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LECTURES ON PREACHING

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY AT YALE COLLEGE

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1882

BY

E. G. ROBINSON

President of Brown University

NEW YORK
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[*From the Records of the Corporation of Yale College, April 12, 1871.*]

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Numerous friends have asked to see these lectures in book form, otherwise they would not have been taken from the columns of the newspaper for which they were reported when delivered, and in which for nearly a twelvemonth they have lain undisturbed. If read in the spirit in which they were conceived and delivered, they will do no harm to any reader, and possibly some preacher of the gospel, not yet unalterably fixed in his habits, may glean from them here and there a hint that will not be wholly without use to him.

Brown University, DEC., 1882.

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LECTURES ON PREACHING.

LECTURE I.

THE PLACE OF PREACHING IN THE ECONOMY OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT may be taken for granted at the outset of these lectures that we all are agreed as to what is meant by preaching; it is the proclamation and enforcement of the distinctive teachings of the Christian Religion. We all accept it as one of the established offices of Christianity. As to the relation of this office to other Christian offices, there is room for considerable diversity of opinion. Christian communions equally devout and earnest, perhaps I should also say equally intelligent, place very different estimates upon the value of preaching. It has seemed, therefore, fitting, that the first topic discussed in the present course of Lectures should be, the Place of Preaching in the Economy of Christianity.

Possibly we can be led to a better conception of that place if we glance for a moment at the aim of the Christian Religion. Manifestly, its aim is to make God known to men, to make men known to themselves, and by this twofold knowledge to bring them into harmony; to make men aware of their wants, their dangers, their duties,

and so to persuade them to a wise choice between the alternatives of destiny that lie open to them. To accomplish these ends, men must be taught and pleaded with till roused into action. Instruction and persuasion are the two chief elements in all true preaching.

But the purpose of our holy religion, and the dependence of this purpose on preaching as a means for its fulfilment, appears as nowhere else in the life and teachings and death of Him who gave to our religion its name, its principles, its spirit, and its methods. Christ was in his own person all that he requires men to become, and all that they need to know in order to become what he requires. He was moral and religious truth incarnate, and to proclaim truth by word and deed was the one unvarying purpose of his life. "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good tidings of the Kingdom." He was distinctively and pre-eminently a preacher and teacher. While yet on earth he sent forth the seventy and the twelve to proclaim what he had taught them. Master, disciples, and apostles, all alike, were preachers of righteousness; and, at the conclusion of his ministry on earth, as he was about to ascend on high, he said to the twelve, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

But it was only in the closing scenes of Christ's life that the full significancy of what he had said and done, and himself was, began to appear. Indeed it was only when his life on earth had been concluded; when he had ascended to the throne

of his power and his glory, and the Holy Spirit whom he had promised had been poured from on high that the whole scheme of Christianity, the vastness of its purpose, the fullness of its provisions, the inexhaustibleness of its resources, the depth and compass of its teachings, the indestructibility of its power and kingdom, became fully apparent to the Apostles; it was only when the omniscient Spirit had revealed it to them that they began to comprehend the significancy of the cross and of all which had preceded it,—the former dispensations, the long line of prophets, the miraculous birth which introduced our Lord into the world, and the miraculous resurrection and ascension which concluded his stay in it. When all these had been made plain to them, then the place of preaching in the economy of Christianity became at once apparent and established. Then was it that the preaching of Peter and Stephen and Paul and Barnabas won for the gospel its first triumphs. And through all generations, from the time of the apostles till now, it has been by the office of preaching that the real power of the gospel has been perpetuated among men.

Now, when our Lord instituted the Christian ministry, giving some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, and sending them forth as heralds of the glad tidings of a new kingdom of God on earth, he did not so much create a new office among men as give to an old office a new function and a new power. Religious guides and teachers, priests and prophets, men set apart to one kind or an-

other of sacred function, already existed and abounded. They existed in one kind or another among all nations. Our Lord, recognizing the need of them, adopted them in his kingdom and prescribed to them their distinctive functions as preachers and teachers of his religion.

