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ART. 1.—EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING.

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THE discussion of the subject of Homiletics would be incomplete, if it did not include the topic of Extemporaneous Preaching.

This species of sacred eloquence has always existed in the church, and some of the best periods in the history of Christianity have been characterized by its wide prevalence and high excellence. The Apostolic age, the missionary periods in Patristic and Mediæval history, the age of the Reformation, the revival of evangelical religion in the English Church in the eighteenth century, in connection with the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield, and the "Great Awakening" in this country, were marked by the free utterance of the extemporaneous preacher. Being now too much neglected by the clergy of those denominations which both furnish and require the highest professional education,—a clergy, therefore, who have the best right to employ this species of sermonizing,—here is reason for directing attention to it. In discuss-

across it, therefore the king was angry and threatened; "hereafter (τοῖς λοιποῦ) I will make the river so shallow that women can walk across it." So much for the use, now for the grammar of it. In the earlier and best Greek the genitive form (τ. λοιποῦ) meant *sometime in the future*; the accusative form meant *all through the future*; but in the later Greek this distinction of form is not kept, the language yields to the general law under which the sharp chisseling of the cases is worn off, and the accusation stands alike for both nations, *all through the future*, or, *sometime in the future*. Examples are not needed here, for this is an accepted and recorded conclusion. We have then all we want; the translation *hereafter* suits the circumstances, and the language. "Sleep hereafter and take your rest, but now . . . let us rise and depart."

ART. VI.—A LECTURE ON PARISH PREACHING.

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1. A Pastor is a minister of Christ, placed by the Holy Spirit at the head of a Parish.* The field of the ministry is the world; in sympathy, and as far as may be, in activity, it is still his field; but a Parish has been sacredly assigned to him, as appropriately and exclusively his own, to labor therein as the official servant of his Divine master.

2. *For dignity and usefulness the Pastoral office is the first in the Church.*† None is above it; every other subserves and culminates in it. It is in the Pastor that we find the minister in the plenitude of his functions. The Pastor is also "a steward of the mysteries of God," "a teacher," "a bishop," "a deacon," "an ambassador for Christ," "a ruler," "an angel," but the converse is not true; some of these names may be taken as

* Acts xx. 28.

† Form of government, chap. iv.

identical in meaning with pastor ; otherwise, neither one or the whole of them has as comprehensive an import. Indeed Vinet does not mistake, when he makes the pastor essential to *the typical man*. "It is impossible," he says, "that the pastor should not make a part of the ideal of man—impossible, that He in whom the perfection of human nature was fully represented, should not have been a Pastor." It was necessary, therefore that Christ, the Divine Man, should have borne this office ; that this "Pastor of the worlds in the heavens," to use the language of St. Bernard, should also have been the shepherd and bishop of the souls of men.

3. The Pastoral office comprises various functions ; conducting worship, celebrating rites, catechising, caring for the poor and the sick, etc ; but first and chief among them, is *Parish Preaching ; the proper ministry of the word to the Parish*. On this point there is no real difference of opinion. Among pastoral duties, among qualifications for the Pastorate, every one, in truth, gives this the greatest importance. Some would seem to make preaching inferior to reading prayers and ritual celebrations ; nay, the very *pis aller*, of the sacred office ; but these, as well as all others, do really hold ability in preaching in supreme estimation. Of this, admitted or not, the proof is absolute. Even among the most ritualistic churches, a celebrant, however superior, and however acceptable in domestic and private offices, is of small account, in comparison with a gifted preacher, though less distinguished by aptitudes for the other forms of work. In general opinion, there is no pastoral talent of equal value with ability in the pulpit, and no compensation for the want of it. A minister without this talent, will find himself little desired as a pastor, no church will covet him : no church will, of preference, accept of him.

4. *The paramount importance of Preaching is not a mere theory*: it is grounded in truth, it is historical ; invariable experience asserts it. It is a fact without exception, that a pastors' success in his parish, depends on his pulpit work as its condition and chief means. This success is unknown, if it be not impossible, apart from success or faithfulness, in Parish

preaching. It is virtually comprehended in this. This is the prime means of every thing in parish prosperity ; the means of every subordinate means of it ; their origin ; their informing and controlling instrument ; their support ; their perpetuity ; their perennial fountain. After taking away preaching, who would expect the continuance of the proper prosperity of a Parish ? Were not the hope of this, as if one should hope for the continuance of day after sunset ?

5. *Parish preaching, takes its distinctive difference from preaching at large, not only from its being delivered to a parish ; it is already so distinguished when it is delivered* It is already inherently parochial, it has copied and wrought into itself the life of the parish. This preaching were otherwise, in no respect different from that of an evangelist, or a minister without charge. Though spoken to a parish the year round, it could in no proper sense be called Parish preaching. "There ought to be, there must be, between a pastor and his flock, a common life, a reciprocal sensation which conforms the auditory to the preacher and the preacher to the auditory. When the preacher has not received from his life as a pastor, the word of command, as to his successive preachings, we may doubt whether his ministry is well discharged, or well understood."*

6. *The fittingness of this preaching, however, to the peculiarity of the Parish, does not either as to matter or manner, substance or form, abridge or provincialize the ministry of the word.* It does not permit or even tolerate such narrowness in the pulpit. In its essence, its tendency, its aim, all true preaching is illimitable, infinite, the same every where, to all mankind: in accommodating itself to diversities of place and people, in city and country, it keeps its own distinctiveness ; it becomes all things to all men, not to promote or perpetuate what it finds, but to produce conformity to itself ; to exalt the thoughts, sentiments, character, aspirations of all to its own sphere of perfection ; it would efface the distinctions

* Vinet.

of rank and education ; it is not sectional, it is not national even : it is local that it may end in the universal ; it is parochial that it may, as far as possible, transform the parish into the paradise of God, what the world will be after its regeneration. Hence its method ; we see it both in its own light and in that of its purpose.

