament; of ambitious oratory; of going into a search for the enticing words of man's wisdom; of depending too much on the sermons or plans of others; of being too speculative and abstruse, or, on the other hand, vulgar and commonplace; of being only half or almost true; in a word, of ignoring the Spirit's part in preaching, and, consequently, of abating the necessity and exercise of prayer. In writing, much more than in the preliminary labor, and than in extemporizing, the mind busies itself about the externalities, the outward investments of the matter. The expression of a written no less than a spoken sermon ought to be spiritual, but where it is the chief object of attention there is special danger that it will not be; it will be from spirituality in the writer of the sermon if the structure and tissue of it be not unspiritual, in wisdom of words, rather than in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

6. The best written productions should be carefully

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revised, and, if possible, copied with the last improvements. Second or repeated writing is often more advantageous than the first. No one becomes fully conscious of the defects of his own productions until he has repeatedly revised and reconstructed them; and it should be received as a maxim that it is far better to write a few sermons well, indeed as perfectly as possible, than to scribble voluminously and perfect nothing.

7. In the second and subsequent writing, write plainly in a large and bold hand, with ample spaces for enlargement in future revisions.

8. However perfectly a sermon may have been written, always revise it before preaching, and endeavor to recall, not only the emotions which accompanied the original composition, but, if possible, to improve it both in letter and in spirit.

9. Never let the rereading of a fully written sermon be the last act preparatory to preaching extemporaneously. It is far better to prepare a new abstract, and to contemplate the sermon in its plan, not in its verbiage, lest the written words become an embarrassment to the freedom of thought.

In the repetition of sermons every effort must be made to recover the original interest of preparation, and, if possible, increase it. Failing to succeed in this, it is far better to throw all previous preparations away and begin anew. Dr. Olin has described, with startling emphasis, both the danger and the sin of ministers arising from neglect of this principle:

> When their stock of sermons or *plans* has accumulated, so far as to answer current demands upon it, they make no more, and cease to be students. There is an end to all improvement, and they stagger on to premature mental decrepitude under the burden of these same four or five hundred stale antiquated sermons. In not a few instances the victims of this stupendous

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offence against the human understanding, and the claims of God upon his ministers, reach their climacteric at thirty years of age, after which they neither study nor think, unless we are to dignify as intellectual efforts the half hour devoted from week to week to conning over the well-remembered, venerable manuscript. Everyone in the least acquainted with the powers and the laws of the mind is able to comprehend the stupendous folly of these men. The human intellect gains expansion and vigor and acuteness by activity. *It must work*, or dwindle and starve. It must THINK—think habitually, earnestly, consecutively—or it will ere long lose its power of thinking. The perusal and reperusal of yellow manuscripts is not study. The recollection and repetition of old sermons is not *thinking*. The mind must do something, must invent something fresh, must work and wrestle with new problems and deep propositions, in order to give hardness and vigor to its own sinews. The hand that wields the hammer or plies the graving tool constantly gains strength and skill; but, suspended in a sling, it will not be long in forgetting its cunning. The Hindoo devotee, who has been stationary ever since he learned to stand on one foot, has also lost the power of locomotion.

Our objection is not to the quality of the old sermons. They may be very good, and theoretically very well adapted to the existing wants of the hearer. It is possible they are even better than the preacher may now be able to produce. All this may very likely be true, and yet they may be useless to the people and discreditable to the preacher; while very inferior discourses, fresh from the mint of the soul, and blazing with the fervors of an excited laboring mind, will awaken profound emotion in the hearer's as well as the preacher's heart. Old sermons are preached with good effect by men who are still in the habit of making new ones, and who keep their intellects thoroughly awake by study and invention. They then receive a new endowment of life and power, a new assimilation to the pious Spirit by passing through such an intense resuscitating medium. Without this fresh, vivifying baptism these repetitions are, irrespective of their intrinsic quality, the stalest and most unsavory of human performances. They remind us of the desiccated preparations of the botanist, which are quite bereft of all their fragrance and grace and charming colors, though one might not be prepared to deny that they still retain a measure of latent medicinal virtue. It may be laid down as a first principle,

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that he cannot long continue a useful, nor even a popular preacher, who has ceased to be a student. He must himself gradually lose all relish for the dry, irksome work of memory and repetition to which he dooms himself. However habit or temperament may enable him to preach with apparent warmth and vivacity, his announcements of truth do, in fact, no longer bear the sanction and indorsement of his own deep, living convictions; for neither reason, nor conscience, nor faith is much concerned in the reproduction. If this sort of work is distasteful to the preacher, it soon becomes loathsome to the hearer, with whom all such exhibitions pass for mere routine or declamation. No minister can maintain a respectable position, and satisfy the wants of an intelligent congregation, who is not a diligent student. No matter if he has a cart-load of prepared sermons, and they as good as ever Paul preached; he must bring out "things new" as well as old if he would make his ministrations either profitable or acceptable to the people. *At least half* of the sermons called for by the exigencies of ministerial labor should be produced by current efforts. To say nothing of doing good to others, the study and preparation of one sermon a week is no more than is requisite for the best nurture of mental and moral life. The greatest boon that could befal many preachers would be the conflagration of their old store of manuscripts. Anything that should induce or compel them to return to studious habits were better than the mental inactivity which dooms so many good men to actual inefficiency and superannuation, at a time of life when experience and hoarded wisdom should qualify them for the most extended usefulness, and the most salutary, effective popularity.

THE PROPER USE OF PLANS.

So much has been said in this and other chapters on the preparation of plans of sermons, that the question of their specific use deserves now to be considered. Are they to be taken into the pulpit as mnemonic guides? As a general rule this question is to be answered emphatically in the negative. The plan as recommended in this work is designed to aid the mind in the mastery and grasp of the subject. For that purpose nothing is more serviceable than the act of

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writing, perfecting, and committing a well-digested plan. In this task ideas are the desideratum; not words, except as brief signs of ideas.

Careful practice in this matter will give a preacher great facility in the kind of preparation so much needed for independent public speaking. It will enable him to hold his subject and all its details in a clear, mental perspective, and to be perfectly independent of what Bautain calls those "wretched notes," a very look at which sometimes chills the current of the warmest eloquence. It is better, then, to begin right by forming the habit of perfectly memorizing the plan and relying upon memory. The memory loves to be trusted, and gains strength in proportion to the confidence reposed in it. The use of a written plan in the pulpit invariably indicates imperfect preparation or timidity. There may be cases in which for either cause it should be allowed exceptionally. Nevertheless, the aim of the preacher should be to attain the highest excellence with the fewest possible embarrassments. If any can succeed best in marshalling their thoughts without employing the pen at all, let them lay it aside till after preaching, when it is well to make a record of what has been thought and said in the pulpit. Plans and written sermons, therefore, should become mnemonics for future preparation, rather than for pulpit delivery.

SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR READING OR RECITING.

So far as the suggestions of this chapter relate particularly to the preparation for extemporaneous preaching, it is believed that they equally provide for the other styles of delivery. Where either reading or reciting is to be practised, there exists a necessity for writing in full which is not known in the other case. Time must consequently be taken to put every word in its proper

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place, and to make the diction as perfect as possible. In the case of reading many have supposed that this was all the preparation needed, reading being a very ordinary accomplishment. Where this view is entertained it is usually performed in a very ordinary manner.

Whoever adopts reading as a mode of delivery should feel bound to make special elocutionary preparation to perform it well, to read as freely and effectively as possible.

It is said that the pious Mr. Simeon of Cambridge "spent more time toward the close of his life in preparing to read his sermons with effect than most men bestow on the preparation of the sermon itself." In this respect he did equal honor to himself and his audiences, and indicated to all readers of sermons their obvious duty. Whitefield, also, as a reciter of sermons, is known to have made laborious preparation to secure an impressive delivery, and thus to have become an authoritative example for all who follow him in that style of preaching. In both these styles of delivery the elocutionary preparation must be special. In extemporaneous address it can only be general.

In every case a deep spiritual preparation is of indispensable importance as a means of surcharging the heart with emotion, and the mind and the tongue with power. Continuous meditation, affecting views of truth, and much prayer for the influence of the Holy Spirit, are the true elements of this crowning grace of a full preparation to dispense the word of life.

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CHAPTER XVI.

PREACHING AS A PASTORAL DUTY.

THE pastorate, in a historic point of view, may be regarded as the ultimate position of the minister. If he were alone as a promulgator of the Gospel he would need to go forth and preach wherever he could find hearers, and it would only be when he had planted a Church or Churches that he could in any proper sense become a pastor. But in Christian countries the case is reversed, and young ministers are often, if not usually, employed as pastors or assistant pastors, from the first. They consequently need to have in advance some just idea of pastoral duty and responsibility.

PECULIAR POSITION OF A YOUNG PASTOR.

The position of a young minister, entering as a stranger upon the duties of a preacher and pastor in any charge, is necessarily delicate, if not embarrassing. He will consequently have need of great circumspection with reference to himself, and of anxious solicitude in behalf of the flock to whom he is sent to minister.

Without entering upon details, a few suggestions will be made as to his mode of procedure. His first sermons must of necessity be more or less general in their character. The question as to whether he should preach a sermon specially introductory to his intended labors must be decided by his best judgment of the circumstances. As a general rule nothing can be more appropriate, for the reason that the people are expecting

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and are entitled to hear at an early day a minister's views respecting the importance and nature of his work, and that it is often better to declare his views on such topics in advance of acquaintance with local circumstances. Nevertheless, it may sometimes be best to waive the formality of an introductory sermon, and to proceed as if it were unnecessary. Following either course, he must at the earliest moment acquaint himself with the moral and spiritual condition of his people, and address himself skilfully to its improvement. It is well to draw attention as soon as practicable to those duties which are of obvious necessity for the general good, such as that of attendance on the means of grace and of exertions in behalf of Sabbath-schools; but it is better to defer radical changes till influence and authority are acquired. It should be a rule with young pastors to make few or no changes in the established order of things for the mere sake of change; but if changes are absolutely necessary, let them be made with discretion. In all cases censoriousness upon predecessors should be scrupulously avoided.

When the preacher has entered properly upon his work two great objects rise up before him: the edification of the Church and the conversion of the unregenerate. For these objects he should at the earliest moment make intelligent and far-seeing plans.

§ 1. The Edification of the Church.

I. The edification of the Church involves that of the individual believer, and of the Church as a whole. The great element of power here is the word of God. It must be presented to the people historically, doctrinally, specially, and consecutively. In all these respects it has exhaustless variety and peculiar instructiveness. It becomes the preacher to enter

Elements of power.

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experimentally into its deepest meaning, and to set himself with active zeal to bring forth things new and old for the instruction, the encouragement, and the godly admonition of every class of Christians in their various phases and stages of experience. This important work can never be so well done as in its appropriate connection with the demands which God makes upon his Church to be the light of the world.

Great evils follow in the train of those views of the Christian life which countenance the pursuit of ease and enjoyment, instead of active and aggressive plans for the diffusion of truth and the overthrow of error. It therefore becomes all pastors of Christ to be leaders of his sacramental host, and to infuse into the breast of every member, both by precept and example, a holy enthusiasm to do God's work at home and abroad.

When a minister becomes fully aroused to his sublime responsibilities as the leader and guide of God's chosen people, themes rush upon his mind with a newness and force of which he before but faintly conceived. Instead of being straitened for subjects and the material of preaching he finds his heart "full of matter," and burning with desire to deliver the glorious messages of salvation. In this frame of mind pastoral visitation becomes to him an agency of good only second to that of the pulpit itself. Like the holy apostles, he will not only preach Jesus Christ in the temple, but in every house; and in his daily intercourse with the people of his charge will learn their special wants, and the means of providing for them with directness and certainty.

Pastoral visitation is as direct a necessity to the preacher as to the people themselves. Without it he not only lacks the spiritual benefits flowing from the faithful discharge of duty, but he must ever select his subjects at a disadvantage, and treat them with a

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vagueness, at least an uncertainty, as to their special adaptation by no means friendly to the efficiency of his ministrations.

Let it not be objected that an itinerant ministry is unfavorable to pastoral acquaintance, and that consequently it affords but little encouragement to this class of duties. The man who will not in two years, or even in one, gain an adequate, not to say perfect acquaintance, with his flock never will. Promptness and diligence in pastoral visitations will accomplish more in a short time than the opposite qualities in the longest period, and these are the qualities essential to success during any term of ministerial service. They should be brought into requisition from the beginning, and they will soon make the minister at home in all the homes of his congregation.

Invalid excuse.

§ 2. The Conversion of Souls.

But at no period of his pastoral service should the pastor be indifferent to the conversion of the unregenerate. In order to this there must be great faithfulness in declaring the whole counsel of God, reproving men of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come; also pointing out clearly and forcibly the one true and only mode of salvation. In laboring for this object, moreover, it is important to study the characters of different classes of persons, ranging from those who are almost persuaded to be Christians to the opponents of the Gospel. Efforts made in behalf of these several classes should be discriminating both as to character and occasion. It may be adopted as a rule to labor specially for the most hopeful, but at the same time to neglect none. The minister should labor against hope, trusting in the power of the divine Word and the promises of God. Preaching designed to benefit the unawakened, or par-

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tially awakened, must be accompanied with personal visits and private appeals. Direct interviews with individuals of this character often furnish the most hopeful opportunities for leading them directly to the Saviour; and it is by diligent efforts to answer the questions, to remove the difficulties, and encourage the hopes of those not yet born into the kingdom of God, that the minister becomes more and more thoroughly furnished and specially qualified for his public duties as a preacher.

Mental and spiritual growth.

In order to success in either branch of his labors, the preacher must maintain in himself a constant mental and spiritual growth at every period of his ministry. In his second and subsequent appointments as a pastor he must not be content with the mere routine of the first, but seek to improve upon that with enlightened and studious discretion. To make each year an improvement on the last should be his constant motto and endeavor. With increasing experience and zealous effort nothing is more practicable. In a settled pastorate this is absolutely essential to success; and in the itinerancy it is no less desirable, although a failure may be less obvious. It is precisely at this point that one of the most serious objections is made against the system of itinerancy. It is urged that its tendency is to induce mediocrity of ministerial development, a satisfaction on the part of the minister himself, when he has prepared a number of sermons sufficient to eke out two successive years, which causes him to abandon further habits of diligent study and laborious preparation. This cannot be admitted as a legitimate tendency of the system, although it may be true that many individuals under the system have fallen into indolent habits, as is doubtless the case under other systems. Of course any man who adopts such views and practice must soon become dwarfed in mind and feeble in in-

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fluence. It is therefore of unspeakable importance for a young minister to set himself resolutely against every tendency and temptation to relax his efforts with his advancing experience in preaching. If itinerant ministers have special temptations to fall into a routine of pulpit labors, which, however new to strange people, must become monotonous to themselves, let them set a double guard against any influence, however insidious, that might lead them to a loss of power or vitality in their pastoral ministrations. On the other hand, let them be diligent to seize upon the advantages which enlarged observation and a wider acquaintance with men and society may enable them to derive from systematic changes as an auxiliary to ever-growing power in the pulpit.

Avoid routine.

That such a result may be attained by an active mind and an energetic purpose is certain. But in order to it high ground must be taken and maintained from the first. The preacher must never content himself with the present interest and satisfaction of his audience, but must aim by study and labor to cultivate an ever-growing interest in his duties. He must lift his people above the idea of going to church because it is a duty; he must create an attraction for them so that they will hunger and thirst for the word as for their daily food. Under the steady and powerful influence of a ministry that rises to this grand ideal, the rage for novelty and extravagance passes away like the dew of the morning before the rising sun.

Cherish the noblest aims.

Such a ministry will neither have occasion nor tolerance for self-repetition and spiritless efforts, but will go on from strength to strength, finding favor both with God and man.

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CHAPTER XVII.

PREACHING AS A MISSIONARY DUTY.

PECULIARITIES OF MISSIONARY LABOR.

THE position of a Christian missionary has these peculiarities as compared with that of a pastor:

1. He has no church to receive him.
2. Often no congregation to hear him.
3. No people to sympathize with him.

He has uniformly to encounter the natural opposition of the human heart to truth; and usually the accumulated obstacles of ignorance, prejudice, and vicious customs.

Sometimes systematic and organized heathenism or infidelity confront him, intrenched behind the institutions of ages.

The great work of the foreign missionary must be directed,

1. To arouse attention.
2. To remove error.
3. To overcome superstition; and
4. To spread the truth of God.

This is a work of extreme difficulty, not only owing to the circumstances of the people, but also to the embarrassments of the missionary as a foreigner but imperfectly speaking their language. Moreover, he can have but brief access to the subjects of his labors, and usually in very unfavorable circumstances. They have no Sabbath; he cannot visit them at their homes, and must consequently address them in highways, in market-places, and at heathen festivals.

It would be interesting and appropriate, did space

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allow, to present the peculiarities of missionary labor in Africa, in India, in China, and other countries. But it can only be remarked in passing, that curiosity is the great principle upon which the missionary is compelled to seize as a means of arousing and guiding attention to religious truth.

The object of this chapter is to point out the nature of mission work in Christian lands.

The field of domestic missions in the United States extends from the moral deserts of our large cities to the sparsely-settled districts of the remotest frontier. A deserved prominence has been given of late years to city missions, and to evangelical labors in behalf of those degraded classes usually found in all great centres of population.

Domestic mission fields.

With these may be classed missions to seamen in domestic and foreign ports, and also the duties of chaplains to soldiers and prisoners and freedmen. The rush of population to the gold mines of California, Colorado, Neveda, and other territories has made necessary special efforts in behalf of the motley communities usually gathered together at the localities of profitable or hopeful mining.

Faithful ministers sent into such fields of labor soon learn the necessity of special endeavors to adapt themselves to successfully preach the Gospel to classes of men whom they have not been accustomed to see within the walls of churches.

§ 1. Pastors should be Practical Missionaries.

As a rule it may be affirmed that all pastors should interest themselves in practical missionary work, as well as in supporting the various missions referred to. There are few who desire to sow beside all waters who will not themselves have occasional opportunities to

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preach to the very classes of persons referred to, either in connection with their own charges or during their travels. If diligent to visit prisons and hospitals, and to proclaim Christ in neglected neighbourhoods and haunts of dissipation, they will find occasions for the zealous and well-directed missionary efforts. Sometimes such occasions may be met with at hotels, or on steamboats when travelling, and with some regularity at camp-meetings; while in the streets and market-places of cities it is often practicable to present the Gospel to those who would never come to hear it in churches.

How far it may be best for the pastors of churches in cities to participate in street-preaching, is a question that cannot be satisfactorily decided apart from the peculiar circumstances in which they may be placed. But on the general question of the propriety of out-door preaching there seems hardly room for two opinions.

In favor of preaching to multitudes wherever they can be gathered, we have the direct example of Christ and the apostles. Such authority ought to silence all doubt upon the subject. But if any one should query whether out-door preaching is called for in modern times, let him consult the annals of the Wesleyan Reformation. Let him follow Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Nelson, Pawson, Bradburn, Asbury, Lee, and other successful preachers of early Methodism in England and America in their out-door labors for the furtherance of the Gospel, and his doubts will vanish. Nor will it be difficult to find, even down to the present day, convincing examples, though of a less prominent character.

§ 2. Qualifications Essential to Success.

Suffice it here to say, that whoever would succeed in out-door preaching, and in that class of missionary

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efforts to which every minister is liable to be more or less frequently called, will need to cultivate great readiness and boldness of speech. He will need to understand human nature thoroughly, and to possess himself calmly in the most exciting circumstances. He should never forget that to win souls, rather than control mobs, is the proper object of his ambition.

To this end he must present truth in its most attractive and striking forms. He must acquire great skill in portraying character, so as to let every man see himself plainly in the Gospel glass.

Many of the hints heretofore given on preaching to children are available for the purpose now under consideration, although care must be taken to avoid the remotest intimation that the intelligence of a crowd is underrated.

Anecdote, promptness of retort, frequent variations of the form of address, multiplied illustrations, and all other lawful devices of the public speaker will need to be at the ready command of him who would fully succeed in this class of efforts. But no one should be discouraged by partial failure at first. Practice is as necessary in this kind of preaching as in any other in order to attain the maximum of power.

Nevertheless, he who would by all means save sinners will hold himself in readiness to do good even in a small degree and with occasional opportunities.

Whatever may be said of other good qualities of this species of address, there is but little doubt that in genuine religious faithfulness lies the ultimate secret of success. This in its active glow with the divine blessing will render even feeble talents effective for great good, and if coupled with high oratorical power may exert an influence almost unbounded.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PROPRIETIES AND VICES OF THE PULPIT.

§ 1. Proprieties.

There is no character among men to whom an acute sense of propriety is more necessary than to the minister of the Gospel. He needs its guidance in all his intercourse with society, and especially in the performance of his public duties. He is then exposed to the gaze of the multitude, where an improper word or action makes him the subject of remark, if not of censure.

It is highly important, therefore, that ministers, from their earliest appearance before congregations, should reflect upon the essential proprieties of demeanor in the church of God and in the sacred desk.

It is possible by a haughty or a careless manner, even in entering the church, to disgust an audience. On the other hand, by a manner true to the dignity and meekness of the holy office it is equally possible to impress a congregation favorably for the reception of the truth.

Two examples will illustrate this position. 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.

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After the death of M'Cheyne, 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."

PROPRIETIES INVOLVED IN A MINISTER'S PERSONAL DEMEANOR.

A minister's walk and appearance in entering the house of God should be equally removed from awkwardness and from artificial airs. His demeanor from first to last should be characterized by thoughtful solemnity, and yet by ease and self-possession. It is said to be the custom of ministers in Holland to manifest a reverence for the pulpit by pausing at its lowest step in silent prayer.

This may be very well, but it seems less appropriate to all the circumstances of the place and the service than the custom of kneeling after entering the pulpit, not toward the audience, but modestly toward the wall, as before the Invisible, to invoke divine aid in every act and word belonging to that sacred place.

To enter the pulpit with apparent unconcern, and to sit down and gaze about upon an audience, betokens a lack of that devotional feeling which ought to be felt by the minister, and through his example communicated to the assembly.

Any act out of harmony with such a frame of mind, whether of ostentation or of inadvertence, whether relating to himself or others, will mar the propriety of an occasion of worship.

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Adjustments of the clothing or of the hair, manipulation of one's handkerchief or watch-key, or any other act that might divert attention from higher and appropriate objects, should be carefully avoided.

The preacher should be a worshiper.

The minister should never seem to recognize that he is observed by the audience, but should proceed, like any other worshipper, to participate in the solemnities of the occasion. He should habitually commence with promptness. He should read his hymns in a clear and audible voice, and, if possible, join in singing the praises of God. In offering prayer he should kneel before his Maker, and with closed eyes and devout supplication should lead his congregation to the very throne of the heavenly grace. He should handle the books with quiet reverence, and not toss them about or beat them like dead matter. He should regard the Holy Bible as containing the living oracles of God, and should treat it with the respect due to its author. He should not lay it aside to make room for his notes; he should not close it on taking his text, as if independent of its aid; but with the open book before him, as the guide and source of his teachings, he should acknowledge it to be his highest aim to declare the words which God has spoken. And having appropriately discharged the duties of the pulpit, he should maintain a walk and conversation, so harmonious with them as never to excite the observation of incongruity or insincerity. It is indescribably painful to the pious to witness levity and indiscretion on the part of those to whom they are accustomed to look for the bread of life. And yet how often are they forced to wish that they only saw and heard their ministers in the pulpit! A single light or incautious expression sometimes neutralizes the entire effect of a sermon. But to

Avoid levity.

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such expressions some ministers are particularly prone, following the excitement of preaching. The surest if not the only remedy against evils of this kind is found in the admonition of the Saviour to his disciples: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

THE AUXILIARY SERVICES OF THE PULPIT.

If preaching and hearing be regarded as the leading and central object of religious assemblies on the Sabbath, the other services of the sanctuary should be regarded as auxiliary to that object. Hence in selecting the hymns and Scripture lessons, as well as in offering prayer, regard should be had to an essential unity of design with the sermon itself, so as, if possible, to make a definite and powerful impression, not weakened by a contrariety of subjects.

Every minister should seek to qualify himself to read the Scriptures with great impressiveness, and with a truthful indication of the meaning of every word. To this end, as well as for general elocutionary improvement, the practice of daily reading aloud in a large room or in the open air is of great advantage.

Notices should be read at the time when they will least divert attention from the leading object of the service, hence generally before the sermon. When the sermon accomplishes in any good degree its object, the concluding prayer and hymn should follow in its immediate train, deepening the impression which has been made.

The congregation should also be dismissed with solemnity, and become accustomed to retire in thoughtful silence.

If the Psalmist spoke truly in saying, "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever," it must ever be

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the duty of those who conduct the services of the sanctuary to so govern them at every point as that their influence may be right upon the hearts and lives of the people. A failure to perceive what is strictly proper, and still worse, an incapacity to quietly and wisely govern an assembly, especially if it lead to any indiscretion on the part of the preacher, will often cause disorder, trifling, and other serious breaches of decorum greatly at variance with the objects of public worship.

Solemnities of worship.

As a general rule, a minister is responsible for the public conduct of his congregation. If any members of it are not aware of what is proper or improper in the house of God they should be patiently instructed. If any are wilfully rude or disorderly, the minister with such aid as he may secure should see that they are effectually corrected, or at least prevented from doing harm to others.

While promptness and decision of character are important in their place, it must never be forgotten that love and gentleness are the great instrumentalities by which the froward are restrained and the careless effectually rebuked.

By long usage the utterance of a scriptural benediction has become the established mode of dismissing a religious congregation. By some ministers this act seems to be regarded as analogous to that of priestly absolution. Hence with open eyes gazing upon the people and with out-stretched hands they declare upon them the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

The benediction.

The error of this mode of pronouncing the benediction is obvious from the simple reflection that the blessings indicated in the apostolic benediction are peculiarly the gift of God. They are not committed to

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mortals to dispense, ministers though they be. Hence they are to be sought in supplication, with uplifted hands and closed eyes, expressive of conscious dependence upon the Giver of all good gifts.

Attention to the different Scripture benedictions will show that they are invariably supplicatory in fact, if not in form. Hence ministers should not assume to bestow blessings when their highest province is to invoke them upon the people.

MINISTERIAL COURTESY.

Courtesy may be enumerated among the proprieties of the pulpit. It is enjoined and commended in the New Testament as a Christian virtue. Christian courtesy condescends to men of low estate: it honors the poor, the aged, and the stranger. In its highest and purest forms it should pervade all the intercourse of a minister with his people and his audiences.

It also has special application to his ministerial brethren. When a stranger is invited to preach for you, courtesy will prompt you to conduct him to the pulpit, to offer him the hymn book and Bible, to introduce him in some modest form to your congregation, and thus make him feel at home with your people.

On the other hand, courtesy will prompt the stranger to conform to your modes of worship, to avoid attacks upon your doctrines or usages, although he may not receive them all as his own, and to present those views of truth in which you and he may fully harmonize.

Courtesy between ministers demands frankness in giving and accepting, or declining invitations to preach. It rejects ceremonious formalities in reference to either, and demands truth from the lips as well as in the heart. True Christian feeling is at once the source and expo-

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nent of real politeness. It generously prompts and kindly accepts appropriate attentions, as well in ministerial as in common life, while it scorns idle ceremony and false pretence.

The late Dr. Bethune once uttered words on the subject of courtesy in ministerial character* which deserve to go down to posterity, and may fitly conclude the treatment of this topic:

Our brethren in the ministry should ever be spoken of with honor and kindness. Let ministers show disrespect for each other and the world will soon show disrespect for the whole ministry. They are heralds of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Especially the fathers in the ministry are to be venerated and given all precedence. "Rise up before the hoary head," is a command of the Holy Ghost; but when the head has grown gray in righteousness, and been made glorious by many anointings of the Holy Spirit, it ought to abash the flippant tongue and beardless self-sufficiency of a stripling but a few days from the theological nursery. It is most offensive to see such green babblers pushing aside God's veterans in council and action. The new weight of responsibility should make them humble, and common decency loth to obtrude. He that is not willing to take the lowest place shall never hear the Master saying, "Friend, come up higher!" To be conspicuous in littleness one need only stand on the pedestal of a Colossus.

Can I be wrong in saying that a Christian preacher should be the highest style of gentleman? Not one of those polished hypocrites, fashioned by the tailor, dancing-master, and hair-dresser, who usurp the name; covering coldness of heart with pretences of friendship; flattering to cajole; bowing where they feel no respect, and promising service while they intend to abandon, circumvent, or destroy. But a gentleman in the true sense of that honorable term, firm in high principle, and dignified by integrity; frank without bluntness, kind without flattery, gentle without weakness, exact without formality, charitable without show; free from affectation, egotism, or impertinence; ever mindful of his neighbor's feelings, tolerant of his infirmities, and patient with his mistakes; never intrusive nor yet bashful, tem-

* Oration at Andover, 1842

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pering his speech to the occasion, ready to give place to the older, the wiser, the stranger, and the more feeble; yielding scrupulous respect to authority, not ashamed of allegiance to God, and serving his fellow-men for God's sake.

These, beloved brethren, are the maxims that should govern our lives, and mark our demeanor in the pulpit, where we stand in Christ's place, examples as well as expounders of Christianity. We need no silken deceits, no fashionable airs, no flattering obsequiousness. But if we be humble, as we ought to be; if we walk as followers of the meek, mild, and merciful Jesus, and learn, as good scholars, from the Holy Spirit, of concord and order, we must manifest it by a real deference, a sweet respect, a kind consideration, and a gracious manner toward all with whom we have to do.