7. *It may be that the Peculiarity of the parish demands special breadth and comprehensiveness, in the preaching most proper to it.* This peculiarity consists, perhaps, in part, of peculiar restrictiveness ; it may have more than a common measure of traditional illiberality, of diversified, old-grown uncharitableness. If the Pastor find that he has to do with a parish of this class, what means shall he use with it ? Shall he direct contention against details of its narrowness, one by one ? Possibly he may be required to do this, but whether he is or not, there is another means to the application of which his call is not questionable. With special diligence he ought to study depth, breadth, altitude, longitude, in his pulpit ministrations to this contracted parish. There is no way so good as this, so potent against the evil to be done away with. Let him bring to bear upon it, the bright and burning light of absolute principle. That light will shine all narrowness away, as the sun when he has risen, shines stars and night-meteors out of the possibility of being seen. As far as possible, all parishes, high and low, rich and poor together, ought to be accustomed to such preaching. Never should parochial interests so affect the eloquence of the pulpit, as in a single instance, to deprive it of this stamp. It is the stamp which the Pastor should seek to reproduce in his parish, in every sermon which he preaches to it.

8. *There is no parish interest, to which the preaching should be indifferent.* Otherwise, it were untrue to the purpose, the nature of Christianity. The tendency of Christianity and as far as it prevails its effect, is, in all respects, the highest advancement of man's well being, in the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come ; in all that concerns him, civil, social, domestic, individual. " Christianity opens a way to itself

even into the details and the extreme parts of life." Its grand means is preaching, the principal work of the Pastor. The minister of a parish, therefore, is unfaithful to his sacred charge, in so far as he does not seek through preaching to bring every parish concern, business, politics, pleasure, art, culture, manners, customs, the whole of parish life, under the domination of Christian principle and Christian law; to make the parish a complete specimen of Christian civilization. But he has his own method of promoting inferior good; the religion he preaches, prescribes it; and if he follow any other, he has need of some one to preach to him; it is no small thing in which he is disobedient. His proper, his only method in treating of all earthly interests is to keep his preaching at its own stand point, looking on these interests from the heights of heaven, still breathing the air of heaven, dealing with the affairs of this life, without entangling itself in them; spiritualizing the material, making the actual eternal; seeking the advancement of society only "through the *individual*—the individuals' christian advancement," in sympathy with the indignant incisiveness of our Lord, when asked to interfere in a quarrel about property;* remembering, that "if on one

"Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Luke xii., 16.

hand, the human character of christianity, puts it into contract with all the interests of life, gives it a word to speak in all circumstances; on the other hand it never surrenders its liberty to place and time, and with extreme reserve mixes itself with everything that does not bear the stamp of eternity." That such reserve, such elevation above all temporalities while still conversant with them, be retained to christianity, is the condition of its exerting its beneficent influence. Let these eloquent words of Robert Hall, conclude this section of our lecture. "Christianity will civilise, it is true; but it is only when it is allowed to develop the energy by which it sanctifies. Christianity will inconceivably ameliorate the present condition of being—who doubts it? Its universal prevalence, not in the name but reality, will convert this world into a semi-paradisaical

state ; but it is only while it is permitted to prepare its inhabitants for a better. Let her be urged to forget her celestial origin and destiny ; that she came from God and returns to God ; and whethershe is employed by the artful and enterprising, as the instrument of establishing a spiritual empire and dominion over mankind, or by the philanthropist as the means of their development and improvement, she resents the foul indignity, claps her wings, and takes her flight, leaving nothing but a base and sanctimonious hypocrisy in her room."

9. *Parish peculiarities do not change or effect the standard of essential merit in preaching.* Truly good preaching is good for all classes. Vary its application as it may it is like christianity, like Christ himself, without respect of persons. Deal with whom it may, its object is to raise them to the summit of the highest good ; it would place the high on a yet higher plane it would give the low an equal elevation. Hence an inviolable law to the Parish pulpit. *It must not deal with the high to the disadvantage of the low ; as far as possible its regards must be common.* The high, on this account, have no right to complain. If they are less profitted, this is but incidental to doing aright such business as public preaching. They should be willing to forego their own advantage ; but contentment is a necessity, imposed by the nature of the work. Preaching is a species of public eloquence "and the true region, the natural medium of eloquence embraces the thoughts of all, and as far as possible the language of all." * "In eloquence" says a great master of the art "the greatest error that can be incurred, is to deviate into abstruse expressions, and out of the beaten track of common sense."† But the high would suffer no loss. In good preaching, breadth and simplicity meet at the same point. Persons of the highest cultivation delight most in simple preaching. They enjoy it the more from their superior culture. "And in this view the preacher's success, thus obtained is of the highest kind ; while that which is done for the purpose of pleasing a certain class is lost on others, without in fact succeeding better with a

* Vinet.

† Cicero.

class whose applause was desired, or whose assent was sought."*

10. *And as the substantive worth of preaching, so likewise its Difficulty, is unmeasured by local and circumstantial diversities.* The latter is at least as great in a rude, as in a highly cultivated parish; in country as in city. In vain does a pastor prefer the former, from the love of ease. Have what field he may, he engages and undertakes to cultivate it, to the full measure of his ability; to make it as far as possible, the garden of the Lord; will he find his task less hard from his having to work in wild land? Do debasement and want of culture in the people facilitate the communication to them of the highest kind of knowledge? If his preaching is suited to the ends of the ministry, to the *wants* of his parish, what city pastor has a deeper or larger acquaintance with hard work? Full proof of his ministry is his goal, irrespective of local peculiarities: he would perhaps strive to reach it, in an aristocratic parish; he ought to reach it if he can, if he is the pastor of the most common country village. He owes it to himself at least to do his best in the ministry of the word, labor in it wherever he may: otherwise he is in peril, be his gift ever so good, of becoming an indifferent preacher; for degeneracy begins in voluntary delinquency; and in principle and generally in fact, it is progressive.—But greater is his debt to his parish; whether refined or barbarian, wise or unwise, it ought to hear from him no other than the best sermons he can make. The obligations of love and covenant engagements, and infinitely more, the love of Christ bind and constrain him to preach well, up to the full measure of his talent.

11. *No pastor should think that good preaching even the best of which he is capable, may be lost upon his parish however humble.*—Discourse constructed and delivered, on principles of highest art, is interesting and useful to all, in proportion not to its plainness and commonness only, but to its excellence in all respects—thought, invention, disposition

*Vinet.

order, vivacity, energy, movement, color, warmth. The better it is in itself, the better an instrument is it, of popular improvement. Hugh Miller speaking of his own pastor, the minister of the church of Cromarty, says: "that some of his clerical cotemporaries used to allege that in exercising his admirable faculties in the theological field, he sometimes forgot to lower himself to his people, and so preached over their heads; and at times when they themselves came to occupy his pulpit, they addressed to the congregation, sermons quite simple enough for even children to comprehend: I taught at the time a class of boys in the Cromarty sabbath school, and universally found, on these occasions, that while the memories of my pupils were charged to the full with the striking thoughts, and very graphic illustrations, of the elaborate discourses deemed too high for them, they remembered of the very simple ones, specially lowered to their narrow capacities, not a single word or note."* He adds a remark involving a principle generally applicable to intellectual work. "All the attempts at originating a cheap literature that have failed, have been attempts pitched too low; the higher efforts have usually succeeded." The remark has its ground in the nature of mind, in all classes, high and low, learned and unlettered. Discourse, indeed every thing, is as nothing to the human mind, which does not excite it, vivify it, move its inherent inquisitiveness, set it to thinking for itself, stimulate while it gratifies its instinctive desire for the knowledge of principles and reasons. The discourse of Him who spake as man spake never, was of all discourse ever heard by man, the most suggestive, and therefore, in part, the most interesting, to the common mind: The common people heard him gladly.

12. *Parish, like other preaching, ought to be clear; as a whole, every sermon should shine, shine brightly with sense; not intelligible only, but to every hearer if possible, interesting, and unmistakable as to meaning. But this great law of oratory does not pre-suppose that oratory, eloquence even—oratory at its height—is in all its utterances, plain, at once. It may with reference to greater ultimate perspicuity,*

to the best understanding of its theme in the sequel, be in parts, designedly mysterious, surprising, above general comprehension. In a preacher especially, it may be an excellent means of giving the hearer a better understanding of truth, first amaze, perplex him a while, as our Lord did Nicodemus, and the people who said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat;" and his own disciples, after hearing the parables of the sower and the tares. To be most profited by preaching it is needful, that the people perceive their ignorance as compared with their pastor, and be willing to keep in a learning state. For this reason Mr. Baxter, who

—"Preached as though he ne'er should preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men,"

did, usually, as he tells us "put in, something in his sermon which was above the discovery of his hearers, and which they had not known before."*

13. *There is in the best kind of Parish preaching a highly educating virtue*; it gives the best exercise, in kind and measure, to all the faculties of the audience; whence their constant improvement: and, what should be a special motive to the Pastor's progress in sermonizing, a *constant improvement in their faculty of hearing*. They will be made more and more attentive, and more and more competent to understand preaching in its highest spheres. The pastor on his part will "go on into perfection," no faster than they will on theirs. He need have no fear of outgrowing them; if he remains with them long enough, they will be among the first in having "an ear to hear," the most excellent kind of sermons, at the end of his course, whatever they may have been in this respect, at the beginning. He cannot over-value this fruit of assiduity in the ministry of word: It is worthy of his utmost aspiration, his most strenuous endeavors as a preacher.

14. *As to actual proficiency in his great work: This depends in part, on general proficiency in the discharge of his other*

*Ormes' Life of Baxter, Vol. I. p. 160.

duites. We have said that Parish preaching, has in it, self, subjectively, the image and superscription of Parish individuality. It can have this only through completeness in pastoral activity. To this the preaching inevitably leads ; but this, in turn, reacts upon and perfects the preaching. Excellence in the former is the condition of excellence in the latter. United, they both prosper ; neither prospers separated from the other. The pastor by confining his care to his sermons, may make them better than they would be otherwise, as specimens of preaching at large, but it is the pastoral care in the breadth and fullness of its applications, that helps him "on to perfection" in making sermons for his parish. He must keep himself acquainted, as perfectly as possible, with the wants and changes of his flock, which are not the same always ; he must be inspired in his preaching by sympathizing with it, and other things not wanting the measure of this inspiration, measures his pulpit proficiency.