If we address men as sinners it will not be in harsh or repulsive language, as though we were better than they; but by putting ourselves among them as sinners saved by free grace, which we entreat them to share. If we rebuke it will be in the name of God, before whom we tremble. If we denounce licentiousness it will be in no gross terms, but with a delicacy shrinking from the shame duty requires us to discover. If we foretell the miseries of the lost it will be with a pious terror, and an earnest desire to avert them from our hearers, "for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" and we might well weep over impenitent souls, as Christ did over Jerusalem. If we be in controversy (though it is far better to refute error by teaching truth), our opponent, however we handle his arguments, should receive from us the respect due to a man. Mere abuse always gives him a moral advantage in the sympathies of the people, and supercilious airs of anticipated triumph disgust by their vanity. Railing makes a blackguard mouth; and he who calls ill-names, in the pulpit or out of it, dares to say of his fellow-sinner what Michael, the archangel, dared not of the devil himself. There is nothing so strong as a fair argument in meek lips. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

§ 2. Vices of the Pulpit.

The term *vices* is used in this connection to indicate a class of serious faults which are not often found aggre-

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gated, but which singly, or with more or less cohesion, are quite too common among preachers.

PLAGIARISM, OR LITERARY THEFT.

Stealing is always a vice, and certainly not less so when applied to the products of the mind than to those of the hand.

Like other vices, also, it hardens the criminal and renders him insensible to the niceties of moral obligation, and often to the hazards of detection. This is shown by the fact that not seldom plagiarists become so bold as to rush into print, and run all the risks of actual collation and comparison of their stolen matter with the original. The greater difficulty of comparison in the case of a spoken discourse may embolden still greater liberty on the part of speakers who have no moral scruples to deter them from the use, without proper credit, of other men's productions.

There certainly exists in the Christian literature of the present age a large provision for the entertainment and instruction of the people, and hundreds of volumes containing such instruction are not likely to find their way into the hands of the masses. Now, why may not a preacher avail himself of the labors of other men by copying or committing his sermons from books rather than to have the labor of writing or preaching new ones continually, and especially when he knows that his best efforts will not equal the literary merits of many sermons already written and published? One reply may be given to this question in the statement, that if the reproduction of fine sermons already written were the chief thing required of the modern pulpit, churches might readily supply themselves with the volumes containing them, and at a rate much cheaper than the support of living ministers.

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Circumstances occur in which the reading of sermons from books is highly appropriate, as in the absence of a minister, or when a minister has a special and sufficient reason for reading the discourse of another man, for example, Wesley's sermon on dress or on popular amusements; but any effort to gather or maintain a congregation by the reading or recitation of the sermons of other men, if the mode of proceeding be known, will result in failure.

The natural demand of mankind in respect to public teaching is the living speaker. Him, in what they suppose to be his proper character, they will come and hear, though they know that his ability is inferior to that of authors they may read at home.

This principle may be tested by political gatherings. The finest things that can be written or said on various political questions are already in print; but where could you gather a mass of people to hear speeches read, even of the greatest statesmen or orators? Yet people will come in crowds to hear living and actual speakers, although but ordinary men, discuss the questions of the day.

Notwithstanding the claim made by the public and by truth for originality upon preachers, yet some ministers commit plagiarism in one or more of the following forms:

1. Of entire sermons, by copying from books, by exchanging with other ministers, and by purchasing manuscripts and lithographs prepared for their use.

2. The plagiarism of extracts, which are interwoven with more or less regularity into the web or woof of their discourses.

3. Of plans.

Some good men have encouraged a very loose morality respecting the use of plans of sermons. Volumes

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on volumes have been published and recommended to young ministers and others supposed to need helps of this kind. The impropriety of adopting them has been shown in a former part of this work, on the ground of its tendency to enfeeble the mind and prevent a man from ever attaining true independence in preaching. It is only necessary to add, that if a preacher intentionally adopts the plan of another he is morally bound to give appropriate credit.

4. Another species of plagiarism consists in direct efforts at imitation.

It has been already explained that we are at perfect liberty, it is indeed our duty, to imbibe the spirit of whatever excellences we read or see or hear. But if we reproduce them it must be in our own way, with our own language, and having passed through our own mental processes.

But when we seek to imitate other men's intonations, forms of expression, and modes of thought, we to a certain degree become plagiarists, and are generally rewarded according to our deed by only succeeding to imitate the faults rather than the excellences of those we admire.

Be yourself "rather than an angel," said Adam Clarke. Nevertheless, we should put forth great efforts to make ourselves more worthy men though we cannot be angels.

INDOLENCE OF PREPARATION.

This involves a lazy routine of subjects, the too frequent repetition of old sermons, and also a lack of interest, of ingenuity, or of diligence in adapting truth to the instruction of the people.

So much has been said in foregoing chapters upon the duty and modes of preparation to preach, that it

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cannot now be necessary to dwell upon the negative aspects of the subject any further than to characterize neglect or indolence in reference to this matter as a serious evil, and one into which extemporaneous preachers are very liable to fall.

STARRING.

This term is used to indicate the habit of using a few showy or superior sermons at the expense of more general and uniform excellence.

There can be no objection to few or many good and even superior sermons if adapted to the occasions of their delivery. Attempts, however, to show off great talents, or to seek reputation by means of one or more extraordinary efforts which will be necessarily in contrast with one's ordinary ministry, are of more than doubtful propriety.

The influence of such a course upon the minister himself is bad. It will at least gradually compromise the acuteness of his sense of honesty and truth, while it will encourage in him a hunger and thirst after human applause rather than a single desire for the honor that cometh down from God.

The effect it will have upon his reputation and usefulness in the Church will be ultimately injurious, however he may at first be flattered by apparent success.

All sermons should be good.

If the question be asked, Is it not better to prepare a few good sermons rather that many poor ones? it may undoubtedly be answered in the affirmative. But such an answer by no means concedes the propriety of preparing or preaching any poor sermons. If a preacher is compelled by circumstances to preach oftener than he would desire, he is at liberty to curtail the length of his sermons to

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the narrowest limits; nevertheless, he should every time do his best.

No one knows what he can do until he is brought under the strong pressure of necessity, and made to feel a deep sense of dependence upon God for illumination and aid.

At least indirectly under the present head, it is proper to notice and condemn every species of extravagance, bombast, and clap-trap which are sometimes employed to draw crowds.

The principle of appealing to the lower sentiments of humanity for the sake of securing applause being once adopted, it is liable to assume a variety of forms, and sometimes to descend very low.

Serious vices.

It cannot be denied that even vulgarity and flattery of the mob are sometimes resorted to in the pulpit, and that they seem to secure their object. That their results, however, are ever good, and not injurious to the cause of true religion, is as little questionable. They are always in extremely ill taste, and they imply a lack of confidence in truth, and disposition to rely on carnal agencies for the promotion of the Gospel not consistent with the faith of a Christian minister.

Besides, the tendency of such indulgences is to desecrate the hallowed place and to break the sacred charm of religious associations.

As affectation is never graceful, so coarseness is never effective. There is no force nor wit in slang or cant expressions; or if they excite attention for the moment it is at the expense of the house of God, the ministry, and the Gospel itself, by pandering to a low taste, and investing sacred things with ludicrous and groveling associations. The man who plays the buffoon or the clown in a pulpit leaves not that solemn place what he found it. However dignified the preacher may be that follows him, the people cannot look up to listen, and forget the tricks that were played

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where he stands ; vulgar pruriency will long for the gross excitement, and the refined cannot wholly discharge the sickening images from their thoughts. Let once the boisterous laugh ring round a place of worship, and its echoes will disturb the meditations of the pious for many a long day.

Never forget yourselves, nor suffer those to preach for you who do forget, that the Church is "none other than the gate of heaven," and the ministry men consecrated to convert the hearts, refine the temper, and exalt the minds of a degraded world, by uplifting before them, in all its grandeur and sweetness, the Gospel of a holy God.—BETHUNE.

WITTICISM.

On the use of wit and humor in preaching there is a greater variety of opinion. Some earnestly contend for the supposed propriety of applying ridicule and sarcasm to error and sin. If the question were with reference to general literature, or the style of a mere moralist, it might be differently regarded, since certain species of folly may be made to wither under the application of ridicule, and humor is very entertaining.

With reference to preaching the Gospel, however, the question arises on the score of congruity and propriety in their highest and gravest sense. In this view, the most that can be said in favor of wit and humor can only present them as very feeble auxiliaries to a Christian minister, whereas danger of gross impropriety attends their use. If, in deference to those rare examples of irony found in the Scriptures, it be conceded that humor may be occasionally employed, it must also be enjoined to keep it under rigid restraint. Some men are gifted with an extraordinary flow of humor, which without doubt may be disciplined and sanctified so as to become a talent of usefulness, when judiciously employed, even in the pulpit. But against its free indulgence or excessive use by ministers in any circumstances, distinct warnings should be uttered.

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In all periods of the history of preaching the abuses of this faculty seem to have been more obvious than its uses. Hence it may be better to rest the case upon the testimony of good men rather than upon a theoretic argument.

Ridicule (says Vinet) shuts the soul to religious emotions. Moreover it is a weapon that may be applied to good as well as to evil, and one which if a minister uses he is very likely to have with greater power turned against himself.

Dean Swift, in his letter to a young clergyman, throws a shaft of ridicule at the very practice in question. He says:

I cannot forbear warning in the most earnest manner against endeavoring at wit in your sermons, because by the strictest computation it is very near a million to one that you have none, and because too many of your calling have made themselves everlastingly ridiculous by attempting it. I remember several young men in this town who could never leave the pulpit under half a dozen *conceits*, and this faculty adhered to those gentlemen a longer or shorter time, exactly in proportion to their several degrees of dullness; accordingly I am told that some of them retain it to this day. I heartily wish the brood were at an end.

Again, the use of wit tends to depreciate the estimate in which one's judgment is held, and consequently to lower the influence of a minister's personal character. Lord Kames is authority upon this point, although his remarks are general, and not designed for the present application. He says:

Wit and judgment are seldom united. Wit consists chiefly in joining things by distant and fanciful relations, which surprise because they are unexpected. Such relations, being of the slightest kind, readily occur only to those who make every relation equally welcome. Wit upon that account is incompatible with solid judgment.

"Subjects really grave are by no means fit for ridicule." And yet those who ought to be grave ministers

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are tempted sometimes to indulge in ridicule because it excites laughter and the appearance of a momentary approbation. Campbell, author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric, says:

The effect designed by the pulpit, namely, the reformation of mankind, requires a certain seriousness which ought uniformly to be preserved by the preacher. His time, place, and occupation seem all incompatible with the levity of ridicule; they (indeed) render jesting impertinence and laughter madness. Therefore anything from the pulpit which might provoke this emotion would be deemed an unpardonable offence against both piety and decorum.

Edmondson, in his work on the Christian Ministry, says:

Never aim at displays of wit in the pulpit. This might suit a buffoon, but ill becomes a grave minister of Jesus Christ. Triflers might like it well enough, but the deeply serious would be disgusted.

Baxter enters his solemn protest against witticism in the pulpit in these words:

Of all preaching in the world that speaks not stark lies, I hate that which tendeth to make the hearers laugh or to move their minds with tickling levity, and affect them as stage-players use to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence in the name of God.

The same evil, with some others, has been gibbeted in the immortal verse of Cowper:

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 impressed

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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.
Behold the picture! Is it like? Like whom
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and reading what they never wrote
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!
In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
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 Master, 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, practised at the glass!

* * * * *

He that negotiates between God and man
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. '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!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,

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Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

THE AFFECTATION OF PROFUNDITY.

Real profundity is bad enough. To a few persons it is habitual; but it renders them so enigmatic and incomprehensible to mankind in general that they are of but little service as public teachers. In order to be useful, such persons need to learn the language and style of thought common among the people whom they address. To the great majority of preachers, that language and style of thought are familiar; but some affect to ignore it at the very time when it might be of the most service to them. They put on airs of superior wisdom, they use "great swelling words" and lofty pretensions. If they speak in common language, or on topics within the range of ordinary mortals, they take care to let you know that it is a peculiar condescension; a descent or ascent to surface ideas quite out of their common course.

In these ways and others like them some may succeed in causing the wonderment of the simple, but rarely in hiding their own shallowness.

Avoid affectation then in all its forms, but especially that of great wisdom and of personal consequence. It will infallibly distress your friends and disgust the enemies of religion.

Get all the real learning and wisdom you can, but fail not to associate with them that modesty and humility which becomes true intellectual greatness as well as the Christian, and especially the ministerial character. "He that winneth souls is wise."

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TEDIOUSNESS.

This is a very unnecessary but nevertheless a common fault of the pulpit. Against it every minister should watch with eagle eye. The remarks and example of William Jay may be received as of unquestioned authority upon the subject:

There is nothing against which a preacher should be more guarded than length. "Nothing," says Lamont, "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." Boyle has an essay on "Patience under Long Preaching." This was never more wanted since the Commonwealth than now, especially among our young divines and academics, who think their performances can never be too much attended to. I never err in this way myself but my conviction always laments it, and for many years after I began preaching I *never* offended in this way. I never surpassed forty-five minutes at *most*. I saw one excellency was within my reach: it was brevity, and this I was determined to obtain.

Let other ministers make the same determination. They may be confirmed in it by the advice of Luther, who said:

I would not have preachers torment their hearers with long and tedious preaching. When I am in the pulpit I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, but I have an eye to the multitudes of young people, children, and servants.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ELOQUENCE CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO PREACHING.

ELOQUENCE is a topic of universal interest. It has been discussed by the learned in the most enlightened countries for more than three thousand years. A school was established in Greece and a book written to promote instruction in oratory half a century before the Trojan war, a period parallel with the days of Solomon.

Eloquence has not been unknown in savage tribes, and with the progress of civilization its study and cultivation increases. Yet even down to the present day there continue to be conflicting views as to what eloquence really is. On no subject within the range of literature will the student find more difference of treatment among standard authors.

§ 1. VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF ELOQUENCE.

From the earliest Greek writers down through the treatises of Cicero and Quintilian among the Romans he will find a confused use of the terms *rhetoric*, *oratory*, and *eloquence*. The prevailing theory to the period of Cicero was that rhetoric was the art of persuasion, and that eloquence was the result of rhetoric. Quintilian objected to that definition on the ground that persuasion was often accomplished by money and other means in no sense oratorical. He sought to give a better definition by calling "Rhetoric the art of speaking

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well," and eloquence the end of perfection of good speaking. Most modern writers have followed one or the other of these ancient theories. Campbell, author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric, following Cicero's definition, says: "Eloquence in its greatest latitude denotes that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end;" and "the ends of speaking are reducible to four, every speech being intended to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, to influence the will." His view is that some one of these objects will preponderate in every discourse, but that they all may have appropriate place in one discourse.

Dr. Porter, of Andover, adopts Campbell's definition.

Blair vaguely uses the term *eloquence* as synonymous with public speaking, and says: "The best definition which, I think, can be given of eloquence is the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak."

John Quincy Adams, improving upon Quintilian, calls rhetoric the science, and oratory the art of speaking well. He also, ingeniously identifies the definition of Quintilian with the language of inspiration in the book of Genesis. When Moses was charged with the mission to Pharaoh his excuse was, "I am not eloquent, but am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." The Almighty condescended to associate Aaron with him, saying of him, "I know that he can speak well;" practically, he is eloquent. The German author, Theremin, accepting the theory of Quintilian, that the orator must be a good man, writes an ingenious treatise under the title, "Eloquence a Virtue." In the fundamental view that eloquence seeks to produce a change in the sentiments and conduct of men, he urges that "rhetoric, considered

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as the theory of eloquence, is a part of ethics, and that eloquence itself is an ability to exert influence according to ethical laws." He further says: "Eloquence in all its various forms is nothing but the development of the ethical impulse itself."

Vinet is more than usually diffuse in his treatment of eloquence. He quotes La Bruyère, who says: "It is a gift of the soul, which makes us masters of the mind and heart of others, which enables us to inspire them as we will, or persuade them to whatever we please." Also Pascal, who says: "Eloquence consists in a correspondence which we endeavor to establish between the mind and heart of those to whom we speak, on the one hand, and the thought and expressions which we employ on the other." He further quotes D'Alembert: "Eloquence properly consists only in vivid and rapid traits; its effect is lively emotion, and all emotion is enfeebled by being prolonged. Eloquence, then, in a discourse of any length, can reign only at intervals; the lightning darts and the cloud closes."

Vinet adopts as his own theory a digest of these views, slightly modified, to the effect that eloquence is subjectively a gift of the soul, and objectively a quality of style that may be not only vivid and rapid, but continuous. He, however, takes particular pains to maintain that eloquence in a unit. "Eloquence certainly is always the same; it is not one thing in the pulpit, and another in the senate or at the bar." And yet the same author speaks of "eloquence not oratorical; the eloquence of narration as well as that of reasoning; eloquence of kinds the most diverse."

Again, an American writer,* conforming to the definition of Webster, the lexicographer, pronounces eloquence to be "the language of emotion."

* Fowler on the English Language.

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In the face of so many and such long-continued divergencies is it possible to deduce a harmonious and comprehensive theory of eloquence? In order to do so it is necessary first to reject all partial and vague definitions, such as those which call eloquence an art, a talent, a gift, or a method.

§ 2. Analysis of the True Idea of Eloquence.

Let us begin at the root of the matter. What is eloquence? The answer cannot be given in a single word or sentence. The term *eloquence* has different significations, all of which revolve around the idea of EXPRESSION. Without expression there can be no eloquence. Any form of expression, even pantomime, may secure in some degree the objective result of eloquence. There is indeed "a dumb eloquence not even denied to the brutes," but it is upon man especially that powers of expression have been lavished as a distinguishing gift, with corresponding powers of perception. The fountain of expression is within the soul. It consists of thought and feeling. Speech is the principal organ of expression, but collateral to it are all significant movements of the body, such as gesture, or the changes of the countenance.

Scriptural idea.

Let us now accept the scriptural idea that an eloquent man is one who can speak well. His eloquence must first exist within him or it can never be uttered. This is the eloquence of thought. But if it remains in his thoughts, though he be a very Moses for wisdom, his fellow-men will not recognize it; they will be unmoved by his "slow tongue." Eloquence of thought must find expression in language. Here is its second phase as a quality of discourse. It is this which has been almost exclusively regarded by rhetoricians, and hence so many imperfect definitions.

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Its third phase is found in the effect it produces on the minds of other men. The object of speaking is to stir the thoughts and emotions of other men. With reference to an audience, or objectively, no speech is eloquent which fails to accomplish that end.

In reference to style, we may call that eloquent which usually conveys or excites eloquent emotions; but style of language is a very small part of eloquence, and that which without specific adaptation and good elocution accomplishes little or nothing. The effect of eloquence, moreover, depends somewhat upon the hearer. A discourse which is eloquent to others may fall profitless upon an inattentive ear, or may fail to arouse a sluggish mind. On the other hand, the power of truth or feeling when inadequately expressed may sometimes produce eloquent thoughts and strong emotions.

Eloquence in its full sense is that powerful combination of thought, language, and delivery which extorts attention from the listless, excites the thoughtfulness of the indifferent, and kindles the emotion of the coldest heart. In brief, eloquence is good speaking, and especially that which excites emotion.

ELOQUENCE NOT A UNIT. IT DIFFERS IN KINDS AND DEGREES.

It is absurd to call it a unit—always the same. Its varieties are infinite. Not more varied are human countenances than the types of mind which beam through them, and which may have their several forms and characters of eloquent expression. Among all the distinguished orators and preachers the world has ever known, it is not possible to name two alike. It is not difficult, indeed, to distinguish similarities and classes, or for students to make choice of styles most in harmony with their tastes; yet it is well to

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study all varieties as containing elements of suggestion and instruction.

Not only does eloquence differ as to individual types, but also widely as to occasion and design. From ancient times the eloquence of the bar, the senate, and the forum have been regarded as distinct in kind, though having points in common. That of the pulpit is broadly distinguished from all the foregoing by its objects and instrumentalities.

Again, eloquence differs in degree as well as in kind. Blair's distinctions of degree are admissible with a single change.

Eloquence of the first degree only aims to *please*, as in panegyrics, inaugurals, addresses of ceremony, and the like.

The second aims to *instruct* and convince. To this belongs chiefly the eloquence of the bar, although it embraces many sermons.

The third aims to secure a far greater control over the human mind, by rousing its feelings or sensibilities and swaying its passions. Excited debate, popular assemblies, and the pulpit give occasion for eloquence of the third degree.

§ 3. The term Eloquence by Eminence applied only to the Highest Degrees.

While it must be conceded that men often speak well for the minor objects named under the first and second degrees, and consequently that the lower degrees of eloquence have an actual existence, yet in common modern use the term *eloquence* is only applied to the third degree, and by superiority only to the highest forms of that.

This fact will serve to harmonize much apparent contradiction in the writers above quoted and others. Thus

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Dr. J. W. Alexander says, "Only one man in a thousand can be eloquent;" and yet the drift of his book is to encourage all preachers to endeavor to become eloquent. It is in this superlative sense that eloquence is the language of emotions. But in admitting this we do not deny the propriety or the possibility of eloquence in addresses to the intellect or appeals to the judgment.

We call a man strong who can lift great weights, but we do not deny that a man who would fail altogether to lift such weights has strength in a lower degree. So we say a discourse is eloquent which secures great control over the will and passions of men; but in so saying we do not deny a lower degree of eloquence to one which merely pleases or instructs. Hence let none be discouraged in their hopes to attain eloquence who at first can only aspire to its first or lower degrees. Let all ministers especially be diligent in acquiring the elements of success—the thoughts, the feelings, the capacities of language and utterance, and trust Providence for opportunities for their successful exercise, indeed for those combinations of circumstances and efforts which are essential to the highest degrees of eloquence. The views here advocated find strong corroboration in the immortal words of Daniel Webster:

The power of eloquence.

May be acquired.

> When public bodies are to be addressed on momentous occasions, when great interests are at stake and strong passions excited, nothing is valuable in speech further than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments. Clearness, force, and earnestness are the qualities which produce conviction. True eloquence, indeed, does not consist in speech. It cannot be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshalled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation, all may aspire to it; they

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cannot reach it. It comes, if it come at all, like the outbreaking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original native force. The graces taught in the schools, the costly ornaments, and studied contrivances of speech, shock and disgust men when their own lives, and the fate of their wives, their children, and their country, hang on the decision of an hour. Then words have lost their power, rhetoric is vain, and all elaborate oratory contemptible. Even genius itself then feels rebuked and subdued, as in the presence of higher qualities. Then patriotism is eloquent; then self-devotion is eloquent. The clear conception, outrunning the deductions of logic; the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit, speaking on the tongue, beaming from the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward, right onward to his object; this, this is eloquence, or rather it is something greater and higher than all eloquence; it is action, noble, sublime, godlike action.

§ 4. The Themes and Circumstances of the Pulpit favorable to the highest Eloquence.

Let the above impressive declarations be compared with what is demanded in the Christian pulpit. True eloquence "must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion." The eloquent preacher must be a man of God. In his own breast must dwell those living emotions which he desires to transfer to the hearts of others. His subject, although not connected with the rise or fall of nations, involves the overwhelming interests of souls that will outlive all the kingdoms and empires of the earth, while it is identified with the dearest interests of the everlasting kingdom of the Son of God.

The man.

The occasion is ever one of imminent concern. It may be the last to the preacher, or the last to the hearer, and upon it eternal interests are ever pending. If such are the essential conditions of eloquence they focalize in the pulpit not once in an

The occasion.

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age, but as often as the faithful minister stands before dying men to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

It was in view of considerations like these that John Quincy Adams said "the pulpit is especially the throne of modern eloquence," legitimately inferring from his position that it was one of the most solemn and indispensable duties of the minister to qualify himself to sway from that throne the sceptre of mind, and thus bring men to the allegiance of the King of kings.

Dr. James Dixon recently said: "Preaching is the effort of the preacher's soul. It is his soul itself, and if the preacher only uses his soul, and has it furnished with truth and knowledge and religion, he must be a good preacher."

Here is a beautiful though undesigned comment upon the idea expressed in the concluding words of the extract from Webster. Neither eloquence nor preaching consist in language, but in that which is higher than all language—in the action of the soul, agitating and elevating the souls of other men. Whatever helps that action, whether the internal working of the soul itself, or its outward expression through words or gestures, is a help to the proper design of the preacher, and whatever hinders that design is a clog upon the wheels of eloquence.

Dr. Skinner has a paragraph to the same effect:

> Eloquence is not from knowledge or thinking merely, but from sympathy, from lively emotion, from light within, which burns while it shines. Eloquence is the fruit of an engagement of the powers and forces of the mind in a business operation, an affair of action directed to an immediate object. Interest is its law, its springs, its life; other things being equal, the livelier the interest the higher the strain of eloquence. The preacher should as much as possible be impassionated by the subject; should put himself wholly into it, so as to be able to give himself to his hearers in and with his discourse.

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A modern writer has said:

Of all the musical instruments on which men play, a popular assembly is that which has the largest compass and variety, and out of which, by genius and study, the most wonderful effects can be drawn. An audience is not a simple addition of the individuals that compose it. Their sympathy gives them a certain social organism, which fills each member in his own degree, and most of all the orator, as a jar in a battery is charged with the whole electricity of the battery. No one can survey the face of an excited assembly without being apprised of new opportunity for painting in fire human thought, and being agitated to agitate.*

Under these suggestive figures let the minister of Christ again behold the glory of his office, and let him resolve that if God ever allows him again to play on that "harp of a thousand strings" he will endeavor to make melody in every heart to the Lord. If ever again permitted to be the organ of communication between the sources of heavenly influence and the consciences of men he will first seek to be "endued with power from on high," that he may by the contact of expression impart that power to others—first be permeated with a pure flame of love from the Spirit of God, that he may kindle a similar flame in the breasts of others, inscribing on their very souls the image of Jesus.

His theme and the circumstances.

The glorious truths he is sent to proclaim, the motives drawn from three worlds which urge him to instant and decisive action, the sacredness of the Divine commission, and the fearful jeopardy of perishing men, all crowd upon him with an inspiration unknown to secular oratory, and leave him no excuse for tameness or dry formality. The pure and hallowed associations of the House of God are also favorable to the results which a minister should hope to accomplish. Although even in the sanctuary he will have to encounter the enmity of the heart against God,

* Atlantic Monthly, September, 1858.

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yet it will not be without the accompanying strivings of the Holy Spirit.

Besides, in every man's conscience he has a coadjutor to the work he hopes to accomplish, and, according to Dr. Griffin, "it may be relied on as an everlasting maxim that the eloquence best fitted to thrill the heart of a philosopher is that which melts a child."

Let not the minister of God's truth then be discouraged by any apparently untoward circumstances, but let him fully understand that if he is the man, God will give him the subject and the occasion, and divinely appointed aid for the most noble employment of human speech ever allotted to mortals.

Self-conviction is the soul of all eloquence. And what are all the objects which ever elicited the fervid eloquence of soldier or patriot compared with those vast, august, and dread realities which swim before the eye and crowd upon the heart of the minister of Christ? Convinced of these, he ascends the pulpit, bending under the burden of the Lord, and like the apostle, even weeping as he tells his hearers they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. His own spiritual experience has left no indistinctness in his mental perceptions. There is nothing vague or uncertain, nothing obscure or unintelligible, in the speech of such a one. He presses earnestly toward his object. His heart's desire is that his hearers may be saved. The power of that inward emotion he cannot conceal. Chains cannot bind it. Mountains cannot 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.*

Here, then, is the philosophy of pulpit eloquence. A man believes, and therefore speaks. If he speaks well he transfers to the bosoms of others the emotions that glow in his own; men being so constituted that right expressions of truth and emotion produce upon them an influence almost irresistible.

* Rev. W. Adams, in Biblical Repository, 1842.

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CHAPTER XX.

CONDITIONS AND ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE PULPIT.

FROM the views presented in the last chapter, it is evident that eloquence alone is not a guaranty of success in preaching, although it is a powerful auxiliary, and one which is to be earnestly coveted and diligently sought.

It is now proposed to consider a subject of still greater importance by asking, What are the elements and conditions of power in the pulpit? There is a great difference between the *form* and the *power* of preaching. The former is easy and, to a certain extent, desirable. The latter is more difficult, but of indispensable importance. Many content themselves with the form. Few covet the power with sufficient anxiety.

Granting that there will ever be a diversity of talents and of administrations in the sacred office, there are certain combinations of equal importance to all. The present theme is one of vast magnitude, but its fundamental principles, have been so fully elaborated in the foregoing chapters that it only seems necessary in this to present a comprehensive summary. The following enumeration of elements and conditions is not made in the idea of exhausting the subject, but rather in hope of suggesting its prominent features.

1. *Strong and clear conceptions of the magnitude and dignity of the preacher's work may be regarded as a primary condition of power in the performance of it.* No

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man who chooses the ministry as a theatre for professional display, or enters the priest's office for a morsel of bread, can ever expect to rise to a just conception of its higher glories. He who would attain not only to such a conception, but to its demonstration before God and man, must set before his mind continually the *greatness* of his high calling, which is of God in Christ Jesus, not allowing it to be regarded as secondary to any earthly dignity. Indeed, he should magnify his office as one divinely appointed to promote the moral welfare of men and nations, and transcending in the greatness of its design all human offices. It conduces primarily to the spiritual good of immortal souls, and ultimately to the consummation of God's great plans for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. To be sent forth to preach the Gospel is to be appointed ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by us to be reconciled to himself. This office too, when faithfully performed, is destined to be crowned with the glories of eternity. Souls rescued from sin and death will be its immortal trophies. It will be for ever identified with the destined victories of the cross and with the ultimate overthrow of Satan's kingdom. If the patriot in the hour of battle needs to inflame his courage by thoughts of his country's weal, so should leaders in Christ's militant host think often of the sacred interests of the Church, for which the Redeemer shed his precious blood, and thus be quickened to the most self-denying efforts.