15—*Another condition of his progress, one of which the fulfilment of the former is a necessary means, though not of course duly conjoined with it, is diligence in replenishing his Pulpit Fund.* Out of this fund he should be continually bringing forth in his ministry things new as well as old. There must be variety, there must be novelty in his preaching ; and to this end, he cannot be too vigilant, too thoughtful, too provident, too economical of time and opportunity. He will need increase of general learning ; he will need continued intellectual culture ; he will need especially, perpetual wide-awake observation, and husbandry of topics, and judgment and thrift in using them. Pulpit exigency must be constantly in his thought ; in his reading ; his studies ; his prayers ; his parochial occupations, conferences, visitations ; in his retirements, and in his recreations. If he relaxes his vigilance, it must be in order to his exercising it better. Subserviency to provision for his Pulpit work must pervade and regulate his whole life.

16—*A third necessity : He must assiduously cultivate his preaching talent ; "neglect not the gift that is in him ;" precious*

beyond price, it is yet not self-conservative, much less self-progressive. There is a principle of growth, there is vital force in it, but it will not grow, it is liable to be blighted and even killed by neglect. Men with excellent preaching ability, at their beginning in the ministry, have lost it from not disciplining and training it. Perhaps they kept up mental discipline in general, and made good progress in learning, and became strong for other work ; but as for preaching, the very inclination for it forsook them : Means of general improvement will not suffice for improvement in preaching. It demands appliances for cultivating, directly and specifically, the talent for the work.

And what are they ? Several might be insisted on ; the study of the principles and models of Pulpit eloquence, the study of Pulpit elocution and delivery, etc. ; but there is one,—one which virtually includes every other, and without which every other will be of small avail ; namely, *artistic practice*, the aiming at ideal excellence in the work ; the performing it as a mental gymnastic. There is no true growth in mind, except from athletic self-exertion. It is not advanced by doing less than its best ; it may lose, it cannot gain by voluntary short coming. This is a law of our mental constitution indefeasable and inviolable, in nothing more than in preaching.

An advancing preacher is one who struggles for perfection in pulpit labor : This labor has not the same form always ; it sometimes accomplishes a homily, or an exhortation, or a paraphrase ; its standard of merit varies with the sort of work it undertakes ; but it should come up to its standard. If however, it be delinquent in its easier performances, it must serve the Parish with its best, or at least intend and endeavor to do this, in those of the highest class. These, in all respects, should as far as possible, have a model stamp, an ideal finish. They will not on that account, be less acceptable to the Parish ; on the contrary, they will doubtless be an immediate treasure to it in proportion to their intrinsic merit ; but should they not be in such estimation at first, they will assert their real value indirectly, and durably, through their disciplinary efficacy on

the mind of the Pastor, and the enhancement of his general ministry. They will elevate and enlarge the fountain of his Pastorate ; and all its streams will be purer, sweeter, more fertilizing ; they will also be enduring ; they will flow in increasing plenitude.

16—*It may be useful as a means of improvement—to the highest proficiency, perhaps, necessary—to pursue the business in presence not only of the idea of the highest excellence, but of a personification thereof, in an individual example ; to preach and prepare to preach, as in the society of a man of exquisite judgment and taste, an accomplished critic of discourse. We have this counsel from Vinet : “Have you an audience composed of forty-nine wise, and one ignorant ; speak for that ignorant one.” We agree, but would add : Have you an audience composed of forty-nine ignorant, and one wise ; forget not this wise one’s presence ; his judgment of merit in discourse, is the only one you should have respect to: and it may save you from faults ; it may energize and sharpen your speaking faculties, to keep yourself under the impression that he is before you : you should still consider, that “He who judgeth you, is the Lord ;” but though it is comparatively “a light thing to be judged of man’s judgment,” it may help you to speak so as to be better able to abide the judgment of God, to commend yourself to this man’s approval.*

17—*And if this man be your personal friend, and through love of you, be incapable of flattering or sparing you, it may be an instance of your wisdom, to ask occasionally his criticism on your preaching. You should not be over confident of your advancement, though you have assurance of the satisfaction of the Parish ; nay, though you have its admiration and applause ; this is a deceptive signal of merit ; it is generally the fruit of partiality or ignorance. You should not, again, be over confident in your satisfaction with yourself. A weak man, it has been said, can read a wise one more easily than a wise man can read himself. Though therefore you may “know nothing by yourself,” and perhaps may hear nothing to the contrary of your being in all respects, universally well pleasing to your*

parish, there may be imperfections in your preaching, which some of the people may see and talk about among themselves, and which, if you were conscious of them, you might correct. You may be admonished as to some of them, by oblique, indirect, methods with a common member of your flock, with a simple parishioner, a poor woman, even a child ; but you need thorough knowledge of them, and the criticisms of an intelligent, frank, faithful friend, may be your only means of acquiring it. Avail yourself of them, if they are at your command. We are acquainted with a minister who regards his having had such a friend among his hearers, in the earlier days of his course, as an advantage to his preaching, for which he owes a debt of gratitude to him, too large even to be repaid.

18. But we have not completed the theory of advancement. The deepest, the genetic element remains to be examined. *This is the pastoral temper ; the stamp of spirituality proper to a pastor ; that which keeps him at his point of view, under pastoral impulses ; that which having in its fullness he is filled with pastoral wisdom, skill, power,—in sacred phrase, full of the Holy Ghost ; of which, if destitute, he cannot comprehend preaching, or know anything about it, as he ought to know.* We shall indicate its principal elements.