2. *A love for his work.* Through whatever agony of soul a man may have reached the conviction of a personal duty to preach the Gospel, when that conviction is reached he should press it to his heart of hearts. He has no right to go about the work of preaching the glorious Gospel complainingly or like a

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driven slave. He should make it his delight and his constant joy.

3. *He should show this* LOVE *by diligence, zeal, and faithfulness in the work itself.* By such means he will gain an ever-increasing fitness for the holy office, and an augmented power for the discharge of its duties. The most diligent and thorough preparation will become habitual to him, and instead of his material being exhausted by use, he will find it to spring up, both in his mental conception and his religious experience, with increasing volume and freshness as he employs for God's glory that which has flowed from the same fountain before. As he becomes the spiritual adviser of his flock, and learns, by visiting the poor and the distressed, and mingling in scenes of sickness, death, and mourning, how bitter is the cup of human sorrow, he will become more than ever qualified to administer the consolations of true religion. And when similar afflictions come upon himself and those to whom he is bound by strong ties of affection, if faithful to his calling and the grace given to sustain him in it, his ministry will be tinged with deeper shades of meaning and a holier power of influence. As he becomes more deeply interested in promoting the salvation of men, not only will themes multiply for his choice, but rich and heavenly material will aggregate around them, conducing to a treatment more practical and powerful than is possible in mere theoretic study.

4. *Preaching must be the* GREAT *business of all who would wield the power of the pulpit.* It must not be secondary to teaching, to authorship, to philosophical study, to science, nor, in fact, to anything. Many other good objects may come in as its auxiliaries, but whenever any one usurps priority of attention it will be at the expense of pulpit power. Facts show that but few men

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have been greatly celebrated or useful as preachers who did not, at least at the time of their success, make preaching their one great business.

5. *An important element of success in preaching is the purpose and habit of making everything subservient to the grand object of the preacher's life.*

As this topic has been alluded to under the head of special preparation, it here requires only the additional remark that a minister should not only endeavor to turn his observation, experience, reading, and study to present account in preaching, but to accumulate from the same sources stores of material for future use. A classified record, particularly of his pastoral experiences may in the course of years become exceedingly valuable as a means of illustration to Gospel truth, while some systematic notation of the facts which his reading has accumulated will place at his instant disposition much material which long and special study might fail to secure.

6. *Discretion in the choice and adaptation of subjects to promote the moral welfare of hearers.*

In preaching it is important to say the right thing at the right time and in the right way. Opportunities for doing good once passed are gone forever; but rightly improved, become helps for each succeeding opportunity. In the earlier part of a minister's career he can only act upon theory; but if he is careful to observe the effect of his communications and of his manner he will soon gain increased confidence in right efforts and augmented power in the application of truth. As it is impossible to be eloquent in any important sense on trivial subjects, so it is impossible to wield the power of the pulpit without seizing upon those great and sublime topics which God has designed to be the means of rousing men's consciences, and of stirring within them fears and hopes with reference to their immortal destiny. In the

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conclusion of his work on the natural and supernatural, Bushnell has a fine paragraph which corroborates this view:

Preaching deals appropriately in the supernatural, publishing to guilty souls what has come into the world from above the world—Christ and his salvation. We ask how often, with real sadness, Whence the remarkable impotence of preaching in our time? It is because we concoct our gospels too much in the laboratories of our understanding; because we preach too many disquisitions, and look for effects correspondent only with the natural forces exerted. Sure preaching is a testimony; it offers not things reasoned in any principal degree, but things given, supernatural things, testifying them as being in their power by an utterance which they fill and inspire. It brings new premises, which of course no argument can create, and therefore speaks to faith. And, what is most of all peculiar, it assumes the fact, in men, of a religious nature, higher than a mere thinking nature, which, if it can be duly awakened, cleaves to Christ and his salvation with an almost irresistible affinity. Hence it is that so many infidels have been converted under preaching that went directly by their doubts, only bringing up the mighty themes of God and salvation, and throwing them in as torches into the dark, blank cavern of their empty heart. They are not put upon their reason, but the burning glow of their inborn affinities for the divine are kindled, and the blaze of these overtops their speculation and scorches them down by its glare. Doubtless there are times and occasions when something may be gained by raising a trial before the understanding. But there may also be something lost even in cases where that kind of issue is fairly gained. Many a time nothing is wanting but to speak as to a soul already hungry and thirsty, or if not consciously so, ready to hunger and thirst as soon as the bread and water of life are presented. No man is a preacher because he has something like or about a Gospel in his head. He really preaches only when his person is the living embodiment, the inspired organ, of the Gospel; in that manner no mere human power, but the demonstration of the Christly and divine power. It is in this manner that preaching has had, in former times, effects so remarkable.

In this manner only can its grand and glorious ideal be realized at the present time and in the future.

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7. *There must be in every case a higher aim than mere success as estimated by man.*

There is danger of setting up standards of external progress with which to be satisfied, rather than aiming supremely and constantly at the salvation of souls and the glory of God, whether encouraged by apparent success or not. We should be jealous of the applause of men, and should labor to secure the honor that comes down from God. We should trample in the dust the ambition of preaching sermons to be admired, and exalt our aims to the more worthy aspiration of winning souls to Christ as often as we open our lips in his name.

8. *A holy life and an influential Christian example.*

Without these our best sermons will pass for declamation, and those who hear them will retort upon us, "Physician, heal thyself." With these our very life will be eloquent, and even an imperfect or halting speech will be owned of God. In equal manner and to a corresponding degree will the highest capacities and the noblest attainments be blessed from on high as chosen agencies of pulpit power.

9. *The spirit and practice of deep devotion.*

Here is the sacred fountain from which our best thoughts and holiest emotions must flow. Here we must bring the richest trophies of our own study and our imagination to be consecrated as upon God's altar, and to be baptized as with the dews of heavenly inspiration. Having secured this precious baptism, our hearts will overflow, and our lips will become a fountain of blessing to others.

10. *The blessing and unction of the Holy One.*

"Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." But he enables his faithful apostle to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the gift of

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tongues of fire were simultaneous bestowments of God upon his Church; and while the former remains, the latter in its most important spiritual sense will not be wanting. O that every minister of the Lord Jesus might in every sermon experience the support and guidance of this assisting grace! By such means only can he attain the full measure of that power which the Master of assemblies waits to manifest through him for the salvation of perishing man.

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CHAPTER XXI.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE IN PREACHING.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS.

Two classes of error prevail with respect to the subject of divine assistance in preaching the Gospel.

Some seem to suppose that if a man is truly pious, and has a call from God to preach, he has only to open his mouth and it will be filled with arguments. Views of this class lead to indolence, if not to presumption.

On the other hand, some persons reject the idea of special divine assistance, and teach the minister to depend wholly upon his own powers and exertions, and the general favor and providential blessing of the Lord.

The truth lies between these extremes. It is no more difficult for the Almighty to supply the assistance needed by his servants in special than in general forms.

All Christian men, of course, acknowledge their dependence upon God for the capacity to speak at all. But as they enjoy this in common with other men, some inquire doubtfully whether they are to expect anything more than the ordinary gifts of life and health and reason.

The position assumed in this chapter is that special divine aid should be sought, and may be expected as often as a Christian minister attempts to preach the Gospel.

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It may not be possible to define precisely in what form or degree this aid is received; and yet it is or may be a positive influence—what no lawyer or political speaker is authorized to expect—enlightening the mind, warming the heart, guiding the judgment, and even invigorating the physical frame, especially giving fluency to the tongue.

The proposition announced may be established by three classes of arguments, based on the nature of the case, the Holy Scriptures, and the experience of devout men in different ages of the Church.

§ 1. The Nature of the Work renders Special Assistance from God highly probable.

1. It is God's work that the minister is sent to do.
2. The work is great and difficult.
3. Man's unaided strength is inadequate to its right performance.

"Who," said the apostle, "is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii. 16. A few verses following he adds: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament."

Now, if it be admitted that the call of the Christian minister is truly divine, and for an object worthy of the divine solicitude; that the minister needs help and that God is able to bestow it, is it not an unavoidable inference that the minister may receive and ought specially to seek the very assistance that he needs? But this question is not to be regarded merely in the light of probabilities. Let us, therefore, consider the light thrown upon it by the Scriptures.

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§ 2. The Scriptures make it certain that Assistance will be given.

The Old Testament abounds in expressions which indicate that the Spirit of God was given to aid ministers of religion, and especially the priests and prophets of the Jewish dispensation.

As an example I quote Numbers xi. 25, 26: "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him (Moses), and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp."

Also, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2: "David the son of Jesse said, . . . and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*"

Job said, xxxii. 8: "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

Ezekiel said, xi. 5: "The spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord."

This last expression may be considered the formula of prophetic utterance.

Such passages fully prove the bestowment of divine aid upon religious teachers among the Jews, without indicating any reason why it may not be equally granted under the Christian dispensation.

The testimony of the Scriptures, with reference to

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spiritual aid for the Christian ministry, may be divided into five classes:

1. Indirect promises.
2. Direct promises.
3. Prayers for such aid.
4. Acknowledgment of divine aid.
5. Incidental proofs that it was sought and received by the apostles.

In this chapter it is only necessary to give specimen texts.

1. *Indirect promises.*

James i. 5, 6: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

Remarks. Wisdom is specially needed in preaching the Word, and may be most appropriately asked for in faith. Under this head might be quoted all the numerous promises which pledge the divine aid in our formation of a Christian character.

Every part of that character becomes auxiliary to preaching, and we are authorized to ask God for special grace according to our responsibilities. This special assurance was given to Paul when praying for a removal of the thorn in the flesh.

2 Cor. xii. 9: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

He also appears in the following passage to have referred to divine assistance in preaching, as generally provided for in the economy of grace.

Eph. iii. 20, 21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*, unto him be glory in the church of Christ Jesus."

2. *The first direct promise* to be quoted is that of the Saviour himself, which is coupled with the apostolic

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commission and a part of the same. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

As preaching was the great business of the apostles, to whom Christ's presence was promised, they certainly were authorized to expect his aid in preaching.

The several evangelists repeat Christ's promise of aid to those of his disciples who should in persecution be arraigned before governors and kings for his sake.

Matthew x. 19, 20: "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in in you."

Luke xii. 12: "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

Luke xxi. 15: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

These passages are not quoted as wholly applicable to the subject of preaching. There was a wide and characteristic difference between the defence of the persecuted disciples and their free declaration of the Gospel. Yet the aid promised in the one case is precisely what is needed and may be expected in certain conditions of the other.

But direct help in preaching was also specially promised by our Lord just prior to his ascension. Acts i. 8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

3. *Prayers for aid.*

Eph. vi. 18, 19: "Praying always with all prayer,"

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etc. "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." Col. iv. 3: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds."

4. *Acknowledgments of aid.*

Luke more than once intimates that the Saviour himself was aided in preaching and giving commandments to his disciples by the Holy Ghost.

The apostles make repeated acknowledgment of similar influence. Paul said, Acts xxvi. 22: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great," etc. 1 Cor. ii. 13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . For when I am weak, then am I strong." Col. i. 28, 29: "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." 2 Tim. iv. 17: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

5. *Other proofs that such aid was given to the apostles generally.*

Mark xvi. 20: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the words with signs following."

Acts ii. 4: "And they were all filled with the Holy

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Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts iv. 8: "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them," etc.

Acts vi. 10: "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he (Stephen) spake."

1 Peter i. 12: "Unto us they did (the prophets) minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

The argument from the foregoing examples is plain and conclusive.

Did the apostles receive divine aid in preaching? So may we, having the same work and the like precious promises. Did they pray for this great blessing? So should we, in faith believing, and receiving answer to our prayers, should gratefully acknowledge the favor bestowed.

§ 3. Experience of Devout Ministers.

The experience of devout ministers in all ages of the Church shows that similar aid may still be expected, and should be sought for by all who hope to preach the Gospel effectively.

1. The best of ministers have felt and often expressed their sense of need of the divine aid in their great work.

This appears from numerous examples of ministerial autobiography.

2. Such men have frequently acknowledged their consciousness of having received help from God both in the study and preaching of his holy word.

This fact also is so familiar to the readers of ministerial biography that space will not be taken for examples.

In addition to these ordinary experiences, there have

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not been wanting cases in which the sermon prepared by the faithful minister has been entirely displaced from his mind, and another one given to him, apparently for some important special purpose.

While it would not be difficult to produce proofs of this position from every prosperous period of the history of the Church, the following, from the recently published life of the Rev. Dr. Bangs, will suffice as representative statements of the experience of intelligent and devoted ministers in reference to special divine aid in preaching.

The first extract describes the very beginning of that great and good man's career as a preacher, when he was yet anxious, if not doubtful, respecting his divine call to the holy ministry.

I was up early on Sunday morning and earnestly prayed for divine aid. My mind was sorely oppressed, and in family prayer I was much bound in spirit, and wished I had not undertaken the task. The principal part of the time after rising from my bed till the hour appointed for the meeting I spent upon my knees. I felt burdened with an insupportable load, and my mind was shrouded in darkness. I finally besought God that if he had called me to preach, he would be pleased to open my mouth, and bless me and the people with the consolation of his spirit; but if he had not called me, he would shut my mouth, and I would return home and try no more. After coming to this conclusion I was tranquil, and waited the result with resignation. The people assembled, and after singing and prayer, I no sooner opened my mouth than the Lord filled it with words and arguments; the Scriptures seemed like a fruitful field before me. The word of God was like fire in my bones, and its utterance was attended with the "Holy Ghost and with power." I felt as if I were in the very suburbs of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the people of God were refreshed as with new wine. The Lord indeed answered "as by fire from heaven."

A few years later he writes:

I then read for my text, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." In

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explaining and enforcing these words, I felt that my divine Master was with me in truth and power; every cloud was dispelled from my mind, and my heart overflowed with love for these people. I believe I preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Nearly fifty years later he makes the following records:

August 4, 1851. While speaking the Lord filled my heart with his love, and put words and arguments into my mouth of which I had not thought before, and they appeared to go like fire through the assembly. It was a time of refreshing from the presence of God. While preaching my heart expanded with enlarged views of the goodness of God, and my tongue was unloosed to speak, I cannot but believe, in the Holy Ghost with much assurance. O how good is the Lord to me!

September 23. I had a blessed time in preaching Sabbath morning on the influence of the Holy Spirit. It seemed as if the fire of His inspiration came down upon me while speaking, and upon the assembly while listening, so that we were abundantly refreshed and strengthened, and felt as if we could go on our way rejoicing. I am deeply humbled under a consciousness of my utter unworthiness before God, and often wonder how it is that he condescends so abundantly to bless and comfort me. It is not surely for my sake, but for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his people whom he loves, and to whom he sends me to minister, that he pours the riches of his grace into my poor heart.

The point of union between natural effort and supernatural aid is doubtless that of the full exertion of our natural powers first and preparatory to the assistance we need.

The gracious provisions of divine aid are not to be presumed upon as a matter of routine or for the encouragement of indolence, but only to be expected when human effort has done its full work, and prayer and faith have brought God's blessing upon it.

The truth indeed has a certain inherent power, which

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it often exerts when indifferently uttered; but the preaching of the Gospel requires the full native force of truth applied with the highest human skill, and attended by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Glorious combination.

This glorious combination every humble, faithful, and diligent minister may hope to attain often, if not regularly, in his own experience. According to his labor and his faith it will doubtless be to him. As with reference to other mysteries of the Spirit of God, it is doubtless impossible to explain, or even fully comprehend, the manner of this divine and hallowed influence. But as in all cases of religious experience, we are most concerned with the fact.

The fact being provided for in the economy of grace, it is not limited to time; and those who would exercise an apostolic ministry must, with ardent supplications and self-denying labors, strive to realize it themselves, and hand it down to generations following both by precept and example.

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CHAPTER XXII.

PUBLIC PRAYER AS A BRANCH OF PULPIT SERVICE.

It is impossible to overrate the responsibility of ministers in reference to a right conduct of the devotions of the sanctuary. No earthly act is more solemn than that of a whole assembly worshiping God. In this act, as usually conducted in Christian temples, the minister becomes a leader to the people. How gross the error if he lead them astray from the fount of blessings! How delightful the privilege if he lead them to the very throne of the heavenly grace! Ill-conducted public prayer is a stumbling-block and an offence to the pious, and a source of scoffing to the ungodly. Well-conducted, it softens the heart of the obdurate, quickens the religious sensibilities of believers, and kindles pure flames of devotion in their souls.

Ministerial responsibility.

In offering public prayer the minister rises to his highest representative capacity. It therefore behoves him to guard carefully against every species of fault which might mar the influence of his devotional utterances, and to cultivate every excellence which might contribute to the religious edification of his people, or conduce to the nearness of his own approaches to God. The idea of the great solemnity of public worship gave rise to the use of liturgies, and is the principal argument for their continued use.

Within a certain limit, as that of fixed occasions

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somewhat rarely occurring, the argument is valid; but when extended beyond that limit, it leads to a tautology and a stiffness widely at variance with the adaptation and holy freedom which ought to characterize the worship of the living God whether in public or in private. Without pausing to discuss the propriety or even the right use of liturgical forms, the present chapter will be devoted to extemporaneous prayer, which it will assume to be the normal mode of worship. It will present briefly, 1. Certain defects to be avoided; 2. The leading qualities essential to excellence; and, 3. Suggest the means to be employed for the attainment of excellence in this important exercise.

§ 1. Faults of Public Prayer.

In this holy engagement anything is a fault which hinders the attainment of its appropriate object as a means of communion between man and his Maker. It is deemed unnecessary here to enumerate those moral impediments which debar access to God and make prayer a mockery. It is assumed that the minister has a right heart and pure intentions. But even with these it is possible for him seriously to err.

1. *As to the use of the voice.* A common fault is indistinctness, especially at the commencement. Skill is necessary in giving to the voice a right pitch, so that all may hear distinctly, and yet so that there may be room to rise and fall with the progress of the prayer. Medium pitch or the natural key of the voice is ordinarily that which answers these purposes. Opposite to low indistinctness is the fault of too great loudness, which jars upon the nerves of the sensitive, and destroys all those tender and solemn intonations which are the true promptings and expression of devotional feelings. Monotony and inflexibility, whether on a high or a low

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key, beget somnolence, and are at variance with that life and devout energy which ought to characterize public worship.

2. *As to matter.* Whatever is didactic or narrative has no proper place in prayer, and yet some ministers make, in what they call prayers, long and prosy statements of facts and principles, as though God, to whom their speech is addressed, needed instruction.* The proper topics of prayer are so varied and so easily apprehended that there seems no apology for either irrelevance or sameness, and yet these both are common faults. Irrelevance may result not merely from the introduction of improper topics, but from the disproportionate use of some to the exclusion especially of petition or supplication, which should ever be the burden of the prayer of supplicants.

Sameness may result not only from identity of language, but from iteration of thought and from an invariable order.

3. *As to manner and spirit.* Whatever in the utterance of prayer is out of harmony with the spirit of meekness and humble dependence on Almighty God is highly offensive. It hardly need be said that haughty airs, pert expressions, insensibility to sacred things, or

* I once knew a member of one of our presbyteries who, when called upon to make the ordaining prayer at the solemnity of setting apart a minister to the sacred office, went back to the beginning of time, traced the progress of civil and ecclesiastical society, alluded to the various plans of electing and ordaining the officers of the Church all along down through the patriarchal and ceremonial dispensations, and at length, after tiring out every worshiper with the tediousness of his deduction, he came to the New Testament dispensation, and made about one quarter part of his inordinately long prayer really adapted to the occasion on which he was called to officiate. During a large part of the time occupied by this prayer his hands, as well as the hands of his fellow-presbyters, were pressing on the head of the candidate, to the great discomfort of all.—*Dr. Miller on Public Prayer.*

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a straining after rhetorical effect, are greatly out of place in an act of worship.

4. *As to language.* Coarseness and grammatical inaccuracies on the one hand, and studied ornament or rhapsodies on the other, are serious faults. Also the unnecessary repetition of phrases, such as "we beseech thee," "O," and "O Lord," etc., etc. All colloquialisms and trivialities of expression are to be avoided, and equally the language of compliment; as when a preacher prays for the highly respectable and *intelligent* audience he is about to address, or when he invokes a blessing upon the very *eloquent* sermon to which they have listened!

5. To the foregoing faults may be added that of too great length. The Scriptures are specific in condemning long prayers, and especially those which are offered for a pretence or a formality. Tediousness in any form of speech is wearisome, but especially in an exercise of devotion, tending to dissipate pious feelings and induce languor. Mr. Wesley at an early day enjoined upon his preachers not to pray extempore more than eight or ten minutes at most without intermissions, and this rule still is highly appropriate.

It would be an ungrateful, perhaps an impracticable task to even classify all the faults which have been known to mar public prayer. The present topic may therefore be concluded by a few miscellaneous remarks.

Beyond assuming the appropriate posture of humility, which is to kneel before our Maker, gesture should be avoided. The eyes should not be open, either in a vacant stare or gazing about upon the people, but reverently closed, as beholding Him who is invisible. It is, moreover, a serious fault in a minister not to induce, by suitable instructions and example, orderly and reverent habits of public worship.

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Nothing short of actual disorder is more unseemly than the practice of standing or sitting upright and gazing to and fro when the Deity is addressed. Yet hundreds of people adopt that habit through the simple lack of instruction as to the nature of worship and the appropriate modes of participating in it.

§ 2. Qualities Essential to Excellence.

As to manner and spirit every public prayer should be characterized by solemnity, fervor, and dignity, accompanied by the earnestness of faith, hope, and love, and crowned by the influence of the Holy Ghost helping our infirmities.

As to matter, it should be rich in the appropriate topics of worship, suitably varied in arrangement, and specifically adapted to times, circumstances, and occasions. Adoration, confession, petition, and other kindred elements of prayer can never be irrelevant to public worship, but they do not need to be introduced always in the same rotation. They should in every instance be modified so as to express definitely the sentiments of the worshipers. It may be easy to confess the sins of other men, but God requires us to confess our own. Human wants are so numerous and so pressing that after suitable consideration the chief task of the minister will be that of a judicious selection and arrangement. His aim should be to set forth with clearness, but without detailed minuteness, the necessity of individuals and classes in reference to things temporal and spiritual, the present life and the life to come. Aside from the specific wants of the worshiping assembly, according to apostolic exhortation, "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks should be made for rulers, kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and

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peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

As to language, unaffected simplicity should prevail, hallowed by that lofty reverence which indicates a just sense of the reality of human access to God. For the sake of brevity, other good qualities will be incidentally noted under the following head.

§ 3. Means of Attaining Excellence in Public Prayer.

1. Every minister should acquire a good understanding of the general nature and the various elements or parts of prayer, such as invocation, adoration, thanksgiving, supplication, etc. To this end it is well to peruse such standard treatises on prayer as those of Watts, Henry, Bickersteth, Treffry, Entwisle, and Miller. As the subject is not difficult, but highly congenial to every pious mind, any one of the treatises named ought to be sufficient to enable a person to comprehend it, and yet frequent reading of these books will hardly fail to be profitable.

2. A great familiarity with Scripture expressions, and a capacity to use them appropriately in extemporaneous prayer.

In addresses to the Deity no language can be more suitable than that of Scripture. The words of inspiration are characterized by a dignity, an expressiveness, and an unction infinitely superior to the phrases and adornments of human rhetoric.

Although the Bible contains but few examples of formal prayer, yet it abounds in devotional expressions, and with statements of sacred truth that with a slight paraphrase may be adapted to the uses of public or private worship. For this purpose they have been

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employed in ages past, and their adaptation to it will never diminish. Few acquisitions are of greater importance than the memorization of an ample selection of passages of the divine word in close association with the various attributes of God, the character and necessities of men, the leading features of the plan of salvation, and the glorious provisions of the Gospel of grace. Indeed, all Scripture given by inspiration of God is not only profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness, but also for the assistance of man in offering acceptable worship. Hence no man of God can be considered thoroughly furnished for the good work of leading the devotions of a public assembly who cannot quote with facility and appropriateness great numbers of passages of Scripture. Such an acquisition, even apart from direct quotations, will tend to impregnate the devotional style of a minister with a befitting scriptural character. The best liturgies that have come down to us from past ages glow with sacred phrases and imagery, and it is in the power of every minister by study and effort to cause his prayers to partake of the same characteristics, and thus exert a most elevating influence on the religious feelings of others. In few respects does the divinity of the sacred volume appear more striking than in its wonderful adaptation to express the changing sentiments and feelings of the human heart. And as its teachings are familiar to all Christian people, there is no other language so well adapted to aid in arousing the solemn reflections, the adoring gratitude, and the immortal hopes of a worshiping congregation.

Memorization of Scripture.

Power to quote.

The classification and paraphrase of Scripture under the various heads of prayer given in the Appendix* is

* See Appendix C.

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designed to suggest the manner in which ministers may quote inspired language in their public devotions. It is after the manner of Bishop Wilkins, as developed in his "Gift of Prayer," published in 1690, and may be enlarged to any desirable extent.

3. A deep personal piety, cultivated by habitual private devotion. This, which is so important as an aid to preaching, is indispensable for the edifying conduct of public prayer. In such an exercise talent is of little avail, unsanctified by grace and the spirit of holiness; but in reference to the duty of public worship, the precept and promise of our Saviour have a special application. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. vi. 6. Only he who by earnest and hearfelt intercourse with God has learned the language of divine communion can possibly offer prayer to the edification of others.

4. Meditation. Special preparation for this exercise is as appropriate as for preaching. It may be secured by Scripture study and meditation, by means of which the devotional aspects of subjects are brought vividly before the mind. It may also be secured by devotional reading and composition. The former brings the mind in unison with the experience of the devout, and often stimulates it to a higher and holier activity. The latter is specially important, not as a means of accumulating fine and polished expressions, but as an agency for detecting redundancies, framing the style, and developing continuous and appropriate devotional thought. It is no less to be commended as a means of improvement in private than in public prayer. Without at least an occasional resort to the discipline of careful writing there is danger of falling into a monotonous routine, as un-

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friendly to personal improvement in piety as to the proprieties of an elevated devotional style.

It would be easy to multiply suggestions upon a subject so vitally important, but they would only be of the same tenor of much that has been heretofore suggested as auxiliary to ministerial success. Whatever elevates a man in the likeness of his Maker, whatever brings him into closer spiritual relations with the Author and Finisher of faith, will qualify him better both to dispense the word of life to others, and to lead the devotions of Christian worshipers.

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APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

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A.

SCHOLASTIC LITERATURE OF HOMILETICS.

TWELFTH CENTURY.—*Guibert de Nogent*, an abbot, who died in 1124, left behind him a treatise on the proper method of making a sermon. The most important ideas it contains are the following:

1. The preacher should exercise his talent as often as practicable.

2. He should never ascend the pulpit without prayer.

3. He should, above all things, be short, and rather dwell on practical than on dogmatical subjects.

This idea he enforces by exhorting preachers to remember how much better it is that a few things should be heard with pleasure and retained, than that out of a multitude nothing should be carried away.

He also remarks that some in his day renounced preaching, from the fear of vainglory and the dread of being called sermoners and ventriloquists.

From this representative of the twelfth century we come down to the THIRTEENTH, in which we find note of *William*, Archbishop of Paris, who wrote a meagre work entitled *Rhetorica Divina;* and *Humbert de Romanis*, a general of the order of St. Dominic. The latter prepared a treatise on the Institution of Religious Preachers, in the second book of which he professes to teach "a way of promptly producing a sermon for any set of men and for every variety of circumstances." It will require no great effort to conjecture the depth and philosophical character of such a treatise.

Whatever works appeared on this subject for the next three hundred years were either so valueless or of such obscure author-

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ship as not easily to be identified. An exception in the last respect may be made in favor of a compilation made about 1500 by *John Reuchlin*, entitled *Liber Congestorum de Arte Prædicandi*, which went through several editions.

For our next examples we come down to the days of the REFORMATION. That period which so greatly agitated the minds of men on religious subjects, gave rise to numerous productions with reference to preaching. Most of them, however, were brief, and of such moderate ability as to call for no notice at the present day.

Next on the list of works known to after years is that of *Philip Melancthon*, which dates from 1517. It is entitled *Ratio Brevissima Concionandi:* a Brief Treatise on Preaching. The following is a summary of its contents.

I. The different parts of a discourse.
   1. The exordium. 2. The narration. 3. The proposition. 4. The arguments. 5. Confirmation. 6. Ornaments. 7. Amplification. 8. Confutation. 9. Epilogue. 10. Peroration.
II. Of simple themes, with examples.
III. Of complex themes.
IV. Of the explanation of different meanings.
V. An example of deliberate discourse.
   Rem. 1. The principal work of a preacher is to instruct.
   2. There are two kinds of sermons. (1. Didactic. (2. Demonstrative.
   3. On the four senses of Scripture.
   4. On method.

In 1535 *Erasmus* wrote a work entitled *Ecclesiates, sive Concionator Evangelicus:* Ecclesiastes; or, the Evangelical Preacher. It extended through some 320 pages, quarto, and was divided into four books, as follows:

Book I. On the dignity, difficulty, piety, purity, prudence, and other virtues which should be cultivated by the preacher.

Book II. On the studies of a preacher, parts of a sermon, etc.

Book III. On delivery, metaphor, adaptation, etc.

Book IV. On the threefold character of the priesthood; topics or commonplaces, etc.

Appendix. On the mode of prayer.

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The above-quoted works are justly celebrated. Their authors were learned men, and it may be safely assumed that their treatises on preaching excelled in value any others of their period. That of Melancthon is the most valuable for practical purposes, although that of Erasmus is best known, since, owing to the superior Latin of which the author was master, it has been sometimes prescribed as a text-book in schools and colleges. Both exhibit, with some of the formalities of scholasticism, the awakening power of the new era upon which the world was entering.

In 1580 *Charles Borromeo*, Bishop of Milan, wrote a tract entitled *De Instructione Predicatoris:* on the Education of a Preacher. This work, although not celebrated for anything new or remarkable in its contents, represents the reaction in behalf of preaching already taking place in the Roman Catholic Church as a result of the Reformation.

In 1583 *Martin Chemnitz* published *Methodus Concionandi:* a Method of Preaching.

Chemnitz was a disciple of Melancthon, and his *Methodus* was a respectable echo of the *Ratio Brevissima* of his instructor. He also wrote a work on the Council of Trent, which was much esteemed.

B.

MODERN AUTHORS ON HOMILETICS.

LATIN.

At the period of the Reformation, and for a century later, European books designed for the learned were written in Latin, then the language of the schools in all countries. A great number of treatises on preaching, both by Protestant and Roman Catholic authors, appeared during the latter part of the SIXTEENTH and the early part of the SEVENTEENTH centuries.

Those first enumerated will serve as specimens of their titles, their precise date not being known.

Hen. Alsted, *Theologia Prophetica*

Joh. Clark, *Oratoriæ Sacræ* Σκιαγραφία.

Lamb. Danæi, *Methodus S. Scripturæ in Concionibus Tractandæ.*

Barth. Keckermanus, *De Rhetorica Ecclesiastica.*

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Geor. Lætus, *De Ratione Concionandi ad Method. Anglican.*
Jo. Segobiensis, *De Prædicatione Evangelica.*
Abra. Schulteti, *Axiomata Concionandi.*

Bishop Wilkins, from whose "Gift of Preaching" the foregoing titles are derived, says: "There are above forty other authors who have writ particularly upon this subject recited by *Draudius* in his *Bibliotheca Classica*, under the head of *Concionatorum Instructio.*"

On the supposition that they answered a purpose at the time of their issue, we may be content to leave them in their present obscurity, as it is not to be supposed that they contain anything of importance which has not descended to us in other forms.

1620. F. Ben, Ferrarii Mediolensis, *De Ritu Sacrarum Concionum.* Libri duo. Mediolani e Collegia Ambrosiana, typ.

Gaussen, *De Arte Concionandi.* This work Ostervald (Essay, etc., 1700) pronounces "the best extant." He says, "It is a book you should constantly read, and study, and make your pocket companion. Of all the French divines he best understood the defects of the Reformation."

Numerous volumes in Latin, written and compiled by undistinguished authors, appeared in Germany during the latter part of the sixteenth and the whole of the seventeenth century; for example, Hyperius, 1553; Osiander, 1582; Andræ, 1595; Rebhan, 1625; Carpzov, 1666; Baier, 1677,

ENGLISH.

I. WORKS TREATING DIRECTLY ON THE SUBJECT OF PREACHING.

1613. PERKINS, WILLIAM, *Art of Prophesying.* As this work is one of the most celebrated of its date, and is now extremely rare, the full title is subjoined, with an abstract of its contents and a few extracts of striking passages.

"Arte of Propheeying, or a treatise concerning the sacred and onely trve manner & method of preaching. First written in Latin, by Mr. William Perkins, and now faithfully translated into English (for that it containeth many worthy things fit for the knowledge of men of all degrees) by Thomas Tuke. Motto, Nehemiah viii, 4, 5, 6. Cambridge, 1613."

Extract from the dedication:

To the faithfull minister of the Gospel:

That common place of divinity which concerneth the framing of sermons is both weighty and difficult, if there be any other throughout

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all that sacred science. The dignitie thereof appeareth in that like a Ladie it is highly mounted and carried aloft in a chariot; whereas all other gifts, both of tongues and arts, attend on this, like handmaides aloofe off.

Contents:

CHAP. I. The Art or faculty of prophecying is a sacred doctrine of exercising Prophecie rightly.
II. Of the Preaching of the Word.
III. Of the Word of God.
IV. Of the interpretation of the Scriptures.
V. Of the waies of expounding.
VI. Of the right dividing of the Word.
VII. Of the waies how to use and apply doctrines.
VIII. Of the kinds of application, either mental or practical.
IX. Of memorie in preaching.
X. Promulgation or uttering of the Sermon.
In this 2 things requisite: 1. The hiding of human wisdom 2. The demonstration of the Spirit.
XI. Of conceiving of prayer.

Extract from Chapter ix:

Of Memorie in Preaching.

Because it is the received custom for preachers to speak by heart before the people something must here be annexed concerning memory.

Artificial memorie which standeth upon places and images will very easily without labor teach how to commit sermons: but it is not to be approved. 1. The animation of the image which is the key of memorie is impious: because it requireth absurd, insolent and prodigious cogitations, and those especially which set an edge upon and kindle the most corrupt affections of the flesh. 2. It dulleth the wit and memorie, because it requireth a threefold memorie for the one: the first of places, the 2d of the images, the third of the thing to be declared.

It is not therefore an unprofitable advice if he that is to preach do diligently imprint in his mind, by the help of disposition either axiomatical or syllogistical or methodical, the several proofs & applications of the doctrines, the illustrations of the applications & the order of them all: in the meantime nothing carefull of the words which (as Horace speaketh) will not unwillingly follow the matter that is meditated.

Verba que provisam rem not invita sequenter.

Their study hath many discommodities who doe con their written sermons word for word. 1. It asketh great labor.

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2. He which through fear doth stumble at one word doth both trouble the congregation and confound his memorie.

3. Pronunciation, action, and the holy motions of affections are hindered; because the mind is wholly bent on this, to wit, that the memorie fainting now under her burden may not faile.

1617. HIERON, SAM. "*The Preacher's Plea*, a Treatise in forme of a plaine dialogue, making known the worth & necessity of that which we call preaching; showing also how a man may profit by it both for the informing of his judgement and the reforming of his life."

The above is a dialogue between a minister and hearer, for the benefit of the latter.

The same author wrote a tract on the *Dignity of Preaching*; useful in its time, no doubt, but of no importance now.

1656. Bishop CHAPPEL, (of Cork). *The Preacher.*

This, like the two foregoing, appears to have been first written in Latin and afterward translated.

The Latin treatise was entitled *Methodus Concionandi*, and published in London, 1648, the year before the author's death.

1664. SEPPENS, ROBERT. "*The Preacher's Guard and Guide*" in the didactical part of his duty: wherein is discussed:

"I. The duty of preaching in general.

"II. To whom it primarily belongs.

"III. How managed in the Ancient Church.

"IV. What innovations these later times have made."

1667. Bishop WILKINS. *Gift of Preaching.* "Ecclesiastes; or a discourse on the Gift of Preaching, as it falls under the rules of art. By John Wilkins, D.D., Lord Bishop of Chester."

This was altogether the most valuable work of its period. It reached its seventh edition in 1693, in the same volume with another excellent treatise by the author on the Gift of Prayer.

The "Gift of Preaching" has several times been republished, in whole or in part, as in "Williams's Christian Preacher," where it forms discourse first. It contains some excellent suggestions, but is most useful to the modern student as illustrating the continued use and the most approved forms of the scholastic method of preaching as adopted by the Reformers.

The following extract will serve as an example:

The principal scope of a divine orator should be to { Teach clearly, Convince strongly, Persuade powerfully.

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Suitable to the chief parts of a sermon are these three, { Explication, Confirmation, Application.

Each of these may be further subdivided and branched out according to the following *analysis*. [One topic, as a specimen, must suffice.]

2. CONFIRMATION may be managed in

- *Doctrinal* points, either by
  - *Positive proofs*, whether
    - *Testimony*,
      - *Divine*, from Scripture,
        - *Direct*, affirmation or negation,
        - *Evident*, consequence.
      - *Human*, for such matters as are
        - *Moral* and suitable to natural reason, by the consent of the most or wisest of the heathen;
        - *Instituted*, or points of faith by Councils, Fathers, Confessions of Churches, or such particular writers whose names have come to be of authority.
    - *Reason*, from some of the nine topics, Cause, Effect, Subject. Adjunct, Dissentan, Comparates, Name, Distribution, Definitions.
  - *Solution* of such doubts as are { Obvious, Material.
- *Practical* points, either by—
  - *Positive proofs*, whether
    - *Testimony*,
      - *Divine*, from Scripture precepts or prohibitions, commendations or dispraise, promises and blessings, or threats and judgments.
      - *Human*, in duties
        - *Moral*, by the consent and practice of the wiser heathen.
        - *Instituted*, namely, such as we should not have known or been obliged unto unless they had been revealed and commanded, in Scripture, by Councils, Fathers, Confessions, etc.
    - *Reasons* proving the
      - { *Equity* and fitness of any thing;
      - { *Necessity*, upon the account of
        - { *Duty*,
        - { *Interest*, or the advantage accruing to us by the observance of any duty with respect to our wellbeing
          - *Temporal*, Health, Riches, Honor, Pleasure, Peace, Safety.
          - *Spiritual*,
          - *Eternal*.
    - *Experience*.
  - *Solution* of doubts and cases.

1678. GLANVIL, JOSEPH. "*Essay concerning Preaching*, written for the direction of a young divine."

The author was Prebendary of Worcester, and his essay was a plain and sensible treatise. London.

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1705. EDWARDS, JOHN, D.D. "*The Preacher;* a discourse showing what are the particular offices and employments of those of that character in the Church; with a free censure of the most common failings and miscarriages of persons in that sacred employment."

The author was a Calvanistic divine of the Church of England, prominent as a writer and controversialist. The freedom of his criticisms provoked a reply by Robert Lightfoot, which led to a vindication and rejoinder. Two additional parts to the Preacher were issued in 1706 and 1709. London.

1710. (?) MATHER, COTTON. The Student and Preacher. "*Manductio ad Ministerium;* or, directions for a candidate of the ministry, wherein

"1. A right *foundation* is laid for his future improvement.

"2. *Rules* are offered for such a management of his academical and preparatory studies: and upon that for

"3. Such a *conduct* after his appearance in the world as may render him a skilful and useful minister of the Gospel." Latest edition, London, 1789. R. Hindmarsh.

This work has the distinction of being the first American production on this class of topics. It has, however, been better known in England than in this country, where it is not known to have been republished. Two editions were published in London, the first known as Mr. Ryland's edition, the second in 1789, "carefully revised and corrected by a lover of the Gospel," and containing also an abridgment of Mr. Ryland's preface. Copies of the last-named edition, although now very rare, may still be occasionally found. It is a small 12mo. of 250 pages. The style, though in a less degree than in some of the author's works, smacks of the pedantic. The English text is introduced by a stately Latin preface, and the several pages are headed "*The Angels preparing to sound the Trumpets.*"

The greater part of the work relates to the scholastic and religious character of the preacher, in which high and creditable ground is taken. In the brief sections which relate more especially to preaching are a few gems too bright to be left buried in the rubbish of the past.

The first thing which I have to demand of you is that you entertain the people of God with none but well-studied sermons, and employ none but well-beaten oil for the lamps of the golden candlestick.

When you are to preach, you should go directly from your knees in your study to the pulpit.

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Your sermon must also be such that you may hope to have the blood of your Saviour sprinkled upon it, and his good Spirit breathing in it.

Let the motto upon your whole ministry be, "Christ is all."

Be a star to lead men unto the Saviour, and stop not till you see them there.

Be careful evermore to preach scripturally, and employ the sword of the Spirit if you would hope to do execution.

If you must have your notes before you in preaching, yet let there be with you a distinction between the neat using of notes and the dull reading of them. Keep up the air and life of speaking, and put not off your hearers with an heavy reading to them. How can you demand of them to remember much of what you bring to them, when you remember nothing of it yourself? Besides, by reading all you say, you will so cramp and stunt all ability of speaking that you will be unable to make an handsome speech on any occasion. What I therefore advise you to is, let your notes be little other than a quiver on which you may cast your eye now and then to see what arrow is to be next fetched from thence, and then, with your eye as much as may be on them whom you speak to, let it be shot away with a vivacity of one in earnest for to have the truths well entertained with the auditory.

1712. BLACKWELL, THOMAS, Prof. of Div. and Prin. Marischal College, Aberdeen. "*Methodus Evangelica*; or, Discourses upon the Homiletical, Textual, and Occasional methods of preaching." London.

1715. BARECROFTS, J., D.D. "*Ars Concionandi;* or, an instruction to young students in divinity, with rules for preaching or advice to all novices in that divine art." London.

1723. JENNINGS, Dr. JOHN. "*Discourses* on preaching Christ, and on particular and experimental preaching." London.

The author was the tutor of Dr. Doddridge. His work is reproduced in Williams's Christian Preacher.

1731. BLACKMORE, Sir RICHARD. "*The Accomplished Preacher;* or, an essay upon divine eloquence." London.

1751. DODDRIDGE, PHILIP. "*Lectures on Preaching* and the ministerial office."

These lectures were delivered to his own clerical students, and left in manuscript at his death. They are published in his works, and also in a small 24mo. volume, reprinted at Andover, 1833.

1754. FORDYCE, DAVID, Professor of Phil., Marischal College, Aberdeen. "*Theodorus;* a dialogue on the art of preaching."

Usually printed and bound with the following:

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1754. FORDYCE, Rev. JAMES, Minister in London. "*Eloquence of the Pulpit*, a sermon: and *Action of the Pulpit*, an essay."

1772. GIBBONS, THOMAS, D.D. "*The Christian Minister*; three poetical epistles, addressed to Philander." London: Buckland.

A feeble production.

1775. CAMPBELL, GEORGE, LL.D., F.R.S., Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. "*Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence.*"

These lectures, from the author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric and other well-known works, have been several times reprinted in America.

1780. HOLLAND, P. "*Discourse* on the character, offices, and qualifications of the Christian preacher." London.

The author was a Unitarian, and his discourse was based on Titus ii. 15.

1787. GREGORY, GEORGE, F.A.S. "*Thoughts* on the composition and delivery of a sermon." London: J. Johnson.

Published in connection with a volume of sermons, and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

1800. WILLIAMS, EDWARD, D.D. "*Christian Preacher*; containing, in part or in whole, the works of Wilkins, Jennings, Franck, Watts, Doddridge, and Claude."

The fifth edition of the above was published in 1843, with a valuable appendix, suggesting books for the preacher's library. London: Thomas Tegg.

1805. ST. JOHN'S "*Composition of a Sermon*, adapted to the Church of England."

Published in the same volume with a translation of the work of Reybaz, a French Jesuit, on the Art of Preaching.

1809. BRAMWELL, WILLIAM. "*The Salvation Preacher.*"

Bramwell was a Wesleyan minister, of extraordinary power and success. "You could trace," says one of his biographers, "the footsteps of William Bramwell by the penitents, converts, and sanctified believers he left behind him."

His "Salvation Preacher" was a compilation and abridgment from D'Oyley's translation of Gisbert's Christian Eloquence. One of his letters speaks of it, incorrectly, as from a translation of St. Chrysostom on the Priesthood.

The preface states his object in its publication to have been twofold: "first, to rouse from slumber those preachers who, from a profession of depending wholly upon the Lord for everything, neglect the proper means for improving the judgment

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and exciting the affections." "Second, to preserve the studious minister from that dependence on his studies which prevents the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit in the act of preaching."

This book is now extremely scarce; but its existence proves that an honored class of evangelists, often characterized as indifferent to the graces of oratory, had in fact a high appreciation of both the theory and practice of Christian eloquence, even though illustrated by a Roman Catholic author.

1819. CLARKE, ADAM, LL.D. "*Letter to a Preacher*, on his entrance into the work of the ministry."

This work is still published at the Methodist Book Rooms, New York, in connection with the *Clavis Biblica* of Dr. Clarke, and four discourses on the duties of a minister of the Gospel, by Thomas Coke, LL.D., originally published in 1810. Title of the volume, "Preacher's Manual."

1819. PORTER, EBENEZER. "*The Young Preacher's Manual*; or, collection of treatises on preaching: comprising *Brown's* Address to Students in Divinity, *Fenelon's* Dialogues, *Claude's* Essay, *Gregory* on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon, *Reybaz* on the Art of Preaching. Selected and revised by Ebenezer Porter, D.D., Partlett Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in Theological Seminary, Andover." Boston: Charles Ewer.

1820. RITCHIE, ANDREW. "*The Christian Preacher's Assistant*; consisting of rules and observations designed to conduct him to the most eligible method of preparing and delivering sermons. London."

1822. BURDER, HENRY FOSTER. "*Mental Discipline*; or, hints on the cultivation of moral and intellectual habits." Addressed to students in theology, and young preachers."

Edition published in New York, 1830, including an address on Pulpit Eloquence, by Justin Edwards, D.D.

1824. WARE, HENRY, Junior. "*Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching.*"

The author was a Unitarian Minister, and a professor in the theological school at Cambridge. The work is brief and able, and in no respect objectionable. It is now reprinted in Ripley's Sacred Rhetoric. Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

1825. LLOYD, R. "*Extensive Inquiry* into the important question, What it is to preach Christ, and what is the best mode of preaching him?"

This is said to be a useful volume, containing some very good and judicious remarks on the composition and delivery of ser-

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mons, and displaying both eloquence and talent in the author's observations on the mode of preaching Christ. London.

1830. PIKE, G. *Essay on Preaching.* London.

1831. BLOOM, J. H. *Pulpit Oratory* in the time of James I., considered, and principally illustrated by original examples, A.D. 1620-22. London: Longman, Reese, & Co.

This work is only interesting as containing a few specimens of sermons written, and supposed to have been preached, at the period named.

1834. PORTER, EBENEZER, D.D. "*Lectures* on homiletics and preaching, and on public prayer." Andover: Flagg, Gould, & Newman.

The author of the above-named volume was appointed to the professorship of Pulpit Eloquence in Andover Theological Seminary in 1811, as successor to Rev. Dr. Griffin, the first incumbent. The title of the professorship was, at his suggestion, changed to that of Sacred Rhetoric. He performed its duties for twenty-three consecutive years, and the publication of his lectures just before his death fitly crowned the labours of his useful life.

The name of Dr. Porter is permanently and honorably associated with the earliest systematic efforts in America to promote improvement in public speaking. It may be seen above that as early as 1819 he published a compilation of several treatises on preaching under the title of "The Young Preacher's Manual." In 1824 he published, for the use of his students, a lecture on "Vocal Inflections," which in 1827 was enlarged into a text-book for schools and colleges, entitled "Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery, as applied in Reading and Speaking." In 1831 he published a small volume of a still more elementary character, entitled the "Rhetorical Reader." Both these volumes have been of great utility as school books, although they are now generally superseded by others of more recent date.

In 1836 the author's "Lectures on Eloquence and Style," a part of his regular course at Andover, were published as a posthumous volume. They possess decided merit, but have had only a limited circulation.

In view of the intrinsic excellence of Dr. Porter's "Lectures on Homiletics," as well as of their republication and favorable reception in England, it may be regarded as not very creditable to the denomination and theological school which the author represents that the book has been allowed to go out of print and become rare in this country.

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1835, SUMNER, CHARLES R., Bishop of Winchester. "*The Ministerial Character of Christ* practically considered." London: Hatchard & Son.

1838. STURTEVANT, S. T. "*Preacher's Manual.* Lectures on Preaching, with rules and examples for every kind of pulpit address." London: Ward & Co.

This work is a voluminous expansion of Claude's Essay.

1839. SUMNER, JOHN BIRD, Lord Bishop of Chester. "*Apostolical Preaching Considered*, in examination of St. Paul's epistles; also four sermons on subjects relating to the Christian ministry." London.

1839. SKINNER, THOMAS H. New York. "*Aids* to preaching and hearing." New York: J. S. Taylor.

1840. KENDALL, J. WESLEYAN. "*Qualifications* of an eloquent preacher; a lecture on Pulpit Oratory." London.

1840. GRESLEY, W. "*Ecclesiastes Anglicanus;* a treatise on preaching, as adapted to a Church of England congregation." Reprinted in New York by Appleton.

1841. BRICKNELL, W. S. "*Preaching;* its warrant, subject, and effects." London.

1842. VAUGHAN, Rev. ROBERT. "*The Modern Pulpit*, viewed in relation to the state of society." London: Jackson & Walford.

1848. JAMES, JOHN ANGELL, of Birmingham. "*An Earnest Ministry* the want of the times." Republished in New York by M. W. Dodd, with an introduction by J. B. Condit, D.D.

A large portion of this able work, perhaps the best its author ever published, is devoted to the exemplification of earnestness in the matter and manner of preaching.

1848. RAWSON, JAMES. "*Hints on Pulpit Preparation;* an essay on the composition and delivery of a sermon." 18mo., 85 pp. Boston.

This essay was prepared and published at the instance of a district association of ministers of the Troy Conference, of which the writer was then a member. He subsequently entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the ministry of which he died.

1849. RIPLEY, H. J. "*Sacred Rhetoric;* or, composition and delivery of sermons." With Ware's Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching." Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

The author was professor in a Baptist theological school. This volume was evidently designed as a text-book.

1849. "*The Preacher and Pastor;* containing, with an introductory essay by Edwards A. Park, *Fènèlon's* Dialogues, *Herbert's*

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Country Parson, *Baxter's* Reformed Pastor, *Campbell's* Pulpit Eloquence." New York: M. W. Dodd.

1850. "*Hints* on preaching without reading."

Anonymous, but of Presbyterian authorship. It is based upon a resolution of the General Assembly discountenancing the reading of sermons, and is very severe on the practice. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

1850. ADAMS, CHARLES. "*Notes* of the minister of Christ for the times, drawn from the Holy Scriptures." New York: Methodist Book Concern.

Part third, comprising about one quarter of the work, is devoted to the minister of Christ as a preacher. The whole is written in a graphic and impressive style.

1854. SPRING, Dr. G. "*The Power of the Pulpit;* thoughts addressed to Christian ministers." New York: Dodd.

1855. STEVENS, ABEL, LL.D. "*Preaching Required* by the times." New York: Methodist Book Concern.

This is a spirited and popular volume, the greater part of which was originally published in the form of review and magazine articles.

1855. ARTHUR, WILLIAM. "*The Tongue of Fire.*" London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co.; New York: Harpers.

Indirectly, this volume is a valuable contribution to Homiletics.

1856. CUBITT, GEORGE. "*Dialogues* on pulpit preparation, between a senior and a junior minister, with sketches of sermons." London: R. Needham.

The author was a Wesleyan minister of some prominence. This volume was not published till after his death. It was followed by another, entitled, "Outlines for Pulpit Preparation." See "Pulpit Aids."

1856. "*Medieval Preachers and Preaching;* a series of extracts translated from the sermons of the Middle Ages, chronologically arranged, with notes and an introduction, by J. M. NEALE, M.A., Warden of Sackville College." London: I. H. Mozley.

A fine contribution to the history of preaching, designed to vindicate the excellence of medieval sermons in comparison with those of modern times.

1856. FISH, H. C. "*Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence,* with historical sketches of preaching in different ages and countries." 2 vols., 8vo.

1857. FISH, H. C. "*Pulpit Eloquence* of the nineteenth cen-

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tury; sermons and sketches of living divines." 1 vol., 8vo. New York: M. W. Dodd.

These three volumes exhibit representative discourses from all the most celebrated preachers in the successive periods of Church history.

1857. LEIFCHILD, JOHN, D.D. "*Preaching and Preachers.*" An Inaugural Address, delivered at the opening of the new Baptist College, Regent's Park; with an appendix, containing practical remarks on preaching and preachers. London: Ward & Co.

1858. CHRISTMAS, HENRY. "*Preachers and Preaching.*" London. A work of very moderate ability, written by a minister of the Church of England.

1858. SMITH, GEORGE. "*The Local Preacher's Manual.*" London.

1859. MOULE, HORACE M. "*Christian Oratory:* an inquiry into its history during the first five centuries." Cambridge: Macmillan & Co.

This essay obtained the Hulsean prize in the University of Cambridge, in the year 1858. It is both able and interesting.

1859. TAYLOR, WILLIAM, of California. "*The Model Preacher;* a series of letters on the best mode of preaching the Gospel." Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe.

1859. EADIE, JOHN, D.D. "*Paul the Preacher;* a popular and practical exposition of his discourses and speeches as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles." Republished, New York Carter & Brothers.

1860. MURRAY, NICHOLAS, D.D. "*Preachers and Preaching.* New York: Harper & Brothers.

This work, by the author of Kirwan's Letters, is composed of a series of letters originally published in the New York Observer. It is readable, but not equal in power to some of the author's previous works. It has proved to be his last.

1861. ALEXANDER, JAMES W., D.D. "*Thoughts on Preaching;* being contributions to Homiletics." New York: Scribner.

This volume is a posthumous publication, composed of several articles published in the Princeton Review, and sundry paragraphs from the private journals of the author, who for some years had contemplated a volume on Homiletics. It is greatly to be regretted that he did not live to complete his plans; for although the work, issued by a friend from the material left behind by Dr. Alexander, is valuable, it nevertheless lacks the completeness which he was so well able to supply.

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1861. MOORE, DANIEL. "*Thoughts on Preaching;* specially in relation to the requirements of the age." London: Hatchard & Co.

There is a striking coincidence between the date and title of this work and those of the preceding. The first, however, represents the Old School Presbyterian Church of America, and the second the Church of England, having been written by the incumbent of Camberwell, and dedicated to the Lord Bishop of London.

At present the most recent English work on this subject, it may also be pronounced one of the best.

1863. BEGG, JAMES, D.D. "*The Art of Preaching*, and the duty of the Church toward her theological students." Edinburgh.

1863. WAYLAND, FRANCIS. "*Letters* on the Ministry of the Gospel." Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

NOTE.—In many, if not most, English and American works on the Christian Ministry and Pastoral Theology, the subject of preaching is treated to a greater or less extent, and sometimes quite ably; for example, Bridges on the Christian Ministry, Cannon's Pastoral Theology, and Tefft's Methodism Successful.

II. PULPIT HELPS, SO CALLED.

For the *design* of most works of this class, the author of the present volume cherishes not the slightest respect. Indeed, he omits no suitable opportunity of cautioning students against the use of the skeletons as well as the sermons of other men. This being understood, he sees no objection to such an acquaintance with this branch of literature as will enable one to make easy reference to other men's labors for general information, for comparison, etc.

1771. ENFIELD, WILLIAM. "*The Preacher's Directory;* or, a series of subjects proper for discourses, arranged under different heads, with texts under each." 4to. London.

1783. COOKE, JOHN. "*The Preacher's Assistant*, containing a series of the texts, sermons, and discourses published singly or in volumes by the divines of the Church of England, and by the dissenting clergy, since the Restoration, 1660." London.

1808. SIMEON, CHARLES. "*Helps to Composition;* or, six hundred skeletons of sermons." 5 vols.

1819. SIMEON, CHARLES. "*Horæ Homileticæ;* or, discourses

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in the form of skeletons, digested into one continued series, and forming a commentary upon every book of the Old and New Testaments; to which is annexed an improved edition of Claude's Essay." 11 vols., 8vo.

The "Horæ Homileticæ" form a principal portion of the entire work of Simeon, edited by Thomas Hartwell Horne, in 21 vols., 8vo. London: 1845.

Regarded as a topical commentary on the Scriptures, this work is a monument of industry and sound judgment. In direct availability to the minister, for the suggestion of themes and appropriate thoughts for preaching, it has no superior. It cannot be doubted that such a work was greatly needed at the period of its issue, and that its publication exerted a most wholesome influence upon the ministers of the Church of England, for whom it was more especially designed. It contains not less than 2,536 skeletons of discourses, or, as the author estimates in his preface, one for each day of seven consecutive years. Simeon seems to have accepted "Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," as the exponent of a new homiletical dispensation, and he himself became the great expounder of Claude's system to the English public. This circumstance fixed an undesirable sameness upon his sketches, which are generally more to be admired for matter than for manner of construction, although it may be said that the author has usually illustrated the three great objects he proposed to himself in every discourse, namely, *unity* in design, *perspicuity* in arrangement, and *simplicity* in diction.

Simeon's consistent adherence to the latter quality of style is well illustrated in the following anecdote. A young composer of sermons was reading a discourse for the purpose of obtaining the approbation of the author of the "Horæ Homileticæ." At length he reached the following passage: "Amidst the tumult and ecstasy of the children of Israel, the son of Amram stood unmoved." "The son of Amram!" interrupted Simeon; "the son of Amram! Who was he?" "Why, sir, I meant Moses." "Then," thundered the critic, "if you *mean* Moses why not *say* Moses?"

The amiable spirit and the earnest evangelism of Charles Simeon will cause his name to be held in honored, if not perpetual remembrance. His anxious efforts to harmonize Calvinists and Arminians by an avoidance of extreme views on both sides, anticipated by half a century the catholicism of the Evangelical Alliance.

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1810-19. HANNAM, THOMAS. "*Pulpit Assistant;* containing three hundred outlines or skeletons of sermons; with an essay on the composition of a sermon." 5 vols., 18mo.

Fifth edition, revised by J. Anderson, 1840. 1 vol., 8vo.