19. It includes what has been lately termed, "*the enthusiasm of humanity ;*" humanity, impassioned, filled with true enthusiasm, in the interest of itself, its highest interest ; temporal and eternal ; its interest as sought by Christ, and in Him and through Him, secured and actualized ; humanity in its every member, meanest and greatest, raised to its ideal glory.* This belongs to it, intuitively, from the *immediate* purpose of preaching which is "the salvation of man with eternal glory." Preaching is the ordinance of salvation : How impossible

*Ecce Homo, The scope of the author's idea of man's well being, comprehends, not "the good gifts of the earth merely," but "whatever cherishes and trains best, the Christ within man:" "the object of Christ's love for men in life and in death." pp. 180. 181.

* II. Tim. ii. 10

to be earnest without being *enthusiastic* in it. If in other interests one cannot be earnestly engaged without becoming oblivious of self; if a patriot-soldier cannot, in the strife of battle think of his life, much more cannot a leader of the sacramental host, in warfare for man's recovery from the power of Satan to God: Nothing is more inconceivable. This divine enthusiasm, in the necessity, the nature of things, possesses every earnest preacher so long as he is indeed earnest—under modification from his pastorate, it possesses the Pastor. Under the pastoral impulse, he has already virtually surrendered his life for his flock,* his interest in it is as nothing to him compared with his interest in their service. He is very imperfect, very variable, in the proper exercises of this self-devotement, but the principle of them lives within him, and will not fail to discover itself even in its extreme form, if in that form occasion requires its appearance.

20. But this passion of humanity, at its utmost height, is not the highest spring of the Pastor's activity. This lies *in his sense of excellence in the way of salvation; the scheme of Redeeming Love* As a motive force in his ministry, this transcends the other beyond the reach of thought. It does so with reason; it is in itself "a far more exceeding" and powerful impulse. It is not, in the deliverance of man, but in the mode of its accomplishment, that the glory of God is most resplendently displayed: our salvation, by itself, gives exercise to but one of the Divine attributes; in *its mode* every one concurs in measure beyond measure. The mode, moreover, is effectual to other ends, besides its immediate one; ends surpassing whatever may be separately reached; ends involving in a higher degree, the happiness of all good creatures.† True preaching while in the spirit of self-sacrifice seeking its immediate end, is not insensible to the wider bearings and designs of this Device of the Trinity, in the interest of mankind; Its supreme impulse is derived from reference to them; an impulse including

*See John ii. 11. Philip, x. 17. Rom. iv. 3.

†Col. ii. 3. Eph. iii. 10.

the others but extending immeasurably beyond them ; an impulse unimpaired, still triumphant, under failure of the other ; an impulse to which despondency is inaccessible ; which, whatever may be the direct effect of preaching, causeth the preacher "always to triumph in Christ ;" assuring him, that he is "un to God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved ;" that "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall he be glorious in the eyes of the Lord."* Restricting his thoughts to the immediate results of his ministry he cannot forbear the complaint : "I have labored in vain ; I have spent my strength for naught and in vain ;"† he is sometimes pierced with agony in uttering it ; but by extending his view, by bringing himself under the illumination of the mediatorial scheme, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."‡ he is more than consoled ; his grief is allayed by a divine gladness ; he renews his strength and courage in preaching ; he goes forward in it, still with fear and much trembling,§ as to its instant consequences, yet on the whole with irrepressible animation, rising sometimes to sublime and glorious joy. ||

21. As might be expected, since "the joy of the Lord is our strength," *the direct fruitfulness of preaching is large in proportion as the work proceeds, under the command of this larger, mightier, motive.* It is in this motive, not distinctively in the other, that zeal in saving man has "the hiding of its power." It gives the highest inspiration in calling sinners to repentance, and in edifying the church. It yields more success, in making converts and training them in the christian life. Were the salvation of his parish the Pastor's ultimate end, he should abide under the domination of this impulse. So we are taught by experience and the history of evangelism, as well as by theory. ' Whitfield's astonishing zeal, and corresponding success as an evangelist, is ascribed by Isaac Taylor, to his

* Is. xlix. 5.
§ I Cor. ii, 3.

† Is. xlix. 4.

‡ II Cor. iv. 6.
|| II Cor. iv, 17.

living in the effulgence of the mediatorial scheme.* There are other examples too many to be all cited. Let two more suffice. The soul of Paul, the most celebrated model among human preachers, "existed," says Taylor, "in the very blaze of that glory which surrounds the mediatorial scheme." He was, doubtless, distinguished in this respect, less only than ONE other; he had like pre-eminence in laboring as a preacher; as to his success, there is no parallel to it in Christian history. But a greater than Paul, is the other instance. The Saviour of mankind who died for us all, the Divine ideal of the enthusiasm of humanity, fulfilled his ministry of unsearchable love to man under the influence of an enthusiasm, if we may so name it now, which had its fountain in a sphere in which greater interests have place than those exclusively of mankind. He sacrificed himself for our sake; his preaching was an earnest overture of salvation, but it had an infinitely wider scope, comprising the ultimate honors and triumphs of his mediation in behalf of man. He wept over those to whom his preaching was unavailing; † but his tears did not save them; there was no forgiveness for them; their contempt of the all-glorious plan of redemption, was avenged by their aggravated destruction. His own regard to the Divine glory as concerned in his mediation was supreme. It dominated his whole ministry, as it has all the counsels and acts of the divine government of the world, and will dominate the proceedings and issues of eternal judgment.

22. In the whole and in each one of the elements of this imperial motive, there is a preaching force, which only consciousness can understand; but there is one of its elements, which our analysis ought not to omit: from its special influence on preaching, it deserves special emphasis. *It is, distinctively, the conscious counterpart in the preacher of the Divine Love*

* Wesley and Methodism. Let the reader turn to the section of this book, entitled, "The fourth element of Methodism." We have seldom read a more interesting work than this; the whole is admirable, but the section we have referred to, is, we think, chief in importance

† Luke xix, 41.

which was the *Spring-head*, and the *Efficient* of the Device of Redemption : Love alike inherent in the entire Trinity, but, in its several offices, personally actualized by the Eternal Son. The gospel history is the record of its manifestations : and this history, made reality in the soul of the preacher, is the objective cause of the impulse referred to. The impulse, *a sense of love to Christ*, responsive to his love in working out our redemption : love terminating on the glories of his character, as exhibited in accomplishing this work ; and sympathizing with Him, in its several functions of self-sacrifice : love unutterable in its desire *for supreme, adoring, universal praise to the name of Christ*.* As pre-eminently a preaching impulse, it has distinct authentication ; † it constrains the true pastor in all his pastoral labors ; its normal expression is feeding the sheep, the lambs of Christ ; ‡ his preaching especially will bear the impress of it : it will perform all its functions as a tribute of supreme affection to the name of the Lord Jesus.

23. We must by no means end our analysis, without emphasising another of the components of pastoral spirituality, *the proper counterpart in the preacher's soul, of the fact, that he is a worker together with the Spirit of God*.§ The union of the Divine with the Human in our religion is not restricted to Christ's personality ; in this alone, it is hypostatic, but it is essential and real, in every movement and exercise of spiritual life. In keeping with the high spirituality of the work, it is highly special, in preaching. In this, the Holy spirit worketh

* As in the following instance : " amidst the dead and the dying, nothing can be more apparently prosperous to the church, than the overwhelms now taking place in the earth. Christ will find his way to the hearts of men, and there will be a great company to praise Him. I know not why we should wish to be saved, but for this purpose, or why but for this purpose we should desire the conversion of Heathens, Turks, and Infidels. To find them at the feet of Jesus will be a lovely sight. Our feeble voices cannot praise Him much : we shall be glad to see them clapping their hands and casting their crowns before Him ; for all in heaven and earth cannot sufficiently praise Him. I see no cause to wish for anything but the advancement of that knowledge by which there is some accession of praise to His holy and blessed Name.—Henry Martyn's Memoir, pp. 254-255.

† II Cor. iv, 14

‡ John xxi, 15-17.

§ II Cor. iiii, 1.

mightily, and the preacher worketh according to the working of the Spirit within him.* And in the preacher, in his proper habit of soul, it cannot but be, that this law of co-operation between himself and the Holy Spirit will be imperative : it will assert itself in his consciousness. He will not, it is true, distinguish the Spirit's working from his own, for it is only through and in his own, that the Spirit does work ; but the fact of the Spirit's working, is a reality to his faith, and if a reality indeed, what must it be as a motive force ! With what awe, must it inspire him ! With what confidence, what boldness, also, as to the effectiveness of his ministry ! Assured that Omnipotence is exerting itself in his utterance, he is alike assured, that his utterance, though it were as the cry of infancy, must in reference to its purpose, be as the voice that called the worlds from nothing, and they came.†

24. Such are the principal integrants of the preaching impulse. Except in the Supreme Preacher, the Incarnate Word of God, its ideal has not been realized ; but to every true preacher, it is the standard of motive force, the measuring reed of pulpit excellence and power. More than upon all things else, proficiency in preaching depends upon its dominion in the soul ; and where its absolute dominion is not coveted, improvement in preaching is no longer an object of pursuit or of earnest desire.

25. *As to the amount or number of preachings in a parish: while the measure must needs vary with personality in pastors, and ought also to vary with places, times and seasons, there are principles in all cases applicable.* From the supreme virtue of preaching as an instrument of the pastorate, its potentiality should if possible be fully developed; the utmost should be

* Col. i, 29.

† " Oh I have seen the day,
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
My trust is in the Lord ;
My soul hath quelled a thousand hosts,
Fearless of all that could oppose."

made of it, that can be, without trenching on the claims of other work : There should be no needless abatement in it. It has its limitations however, and it must by no means transgress them; by doing so, it would itself become an eminent transgressor; a model of mischief making to the parish. And what are its limitations? These we answer : *The pastor must not outpreach his health; or by quantity deteriorate quality in his preaching, or require over much attendance of the people on his ministrations.*—Preaching may certainly be too much for the health of the pastor. Not chiefly, however, from its overtasking the voice, or lungs, or muscles; these are seldom hurt by frequency in speaking at the bar; it is from the much study, thinking, intellectual and emotional exercise, required in preaching, that much of it becomes a cause of disease to the flesh. But be the peril to health, from what cause it may, disregard to it, is without excuse : health has its laws; the natural consequences of inattention to it may be expected; they will probably come, and they may be without remedy: the preaching may be still abundant; possibly alike admirable; witness this, in Calvin, Baxter, Brainerd, Payson, and others. It is nevertheless exceptional in these great examples: generally its course is short, and the impress of ill health apparent in it, in inherent debility and lassitude. Unquestionably then, due attention to dietetics and bodily recreation, is imperative on the Pastor; it is one of the limitations of his measure in preaching.*—His next restriction is more serious. *The quality of his preaching*, nothing is permitted to impair: degeneracy in this is virtual degeneracy in the entire pastorate, and we