1844. "*The Pulpit Cyclopedia;* or, Christian minister's companion; containing three hundred and sixty skeletons and sketches of sermons, and eighty-two essays on Biblical learning, theological studies, and the composition and delivery of sermons." 5 vols., London; 1 vol. 8vo., New York.

1844. "*Sketches* of four hundred sermons preached in various parts of the United Kingdom and on the European continent, furnished by their respective authors." American edition, 4 vols. Philadelphia.

1856. CUBITT, GEORGE. "*Outlines* for pulpit preparation; being one hundred and fifty skeletons of sermons: the greater part prepared shortly before the author's death, and never before published." London: Needham.

1860 "*Pulpit Themes and Preacher's Assistant;* outlines of sermons by the author of 'Helps for the Pulpit.'" Philadelphia: Smith & English.

In this class of works may be included *The Homilist*, a periodical published for the last ten or twelve years by Ward and Co., London, and an abridgment of the same published in one volume by Carlton and Porter, New York.

III. PUBLISHED SERMONS.

Every good sermon that has been published to the world may be considered as a contribution to the literature of homiletics. Published sermons, in fact, form the staple of what is usually denominated homiletical literature. They are numerous in the languages of all Christian countries; most of all in the English language.

Sermons are usually published for the benefit of laymen. They are most extensively read by ministers. To the latter they have especial interest as examples in respect to style, doctrine, and mode of construction. No minister should attempt to read all the sermons that may fall in his way; no one should voluntarily fail to read, and even study, some of the sermons of the great representative preachers of different countries, and of the successive periods of the Church. For single specimens of such sermons, no work is more convenient or suitable than the

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"Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence," and "Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century," compiled by Rev. H. C. Fish.

The analysis and criticism of sermons after the manner illustrated in "Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric," is an exercise of great value to ministers and homiletical students.

Believing that the occasional and even frequent perusal of the best sermons of great and good preachers will exert a happy influence on the ministry of any one capable of being aroused to noble exertions by the words and example of others, the author at first contemplated the insertion of a select list of sermons worthy of the attention of young ministers. Reflecting, however, that any such list must necessarily omit more sermons and authors of merit than it can possibly notice, and also that new examples are continually arising, he has resolved to limit himself to the suggestion of a few principles which should govern a minister in the perusal of sermons.

1. Read sermons of historic interest; for example, those of the principal fathers, reformers, and pulpit orators of all countries.

2. Read sermons of didactic value; for example, Wesley's Dwight's, Edmondson's, Thomas Jackson's.

3. Read sermons pronounced by good critics to be models of style; for example, Watson's, Alexander's, Harris's, Hamilton's, etc.

4. Read the sermons of men who have been greatly blessed of God in a ministry of success and power; for example, Whitefield's, Fletcher's, Payson's, Summerfield's, etc.

5. Read not only sermons produced in the past, but at the present time; for example, Spurgeon's, Punshon's, Simpson's, Beecher's, and Guthrie's.

6. Read chiefly those sermons from which, on experiment, you find you derive the greatest profit in respect to your devotional feelings and your pulpit services.

IV. CLERICAL BIOGRAPHY.

No biography of a Christian minister is complete without a sketch of his mode of preaching the Gospel, and a portraiture of the means which he found most successful in winning souls to Christ and moving men to the discharge of duty.

Many biographers have overlooked this important matter; while many ministers—few, however, that are worthy of biographical publicity—seem to have adopted such a mechanical routine in the discharge of their pulpit duties as during a whole

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life to have accumulated no materials of value in reference to a work which ought to arouse the enthusiasm of all who engage in it, and to which every one ought to contribute something, either of precept or example.

Ministerial biography illustrates the wonderful variety of talents which God employs in the propagation of his truth, and delineates those traits of character and habits of life which tend to the largest usefulness.

Following the above general remarks, it will be sufficient to indicate a few works of this class which are specially valuable for the hints and instructions they contain on the subject of preaching:

Life and Remains of Richard Cecil.

Autobiography of William Jay.

Sketches of the Early Methodist preachers contained in Stevens's History of Methodism.

Annals of the American Pulpit, by W. B. Sprague, D.D.

Lives of A. Alexander and J. W. Alexander, M'Cheyne, Bunting, Newton, and others.

V. ARTICLES IN REVIEWS AND PERIODICALS.

Within the last twenty-five years, numerous articles bearing upon the subject of preaching, some of them of great value, have appeared in the religious Quarterlies of England and America. Occasionally, even in secular periodicals, pulpit eloquence has been well treated. But especially within the last ten or twelve years these topics have been discussed by the leading periodicals of most Christian Churches as of constant importance and of inexhaustible interest. Articles that have thus appeared originally have in some instances been subsequently made up into books. Others have been of a very discursive character. While many crude notions and superficial views have been put forth through the agency under notice, yet the influence of periodical articles, as a whole, has been favorable to the diffusion of correct popular views in reference to preaching; and it is to be hoped that a similar result will continue to follow from the same source.

Without an attempt to specify particular articles, reference is made to the Bibliotheca Sacra, the New Englander, the Methodist Quarterly, the Princeton Review, and the American Theological Review, etc.; also, to the North British Review, the London Review, and the British Quarterly Review.

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FRENCH.

The homiletical literature of the French language is less voluminous than valuable. It has been produced in nearly equal proportions by Protestant and Catholic writers. The principal works have been translated into English, and widely circulated both in England and America.

In addition to the treatises enumerated below, reference may be made to the Critical Works of Rapin, 1670, and the Belles-Lettres of Rollin, 1730, for excellent remarks on pulpit eloquence.

1688. CLAUDE, JOHN. "*Essay on the Composition of a Sermon.*"

Claude was a cotemporary of Bossuet, Massillon, and Bourdaloue. He was an able Protestant minister, and a faithful defender of the Reformation. As such, he was persecuted in the different fields of labor which he occupied, and ultimately driven from the kingdom by the persecutions following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In 1654. while pastor at Nismes, in the south of France, he instructed a class of candidates for the ministry. Probably at that time he collected and arranged the materials for this essay, which, however, was not written in full till a subsequent period of his life, when his own son was about to be ordained to the ministry. It remained in manuscript till after the author's death, and was published as the first of his posthumous works in 1688.

It was first translated into English in 1778, by Robert Robertson, a Baptist minister of Cambridge, and subsequently edited by Charles Simeon. Simeon's edition has been republished in America in several different forms, but has had its greatest currency as a prescribed text-book for junior preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

1700. FENELON, Archbishop of Cambray. "*Dialogues on Eloquence*, and particularly that of the pulpit."

The Dialogues of Fenelon were translated into English in 1722, and have since been reproduced in various English and American editions. They are now most conveniently accessible in a volume entitled "Preacher and Pastor," published by M. W. Dodd, New York.

This work may be pronounced as much a classic as Cicero's dialogues on oratory, by which its plan was evidently suggested. No authority is higher than that of Fenelon on questions of taste, while his evident candor and unaffected piety have caused him to be equally admired throughout the Protestant and Catholic worlds.

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1715. GISBERT, F. "*Christian Eloquence*, in theory and practice."

The merit of this book is not easily overrated. It possesses the classic elegance of Fenelon's Dialogues, with a greater directness and didactic power. It was translated into English in 1718, by Sam. D'Oyley, who, having emblazoned his own name on the title-page, had the meanness to conceal that of the author by not once mentioning it in the volume.

In 1809, William Bramwell, a revivalist of celebrity among the English Wesleyans, republished this work, with the omission of two chapters, under the title of "The Salvation Preacher."

1747. OSTERVALD, J. F. "*Lectures on Preaching.*"

Ostervald was a learned and pious pastor of the Reformed Church at Neufchatel, in Switzerland, where, as professor of divinity, he taught candidates for the ministry. His work on the exercise of the sacred ministry consists of his reported lectures, said to have been published without his consent.

The first half of it relates to preaching. The entire work was translated into English by T. Stevens, 1781.

About 1820 the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe published a new and improved translation of the Lectures on Preaching, of which an American edition has been printed by I. P. Cook, of Baltimore. It is well worthy of purchase and perusal.

1790 REYBAZ. "*The Art of Preaching.*"

A brief treatise, of no special value. An English translation has been published in connection with Massillon's Charges.

1793. MAURY, Cardinal. "*The Principles of Eloquence;* adapted to the pulpit and the bar."

Translated into English by John Neal Lake. An American edition is published at the Methodist Book Rooms.

1819. BESPLAS, Abbot. "*Essay* on the eloquence of the pulpit." Translated, with preface, by Miles Martindale.

1840. VINET, A. "*Homiletics;* or, the theory of preaching."

Translated by Thomas H. Skinner, D.D. New York: 1853. A translation is also published in Clark's Theological Library, Edinburgh.

1845 VETU, Abbot J. X. "*Les Vrais Principes* sur la predication ou manière d'annoncer avec fuit la parole de Dieu."* 3 tomes. Paris.

* Works named by their French titles are not known to have been translated into English.

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1852. MARTIN, Abbot, C. "*Panorama des Predicateurs;* ou, repertoire pour l'improvisation et la composition du sermon." 3 tomes, grand 4to. Paris.

This work is a decided curiosity; and as it bears a special recommendation from his Holiness Pope Pius IX., and enthusiastic compliments from most of the bishops of France, may be supposed to be in the height of fashion with modern French preachers of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is more systematic than any of the English Pulpit Helps. It is arranged in conformity with the ecclesiastical calendar, and for each Sabbath and important holiday of the year presents three plans of sermons: first, in outline; second, in development; third, illustrations and quotations from the Scriptures and the fathers, together with a list of authors to be consulted on the topics chosen.

No book of its class contains finer extracts, or a more ingenious arrangement of matter.

1858. VINCENT, ALFRED, Pasteur. "*Recherches Homilètiques;* ou, quelques idées sur la predication, avec de nombreuses citations a l'appui." Paris: Grassart.

This is a brochure of 92 pages, characterized in the highest degree by freshness and piquancy of thought.

1859. BAUTAIN, M., Vicar-General and Professor at the Sorbonne. *The Art of Extempore Speaking;* hints for the pulpit, the senate, and the bar." New York: Scribner.

1860. COQUEREL, ATHANASE, un des Pasteurs de l'Eglise Reformée de Paris. "*Observations Pratiques* sur la predication." Paris; Cherbuliez.

The author, although regarded as rationalistic in his views, enjoys great celebrity as a preacher. He has embodied in this volume a truly fine collection of ripe thoughts and judicious suggestions, the result of more than forty years' attentive observation upon preachers and preaching.

1861. VINET, A. "*Histoire* de la predication de l'Eglise Reformée de France, pendant le siècle dix-septieme." Posthume.

GERMAN.

Introductory to a list of the principal German writers on Homiletics, the author is happy to insert the following condensed historical sketch of *Preaching in Germany*, for which he is indebted to Rev. Professor Warren, of Bremen:

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In the history of preaching in Protestant Germany, several periods, marked by the prevalence of peculiar styles, are clearly distinguishable.

1. The period of Luther and the Reformation. The preaching of this period may be characterized as blunt, earnest, evangelical, and powerful.

2. Period of the Homilists, sometimes called Postillists. This period commenced almost immediately after Luther's death, and may be regarded as extending to the rise of the Spener pietistic school. The most notable of these homilists were Corvinus, Brentz, Chemnitz, Osiander, Matthesius, and Dietrick. An extreme artificiality characterized the preaching of this period. A few, however, did not lose themselves in the puerilities and triteness of the prevalent scholastic method, but preached with unction and power; for example, Arnd, Herberger, John Valentine, Andreæ, and others. The same style in the Catholic Church reached its culmination in Ulrich Megerle, imperial court preacher at Vienna. His name, moreover, is quite as proverbial for bad taste as for scholastic pedantry.

3. The movement commenced by Spener and Francke wrought a healthful reform in pulpit ministrations as far as it extended: but the almost cotemporaneous rise and spread of the Wolfian philosophy, introducing into all departments of thought a perfect mania for logical definitions and demonstrations, prevented the new religious movement from penetrating and influencing the schools. J. J. Rambach, d. 1735, and J. G. Reinbeck, d. 1741, represent the transition from the so-called pietistic to the philosophic method.

4. A new era for German homiletics dates from Mosheim, d. 1755. From him, in fact, the Germans date *modern* Homiletics. He is called the German Bourdaloue. His pattern was Tillotson. His scholars, however, inclined more and more to mere moralizing, and their discourses finally degenerated into lectures on agriculture, hygiene, etc. J. A. Kramer, the two Sachs, Spalding, Zollikoffer, and others, represent this period; also the more warmly and strictly evangelical G. C. Reiger, in Wurtemburg, and Willamosius, Herder's ideal, in Prussia. The spirited Herder and Lavater are also to be mentioned in this connection. They, however, were original geniuses, who neither represented nor founded any particular school.

5. The sermons of F. V. Reinhard, court preacher at Dresden, published in thirty-five volumes, 1793-1813, inaugurated another period. They are characterised by richness of thought, clearness and definiteness of expression, force and dignity of style; and were long regarded as models. His style and method were the prevailing ones, both among the rationalists and the orthodox, to the time of Schleiermacher.

6. The revolution which dates from Schleiermacher's appearance is as marked in the department of homiletics as in that of dogmatics. In his earlier sermons he inclines towards the moralizing style; but

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later he dwells more upon Christ and redemption, though of course after his fashion. His sermons fill nine volumes of his published works.

The great preachers of the present day can scarcely be regarded as his scholars, or those of any one else. They are partly products and partly producers of the time. The most distinguished are, by a great majority, what are counted orthodox, and quite a large number truly evangelical. Most of them preach memoriter: none read. Claus Harm's style is remarkable for blunt popularity; F. A. Krummacher's for flowery but stirring diction; Nitzsch's for Schleiermacherian profundity and obscureness. As a general criticism upon German preaching, it may be said to lack point. The preachers for the most part aim to construct and influence the people, but not to secure their immediate conversion. Nevertheless, there is in this respect a gradual improvement going on.

Sermon literature is very abundant in Germany, and constantly increasing. Most discourses are still planned on the old homily model.

1736. RAMBACH.

1752. REINBECK and J. S. BAUMGARTEN.

1762. MEIER.

1765. MOSHEIM. "*Anweisung Erbaulich zu Predigen.*"

A work published ten years after the author's death.

1772. SPALDING.

1779. STEINBART.

1795. AMMON.

1797. SCHUDEROFF.

1807. SCHOTT. "*Theorie der Beredsamkeit.*"

For an English transfusion of the principal portions of this work, see Bibliotheca Sacra, 1845.

1810. REINHARD, F. V. "*Geständnisse* seine predigten und seine bildung zum prediger betreffend, in briefen an einen freund."

This work, under the title of "Lettres de Reinhard, etc.," was translated into French by J. Monod, and published in Paris, 1816. It was translated into English by O. A. Taylor, under the title of "Confessions of Reinhard," and published in Boston, 1832. The Confessions have recently been reprinted as an addendum to "Pulpit Themes," published by Smith & English, Philadelphia.

1811. MARHEINEKE. "*Grundlegung der Homiletik.*"

1814. THEREMIN. "*Beredsamkeit eine Tugend.*"

This work has been well translated by Professor Shedd, late

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of Andover, with the title, "Eloquence a Virtue; or, outlines of a systematic rhetoric." Professor Shedd's introductory essay is valuable.

1830. STIER, R. "*Kurzer Grundriss einer biblishen Keryktik;* oder, anweisung durch das Wort Gottes sich zur predigtkunst zu bilden."

This work is noted for the author's proposition to substitute the term "keryktik," from *κήρυξ*, for "homiletik;" also, as a spirited and earnest attempt to develop a method of preaching from the example of the Bible prophets and apostles. It is pre-eminent among German homiletical writings for its urgency of a stricter conformity to the Scriptures.

1842. PALMER, C, "*Evangelische Homiletik.*"

This work has gone through several editions. The author is still living, and is highly esteemed among the Lutherans.

1847. FICKER. "*Grundlinien der Evangelische Homiletik.*"

1848. SCHWEITZER. "*Homiletik.*"

This author, although not regarded as a sound theologian, has the reputation of being the ablest living writer among "the Reformed." His work is scientific, but cold.

Homiletics, being regarded in Germany as a branch of Practical Theology, has been treated at some length by writers on that subject; for example, Moll, Ebrard, Nitzsch, Ehrenfeuchter.

There have also appeared in German two valuable works on the history of preaching.

1839-41. PANIEL, C. F. W. "*Pragmatische Geschichte der Christlichen Beredsamkeit*, und der homiletik, von den ersten zeiten den Christhenthums bis auf unsere zeit."

1839. LENTZ, G. H. "*Geschichte der Christlichen Homiletik.*"

This work is the most complete of the two, furnishing notices and brief specimens of popular preachers, of whom it enumerates some three hundred.

Recently there has been translated into German, and published in Bremen, Adam Clarke's "Letter to a Young Preacher;" with an appendix, containing essays on the composition of sermons from the best English and German authors.

PORTUGUESE, SPANISH, AND ITALIAN AUTHORS.

IN countries where the Reformation did not prevail, preaching has received comparatively little attention, and the literature of homiletics is correspondingly meagre. After considerable inquiry, it has not been ascertained that any works worthy of enumera-

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tion have been published either in Portuguese or Spanish. In Italian the following author's may be named, with abridged titles of their works:

1619. PANIGLA, FRANCESCO. *The Preacher.* 1 vol. Venice.

1627. ARESI, PAOLO. *The Art of Preaching.* 2 vols. Milan.

1669. MANSI, GIUSEPPE *The Preacher's Library.* 5 vols. Rome.

1725. BRASCHI, GIO. BATTISTA. *Idea* of the mitred pulpit. 1 vol. folio. Rome.

1764. DA FAENZA, M. R. P. ANDREA. *Letters* to a young preacher 1 vol. Vincenza.

1770. LASTRICO, RAFAELLO. *Institutes of Oratory* explained to a young preacher. 1 vol. 4to. Vercelli.

1824. CHILESOTTI, VALENTINO. *Defects* of modern preaching. 1 vol. Genoa.

1850. LUXARDO, FIDELE. *Treatise* on sacred eloquence. 1 vol. Genoa.

1852. OTTAVIANO, R. P. DA SAVONA. *Lessons* in sacred eloquence. 3 vols. Genoa.

1853. REBUFFO, PAOLO. *Letters* on sacred eloquence. 1 vol. Genoa.

C.

SUMMARY

OF THE VIEWS OF LEADING DIVINES, AUTHORS, AND CHURCHES ON THE MODES OF PREACHING, WITH REFERENCE TO DELIVERY.

1692. BISHOP BURNET.

As Bishop Burnet was the first historian to record the origin of the practice of reading sermons, he can be safely quoted as giving the best views of the subject in his day.

In his work on the Pastoral Care he says:

Reading is peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no other. It has, indeed, made that our sermons are more exact, and so it has produced to us many volumes of the best that are extant; but after all, though some few read so happily, pronounce so truly, and enter so entirely into those affections which they recommend, that in them we

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see both the correctness of reading and the seriousness of speaking sermons, yet every one is not so happy. Some, by hanging their heads perpetually over their notes, by blundering as they read, and by a cursory running over them, do so lessen the matter of their sermons, that as they are generally read with very little life or affection, so they are heard with as little regard or esteem. Those who read ought certainly to be at a little more pains than for most part they are to read true, to pronounce with an emphasis, and to raise their heads and direct their eyes to their hearers; and if they practiced more alone the just way of reading, they might deliver their sermons with much more advantage. Man is a low sort of creature; he does not, nay, nor the greater part cannot, consider things in themselves, without those little seasonings that must recommend them to their affections. That a discourse be heard with any life, it must be spoken with some; and the looks and motions of the eye do carry in them such additions to what is said, that where these do not all concur, it has not all the force upon them that otherwise it might have. Besides that, the people, who are too apt to censure the clergy, are easily carried into an obvious reflection on reading, that it is an effect of laziness.

In pronouncing sermons, there are two ways. The one is when a whole discourse is got by heart, and delivered word for word as it was writ down. This is so vast a labor that it is scarce possible that a man can be able to hold up long to it. Yet there is an advantage even in this to beginners: it fills their memories with good thoughts and regular meditations; and when they have got some of the most important of their sermons by heart in so exact a manner, they are thereby furnished with topics for discourse.

But now I come to propose another method of preaching, by which a priest may be prepared, after a right view of his matter, a true understanding his text, and a digesting of his thoughts upon it into their natural and proper order, to deliver these both more easily to himself, and with a better effect both upon himself and his hearers. To come at this, he must be for some years at a great deal of pains to prepare himself to it; yet when that is over, the labor of all the rest of his life, as to those performances, will become very easy and very pleasant to him. The preparations to this must be these. First, he must read the Scriptures very exactly; he must have great portions of them by heart; and he must also, in reading them, make a short concordance of them in his memory; that is, he must lay together such passages as belong to the same matter; to consider how far they agree, or help to illustrate one another, and how the same thing is differently expressed in them; and what various ideas or ways of recommending a thing rise out of this concordance. Upon this a man must exercise himself much, draw notes of it, and digest it well in his thoughts. Then he must be ready with the whole body of divinity in his head; he must know what parts come

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in as objections to be answered, where difficulties lie, how one part coheres with another and gives it light. He must have this very current in his memory, that he may have things lie before him in one full view, and upon this he is also to work, by making tables, or using such other helps as may lay matters clearly before him,

These are the materials that must be laid together; the practice in using them comes next. He, then, that would prepare himself to be a preacher in this method, must accustom himself to talk freely to himself, to let his thoughts flow from him, especially when he feels an edge and heat upon his mind; for then happy expressions will come in his mouth, things will ventilate and open themselves to him, as he talks them thus in a soliloquy to himself. He must also be writing many essays upon all sorts of subjects, for by writing he will bring himself to a correctness both in thinking and in speaking; and thus, by a hard practice for two or three years, a man may render himself such a master in this matter that he can never be surprised, nor will new thoughts ever dry up upon him. He must talk over to himself the whole body of divinity, and accustom himself to explain and prove, to clear objections, and to apply every part of it to some practical use. He must go through human life in all the ranks and degrees of it, and talk over all the duties of these; consider the advantages or disadvantages in every one of them, their relation to one another, the morality of actions, the common virtues and vices of mankind, more particularly the duties of Christians, their obligation to meekness and humility, to forgive injuries, to relieve the poor, to bear the cross, to be patient and contented in every state of life, to pray much and fervently, to rejoice ever in God and to be always praising him, and most particularly to be applying seriously to God, through Jesus Christ, for mercy and pardon and for his grace and Spirit; to be worshiping him devoutly in public, and to be delighting frequently to commemorate the death of Christ and to partake of the benefits of it. All these, I say, he must talk over and over again to himself; he must study to give his thoughts all the heat and flight about them that he can; and if, in these his meditations, happy thoughts and noble and tender expressions do at any time offer themselves, he must not lose them, but write them down. And in his pronouncing over such discourses to himself, he must observe what words sound harsh and agree ill together; for there is a music in speaking as well as in singing, which a man, though not otherwise critical in sounds, will soon discover. By a very few years' practice of two or three such soliloquies a day, chiefly in the morning, when the head is clearest and the spirits are liveliest, a man will contract a grea easiness both in thinking and speaking.

But the rule I have reserved last is the most necessary of all, and without it all the rest will never do the business. It is this: that a man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion;

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he must have a life and flame in his thoughts with relation to those subjects; he must have felt in himself those things which he intends to explain and recommend to others. He must observe narrowly the motions of his own mind, the good and bad effects that the several sorts of objects he has before him, and affections he feels within him, have upon him, that so he may have a lively heat in himself when he speaks of them, and that he may speak in so sensible a manner that it may be almost felt that he speaks from his heart. There is an authority in the simplest things that can be said when they carry visible characters of genuineness in them. Now, if a man can carry on this method, and by much meditation and prayer draw down divine influences, which are always to be expected when a man puts himself in the way of them and prepares himself for them, he will often feel that "while he is musing, a fire is kindled within him," and then he will "speak with authority" and without constraint; his thoughts will be true, and his expressions free and easy. Sometimes this fire will carry him, as it were, out of himself, and yet without anything that is frantic or enthusiastical. Discourses brought forth with a lively spirit and heat, where a composed gesture, and the proper motions of the eye and countenance, and the due modulations of the voice concur, will have all the effect that can be expected from anything that is below immediate inspiration; and as this will be of use to the hearers, so it will be of vast use to the preacher himself, to oblige him to keep his heart always in good tune and temper, not to suffer irregular and forbidden appetites, passions, or projects to prepossess his mind: these will both divert him from going on in the course of meditation in which a man must continue many years till all his thoughts are put in order, polished, and fixed; they will make him likewise speak much against the grain, with an aversion that will be very sensible to himself, if not to his hearers, if he has guilt upon him, if his conscience is reproaching him, and if any ill practices are putting a damp upon that good sense of things that makes his thoughts sparkle upon other occasions, and gives him an air and authority, a tone of assurance, and a freedom of expression.

Such a method as I have been opening has had great success with all those that I have known to have tried it. And though every one has not had that swiftness of imagination nor that clearness of expression that others may have, so that in this, men may differ as much as they do in their written compositions, yet every man by this method may rise far above what he could ever have attained to any other way; it will make even exact compositions easier to him, and him much readier and freer at them. But great care must be used by him before he suffers himself to speak with the liberty here aimed at in public: he must try himself at smaller excursions from his fixed thoughts, especially in the applicatory part, where flame and life are more necessary, and where a

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mistaken word or an unfinished period are less observed, and sooner forgiven, than in the explanatory part, where men ought to speak more serenely. Aud as one succeeds in some short excursions, he may give himself a further scope, and so, by a long practice, he will at last arrive at so great an easiness, both in thinking and speaking, that a very little meditation will be sure to lay open a text to him, with all the matter that belongs to it, together with the order in which it ought to be both explained and applied. And when a man has attained to a tolerable degree in this, he is then the master of his business; he is master also of much time, and of many noble thoughts and schemes that will arise out of them.

This I shall prosecute no further; for if this opening of it does not excite the reader to follow it a little, no enlargements I can offer upon it will work upon him.

To enable the reader to judge of the practical value of Bishop Burnet's theory as exemplified in his own character as a preacher the following statement is inserted, from the London Quarterly, of 1857:

Bishop Burnet was himself a conspicuous instance of the success of the style of speaking he recommended. Onslow, who was Speaker of the House of Commons for thirty-eight years, who had listened to the splendid declamation of Bolingbroke, te the terrible thunders of Pitt, and the silvery strains of Murray, could not, after an interval of forty years, recall the sermon which Burnet delivered on the "new heavens and the new earth" without being sensibly moved by it. He describes with warmth the power of his imagination, the solemnity of his language, the earnestness of his heart, look, and voice; and asserts that he never heard a second preacher who equalled him,

Dr. ISAAC WATTS.

Dr. Watts, who flourished among the English Independents at the same period with Bishop Burnet, stoutly objects to the reading of sermons. Says he:

A paper, with the most pathetic lines written upon it, has neither fear, nor hope, nor compassion, nor zeal. It is conscious of no design, nor has any solicitude about its succees; and a mere reader, who coldly tells his people what his paper says, appears to be as void of all these necessary qualifications as his paper is.

RICHARD BAXTER.

Baxter, another cotemporary of Burnet, has left behind him a significant caution on the other hand:

A quaker objected to him, "You read your sermons out of a paper, therefore you have not the Spirit." "It is not want of your abilities,"

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he rejoins, "that makes ministers use notes; but it is a regard to the work, and good of the hearers. *I use notes as much as any man, when I take pains, and as little as any man when I am lazy,* or busy, or have not time to prepare. It is easier for us to preach three sermons without notes, than one with them."

1703. JOHN EDWARDS, D.D.

There are several that scandalously confine themselves to their papers, and read them but indifferently after all. A man would think that some of them are but then learning to read, or that they had never seen their notes before that time. This, indeed, is no other than the perverting of the nature of things, for the speaker should look on those he directs his speech to; wherefore, the custom of those who never look off the book is unnatural and improper. Besides, if a sermon be wholly read, it loses a great deal of its virtue and efficacy, because hereby all laudable action is laid aside, and generally the most ungraceful and shameful postures are taken up, as hanging down their heads and lodging their chins in their breasts. Wherefore I advise my brethren to exercise their talent of memory, and those that are young especially to make use of it at their first undertaking the preacher's office, that so it may become easy to them ever after.

1731. SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE.

It is fit to inquire whether it be more useful to read a written discourse, or bespeak the audience without book. And there are many reasons that should determine us to favor and prefer the last.

1756. PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

Dr. Doddridge, in his lectures to Theological Students, says:

To be able to preach without notes raises a man's character. Accustom yourself to look much about upon your auditory.

1758. JOHN LAWSON, D.D.

Lawson, a celebrated lecturer on oratory in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1758, pronounces the foreign method of reciting sermons the poorest; but as between read and extemporaneous delivery he is unable to decide which is best.

He sums up his dicussion with the following sensible remarks:

As that extemporary discourse which approacheth most to a studied one in regularity of composition and purity of style is the best, in like manner, among studied discourses that undoubtedly excelleth which is composed with the easy air and pronounced with the unaffected warmth and fluency of the extemporary.

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He therefore recommends preachers "to join the exactness of elaborate composition with the spirit of extemporary elocution."

1766. THOMAS SECKER, D.D.

Archbishop Secker, in a charge to his clergy, treats the subject under consideration in the following language,

Defect in action is better than excess. And a great deal cannot well be used by those who read their sermons.