*The body on two accounts needs attention. It is a servant that would be master; and when it leaves the mastery where it belongs, it is too often wronged by the exercise thereof. After what Paul has said, as to his way of dealing with the body in I Cor. ix, 27. the Pastor should not think that he will have no occasion to use a like method with it—but let him have a care, that he does no injury to the body, when not unsubmitive. He may do it wrong by other means than overtasking it. He owes it refreshment and recreation as well as rest. Let him not despise the body. He ought not to forget that though the Lord be not for the body, he may by neglecting the care of it, disqualify himself for serving the Lord; and for serving himself, as otherwise he might do in the work of the ministry.

have already insisted that preaching for its just culture requires the utmost care : still the necessity for this care does not absolutely conclude against abundance ; on the contrary, it generally concludes in favor of this. As with the exercise of other principles of activity, so with that of preaching, much, other things not wanting, tends to much, little to little, in result. Cecil thought he should lose his preaching-talent if he should preach but once a month. He may not have been mistaken. There is a principle of deterioration in infrequent preaching, even when not voluntary, or from preoccupation in other very good work. Eminent preachers have ceased from their high pulpit distinction, have scarcely retained an aptitude for pulpit duty, after having being transferred to the chair. They were good in teaching the art of preaching, but they performed the whetstone's office,* which sharpens without being itself sharp.—As to the remaining restriction: this infers of necessity, but a small abatement. Without requiring time appropriate to business or common duties, a pastor may keep at daily preaching, to the advantage of those who desire to hear him, giving the rest no occasion of complaint. A brief morning sermon may be a help to better living, in all respects though the day; nor need this complete the daily ministration of the word. The pastor without offending against this restriction, may follow the morning service, with district or domestic preaching in different parts of the parish. If there be objection to such frequency, it must be from the pastor's overdoing, not from necessary infringement on the duty or interest of others.

If now we turn for instruction from theory to *examples*, of these three classes may be distinguished: One consisting of those who take the minimum, as the best measure: another of pastors who adopt the traditional amount; satisfying themselves with what satisfies the parish: a third, of pastors who while keeping themselves within the proper limits, are yet instant in preaching, in season, out of season, *laboring* in

* "Fungar vice cotis"—

word and doctrine, day and night, publicly and from house to house; measuring amount in their work by the measure of their gracious ability. Which of these classes should be taken as most exemplary? The question answers itself. Intuitively, emphatically, the last is the class which commends itself as the model one; that in which is found the nearest approach to the ideal of the ministry, that in which the conformity is most complete to Paul's style of working, as reported in Acts xx. 18-20, and especially, in the 31st verse of this chapter. Here are the representative pastors through all the centuries; the best Parish preaching; the best pastors, in most, if not all respects, have been of the third class. It is the class, at the head of which Christ stands as a preacher. The typical excellence in doing the work of the ministry, is reproduced in this class, more than in either of the others. There may be in it, too many valetudinarians; there are also, probably, in both the other classes; be this as it may, it is to the third class that the pre-eminence belongs.

27. It has been objected to abundance, that it is necessarily wasteful, nay, even destructive of fruit which has been produced. If one sermon, it is said, be followed by others in quick succession, they will efface the good impressions made by the former. There is danger that nothing will be remembered, nothing retained by most of the hearers. The objection mistakes as *to the way* in which the hearers are profited by preaching. The measure of their advantage from it, is not what they remember or retain in distinct knowledge. Neither are actual impressions displaced or impaired by succeeding ones. The good impressions are homogeneous; they are well affectioned to one another; they interpenetrate and confirm one another. It is the interest which the hearers take in preaching, and their mixing faith with it, at the moment of hearing it, that chiefly makes it profitable to them. It is not through their remembering what they hear, so much as through exercises of grace wrought in them under the sound of the word, that their edification is most advanced. "This," says Edwards, "may explain how simple and unlearned per-

sons may derive great advantage from preaching, of which they can give no connected account ; while they have the help and guidance of the preacher, they get along well enough ; when he ceases they have little to rehearse ; yet it is not a little, if during the time of the exercise, they have been moved to fear, hope, love, or adoration." An anecdote may illustrate philosophy in this matter. A poor Scotch woman, at her duty on a bleaching ground, was asked by a traveler, where she went to church, what she had heard the preceding day, and how much she remembered. She could not tell the text of the last sermon. "And what good," said the stranger, "can the preaching do you, if you forget it all." "Ah sir," she replied, "if you look at this web, you will see that as fast as I put the water on, the sun dries it all up, and yet, sir, I see it gets whiter and whiter." It is well surely to be able to recall a sermon ; a second benefit may possibly be thus obtained, larger than the first ; but as Edwards has remarked the after remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart at the time, and the memory profits as it renews and increases that impression.