This is one objection against reading them; and there are several besides. Persons who are short-sighted have peculiar reasons to avoid it. Indeed, almost all persons are accustomed from their early years to read in a different tone from that in which they speak at other times, and we seldom correct it thoroughly; or if we did, what we say in such manner as to make it seem the present dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper from which we visibly recite the whole. It will ordinarily be uttered, too, with more disengaged freedom and livelier spirit. The preacher also will be able to enforce his words by significant looks, to perceive from the countenances of his hearers what they comprehend and by what they are moved; and may accordingly enlarge on that head, or proceed to another, as he finds cause. There is a middle way, used by our predecessors, of setting down in short notes the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best. That which is, or lately was, common among foreign divines, of writing sermons first, then getting and repeating them by heart, not only is unreasonably laborious, but subjects persons to the hazard of stopping disagreeably, and even breaking off abruptly, for want of memory. Or if they escape that danger, there still remains another, of saying their lesson with ungraceful marks of fear and caution.

1772. THOMAS GIBBONS.

Should you, my friend, th' important question ask,
"With or without my papers shall I preach?"
My answer hear and weigh. Your sermons write
From end to end, and every thought invest
With full expression, such as best may suit
Its nature and its use, and then pronounce
As much as your remembrance can retain
Without your written aids. But if too weak
Your memory proves, and like a treacherous sieve
Should let th' elaborate composition through,
Rather read every sentence, every word,

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Than wander in a desultory strain,
A chaos, dark, irregular, and wild,
Where the same thought and language oft revolve
And re-revolve, to tire sagacious minds;
However loud the momentary praise
Of ignorance, with empty fervors charmed.
But never to your notes be so enslaved
As to repress some instantaneous thought,
That may, like lightning, dart upon the soul,
And blaze in strength and majesty divine.

1776. GEORGE CAMPBELL, D.D.

George Campbell, of Aberdeen, in his lectures on Pulpit Eloquence, discusses very fairly the comparative advantages of reading and repeating sermons; and in the end gives his apparent preference to reading, as adapted to secure success for a greater number of preachers.

Intermediately he concedes the superiority of speaking as compared with either reading or repeating, and claims for it the highest excellence of parliamentary and judicial oratory, including the best orations of Cicero and Demosthenes.

1798. JOHN SMITH, D.D.

In his lectures before one of the synods of Scotland, this author uttered the following strong language:

The practice of reading sermons, which is not of a long standing in this country and which is not yet tolerated in any other, is extremely hurtful to the interests of religion; for no sermon can have the same energy or effect when read as it has when spoken or repeated. It may be more correct in point of composition, but this advantage is obtained at the expense of animation, and therefore at the expense of usefulness. For the plainest speaker, with animation, affects us more than the greatest orator could do by reading, which hardly admits of any animation.

Reading, too, hinders us from observing the countenances of our hearers, which would be no less animating to us than ours to them. It hinders us from observing whether they attend to us, whether they understand us, or whether they are moved, and, consequently, from accommodating ourselves always to their circumstances. In short, it is altogether incompatible with true oratory and action, and so much alters the nature of a sermon from what it would be, if repeated, that it can never have the same effect upon an audience.

Hence the bar, the senate, and popular assemblies on every other

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occasion, disallow so much of reading that in none of them has it ever yet been practised or indulged; so that its being introduced into the pulpit only, and continued there, will be found, I fear, to reflect little honor on our predecessors or ourselves. It seems to argue a want of care, earnestness, and sincerity; for who, in advising a friend very earnestly, would think of writing his advice, or taking with him notes out of which he should read his counsel?

Indeed, the practice of reading has in it something that looks so like indolence and indifference, that it is, in appearance at least, ill suited to that boldness and zeal which men should expect in a messenger come from God. A man who speaks in the name of Christ, as his ambassador and representative in the world, might be expected to speak with such a dignity and freedom as would manifest his own inward concern, as well as the awful and infinite consequences of his message. It might be expected that he should speak from the fullness of his heart, and that with all possible earnestness of spirit he would rouse and excite his people to prepare for death, judgment, and eternity, and to look without delay for the glorious appearing of the Son of God. But if, instead of this, he bows motionless over a paper, and only through that medium speaks to his hearers, we are tempted to suspect, if not a want of capacity, at least a want of concern; for every considerate person will judge according to the appearance before his eyes, and not according to the prevalency of custom, and will, therefore, reckon this as an instance of indolence and awkwardness which has no parallel in the affairs of men.

The minds of the hearers, too, from a principle of assimilation, are apt, on such occasions, to be seized with a languor of spirits somewhat analogous to the minister's indolence; and though we must in charity believe that the spirits of both are more seriously engaged than their outward frame would indicate, yet the practice has naturally a manifest tendency to introduce a cold and lifeless face on the awful concerns of our immortal part, and ought therefore, as much as lieth in us, to be always avoided.

The preacher who, cold and inanimate as a statue, slavishly reads his sermons, however well penned, will always find those sermons attended with very moderate success. He may be compared to those worms which seem to glow and give some light in the dark, but have no warmth. He may convey some knowledge to the understanding, but no emotion at all to the heart.

Having given the foregoing extracts from authors of the SEVENTEENTH and EIGHTEENTH centuries, it is not necessary to glean extensively from the earlier authors of the NINETEENTH.

As the preceding quotations represent the oldest expressions on record with reference to the reading of sermons, so the follow-

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ing are selected as containing the most recent. For convenience they will be classified according to the denomination represented, without regard to particular dates. As an introduction to the testimony of the Churches which will follow, two extracts touching the philosophy of the subject are inserted from two distinguished literary men of the present century. The first was a clergyman of the Church of England; the second is an American statesman, and one of the most celebrated of living orators.

Pulpit discourses have insensibly dwindled from speaking to reading; a practice which of itself is sufficient to stifle every germ of eloquence. It is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected. What can be more ludicrous than an orator delivering stale indignation, and fervor of a week old; turning over whole pages of violent passions, written out in goodly text; *reading* the tropes and apostrophes into which he is hurried by the order of his mind; and so affected at a preconcerted line and page that he is unable to proceed any further? SIDNEY SMITH.

It is not indeed to be supposed than an orator like Mr. Webster is slavishly tied down, on any occasion, to his manuscript notes, or to a *memoriter* repetition of their contents. It may be presumed that in many cases the noblest and the boldest flights, the last and warmest tints thrown upon the canvas, in discourses of this kind, were the unpremeditated inspiration of the moment of delivery. The opposite view would be absurd, because it would imply that the mind, under the high excitement of delivery, was less fertile and creative than in the repose of the closet. A speaker could not, if he attempted it, anticipate in his study the earnestness and fervor of spirit induced by actual contact with the audience; he could not by any possibility forestall the sympathetic influence upon his imagination and intellect of the listening and applauding throng. However severe the method required by the nature of the occasion, or dictated by his own taste, a speaker like Mr. Webster, will not often confine himself to pouring out "fervors a week old."

The orator who would do justice to a great theme or a great occasion must thoroughly study and understand the subject; he must accurately, and if possible minutely, digest in writing beforehand the substance and even the form of his address; otherwise, though he may speak ably, he will be apt not to make in all respects an able speech. He must entirely possess himself beforehand of the main things which he wishes to say, and then throw himself upon the excitement of the moment and the sympathy of the audience. In those portions of his discourse which are didactic or narrative, he will not be likely to wander in any direction far from his notes; although even in those portions new facts,

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illustrations, and suggestions will be apt to spring up before him as he proceeds. But when the topic rises; when the mind kindles from within, and the strain becomes loftier, or bolder, or more pathetic; when the sacred fountain of tears is ready to overflow, and audience and speaker are moved by one kindred sympathetic passion; then the thick-coming fancies cannot be kept down, the storehouse of the memory is unlocked, images start up from the slumber of years, and all that the orator has seen, read, heard, or felt, returns in distinct shape and vivid colors. The cold and premeditated text will no longer suffice for the glowing thought. The stately, balanced phrase gives place to some abrupt, graphic expression, that rushes unbidden to his lips. The unforeseen incident or locality furnishes an apt and speaking image; and the discourse instinctively transposes itself into a higher key.

—EDWARD EVERETT.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

There is great uniformity in the manner in which all the recent writers of the Church of England have treated this subject. Bridges, Gresley, Oxenden, Christmas, and Moore, all speak in the most commendatory terms of extemporaneous delivery, and give hints to enable preachers to acquire the capacity for it. At the same time they enjoin the diligent use of the pen, but repudiate the servile reading of manuscripts.

The following extracts from MOORE are inserted as not only the most recent, but perhaps the best plea for the practice of both styles of delivery yet published:

The question, "In what sections of the professing Church does the practice of reading sermons prevail?" may be answered easily. Bishop Burnett gave the answer to it up to his own time; and his dictum will not be far wrong if allowed to be extended to our own. "Reading," he says, "is peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no other." And we see the proof of this in all countries and in all churches. In France, we never hear of such a practice. Even among Irish Protestants it is almost entirely laid aside. In Scotland, it is abjured with an almost superstitious dread. The Wesleyans would relegate to the shop-board or the plough, a candidate for the ministry who could not do without his notes; while, by other Dissenters, the reading of a sermon is only tolerated as an infirmity which they hope the preacher will be able to overcome, and which, until he does, he must use all lawful artifice to conceal.

Still less of countenance to this habit of reading from a manuscript can be found in other forms of popular address, of which the aim, like that of the preacher, is to gain the practical assent of the hearer. What pleader at the bar would think of addressing a jury from a written

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speech? How impatient is the House of Commons of eloquence, of which even a few notes only are fastened in the lining of the member's hat? And how soon would our great religious meetings dwindle down to a scattered remnant, if every speaker, as he was called upon, began to spread out a paper written within and without, like the prophet's roll? instances these, all tending to bear out that observation of Sir Walter Scott, "It is conclusive against the frigid custom of reading sermons, that in any other mode of public speaking it would be held childish and absurd."

Thus, Gospel authority, primitive usage, the custom of the Catholic Church everywhere, and the conclusion from what is found to be effective in public speaking of every other kind, are all *against* the written sermon. What considerations can be urged, in arrest of the sentence that it be proscribed from our pulpits forthwith, and a patent of exclusive preference be made out for the extemporaneous discourse?

We think there are several reasons against such absolute limitation to one kind of homiletical address.

First, we have a large class of sermons in our Church addressed to auditories who are accustomed to habits of close thought; who are conversant already, it may be presumed, with the first elements of moral and religious truth; and for whom, therefore, the logical exactness and higher range of the written sermon would seem to be more suitable than anything which the average standard of extemporaneous ability would be likely to furnish.

Again, we should protest against this banishment from the pulpit of all written sermons, in the name of our theological, or rather our religious literature.

Neither are we prepared to surrender even the *stated* use of the manuscript as in some cases a suitable vehicle of instruction for our more educated and intellectual congregations.

In our day the question is, Why, if both methods have their partisans, every preacher should not cultivate both? No inherent and insuperable unfitness for pulpit purposes can be shown to belong either to one style or to the other. Practical instances could be cited in abundance showing that it is not necessary for a man to be tautologous and vapid because he speaks from short notes; nor, on the other hand, because he has a manuscript before him, that he should be mechanical and lifeless and dull; while if apparent results for good were to influence the decision to be formed, it is certain that either style could number among its supporters some of the most honored names in the Church of God.

In town congregations, more particularly, it might be found profitable if one of the two styles of address were adopted at the *earlier* service, while at the *later* service recourse were had to the other. Many con-

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siderations seem to favor this plan. Thus, the two styles would be found to benefit and assist each other; the habit of constant writing giving precision and clearness to the spoken sermon, and the unconsciously acquired animation of extemporaneous utterance extending itself naturally to the written discourse. Again, the practice recommended would enable us to provide better for the varying tastes and capacities of our people.

Neither does it appear altogether unworthy of notice among the advantages to a preacher to cultivate both the manuscript and the spoken styles, that such a practice will tend to *diversify* the character of his preaching; will help to take off something from that inevitable sameness and repeating of himself which a man, preaching twice or thrice a week in the same style, to the same people, and that for many years together, is sure himself to feel conscious of, and to fear his people will be conscious of too. Now, we are persuaded that a man may greatly break this feared monotony in his preaching by adopting, as a rule, the *written* method at one part of the day, and the *extemporaneous* at the other.

From all that has been advanced, it will be inferred that what we regard as the besetting sin of the extemporaneous preacher is the neglect of needful preparation; the getting into a habit of mere word-stringing; the not being furnished with a store of well-defined and solid thoughts, and therefore being obliged to have recourse to the most feeble and wire-drawn generalities to fill up the time. In saying this, we are far from meaning that all the meagreness and superficialness are on *his* side. On the contrary, we know that there may be twaddle *written*, as well as twaddle *spoken;* and that a sermon demanding many hours for the mere manual writing may, after all, contain nothing but stones of emptiness, sounding brass, and bones that are very dry. But still, the temptation to provide only barren pastures lies more with the extempore preacher. He is liable to fall in, more easily than the writer of sermons, with the suggestions of an indolent spirit. If he have but the trick of fluent declamation, the power of concealing any poverty of thought by means of a thick mist of words, and worst of all, that dreadful habit, which some are said to have, of appearing most animated and earnest when most conscious that they have nothing to say, we have no security but in his own conscience that we may not, at any time, be called upon to sit down to an empty board. And we cannot contemplate this danger without solemn sadness; without warning those who may have fatal facilities this way, whither Satan and their fluent gifts may lead them. They may tell us that, in their most indolent or indisposed moods, they are always careful to redeem time for prayer. And we may not doubt this. But the marvel to us is that, having found time for prayer, they did not learn, *by prayer*, the mockery of not finding time for something

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else. "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Wherefore, let our last protest on this subject be against hasty preparation. The cheaply-produced sermon, whether spoken or written, is always the same: a calamity, a wrong, an offence both to earth and heaven.

THE INDEPENDENTS OF ENGLAND.

Among these, the example of the Rev. WILLIAM JAY, of Bath, is probably a representative one.

The *ex re nata* of extemporary speaking will always be more effective than what is read from composed documents or doled forth from recollection. Animation is desirable, and with ordinary minds no other quality will fully supply the want of it; but then it must *appear* to be the result of feeling. Whenever this is really the case, the animation will glow and rise with the subject. What is continuous and invariable must be mechanical and assumed. This is a sad secret, let out by the constant bawlers or strainers. How can the fire precede the friction? How can the picture be all light without shade? . . .

I seldom ever wrote a sermon at full length, but only a draft or sketch, more or less full according to its requirements, leaving the subordinate fillings up, after meditation and prayer, to the impressiveness and excitations of the audience, and the assistance authorized to be hoped for where means have been duly used. Even these notes I never took with me into the pulpit till within the past year, and I am sorry I ever took them. The memory, like a friend, loves to be trusted, and seldom fails to reward the confidence reposed in it.—*Autobiography.*

ROBERT VAUGHAN, D.D., in his book entitled "The Modern Pulpit," says:

We contemplate preaching to consist, not in reading sermons, but in such extemporaneous delivery as obtains at the bar and in the senate. We account it, on the whole, one of the greatest mischiefs that have befallen the Church and the cause of religion generally, that any other mode of communicating instruction than obtains in these connections should have become prevalent in the pulpit.

We are not ignorant with regard to the objections usually made to extemporaneous preaching. But these objections consist almost entirely of arguments derived from a misconception of the practice intended, or from its abuses only. It does not follow, because the language of a discourse is extemporaneous, that the substance is unpremeditated.

We advocate extemporaneous preaching, not as demanding less labor

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or less talent than the opposite practice, but as being more natural, more impressive, more adapted to the ends of preaching; and as involving, when entered upon with the due amount of preparation, the most wholesome exercise, both of the mental and moral faculties. We no more mean that the extemporaneous preacher should be a mere rhapsodist than we mean that such should be the character of pleading at the bar, or the character of oratory in the senate.

OFFICIAL ADVICE.—The following authoritative precepts relating to the subject are found in "A Guide to the Christian Ministry," by the Rev. Thomas Wallace, published as a prize essay by the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1849.

Do not Read your Sermons.

This is a habit formed by many, and especially by many young ministers at the present period: but we would by no means recommend it. If adopted, we consider that you would *regret* its adoption, and find it detrimental to the power and effect of your ministry. We are aware that by reading your discourses after their careful composition, greater precision and finish of style may be discovered; still, how much is sacrificed, how much is lost! The vivacity of the pulpit is to a great extent impaired. The life, the animation, the spontaneous and buoyant energy of preaching, which render it so interesting and attractive, and give to it so much power, are in a great degree taken away. A stiff, formal, and mechanical manner is also acquired, which those who invariably read their sermons find it difficult, indeed almost impossible, to shake off.

Besides, we have invariably observed, especially among dissenting congregations accustomed to a free delivery in the pulpit and the unrestricted preaching of the Gospel, that sermons, however excellent and able in themselves, when read are listened to by the majority with comparative inattention, and fall on the ears of numbers who remain listless and apathetic.

It must be remembered, too, that we have *few good readers*. It is *rare* to h ar a discourse read from the pulpit *well;* with freedom, animation, and effect; in that natural and vivacious manner which is calculated to produce a pleasing and a general impression.

Commence your ministry, then, by avoiding the practice of reading your sermons. Never read a discourse, except on some occasion of *special significance*, and even then avoid it if you possibly can. Sure we are that it will be connected with the freedom, acceptance, and efficiency of your ministry more than you are aware. The most enlightened judges, the most devout in our congregation, coincide in the observation, that one of the great charms of the Nonconformist pulpit is, that discourses are *preached*, not read; that the minister does

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not confine himself to his manuscript, but that he preaches the word of God, delivers the message of heaven to the people with persuasiveness and animation, presents the truth before them in an easy, unembarrassed, unfettered manner.

We have no objection, confessedly, to the employment of notes in the pulpit; it may be, copious. Some find it difficult to preach connectedly and comfortably without their use. Still, if employed, as has been beautifully remarked, "they should be like a quiver, on which a minister casts his eye now and then to perceive what arrow is to be fetched from thence, and shot in earnest."

Young ministers should endeavor to preach without notes; they often trammel and embarrass. "I once used notes," observed a distinguished preacher, "but found *my memory, upon trial,* served me best. The subject is laid nearer my heart; I think I feel more dependence on the Spirit; my own soul enjoys more; I am more unconfined; and any part of the subject more readily occurs to me *another time,* when I need it. It requires a little more pains to fix it in the memory; but amply, very amply, does it repay for diligence."

Our recommendation is in unison with the above remark, conceiving it to be sound and important. Get the leading thoughts of your discourses, the general outline, the prominent illustrations, well imprinted on the memory, "infixed in the mind;" enter the pulpit after long and deep reflection, under the influence of a devout and holy frame of mind, committing yourselves to the great work to which you are devoted, of unfolding the Gospel and beseeching men to be reconciled with God, and you will find that the Lord Jesus will assist you; that he will be better to you than all your anxieties and fears. Thought will succeed thought, illustration will follow illustration, there will be no deficiency of suitable and expressive phraseology, and you will give the appropriate intonations to your words and sentences, regulated by the natural and fervid feeling you are cherishing; and thus, we are persuaded, your ministrations will be rendered far more effective than they would be were your sermons uniformly read.

ENGLISH BAPTISTS.

No work on preaching is known to have appeared recently from this source. The precepts and practice of Robert Hall were strongly in favor of extemporaneous delivery. So are those of Spurgeon and other great preachers of that denomination at the present day.

ENGLISH WESLEYANS.

It is to be regretted that no work has appeared illustrating and vindicating the theory of preaching which has prevailed

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among the Wesleyans of England from the days of Mr. Wesley to the present time.

In the absence of such a work, we find Cubitt's "Dialogues," prefacing a volume of sketches of sermons, and published in 1856, recommending Claude's "Essay" and Porter's "Homiletics" as chosen guides for a junior minister

Nevertheless, the custom of the denomination has been to preach extemporaneously, though by no means to neglect the use of the pen. The English language furnishes no better specimens of printed sermons than may be found among those of Wesley, Clarke, Sutcliffe, Watson, Bunting, Punshon, and others.

THE FREE SCOTCH CHURCH.

The practice of ministers in this Church is divided with about as much equality as in the Church of England, although its greatest preachers, like Guthrie and Duff, at least in their best efforts, speak "without book."

Recently Dr. Begg made an effort in the Assembly to officially prohibit the reading of sermons by students and young ministers. He was not successful, and has fallen back upon moral suasion, urging his views in a book, the title of which is given in our list of authors in English. The non-arrival of a copy from Edinburgh in time for the insertion of a characteristic extract in this connection is regretted. Possibly the extract may be supplied in future editions.

AMERICAN CHURCHES.

UNITARIANS.

It is a matter of history that the most systematic vindication of extemporaneous preaching yet published in our language is from the pen of the junior Dr. Ware, of Cambridge. This important work is well known, and easily accessible. It seems, however, to have been more appreciated by other denominations than his own, in which it has not had the effect to introduce the custom which he so ably advocates.

CONGREGATIONALISTS.

Perhaps no American Church has been so generally wedded to the habit of reading sermons as have the Congregationalists of New England; and yet the New Englander, their ablest

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exponent, has recently entered warmly into the advocacy of extemporaneous preaching.

The following extracts are from the New Englander, of February, 1858, and November, 1859:

Of the two modes of preaching, as compared with one another, we are persuaded that to talk to the people without a manuscript is "the true way," the best way, as we have so often heard it called by experienced ministers, who regretted, as President Edwards did in his later days, that they had not accustomed themselves to it in their own early practice: . . .

A candidate for the ministry has to be warned against extempore writing. There is danger of it and danger in it. . . .

Why should not a young man be trained to think at his tongue's end as his fingers' end? . . . He may as well be educated to preach without reading as to write and read. The self-possession, readiness, methodical habit, and command of language which it especially requires are most easily and perfectly obtained at the time most favorable to every other part of education.

The theory of the theological seminaries of this denomination now is, that the preacher should accustom himself to both modes of delivery, usually reading a sermon in the morning and preaching extempore at evening.

BAPTISTS.

Professor RIPLEY indicates his appreciation of extemporaneous delivery by inserting Ware's Hints on the subject at length. Nevertheless he says:

It is clearly advisable for preachers to secure the advantages of each method, and the reciprocal influence of the two methods in preventing the dangers incident to each, if exclusively used, and in cultivating to the highest degree the good tendencies of each. Neither method should be used exclusively; both should be used habitually. The pen will tend to prevent inexactitude, shallowness, and consequent tameness of thought, carelessness, extravagance, and vagueness of expression. So, on the other hand, the comparative familiarity, directness, and earnestness to which extemporaneous address is favorable, may correct the formality, abstractness, and coolness which a preacher who confines himself to written sermons is in danger of contracting. Each method may be imperfect without the other; each, if not indispensable, is extremely favorable to the highest efficiency of the other.

Dr. WAYLAND, ex-President of Brown University, and author of works on Mental and Moral Philosophy, etc., gives his mature

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views on the subject in his recent work on the Ministry of the Gospel:

I cannot leave the consideration of the manner of preaching without expressing the opinion that we have greatly erred in substituting reading from a manuscript for direct, unwritten address. If a dissertation on some religious subject were uttered without notes, the speaker would frequently grow warm in the delivery, and eye meeting eye, he would commonly attract the attention of a portion, at least, of an audience. A mutual sympathy binds men together when they look into each other's faces; it acts and reacts on both parties; and the speaker instinctively labors to carry the audience along with him. But when an abstract dissertation on some not very interesting topic is deliberately read to an assembly, the eyes of the speaker being united to his manuscript and never meeting those of his audience, the effect upon the hearers must be as small as possible. Now, is not the tendency of much of our preaching toward this absolute negation of all practical effect? Do not our audiences commonly leave the house of God as unconcerned about the great subject of the soul's salvation as they entered it? The conversion of a sinner under a sermon has come to be a very rare occurrence. A few are pleased with the style; a few admire the imagery; a few suppose it to be profound because they do not understand it; but no one is made to feel himself a sinner against God, and no one asks, "What must I do to be saved?" And, alas! if he should ask the question, would he find anything in the sermon to answer it?

These two methods of preparation for the pulpit tend to awaken dissimilar states of religious feeling. When we write in a quiet study, we may, it is true, and if we believe what we preach we actually do, look up to the Holy Spirit for his guidance and direction. But still the *tendency* is apt to be rather to the intellectual than the moral. In writing, we strive to present some doctrine clearly, to express it correctly and rhetorically, and if we have done this, to be satisfied. We cannot rise to that feeling of earnestness which enables us to press home the truth which we have presented, directly and affectionately upon the conscience. We feel that we cannot *write* what we know we ought to *say*; at least this, I must confess, has been my own experience. During the preparation of the manuscript there is none of that sensibility of the presence of an audience that makes a preacher tremble in his knees, without which it is said that no one ever spoke well. The sermon is arranged according to the rules, and by this test the writer knows that it is a good one; that the audience *ought* to like it; and with this he is too prone to be content. He enters the pulpit with more or less of this assurance. He has no need to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit so far as the matter is concerned, for that

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is all prepared already. He may pray that it may be received into good hearts, but he has no wish that it be different from what it is. He has no fear of breaking down if only his voice and eyesight remain; for it is all plainly written out, to a syllable, before him. He reads it with such animation as may be natural to him, or with none at all; looking steadily at his manuscript, and rarely or never catching the eyes of his audience. If he makes a gesture, it is with his eyes fixed on his paper; one hand on the line which he is in danger of losing, and the other sawing the air without any kind of significance. When he closes, he perhaps feels that he has not succeeded in arresting the attention of the people; he has labored hard, but the result has not corresponded with the pains that he has taken. Something has been the matter, but he does not know what it is.

On the other hand, let a man know that he is about to address an audience on a subject of infinite importance, looking them directly in the eyes, and speaking as man speaketh to man, with the simple design of leading them at once to some action which shall affect their destinies for eternity. He prayerfully selects a subject which seems best adapted to the wants of his people. Looking for the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, he endeavors to penetrate its meaning, and discover its application to those whom he is to address. His preparation is a constant intercourse between his spirit and the Spirit of all truth. His object is to say precisely what is given him to say by the Master. The style in which he shall make known the truth gives him no uneasiness; for as he is accustomed in conversation to use good English, there is no reason why he should not use it in the pulpit, and that is all that is required. Filled thus with his subject, he comes before his people to deliver his message. As he looks around him, and reflects upon the position which he holds, and the consequences which may ensue to his hearers and himself from the service before him, his heart sinks within him, and he not only knows, but feels, that there is no help for him but in God. He pleads the promises, and looks up to the Holy Spirit for aid, casting aside all desire to please men; and conscious that he has no other intention than to declare the whole counsel of God, he rises to speak. The audience at once perceive that he is deeply in earnest. They look upon him with sympathy, such as nothing but unaffected earnestness can awaken. Their attention inspires him with confidence, and he proceeds in the delivery of his message. Gaining strength as he advances, he feels himself at home before his audience; and when he sits down he is conscious that, to the best of his ability, he has made known the whole counsel of God. He may frequently, at first, be aware of failure, and find that in the agitation of the moment the thoughts which he deemed most important escaped from his recollection; but with every attempt the liability of failure diminishes. He acquires the power of thinking on his legs. His trembling, agitated reliance on the

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Holy Spirit is changed into habitual, trustful confidence. He never rises in the pulpit without an earnest, cheerful hope of producing some immediate practical effect upon his hearers. Nor is he apt to be disappointed. The example of his sincerity and love animates Christians, and attracts the attention of the careless; for it is not in man to be affected by that genuine love of souls that shines in the eye and speaks in the tones of a faithful and beseeching ambassador of Christ. The Spirit speaks through him to the hearts of men: saints are established in the faith, and sinners are turned to righteousness.

I, of course, by no means assert that all preachers from manuscript are such as I have referred to in the first example, or that all preachers without notes are such as I have described in the second. I know well that some of our most effective preachers have always used written preparation, and that some of our least useful ministers preach extemporaneously. I speak not of individual cases, and only insist on the tendency of these two modes of preparation. Let it be granted that the promises of the Gospel mean anything, and let it be conceded that there is any Holy Spirit, and then let anyone compare these two methods of addressing our fellow-men on the subject of their soul's salvation, and decide which is more likely to become a blessing to the minister himself, and which is the more likely to bring a blessing to his hearers.

I know it is frequently said that the subject on which a minister preaches is so important, and it is of so much consequence that men should know the exact truth, that we ought not to trust ourselves to speak from the pulpit without the most carefully-written preparation.

But let us not be led astray by words; let us look at realities. Do written sermons always convey sound theology? (and by sound theology I mean the simple truth revealed to us by our Saviour and his apostles.) Do men professing the same sentiments as ourselves never read from a manuscript statements of doctrine to which we cannot assent? It is said we need carefully written preparations; but how often do the most of us deliver from the pulpit *carefully written* discourses, except it be at ordinations, or on some other special occasions? A really extemporaneous discourse may be written as well as spoken without writing. A large proportion of our written discourses are prepared in a hurry, late on Saturday night, and sometimes between the services on the Sabbath, and the thoughts are huddled together with little arrangements and less meditation. Is not such a sermon, though *written*, liable to all the objections commonly raised against *extempore* preaching? Nay, if the same time had been spent in earnest thought, would not the discourse have been more carefully prepared than by the simple process of writing? Men seem to suppose that what is written must, of course, be sound sense. I confess I have not always found it

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so; and I have sometimes been tempted to ask, Would a preacher be willing to look his audience in the face, and utter such commonplace truisms as he delivers from a manuscript, looking on his paper?

I object to the custom of addressing an audience from a manuscript for several reasons.

In the first place, the tendency of habitually using written preparations is to the formation of a written instead of a spoken style; to cultivate a habit of writing for the press instead of uttering our thoughts to an audience. We thus form the habit of using abstract terms, speaking of the most important truths in generalities which men only dimly understand, and which no one applies to himself. It is not the language of ordinary thought or ordinary conversation; and it is as if we addressed them in a foreign tongue, which they only imperfectly understand. What the effect of such preaching must be, or rather how small must be its effect, may easily be imagined. The preacher can rarely be deeply interested in it himself, and it cannot be expected that he will interest others.

Every one knows that the power of a speaker over an audience depends almost entirely on the tones of emotion. This was what the ancient orator meant when he said that the first and second and third requisite essential to a public speaker was *delivery*. But emotion, though it commence in the bosom of the speaker, is sustained and deepened and rendered more intense by the reciprocal action of the speaker and audience upon each other. The earnestness of the speaker, shown in the eyes, the gesture, the tones of the voice, arouses the audience to sympathy. Their eyes answer to his eyes; their breathless attention shows that every tone of his voice thrills their bosoms with emotion; their whole expression reacts upon him, and a mutual sympathy binds them together; and he feels that his heart and theirs are beating in unison. Indignation, sarcasm, pity, sorrow, yearning to create in them the same feeling which agitates him, expressed more powerfully in the tones of the voice than in the words which he utters, sway the audience at his will; and at the close it seems as if they all had but one soul, and that the soul of him who has addressed them. Such was the preaching of Whitefield. Garrick, after hearing him, declared that he would give a hundred pounds to be able to utter the simple exclamation "O!" as Whitefield uttered it.

This power of expressing emotion by the tones of the voice, we may remark in passing, cannot be acquired by art. It must arise from the earnest, honest feeling of the speaker, reflected back from the audience before him. A man may rehearse his sermons alone; he may determine how this or that passage should be uttered, or what gesture should accompany the utterance; he may do it again and again before a mirror; he may blacken his manuscript with every kind of sign that shall indicate the expression to be given to the words; but it is all a failure.

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Nature is not so easily deceived. The hearers see that it is all very elaborately prepared, and very accurately delivered; but somehow or other they are not moved, and it all seems like a boy speaking a piece.

To return. It must, I think, be evident that the tendency of habitual reading is to annihilate the true tones of emotion in a speaker. His eyes and those of the audience never meet. They look up, and all is blank, for he is looking steadfastly on something else. The tendency is for him gradually to subside into a quiet reader, delivering plainly, and without emotion, what he has prepared with care and attention. This is the more common case. If, however, he rises above this, and is of a more earnest character, he acquires a regular tone of apparent emotion, a rise and fall of the voice at regular intervals, in which every sentence is uttered. The important and the unimportant are both pitched on the same key, and set to the same tune. The tones of real emotion have all died out, and nothing remains but sentence after sentence, whether narrative, hortatory, or emotional, beginning, continuing, and ending with the same pauses, inflections, and emphasis, which no feeling of the soul seems really to pervade. To this kind of delivery, I think, reading generally tends, especially in young men; but it is liable to decline, with advancing years, into that which I have just referred to.

I do not, of course, deny that we have frequently eloquent readers. I rejoice to say that I have listened to many myself, though it was frequently the eloquence of high intellectual rather than of moral excitement. Chalmers was a close reader, and never preached without producing great effect. His soul was always on fire, and he threw it wholly into all he either did or said. It was not in his nature to be prosy. Yet a gentleman who was in the habit of hearing him has assured me that his extempore discourses, delivered to operatives in the outskirts of Glasgow, were far more effective, and more truly eloquent than the sermons which he delivered with so much applause in the Tron Church of that city.

During my ministry in Boston I contracted the habit of writing and reading my sermons. Though I did this at the suggestion of my people, I consider it as one of the great errors of my life. This error I should have escaped if I had thought more of moral preparation for the pulpit, if my mind had been more habitually devout, and I had cultivated a more humble reliance on the Spirit of God.

When, a few years since, I was called temporarily to the exercise of the pastoral office, I endeavored in some measure to obey the precepts which I have here inculcated upon others. I at once laid aside every other labor, and confined my reading almost exclusively to the Bible, and to works on devotional or practical religion. To the measure of my physical ability I preached the Gospel, both publicly and from house to house, seeking to hold personal conversation on the subject of

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religion, as far as it was possible, with every member of the whole congregation. The Lord in mercy gave me such success as seemed good to him; and though my imperfections were many, and my practice fell very far short of my duty as a minister, I can truly say that no part of my ministerial life was so full of enjoyment as this, and upon no part of it do I look back with so much satisfaction. I do firmly believe that, to gain victory over one's self, over the love of reputation, position, or emolument, to consider all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and in the face of all men to preach simply what the word of God teaches, to preach that only, and to do this day after day, no matter what men may think of us, is the only way to secure a happy and successful ministry, to be happy in our own souls from the presence of Christ abiding in us, and at last to hear his voice, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

PRESBYTERIANS, OLD SCHOOL.

The following preamble and resolution are recorded among the Acts of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, of 1849, and define the official position of that body:

Whereas, The General Assembly has reason to believe that the practice of reading sermons in the pulpit is on the increase among our ministers, and being decidedly of opinion that it is not the most effectual and acceptable method of preaching the Gospel: therefore

Resolved, That we do earnestly repeat the recommendation of the General Assembly of 1841, that this practice be discontinued, as far as practicable; and affectionately exhort our younger ministers and candidates to adopt a different method, as more scriptural and effective, and more generally acceptable to God's people.

The doctrine of the above resolution is ably enforced in a small book published in Philadelphia, entitled "Hints on Preaching," which contains the following:

The practice of reading discourses is *an innovation in the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in our country*

The Pilgrim Fathers of New England, when they came to our country and planted Churches, *never read their sermons;* the manner was unknown until nearly a century afterward. Those men of God, ripe scholars and able divines, who were so eminently useful, the Hookers, the Shepards, the Eliots, the Coltons, the Mathers, and their immediate successors, never practised this mode of preaching. It is not until 1708 that we hear of it. From a sermon of Solomon Stoddard, on "The

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inexcusablenss of neglecting the worship of God," preached that year, we learn that a very few preachers had adopted this "new method;" a method which he strongly disapproves, against which he warns the ministers, and the sad consequences of which he predicts should it ever become general. But the warning was unheeded; the practice continued and increased until the time of Edwards, when it generally prevailed. That great man read his sermons, and read them closely; and considering what an eminently successful preacher he was, and what a multitude of souls he was the instrument of saving, his example has often been quoted in favor of the method. But he lived *deeply to regret it*, and to bear his testimony against the whole practice of reading. "Although," says his biographer, Dr. Hopkins, "he was wont to read so considerable a part of what he delivered, yet he was far from thinking this the best way of preaching in general, and looked upon using his notes as a *deficiency* and *infirmity;* and in the latter part of his life he was inclined to think it had been better if he had never been accustomed to use his notes at all."

It is scarcely necessary to add that the habit of reading sermons was introduced at a later period in the Presbyterian Church. Our fathers, though very careful in their preparations, pursued not this method. The Blairs, the Finleys, the Davieses, the Tennents, the Witherspoons, and the many others who were such luminaries in our Church, adopted that "better method" recommended by the Assembly. Davies, it is true, read his sermons after he came to Princeton; and it would appear from his diary, occasionally did it in England; but in Virginia, where he principally labored, and where he was most useful, according to universal tradition, handed down from those who attended his ministry, he preached *memoriter*. It is true, also, that Gilbert Tennent, after he came to Philadelphia, read his sermons; but the people, even his own flock, never regarded him as so useful a preacher as he was before, when he adopted a different method. Many now living can remember when the venerable Rogers, with his colleagues, preached without reading; and when, in consequence of the influence which he exerted in the city where he labored, a sermon was seldom read in the pulpit of any Presbyterian church.

Those who in different ages have been raised up by God to accomplish some great work, and have been peculiarly successful, have almost invariably preached without reading.

We have already mentioned the manner of the reformers, and of the earlier and later Puritans. Was it not so when evangelical truths was revived in the Church of England? At the beginning of the eighteenth century, at how low an ebb was spiritual religion in that Church! While the externals of piety were defended, its essential doctrines were neglected; justification by faith and the necessity of inward grace were entirely overlooked. Too many of the clergy were wholly ignorant of

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the Gospel, and satisfied with giving to the people a brief moral essay, instead of preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified; the consequence of which was a prevalence of spiritual deadness throughout the whole Church. In these circumstances Providence raised up Whitefield and Wesley, and their cotemporaries Romaine and Berridge, the Hills and Hervey, and a host of others, most of whom, with a glowing zeal, traversed the whole kingdom, scattering as widely as possible the seeds of truth in the uncultivated soil around them. It is pleasing to see these apostolic and self-denying men thus going out and preaching the Gospel everywhere, in prisons and in fields, to sailors and to colliers, to persons of every class who would hear them. The world around them was in darkness, and they longed to impart to it some rays of light; they saw sin everywhere powerful, and their souls were stirred up within them to destroy it. But in what manner did they preach? Many of them wrote their sermons, which are now perused with interest and profit. But did they *read* them? We know that they did not, from the favor with which they were received by the people, the success that everywhere attended their labors, and the thousands and tens of thousands that were awakened and converted under their ministry.

In our own country, who, in later times, seemed to be a more signal example of ministerial faithfulness than Payson? a more striking pattern of zeal for the salvation of souls? an instrument of the conversion of more souls to God? What is his testimony? In writing to a young clergyman he says: "On Thursday evening and Sabbath morning I preach without notes," (that is, without reading,) "but generally form a skeleton of my sermons, and I find that *when any good is done it is my extempore* sermons that do it;" that is, sermons that have been prepared and preached from a skeleton.

Who, more recently, has excited greater attention than M'Cheyne? Who acquired a higher estimation in the Churches of Scotland? Whose death, at the early age of thirty, was so lamented and deplored as a public loss? When we see the vast numbers that attended his preaching, the fervor with which he sought the salvation of them all, the simplicity, fullness, and pointedness with which he presented the whole Gospel, the wonderful efficacy which the Spirit gave to the truth thus announced, who would think it necessary to ask if he *read* his sermons? Who does not expect such a testimony on this subject as his biographer gives? "From the very beginning of his ministry he reprobated the custom of *reading sermons*, believing that to do so, exceedingly weakened the freedom and natural fervor of the messenger in delivering the message. His custom was to impress on his memory the substance of what he had beforehand carefully written, and then to speak as he found liberty."

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PRESBYTERIANS, NEW SCHOOL.

Dr. T. H. Skinner, translator of Vinet's Homiletics, formerly Professor of Sacred Rhetoric at Andover, and now of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, published in the Presbyterian Review of January, 1864, a very valuable article on the Theory of Preaching, from which the following paragraphs are in point:

Valuable as well-written discourses are in other respects, their chief advantage, ultimately, both to the preacher and his hearers, is from the influence they have on the preparation to preach extemporaneously. Certain it is, that the ideal of excellence in preaching is unattainable when the delivery is from full notes. Extemporizing in itself is the best way of speaking; the natural way; the only speaking, indeed, in the strict sense of the term. Each of the other ways—reading, writing, reproducing from a manuscript—has somewhat in it which nature would hardly suggest or allow in such an occupation as that of *addressing*, speaking to, an assembly. A great master in the ministry of the word has said:* "There is too little of living preaching in your kingdom [England]; sermons there have been mostly read or recited. True and faithful servants of God ought not to wish to shine in the ornaments of rhetoric, or effect great things thereby; but the Spirit of God, should be echoed by their voice, and so give birth to virtue. No possible danger must be permitted to abridge the liberty of the Spirit of God, or prevent his free course among those he has adorned with his graces for the edifying of the Church."

This remark of Calvin should be as a loud warning to preachers when writing discourses for the pulpit. Both in preparing and preaching from manuscripts there is special danger of *abridging the liberty of the Spirit* in his part of the work. From neither, as we have before insisted, is his peculiar agency to be for a moment abstracted. Writing is the preacher's business; he puts himself in it, if he does it, in earnest; and he is very apt, from the nature of the operation, to be in it *by himself*, and to do it in too exclusive self-reliance, and when he has done it to restrict himself to what he has written, ignoring the Spirit's province and right in the actual work of preaching even to the end. He is in peril of doing this in the other way of preaching also; but his liability to it is special when he uses a completely written discourse. And he knows not what his preaching may lose if he does abridge the Spirit's liberty in it. By far the best part of preaching is often from unanticipated assistances of the Holy Spirit.

* Letter of John Calvin to Somerset.

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METHODISTS.

The theory and practice of Methodists, both in the old and the new world, has been so uniformly in favor of extemporaneous preaching, that quotations, beyond those at the close of Chapter XIII, are deemed unnecessary.

If it were desirable to multiply authorities to any greater extent on the topics now under consideration, an almost limitless number of pertinent quotations might be gathered from the memoirs of distinguished ministers.

Whoever will consult that valuable work, Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," or a review of the first six volumes of it in the "Methodist Quarterly" of July, 1860, will find that even in denominations where the reading of sermons has been supposed to be the established law of custom, all the most distinguished and truly powerful preachers have cultivated habits of extemporaneous speech, and have accomplished their deepest impressions and largest usefulness by means of it.

From a classification of the great preachers of the denominations then under review, it appears that Davenport, Bellamy, Huntington, Backus, Spring, Dwight, Payson, Nettleton, and others among *Congregationalists;* Waddell, Turner, Alexander, Mason, Baxter, Romeyn, Kollock, Blackburn, Laurie, Rice, Larned, Nelson, Carroll, Potts, and Wilson among *Presbyterians;* Whitefield, Jarratt, Pilmoor, R. C. Moore, Henshaw, Bedell, and Keith among *Episcopalians;* and Stillman, Manning, Smith, Baldwin, Broaddus, Maxcey, Staughton, Cone, Maginnis, Tucker, and Rhees among *Baptists*, were accustomed to preach extemporaneously, and that the best results of their labors followed that style of preaching.

Among the great preachers of the Methodist Churches, either in Europe or America, it is not known that one was ever an habitual reader of sermons.

The "New Englander," of February, 1858, truthfully remarked that "Chalmers is the only preacher or orator of any kind who ever swayed large miscellaneous audiences by reading his discourses." It is extremely doubtful whether he could have done it in any other country than Scotland.

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D.

EXAMPLE

OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND PARAPHRASE OF SCRIPTURE UNDER THE VARIOUS HEADS OF PRAYER.

INVOCATION.

Rev. xix. 16. Thou King of kings and Lord of lords.

2 Kings xix. 15. O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

Isa. lvii. 15. Thou high and lofty One that inhabitest eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwellest in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. Thou blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hast immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.

James i. 17. Thou Father of lights, from whom doth come every good and perfect gift, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Psa. xxxiii. 13. Who lookest from heaven, and beholdest all the sons of men.

Psa. lxxxix. 7. Who art greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about thee.

Psa. civ. 3. Who layest the beams of thy chambers in the waters; who makest the clouds thy chariot; who walkest upon the wings of the wind; who makest thine angels spirits, and thy ministers a flame of fire.

Psa. lxv. 2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Psa. lxv. 5. O God of our salvation, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.

Psa. xlvi. 1. Thou, O God, art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

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Psa. xxxvi. 5. Thy mercy is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

Psa. xxxiii. 18. Thine eye is upon them that fear thee, and upon them that hope in thy mercy.

ADORATION.

Psa. lxv. 1. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

Neh. ix. 5, 6. Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshipeth thee.

Psa. cxxxviii. 2. We will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth; for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

Psa. xcii. 1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.

Psa. viii. 1. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Psa. ix. 1. We will praise thee, O Lord, with our whole heart; we will show forth all thy marvelous works.

Psa. civ. 1, 2. O Lord our God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty; thou coverest thyself with light as a garment.

Micah vii. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; who retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy?

THANKSGIVING.

Psa. xl. 5. Many, O Lord our God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if we would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered.

Psa. cxxxix. 17. How precious also are thoughts unto us, O God! how great is the sum of them!

Psa. cxvi. 12-14. What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us? We will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; we will pay our vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people.

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Psa. cxxxvi. 1. We will give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Col. i. 13-15. We give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Whose divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

CONFESSION.

Psa. li. 1-4. Have mercy upon us, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions.

For we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Against thee, thee only, have we sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.

Gen. xviii. 27. We are but dust and ashes.

Gen. xxxii. 10. We are not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servants.

Psa. cxliv. 3, 4. Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Man is like unto vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

Isa. i. 4. We are a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corruptors, that have forsaken the Lord, and provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger.

Eph. ii. 2, 3. We are children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of our mind.

Rom. vii. 21. When we would do good, evil is present with us. (24.) Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? (6.) That we may serve God in newness of spirit?

PETITION AND SUPPLICATION.

Psa. xxvii. 7. Hear, O Lord, when we cry unto thee with our voice; have mercy also upon us, and answer us.

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Psa. lv. 1. Give ear to our prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from our supplication.

Psa. cxli. 2. Let our prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice.

Isa. xliv. 22. Blot out as a thick cloud our transgressions, and as a cloud our sins; and return unto us, for thou hast redeemed us.

Psa. li. 6-10. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make us to know wisdom. Purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow. Make us to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

Col. ii. 13. Quicken us who were dead in our sins, having forgiven us all our tresspasses.

Zech. xiii. 1. Lead us to the fountain that was opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Hosea xiv. 2. Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. (4.) Heal our backsliding, and love us freely.

Rom. v. 1-5. Being justified by faith, may we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but may we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.

Eph. iii. 17-19. That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Eph. i. 17, 18. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Eph. i. 13, 14. That we may be sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory

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Heb. iii. 14. That, being made partakers of Christ, we may hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; (ix. 9,) laboring to enter into the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

SELF-DEDICATION.

Psa. xxvii. 4. One thing have we desired of the Lord; that will we seek after; that we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

Psa. cxix. 12. Blessed art thou, O Lord; teach us thy statutes. (14-16.) We have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. We will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. We will delight ourselves in thy statutes, and will not forget thy word.

BLESSING AND PRAISE.

1. Chron. xxix. 11. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

1 Chron. xxix. 13. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

1 Chron. xvi. 25. Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; thou art also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols; but thou, Lord, madest the heavens. Glory and honor are in thy presence; strength and gladness are in his place.

1 Chron. xvi. 29. We would give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, bring an offering and come before him, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Psa. cxlv. 10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. (2.) Every day we will bless thee, and we will praise thy name for ever and ever.

Psa. cxlv. 3. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

Psa. cxlv. 21. Our mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

1 Tim. i. 17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

Rev. v. 12, 13. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive

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power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Therefore would we join with every creature which is in heaven or on the earth, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Eph. iii. 20, 21. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

THE PLAN OF A SERMON.

In distinguishing the parts of a sermon, the same maxim applies as in distinguishing the different species of sermons. The distinctions should be simple, generic, and as few as possible. We shall adopt the enumeration of Aristotle in his Rhetoric,* and regard the sacred oration as made up of the following parts, namely, the *introduction*, the *proposition*, the *proof*, and the *conclusion*.

1. The introduction is that part of the sermon which precedes the proposition and the proof. In common with the conclusion, it is a secondary part of an oration, the primary parts being the proposition and the proof. These latter Aristotle denominates "necessary" parts, "for," he says, "it is absolutely necessary that a discourse should *state* something and *prove* it." And it is plain that if a sermon could have but two parts, the proposition and the proof of it would possess some positive value, taken by themselves; while an introduction and a conclusion, taken by themselves, would be worthless. Hence the exceedingly logical and rigorous Aristotle seems to hesitate at first whether he shall not regard the oration as consisting of but two parts, although he finally admits four.†

The introduction, in its nature, is preparatory. 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

* Aristotle's *De Arte Rhetorica*, iii. 13.

† *Ἀναγκαῖα ἄρα μόρια πρόθεσις καὶ πίστις· ἴδια μὲν οὖν ταῦτα, τὰ δὲ πλεῖστα προοίμιον, πρόθεσις, πίστις ἐπίλογος.* — Aristotle's *De Arte Rhetorica*, iii. 13.

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the discourse, In secular eloquence, one very important object of the exordium is to conciliate the hearer towards the speaker; to remove prejudices, and to awaken sympathy with him. There is not, ordinarily, any need of an exordium for this purpose in sacred eloquence. The preacher, unless he has been exceedingly unfaithful to himself and his calling, may presume upon the good-will and the respect of his auditory, and need not waste time or words in endeavoring to secure a favorable attention to himself as a man. It is, however, sometimes necessary that the preacher, in his introduction, should conciliate his audience in respect to his subject. If his theme is a very solemn and awful one, if the proof and discussion of it lead to those very close and pungent trains of thought which are apt to offend fallen human nature, it is well for the sermonizer to prepare the mind of his auditor for this plain dealing with his heart and conscience. The introduction in this case affords an opportunity to remind the hearer that preaching is for the soul's good and the soul's salvation; that when the subject requires it, the plainest discourse is really the kindest and most affectionate; that the truth which is to be established and applied is a part of God's revelation; and that, however severe it may seem, it is the severity of divine wisdom and love."

The ordinary office of the introduction, however, is to exhibit the text in its connections, and to explain its less obvious meaning. Some writers upon Homiletics assign this work to a particular part of the discourse, which they denominate the explanation. It is better to regard it as belonging to the introduction. In Sacred Eloquence, as we have already observed, there is generally no need of that conciliatory matter, either in respect to the speaker or his subject, which, according to these writers, constitutes the introduction proper. Hence most sermons can have no introduction except this explanatory one. Or, again, the sermon might need to be introduced by some conciliatory matter, and require no explanation of the text. Hence it is better to define the introduction as consisting of *all* the matter, be it conciliatory or explanatory, or both, which prepares for the necessary and fundamental parts of the sermon—the proposition and its proof.

The introduction should be short. Of course it must be proportioned to the length and general structure of the discourse. Still, brevity should be a distinguishing character of the exordium; and where one sermon is faulty from being too abruptly

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introduced, one hundred are faulty from a too long and tiresome preface. It is easier to expand the common thoughts of the introduction than to fill out full, and thoroughly elaborate the argumentative parts of the discourse; and hence we too often listen to sermons which remind us of that Galatian church which began in the spirit, but ended in the flesh. The sermon opens with a promising introduction, which attracts attention, conciliates the audience, and paves the way to a noble and fertile theme. But, instead of bringing the exordium to a close, and commencing with the development of a subject, or the proof of a proposition, the sermonizer repeats, or unduly expands, his introductory matter, as if he dreaded to take hold of his theme. The consequence is, that the theme itself is not handled with any strength or firmness of grasp, and the long and labored introduction only serves as a foil to set off the brevity and inferiority of the body of the discourse. Rather than take this course, it would be better for the sermonizer to plunge into the middle and depths of his subject at once. This latter method is allowable occasionally. When the subject is a very fruitful and important one, and the preacher can have but a single opportunity of presenting it, it is perfectly proper to dispense with everything like a regular and oratorical exordium, and begin with the treatment of the theme itself.

2. The Proposition is the enunciation of the particular truth which is to be established and applied in the sermon. It is therefore of a positive and affirmative nature. If, consequently, the truth or doctrine to be taught and applied has at first taken on a negative form, it is best to convert it into an affirmation. The demonstration of a position is more favorable to eloquence than of a negation. The proposition should also be stated in the most concise manner possible. It is, or should be, the condensation and epitome of the whole discourse, and should therefore be characterized by the utmost density of meaning. The proposition should also be stated in the boldest manner possible. By this it is not meant that the announcement of the subject of a sermon should be dogmatic, in the bad sense of the word. This should be guarded against. But every teaching or tenet of revelation ought to be laid down with a strong confidence of its absolute truthfulness. We are told that a certain auditory, upon a certain occasion, were surprised at the doctrine of our Saviour, because He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Christ spake as never man spake, for He spake with the com-

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manding dignity of a higher consciousness than belongs to a mere man. His doctrines carry a divine weight, decisiveness, and authoritativeness with them, which, when felt, admits no appeal and no gainsaying on the part of the human mind. And this authoritativeness pertains to inspiration as a whole. When, therefore, the proposition of a sermon is a legitimate derivative from a passage of Scripture, it ought to be expressed in such a manner as to preclude all hesitation, doubt, or timorousness in the phraseology. A weighty conciseness and a righteous boldness ought to characterize the terms and form of the proposition. But in order that this may be the case, the utmost care must be expended upon its phraseology. A propositional sentence is very different from an ordinary sentence. It should be constructed much more elaborately. Its phraseology ought to be as near perfection as possible. The members and clauses of the sentence which is to enunciate the whole doctrine of the discourse should be most exactly worded and most cunningly jointed. The proposition of a sermon ought to be eminent for the nice exactness of its expression, and the hard finish of its diction. As a constituent part of the skeleton, it should be purest bone.

We have thus far spoken of the proposition of a sermon, as a definite and distinct statement which follows the introduction and precedes the proof. It is not necessary, however, that a discourse should contain a formal and verbal proposition, in order to its being a true topical sermon, a proper oration. The doctrine may be so inwoven into the proof and discussion, as to render a formal statement unnecessary. The proposition, in this instance, is implied in the body of the discourse. This is generally the case with that large class of sermons which have been denominated subject-sermons. These contain no proposition that is formally announced, although they contain one that is really and organically inlaid. If a discourse does not embody a proposition, either expressly or by implication, it is not topical in its nature. Subject-sermons, as the name denotes, take for their title not a proposition established and applied in them, but the general theme with which they are occupied. From them, however, a proposition can be drawn, to the support and enforcement of which the entire body of the discourse is subservient; and this proves the identity with the topical sermon.

We will illustrate this by a reference to a sermon of Saurin, one of the very first of sermonizers, whether we consider the soundness of his thought, the vigor and clearness of his method,

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or the plain elegance of his rhetoric. The discourse is founded upon 1 Cor. i. 21: "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The title of the sermon is, "The Advantages of Revelation." The translator was, probably, led to give it this loose running title, because the author does not formally announce a proposition in the discourse. It contains one, however, and, put into a distinct verbal statement, would be this: "Revealed religion is infinitely superior to natural religion." This proposition really pervades the whole sermon, and is established by showing that revelation imparts a knowledge infinitely superior to that given by natural religion, in respect—(1) to the nature and attributes of God; (2) to the nature and obligations of man; (3) to the means of appeasing the remorse of conscience; and (4) to a future state.

It is better to vary the structure of sermons by adopting both modes, so far as the proposition is concerned. Invariably to state the proposition, though not so objectionable as invariably to leave it unannounced, imparts an air of stiffness and formality to sermonizing from Sabbath to Sabbath. Whenever, however, the proposition is not verbally stated, the treatment of the subject ought to be of such a character as to leave no doubt in the mind of the hearer respecting the real and positive doctrine of the sermon. The body of the discourse should be made up of such clear and evident matter, that when the hearer asks himself the question, "What is the proposition of this sermon?" the answer is suggested by its trains of thought, and the general bearing of it as a whole. If, therefore, a sermon contains no outward and formally announced proposition, it should contain an inward and organic one all the more; and the whole mass of its argumentative and illustrative matter should have even a plainer reference, and a stronger drift in one general direction, than when the proposition has been verbally enunciated in the beginning.

3. The Proof is the substance of the sermon. It is the most important part of the discourse, because it is that part, for the sake of which the discourse itself is composed. The introduction, the statement of the proposition, and the conclusion, exist only in order to the demonstration. Separated from that argumentative part of the sermon, which establishes some truth and produces conviction, these other parts are worthless. A logical development of an idea, or a convincing demonstration

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of a doctrine, always possesses an intrinsic worth. When we can read or hear but one part of a sermon, we always select the body of it, as it is termed.

The proof divides into parts, which are sometimes denominated "heads," and sometimes "divisions." These divisions should exhibit the following qualities:—First, they must possess a true logical force. By this is meant that they must, one and all, go to establish the proposition. It is not enough that they bear some affinity to the theme of the discourse, that they are not heterogeneous. They must be of the nature of demonstration, and carry conviction, as far as they extend, to the hearer's mind. At the conclusion of each head or division of proof, the auditor should feel that the proposition has received an additional and real support. Secondly, each head of the proof ought to exhibit a distinctive character by itself. By this is meant that it should not contain elements of proof that are found in other divisions. It must not be a mere modification of some other head, but a distinct and additional item in the mass of argument. Hence none but the leading arguments should appear in the sermon for the support of a proposition. There is no time in the oration for the numerous exhaustive demonstrations of philosophy, and in reality no need of them. The preacher should seize upon the few prime arguments, and exhibit to the popular audience only the capital proofs.

A close attention to these two fundamental properties in the heads of proof is indispensable to good sermonizing. If a particular argument in support of a proposition is not *genuinely* demonstrative, and *distinctively* demonstrative, it should not constitute a part of the proof. All arguments that do not, so far as they reach and relate, really evince and afford new elements of conviction, ought to be energetically rejected.

The observance of these maxims will secure a proper number of heads. If everything of the nature of proof is employed, without regard to the intrinsic worth and strength of it, the divisions will be too numerous for the nature of oratory. "Some ministers," says an old homiletist, "do with their texts as the Levite with his concubine—cut and carve it into so many pieces." Some sermons exhibit a body of proof which, owing to the multitude of the divisions and subdivisions, is wholly unsuited to the purposes of persuasive discourse. They are good illustrations of the infinite divisibility of matter, but produce no conviction in the popular mind, because they

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employ the philosophical instead of the rhetorical mode of demonstration. This fault will be avoided if the sermonizer asks, 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?" These two questions, rigorously applied, will exclude from the sermon all second-rate arguments, and the pulpit will bring to bear upon the popular audience only the strongest, plainest, and most cogent proofs. By this it is not meant that a division of the proof may not exhibit another phase of one and the same general argument. There may be but one general argument in support of a proposition, and then the new element of proof, in the new division, must be simply a new aspect of this. But in this case also the spirit of the above given maxim must be obeyed. The new head or division should exhibit a new aspect, so *distinct* and *diverse* from that of all preceding or following heads, as to impart a marked and distinguishing logical character to it.