27.—*Abundance in preaching if still true to the required quality, presupposes at least equal abundance in the preaching impulse ; as a full stream flowing from a fountain of living water. And abundance in the latter is not of itself ; it is of the Holy Spirit in the preacher ; but the preacher has nevertheless an agency in obtaining and keeping it. He must use means to retain his point of view as a preacher ; it will otherwise escape, and be lost. He must not assume that general spirituality will secure to him, of course, the spirituality proper to preaching. There is peril to the former, from neglecting the cultivation of the latter. There is a connection, an identity of essence indeed, between the two spiritualities ; but as to form or exercise neither presupposes or produces the other necessarily. Eminently spiritual ministers have been little spiritual in preaching ; and after preaching exceedingly well, from the true pulpit impulse, they have lapsed, not only from that impulse, but from their former measure of general spirit-*

uality.—Preaching in the proper exercise of spirituality, tends, it is true, to continuance and growth therein ; but this tendency may come to naught, if it be not promoted and matured, by after pains-taking to that end.

There are temptations even in high pulpit experiences. Model preachers have confessed to them. No merely human preacher surpassed Paul in the quality of his pulpit work, yet he did not depend upon it as a security even against *the loss of his soul*. He tells us expressly that he used special means, “lest,” saith he, “when I have preached the gospel to others I myself should be cast away.” ‘But why marvel at this?’—Was our Lord himself negligent as to exercises designed to keep him in the true preaching frame ? In his human nature, even he learned obedience, through common means thereof. In the days of his flesh, he sought help from God, by prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared.* We read of his great labors in preaching by day ; we also read of his praying to God in solitude, through the live long night : Had these labors and this solitary praying no relation to one another ? Before and in his preaching, he was full of the Holy Ghost ; He went with this fullness all alone, into the mountain ; had His occupation there no bearing on His public duties ? Being full of the Holy Ghost implies not the abridgment, but the absolute use of liberty ; and what more unpresumptuous *than liberty at its highest summit* ? What reproof of their error, have ministers who rely for sufficient spirituality on the multitude of their preachings, from the example of Paul and others of less eminence ; but how infinitely is the reproof enhanced and enforced, by the wrestlings of our Lord, at the Throne of Grace, in the cold mountain and the midnight air ?

28. We see in the light of the theory of our subject, another essential in pastoral life ; *a peculiar solicitude about the fruit of preaching*. Both as cause and effect, this is the inevitable, necessary accompaniment of the Pastor’s giving

* Heb. v, 7.

right attendance to his great work. Along with the higher impulses under which he discharges it, *the enthusiasm of humanity*, keeps its distinctiveness ; has its just developments. Though of secondary order, it reigns in its sphere, without abatement or interference from superior motives. In the glory of the Divine Plan, supreme love to Him who fulfilled it, the sense of Divine co-operation in the work of preaching, there is no abridgement of the power of the passion of humanity ; the motives are all in the same interest ; they concur each with every other, and the whole with each ; as does the entire body with the action of each particular member. The whole, in combination, enforces the operation of the love of mankind. Sympathy, weeping tears like the Redeemer's, shed over incorrigible Jerusalem, is unrestrained, is intensified by the other impulses ; they coalesce and work together with it. See this, in our Lord's great example ; see it also in Paul's care for all the churches ; in his travelling in birth for the steadfastness and security of his converts ; in his great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for the castaway Jews ; see it, to omit other instances, in him who wrote the Pilgrim's Progress. Speaking of the failure of his ministry in saving his hearers, he testifies thus : "I did often say in my heart before the Lord, that if to be hanged up presently before their eyes would be a means to awaken them, I gladly should be contented." In truth, nothing more impossible can be conceived, than a sincere Parish preacher, devoid of anxious solicitude about the immediate results of his ministry. The want of it, would virtually falsify the scheme of redemption, with all its wondrous means and ordinances, and stamp the preacher himself as a most infatuated, unhappy man. Before preaching, in it, and afterwards, the anxiety we speak of, cannot but reveal itself, with invincible force, in the soul of every pastor who is a pastor indeed. It will keep guard over him in choosing the subjects of his sermons ; in treating them ; in applying them ; all his work in the pulpit, will be ordered and performed with scrupulous reference to its proper end ; and it will be

followed up by means in keeping with this reference for securing, to the full if possible, the fruit of his labor. His love of life will not equal his pastoral concern. Being affectionately desirous of the souls for whom he watches, he is willing to impart to them not the gospel of God only, but his own soul, because they are dear to him.*

29. *It does not follow from this that he is unhappy.* Greatness of soul is not unhappiness; and there is no higher form of it than pastoral anxiety; in essence, it is fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. It is travail of soul like His, and it has like satisfaction with His. Its pains are not unprofitable; they prevent infinite evil; they yield infinite good. If they fail of their end in some, in others they gain it. They bless some of their objects; they inspire angelic joy; they more than content the Pastor with their recompenses to him; their fruit to him, ere they cease, is sometimes joy unspeakable and full of glory; for the happiness which he has from them, he would not accept the whole world in exchange; they are the witness of the Spirit of God within him, saying to his spirit: "Thou shalt be mine, when I make up my jewels."† They are a pledge to him from God, that in a sphere higher than that of the sun and stars, he shall be shining forever and ever, with a brightness higher than theirs, after they shall have ceased to shine.‡ The earnest of "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" has its completest development, in the proper exercise, and offices of pastoral solicitude. Happy, yea, happiest of men, then, the faithful Pastor. "Happy, thrice happy, if all his desire is to add some voices to the concert of the Blessed; and to remain concealed, in the universal joy, only keeping in his heart, the secret regard, and the everlasting well done, of the Master and the Father."§

* I. Thess. ii. 8.

† Dan. XII. 3.

† Mal. iii. 17.

§ Vinet.