In respect to the number of heads or divisions in the proof, no stiff rule can be laid down. Some rhetoricians say that they should never exceed five. Probably the majority of modern sermons contain less than this number, and the majority of ancient sermons contain more. It is better to amplify one first-rate argument, than to present two mediocre ones in the same space. It is more difficult to do this, because it requires closer and more continuous reflection, but the sermon is the more excellent for it. When a rich and fertile argument has been discovered, the preacher should not leave it until he has made the common mind feel the whole sum of its force. The instant he has done this, he should drop it. It is not enough to barely state a proof. It should be fully unfolded. It should be revolved in the preacher's mind, and before the hearer's mind, until all that is latent in it has been elicited. The maxim, then, in respect to the number of heads or divisions is, "Amplify rather than multiply." The effect of this maxim will coincide with what has been said respecting the choice of arguments. The preacher, we have seen, is to choose genuinely demonstrative and distinctively demonstrative proofs; and these are the only ones that can be amplified, and cannot be multiplied. 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 a sermon.

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These same maxims will apply to the subdivisions of proof. These also must possess a real and distinct demonstrative power. They should not repeat each other in any degree. The choice and number of the subdivisions must, therefore, be determined by the same rules that apply to the principal divisions. As a general thing, subdivisions need not be formally announced; they should be so forcible and marked in their character as to announce themselves. Generally speaking, a subdivision that would not attract the attention of a hearer by its own weight and worth should be omitted.

In announcing the divisions and subdivisions of the proof, the greatest pains should be taken with the phraseology. Each one ought to be expressed in the most exact and concise language. The same care which we recommended in wording the proposition should be expended upon the wording of its proofs. These are themselves a species of proposition, and by the old sermonizers are so denominated. The elder Edwards frequently announces a general proposition, under the name of "doctrine," and follows with "proposition first," "proposition second," etc., as the arguments that support it.*

It sometimes happens that the matter in the proof is excellent, being both truly and distinctively demonstrative, but the style of expression is exceedingly defective. As an example of a loose and slovenly manner of wording the divisions and subdivisions of the proof, take the following from John Howe, a preacher who, in respect to thought and matter, has no superior in the Ancient or the Modern Church, but is excelled, in respect to form and style, by many of inferior discipline, learning, and spirituality.

In the forty-second of his sermons, he describes the nature of the new birth.† The divisions of the discussion are worded thus: "1. As it is a birth, it signifies a real new product in the soul; that there is somewhat really produced anew in it. 2. As this is a real production to be thus born, new born, so it is a spiritual production, in contradistinction to such productions as lie within the sphere of nature. 3. As this is a birth, so we must consider it to be a total production, such an one as carries an entireness with it; for so it is with all such productions that are properly called births. 4. This birth, as it is a birth, signifies a permanent production; an effect that is permanent, lasting, and continued."

* Compare Sermon upon 1 Thess. ii. 16. "Works," iv. 281 sq.

† John Howe, "Works," ii. 894 sq. New York edition.

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Instead of this loose, incompact phraseology, these divisions would be more forcibly stated and easily remembered in the following form: To be born of God (the text is, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God") denotes— 1. A real true birth. 2. A supernatural or spiritual birth. 3. A permanent birth.* The awkwardness of the statement, in this instance, arises from not cleanly separating the head or division from the matter under it, and from attempting some *explanation* or *development* of the head in the head itself. This should never be done. The preacher must reserve the unfolding for its proper place. He should do one thing at a time. When he announces either a proposition or a division, let it be a pure and simple annunciation, in the concisest, clearest, and briefest phraseology. And when he unfolds, or develops, let him do this fully and exhaustively. Milton speaks of the close palm of logic, and the open palm of rhetoric. Now, the statement of a proposition, or of a head, is logical in its nature; it should be the hard, knotty fist. The explanation or development of a proposition, or of a head, is rhetorical in its nature; it should be the open, ample hand. To attempt to unite the two in one sentence, is like attempting to open and shut the hand by a single volition, and by one set of muscles. The hand cannot be shut by the muscles that were made to open it. The statement of a proposition, or of a division of proof, cannot be the development and amplification of it.

Thus far we have spoken of the body of the sermon under the denomination of the proof. When discussing the nature of the proposition, we alluded to a class of sermons, called by some homiletists subject sermons, which contain no formally announced proposition, although they contain an internal and implied one, and are, therefore, truly topical in their nature. It is obvious, that when the proposition is thus inlaid and implied through the discourse as a whole, the proof takes on a different appearance from that which it wears in a more formally constructed sermon. Sometimes there are no distinctly announced heads. The preacher, from the rapidity of his movement, cannot stop to enumerate, but supplies the lack of formality of statement by emphasizing leading words or clauses. In this case there are

* The third head, in Howe's distribution of the matter, is virtually included in the first, and therefore should be omitted in a truly rhetorical plan.

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subdivisions really, though not formally. Every sermon must contain subordinate thoughts, which flow out of each other, and yet are distinct from each other. Otherwise there are no development, no constant progress, and none of the elements of oratory.

When the body of the sermon is of this informal character, it is termed by some writers the *treatment*, by others the *discussion*. These terms are employed not to denote that there is nothing of the nature of logic or proof in the body of the discourse, but that the logic or proof is less formal, and less formally announced, than in the other instance. The qualities which should characterize the discussion or treatment of a theme, are substantially like those of the proof proper. There must be the same accumulation of genuinely demonstrative material. As this less formal development of the theme goes on, it should acquire additional logical force, and produce a growing conviction in the understanding of the hearer.

In concluding this account of the proof, the question arises, whether all the heads or divisions should be pre-announced by the preacher at the opening of his discourse? The decision of this question does not affect the structure of the discourse itself, because this pre-announcement is not the addition of any new matter, but simply the repetition of the existing. Without laying down a stiff, undeviating rule, we are inclined to say that *recapitulation* is better than pre-announcement. And this for the following reasons: First, the recapitulation of the proofs at the close of the argumentation is more *intelligible* than the pre-announcement of them at the beginning. After the mind of the hearer has followed the preacher through his proofs, and has listened to their development one by one, it sees their meaning and interconnection much more readily and easily. The full import and connection of an argument cannot be perceived until it has been unfolded in its relations and dependences. Secondly, the recapitulation of the proofs is more *impressive* than the pre-announcement of them. The accurate and rapid repetition of the arguments of a sermon, after they have been clearly and connectedly exhibited, makes a very strong impression upon the hearer. It is a summing up of the demonstration, a grouping and epitomizing of the entire logic of the discourse, which falls with massive, solid weight upon his understanding. This epitome of the proof, read off to the audience before they have become interested in its contents by a course of argumentation, leaves

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the mind indifferent. It is like perusing the table of contents of a book before reading the book itself. Lastly, the recapitulation of the proof is more easily *remembered* than the pre-announcement of it, for the reason that it is more intelligible and more impressive. That which is most clearly understood, and most forcible and striking, is most easily retained in the memory.*

4. The Conclusion is that part of the sermon which vigorously applies the truth which has been established in the proof, or developed in the treatment or discussion. As the introduction is conciliatory and explanatory, the conclusion is applicatory and hortatory. It should, therefore, be characterized by the utmost intensity and energy. The highest vitality of the oration shows itself in the peroration. The onset on the hearer is at this point. If the man's will is ever carried, if this true effect of eloquence is ever produced, it is the work of this part of the sermon. By this it is not meant that the other parts of the discourse may not be excellent, and produce some of their proper effects, even though the conclusion be imperfect. But the crown and completion of the whole oratorical process, the actual persuasion of the auditor, will not ensue if the conclusion is lame, and not equal to the preceding parts. It must be a true conclusion—a vehement and powerful winding up and finishing. Hence among the ancients the peroration received the utmost attention. The conclusions of the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero are constructed in the most elaborate manner, in order that there may be no falling off from the impression made by the preceding portions. 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

* "Our main work is to be the people's remembrancers, to be constant monitors to them of their duty, to bring the contents of it close up to their minds, and to fasten them upon them. To which end it may be sometimes requisite, in the close of our discourses, to *recapitulate* the most important heads and particulars we have been treating of, that our auditors may carry away with them those brief memorials of their duty, which are the sum and abstract of what we have delivered. We should endeavor to refresh their memories, considering that the preaching of the word was not instituted only to inform men of what they were ignorant of before, but to remind them of what they knew well enough, but had forgot."—JOHN EDWARDS, *The Preacher*, Part i. p. 281.

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which is to save his life from destruction. Indeed, the peroration seems to put the power to spring and smite, the very tendon of Achilles, into oratory.

In sacred eloquence there are two species of conclusions, while in secular eloquence there is, strictly speaking, but one. The sermon may conclude either by *inferences* or by *direct address.* The secular oration employs the latter only. This difference arises from the fact,* that sacred eloquence is more didactic than secular, and hence may vary more from the strict canons of oratory, if it can thereby produce a greater practical impression.

The sermon should have an inferential conclusion, when the principal practical force of the proposition, or the subject, is in the inferences from it. The real strength of some conceptions lies in that which follows from them. They make no very great moral impression of themselves, but they involve, or they imply, or they point to, certain truths that are highly important and serious. Death, for example, is a theme which is much more solemn and effective in its inferences and its implications than in itself. It is, indeed, fearful in itself; but it is the king of terrors only through its concomitants and consequents. The doctrine of the soul's immortality, again, is one that makes its strongest impression by virtue of its inferences and deductions. The mere fact that the soul is to live for ever exerts but little influence upon a man until he has been made to see that he is utterly unfit and unprepared for such an endless existence,— until the doctrines of sin and guilt, of justice and judgment, have sharpened and enforced the doctrine of immortality.

The sermon should also have an inferential conclusion, when the proposition and its proof, or the subject and its discussion, are highly abstract in their nature. There are some doctrines presented in the Scriptures so recondite and metaphysical that they can be made to bear upon the popular mind only in their concrete and practical aspects. Inasmuch as they are revealed truth, they must not be passed over by the preacher. All Scripture is profitable. Yet they are metaphysical in their nature, and in their ultimate reach transcend the powers of the finite intellect. The preacher, therefore, must detect a popular element in them that will make them proper themes for eloquence. He must discover in them a practical quality which will bring them home to the business and bosoms of Christians.

* See "Homiletics and Pastoral Theology," Ch. ii. p. 33. By W. G. T. Shedd, D.D.

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In order to this, the sacred orator must follow the method of Scripture itself. He is to content himself with a brief and succinct statement, which omits nothing essential to the doctrine, but which does not pretend to fully develop and explain it, and from this draw inferences and conclusions respecting the duties of his hearers. In this way the high fundamental dogma is brought down into the sphere of human conduct, and made a practical test of character. It is not fully explained, it is true, because it cannot be by a finite mind; but it is correctly, that is, scripturally stated. This accurate enunciation of the truth, or doctrine, prepares the way for the inferences,—for that handling of it which brings it into living contact with the affections and will of the hearer. In this way the most abstract and intrinsically metaphysical doctrine of Scripture becomes eloquent, that is, persuasive and influential upon the human mind and heart. The revealed dogma of the Trinity is an example. This is, undoubtedly, the most profound truth that has been presented to the human intelligence. Neither in ancient nor in modern philosophy is there any doctrine that carries the mind down to such central depths. A perfect comprehension of this single truth, such as is possessed by the Divine intelligence, would involve a comprehension of all truth, and would solve at once and for ever those standing problems of the human mind, which have both stimulated and baffled its inquirers ever since the dawn of philosophic speculation. And yet this transcendental truth is a biblical truth, and must be preached to Christian plain men and women. A discourse upon the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, should be strong in its inferences, rather than its explanations or developments. The relation, for example, which the three distinct Persons in the Godhead sustain to the believer should be insisted upon. The peculiar feelings which he ought to cherish toward the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, should be inferred from the distinctive character and office of each. The duty of an equal adoration and worship in respect to each Person, the part which each performs in the work of redemption—such practical and edifying discussion as this must enter largely into a sermon upon the Trinity, instead of a strictly metaphysical discussion of the doctrine. But such matter as this is inferential, and should constitute the foundation of an address to the affections and will of the hearer. And it falls most properly into the conclusion, because it presupposes the statement and proof of the doctrine itself.

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In respect to the character of the inferences themselves, they should possess the following properties: First, they must be *legitimate*. They must originate from the very heart and substance of the proposition or doctrine. Inferences should not be drawn from the accidental or incidental parts of a subject, but from its essentials alone. Then they are lawful inferences, and have the support of the whole fundamental truth from which they spring. There is nothing to be subtracted from them. No allowance is to be made. They are entitled to their full weight. The hearer feels their legitimacy, and he cannot escape their force except by denying the proposition or doctrine of which they are the inevitable consequences. Secondly, inferences must be *homogeneous*. They must all be of the same kind. A conflict in the inferences from a truth destroys their influence upon the mind of the hearer, and a direct contrariety absolutely annihilates them. Hence, the utmost agreement and harmony should appear in the practical inferential matter of a sermon. And this will be the case, provided they each and all possess the property of legitimacy. For truth is always self-consistent. It always agrees with itself. Hence, all matter that is really derived from the very substance and pith of a fundamental truth is homogeneous and harmonious. Nothing is then drawn out that was not first inlaid. Thirdly, inferences must be *intensely practical*. The very purpose in employing them, as we have seen, is to popularize the abstract, to bring an intrinsically abstruse doctrine or proposition into warm and vital contact with the common mind and heart. Hence inferences should be entirely free from a theoretic aspect, and from abstract elements. Neither is it enough that they be practical in the moderate sense of the word. They should be *intensely* practical. By this is meant that their address and appeal should be solely and entirely to the most moral, earnest, and living part of man's nature—that is, to his affections and will. The intellectual nature, by supposition, has been addressed by the proposition and the proof; and now it only remains to press the doctrine home upon the conscience and feelings, in the most vivid and vital manner possible. This is done by legitimate and homogeneous inferences, coming directly and inevitably from the core of the subject, and containing its concentrated practical substance. Lastly, inferences must be *cumulative*. They should heap upon each other. Each succeeding one should not only be an addition to the preceding, but an advance upon it. The strongest inference should be the last inference. Unless this

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rule is observed, it is impossible to construct an excellent inferential conclusion. As we have previously seen, the peroration ought to be the most vivid and impressive part of the sermon. But it cannot be if the matter of which it is composed is all of equal value, and there is no progress. The peroration should be distinguished by vehemence, by the utmost intensity, energy, vividness, and motion. When, therefore, it consists of inferences, these should be of such a nature, and so arranged, as to press with more and more weight, to kindle with hotter and hotter heat, to enlighten with stronger and stronger light, to enliven with intenser and intenser life, and to move with a more and more irresistible force.

Constructed in this manner, the conclusion of a sermon may be in the highest degree eloquent, even although an inferential conclusion, as we have remarked, is not so strictly oratorical as the direct address. For this practical property in inferences, this intense vitality of the material, this constant progress in the arrangement, is the essential element in eloquence. Where these are, there is eloquence; and we see not why the preacher may not make an onset upon the heart and will, through inferences, that will be as vehement and successful as that which is made by a more regularly constructed peroration. At any rate, in the instance of such subjects as those which we have specified, and having a proposition whose main practical force lies in its implications, or one which is highly abstract in its own nature, he has no choice left him. He must either pass by such subjects altogether, or else handle them in the manner we have described. But he has no right to omit any truth of Scripture in his sermonizing. He is obligated to employ even the most profound and metaphysical doctrines of Revelation for homiletic purposes, and must, therefore, treat them in the most concrete, popular, and eloquent manner possible, by dealing with their implications and inferences.

The sermon may also conclude with what we have termed the *direct address*. This is more strictly oratorical in its nature than the inferential conclusion. It does not, like this latter, contribute to a further development of the subject of the discourse, while it is applying it to the hearer, but is simply and solely applicatory. The inference, as we have seen, is somewhat didactic. It imparts some further information in respect to the theme of the discourse, while it addresses the affections and will. It is not so with the direct address, or the strictly oratorical peroration. This sup-

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poses that the proposition and its proof, or the theme and its treatment, have exhausted the subject in both its theoretic and practical aspects; and in this case nothing remains but to apply it. As a consequence, this species of conclusion is much briefer than that by inferences. It ought not to be at all didactic. It should be purely oratorical and highly hortatory. But such a species of discourse cannot continue long; and perhaps the art of the orator is nowhere more visible than in the skill with which, in the conclusion, he presses his theme upon the affections and will of the hearer. If this vehemence is too prolonged, it defeats itself. If this exhortation goes beyond the proper limits, it not only fatigues but disgusts the mind of the auditor. No preachers are more wearisome than those who are styled hortatory preachers. Their direct address is unsupported by doctrine. Their whole oration is peroration. They omit the proposition and the proof in their plan. It is safer to overdo the address to the understanding than the address to the feelings. The understanding is a cool and sensible faculty, and good sense never tires or disgusts it. But the feelings are both shy and excitable. Addressed too boisterously, they make their retreat; addressed too continually, they lose their tone and sensibility altogether.

The direct address to the hearer should be characterized by the following qualities: First, it must be *appropriate*. By this is meant that the conclusion should enforce the one proposition or the one lesson of the sermon. Every part and particle of the peroration should be pertinent to the discourse as a whole. And this implies, secondly, that the conclusion by direct address be *single*. It cannot be appropriate unless it is characterized by unity. Whatever the doctrine of the sermon may be, the conclusion must apply this and this only. Says that eccentric preacher, Rowland Hill: "The gospel is an excellent milch cow, which always gives plenty of milk, and of the best quality. I first pull at justification, then give a plug at adoption, and afterwards a tit at sanctification; and so on until I have filled my pail with gospel milk." Now, if the body of the sermon has been constructed upon this plan, then an appropriate conclusion would not be one and single in its character. A peroration pertinent to *such* a discourse would be double and twisted. But we have seen that every sermon ought to be characterized by the utmost unity; that it should approximate to the topical form, even when it does not employ it, and should always approach as nearly as possible to the oration, by containing but one proposition, or developing

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but one general truth. Hence the conclusion of the sermon is appropriate only as it is single and incomplex in its structure and spirit. It matters not what the proposition or subject may have been, let the direct concluding address be in entire harmony with it. Some homiletists lay down the rule: "Always conclude with the gospel; always end with the hopes and promises." This, we think, is a false rule, both rhetorically and morally. If the law has been preached, then let the conclusion be legal, damnatory, terrible. If the gospel has been preached, let the conclusion be winning, encouraging, and hopeful. Then the sermon is a homogeneous composition, developing one theme, and making a single impression. A preacher should know beforehand the wants of his audience, and deliberately make up his mind in respect to the species of impression which it is desirable to produce. When this point is settled, then let him not be diverted from his purpose, but do what he has undertaken. If he judges that mercy and love are the appropriate themes for the hour, let him present them to the hearer's mind, and apply them to the hearer's heart without any let or hindrance. And if he judges that divine justice needs to be exhibited, and set home to the conscience, let him not temper or soften it by a mixed peroration, in which, *owing to the brevity of the treatment* to which he is now shut up, the two opposite ideas of love and wrath will inevitably neutralize each other in the mind of the auditor.

The rule above mentioned is also indefensible on moral grounds. 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. He is in duty bound to make the truth which he has established bear with all its weight, and penetrate with all its sharpness. The *spirit* with which he should do this should be Christian. Let him not dart the lightnings, or roll the thunders, except with the utmost solemnity, the utmost fear of God, the utmost love of the human soul, and the utmost solicitude lest he be actuated by human pride or human impatience. "Were you able to preach the doctrine *tenderly?*" said M'Cheyne to a friend, who had spoken to him of a sermon which he had delivered upon endless punishment. Perhaps the imperfection of his own Christian character is never seen more clearly by the preacher than in the manner in which he constructs and delivers the peroration of his solemn discourses. He finds himself running to extremes. Either he is afraid to be plain and pungent in applying the truth,

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and thereby puts a sheath upon the sword of the Spirit, and muffles those tones which ought to sound startling as a fire-bell at midnight, or else he is impatient with his drowsy auditors, or is puffed up with self-conceit, and thunders and lightens in his own strength, and what is worse, for his own purposes. "Put the lust of *self*," says Coleridge, "in the forked lightning, and it becomes a spirit of Moloch." Self, in all its phases, must be banished from a solemn application of an awful doctrine. The feeling of the preacher should be that of the timid, shrinking, but *obedient* Jeremiah, when bending under the burden of the Lord. "Then, said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak."

Appropriateness and singleness, then, should characterize the concluding address of the sermon. Bringing all the teachings of the discourse into a single burning focus, it should converge all the rays of truth upon a single spot. That spot is the point in the hearer's soul where the feelings and the conscience come together. Any auditor whose affections are roused, and whose conscience is stirred, may be left to himself and the Spirit of God; and any peroration which accomplishes this work is eloquent.

The question arises at this point, whether the conclusion by direct address should refer to both classes of hearers, the regenerate and unregenerate. The answer depends upon the contents and character of the sermon. It is possible that a discourse may establish a proposition that admits of a legitimate application to both the regenerate and the unregenerate; though in this case it will generally be found that the application is more easy, natural, and forcible to one class than to the other. The doctrine that man is an accountable being, for example, may be legitimately applied to the Christian, in order to stimulate him to greater fidelity; and yet its strongest and most impressive application is to the impenitent man, who has made no preparation to meet the coming doom. In such an instance as this, good judgment would decide that the address to that party to whom the subject had a less direct application should be very brief—a hint rather than an application; the intensity and energy of the peroration being aimed at that party most immediately and evidently concerned with the subject.

Hence, in laying down a general rule, we would say, in answer

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to the question that the conclusion should be directed to but one class in the audience, if the proposition or subject applies most plainly to the church, then address the church in the close; if it applies most significantly to the congregation, then address the congregation. Without, however, laying down this rule as a stiff one, to which there are no exceptions, it is safest, in general practice, to allow that unity of aim and singleness of pursuit, which is unquestionably the constituent principle of eloquent discourse, a free operation. Let unity run clear through the sermon, and clear out. If there be other lessons to be taught from the text, teach them in other sermons. If there be other applications of truth, make them in other discourses. It is not as if the preacher had no other opportunity, as if he must say everything in one sermon, and apply everything in a single discourse. He has the year, and the years before him, in which to make full proof of his ministry, in which to exhibit the truth upon all sides, and to apply it to all classes of men. Let him, therefore, make each sermon a round and simple unit, and trust to the whole series of his sermons to impart a full and comprehensive knowledge of the Christian system, and to make a complete application of it to all grades and varieties of character.

Having thus considered the two species of conclusion, it may be asked if it is proper to employ both in one and the same discourse. We answer, that although it may occasionally be allowable to draw inferences from a proposition, and afterwards end with a direct address to the hearer, yet this should be done very rarely. If the inferences do not possess sufficient self-applying power, and need the urgency of direct address to enforce them, this proves that they are defective. In this case it is wiser to bestow more care upon the inferences, and to endeavor to construct a true and adequate inferential conclusion. If the inferences are intrinsically feeble, no amount of earnest peroration can remedy this defect. Generally speaking, therefore, it is an indication of inferiority in a sermon if it has a mixed conclusion, and yet there may be an exception to this general rule. If, owing to the abstruse nature of the proposition or the subject, the inferential matter in the sermon, though more practical and plain than the argumentative matter, is yet considerably recondite and abstract, the preacher may do the most he can towards impressing his subject upon the audience by a direct address to them. In some such case as this, which should be a rare one, and must be, from the fact that but few themes of this highly abstruse

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nature come within the province of sermonizing, the preacher may employ both species of conclusion, not because it contributes to the greater perfection of the plan of a sermon, but because it is a choice of evils, and the best that can be done under the difficulties of the particular and rare case.

In closing this discussion of the plan and its several parts, the question naturally arises, whether a plan should invariably be formed before the process of composition begins. It is plain, from what has been said, that there will be a variety in the sermons of the same preacher, in respect to the distinctness with which the plan and its parts show themselves in the discourse. Sometimes the skeleton will appear through the flesh, so as to exhibit some angularity; and sometimes it will be so clothed upon as to render its presence more difficult of detection. Sometimes the plan will be prominent, and sometimes it will be known to exist only by the general unity and compactness of the sermon. But although there will be this variety in the sermon itself, there should be no variation in the method of constructing it. The sermonizer should *uniformly* form a plan before beginning to compose. The plan may sometimes be fuller and more perfect than at others; but a plan of some sort, of more or less perfection, should invariably be formed in the outset.

By this it is not meant that in every particular the sermonizer must severely confine himself to his skeleton, never modifying the plan after he has begun to compose. It will sometimes occur, and this perhaps quite often, that the endeavor to fill out the plan will reveal faults that were not seen while constructing it. These faults must be removed; and this leads to a modification of the plan itself in and during the process of composition. Indeed, in some instances the first attempt at composition serves merely to introduce the mind into the heart of the subject, and to originate a truly organic method of developing it,—a second process of composition, a re-writing, being necessary to the completion and perfection of the discourse. Probably the masterpieces of eloquence were composed in this manner. The first, second, or even third draught, served principally to elaborate a thorough and perfect plan, to set the mind upon the true trail, and enable it, in the phrase of Bacon, to "hound" the nature of the subject, and reach the inmost lurking-place of the truth. When this work was accomplished, the mind of the orator was then ready for that last draught and elaboration, which resulted in the masterpiece and model for all time.

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But although the sermonizer may modify his plan after he has begun to compose, he may not begin to compose without any plan. He is to construct the best scheme possible beforehand, and to work under it, as the miner works under his moveable hurdle, never disturbing the outside or the main props, but frequently altering the interior and secondary framework as the progress of his labor may require.*

The evils of sermonizing without skeletonizing are many and great. In the first place, the preacher's mind loses its logical and constructive ability. In a previous chapter attention was directed to the excellent influence exerted by the analysis of sermons, and the effort to detect the plan contained in them. All that was there said in this reference applies, with even greater force, to the actual construction of plans for the preacher's own purposes. No mind can be methodical that does not actually methodize. No mind can be constructive that does not actually construct. If, therefore, the sermonizer neglects this practice of skeletonizing, and begins to compose without a settled scheme, writing down such thoughts and observations as spontaneously present themselves, his intellect will surely, and at no slow rate, lose all its logical ability and all its methodizing talent. The fundamental power of the rhetorician and orator, the *organizing* power, will disappear. And if, as is apt to be the case, parallel with this disuse of the understanding and the reason, there is an exorbitant development of the fancy and imagination, the very worst consequences ensue. The preacher becomes a florid and false rhetorician, composing and reciting mere extravaganzas. He

* Skeletonizing is to sermonizing what drawing is to painting. The foundation of superior excellence in this art, is talent in sketching the human figure, and a knowledge of its anatomy. In this consisted principally the pre-eminence of Da Vinci and Michael Angelo, both of whom possessed a wonderful anatomical knowledge, and exhibited it in their figures. The lack of this knowledge and skill cannot be compensated for by other excellences. Sir Joshua Reynolds, owing to the defect of his early artistic education in this reference, confined himself to portrait painting, knowing that he could do nothing in historical painting, and the higher ranges of his art. An outline sketch of Angelo is more full of meaning than a hundred paintings in which there is no anatomy. Retzsch's "Outlines" are wonderfully full of life and meaning, without any filling up from painting, because of the knowledge of the human frame, and the consequent significance of attitudes which they display.

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degenerates into a rhapsodist, making a sensation for the moment in the sensibilities of a staring audience, but producing no eloquent impression upon their higher faculties. There is no calculating beforehand in respect to the issues of such a mind. Reversing the lines which the poet applied to his own composition, we may say of the discourse of a preacher of this character—

> "Perhaps 'twill be a sermon,
> Perhaps 'twill be a song."

Secondly, even supposing that, owing to the fact that the preacher's mind is not imaginative, his preaching does not become rhapsodical and feeble; yet, if he neglects the practice of skeletonizing, he becomes rambling and diffuse. Having no leading idea branching off into natural ramifications by which to guide his mental processes, they run and ramble in every direction. The law of association is the sole law of his intellect. He follows wherever this leads him; and the law of association in an illogical, unreflecting mind, is the most whimsical and capricious of laws. It associates the oddest and most heterogeneous things, and suggests the strangest and most disconnected ideas. The course which trains of thought take in such a mind resembles the trails and tracks of the myriads of worms that are brought up out of ground by a warm June rain. Sometimes such a mind really attempts to be methodical, and then the discourse reminds one of Burke's description of Lord Chatham's cabinet: "He made an administration so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed, a cabinet so variously inlaid, such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tesselated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white, that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on."*

Lastly, the neglect to form a plan previous to composing results in a declamatory and hortatory style of sermonizing. If an immethodical preacher does not fall into one or both of the faults last mentioned, he falls into this one. If he has no imagination and no ideas, not even rambling and disconnected ones, then there is nothing left for him but to declaim and exhort; and this manner of preaching is perhaps the most ineffectual and worst of all.

Certainly such evils as the three we have mentioned constitute

* Burke, Speech on American Taxation.

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the strongest of reasons for not neglecting the plan of an oration, for devoting the utmost attention, and uniform attention, to the logical organization of the sermon. It is a sin for the preacher to be a mere rhapsodist; it is a sin if he is a mere rambling babbler; it is a sin if he is a mere declamatory exhorter. He is solemnly bound to be an orator—a man who speaks on a method, and by a plan.

THE END.



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