The real origin of a distinct class of religious officials was in the needs of mankind; the ground of their existence is in the constitution of human nature and of human society. The origin of their office was like that of other similar offices among men; like that of the so-called professions in all civilized communities.

Thus man has a physical organism which is liable to derangement and disease. Its laws are numerous and complicated, and not always readily discerned. There is need of a class of men known as medical advisers. The necessity for their existence is found in the human organism and in the derangements to which it is liable.—Man also is gregarious and seeks the society of his fellow-men. Society originated in the necessities of the nature of man. But self-interest prompts man to be regardless of the rights of his fellow-man. Individual rights must be defined and protected in human society, by law; or society cannot exist. Laws also must be interpreted and enforced. There is an inexorable necessity in human nature and in human society that there shall be a class of men known as lawyers.—In like manner, man is endowed with various powers and faculties that must be developed and trained to the uses for which they have been given him. He is not born into the world, ready-made and complete for all

that awaits him. His endowments and capacities are all in the germ and must be drawn out and cultivated. There must be educators—a distinct profession.

Man in like manner has his moral constitution. Consciousness tells him something of the hidden depths of his own being. Conscience reminds him of obligations, and warns him against a coming retribution. Observation and experience suggest invisible forces that are around him, that lie behind and within the visible universe. His heart cries out for help from above; he yearns for a knowledge of the invisible, and for a preparation for what awaits him beyond the grave. He needs a religious guide. He must, he will, have one. His need creates the supply. Religious teachers and guides always have existed and always will exist. They have the ground of their existence in the inexorable demands of human nature and of human society. Our Lord, recognizing the need of them, not only appointed a class of men to supply the need, but appointed them to supply it by the distinctive function of preaching his truth; of giving to men a knowledge of himself and of what he had accomplished by his life, death and resurrection, for all who should believe on him. A long line of prophets foretold him and his work; a much longer line of preachers now prophesy of him, by repeating the story of his work as completed, in a new and loftier sense of the word prophecy. What the prophets began, preachers are to carry forward to the end of time.

But let us not forget that the office of the Christian minister is not simply to make known

to men the truths of Christianity. He is not merely a herald of good news. It is an error to suppose that all preachers are, or were intended to be, simply evangelists; that their sole business is to proclaim and reiterate the elementary truths of Christianity. The notion of too many people in our day is, that the distinctive work of the preacher is the conversion of men; or, as the language sometimes is, the salvation of sinners. This latter statement is true in one sense of the word salvation, and false in another. It is true in the sense of making of man the utmost of which he is capable; it is not true in the sense of merely bringing him to the point of thinking his sins forgiven; in barely giving him a hope of escape from perdition. But the work of the Christian ministry and of all preaching is to *save* him in the broadest conceivable sense, by bringing out to view in his character the whole image of God, by building up the entire person, by cultivating every endowment of his soul, by making of him a renewed, completed, harmoniously developed, symmetrical man; and anything short of this is short of the complete Christian idea of salvation. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all alike, according to the Apostle Paul, were given "for the perfecting of the saints," for bringing each one up "into a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." They greatly err, therefore, in our day who take such special pains to decry the plain, plodding, faithful, industrious pastor, that they may set forth the usefulness and glory of the peregrinating evangelist whose

aim is to convert, and not to build up and complete the work of salvation; who can bring crowds to regard themselves as Christians, but who must either consign these to the training and care of instructive pastors, or leave them to the bewitchery and ruin of the errors that beset them at every corner.

He who to-day would preach the gospel most effectively and fully and widely must do it through his well-instructed hearers, must do it by collecting around him a church, every man and woman of which will be a preacher of the gospel, and through whom he can preach the gospel to those who may not otherwise hear it. A gospel unsupported by the example of those who profess to have received and obeyed it will be powerless, and the preaching of it in vain.

The ordinary Christian congregation at this day furthermore is not ignorant of the gospel, either of its provisions or its requirements. The world is not now where it was when Christianity was first announced to it. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reproved those to whom he wrote, because they had not advanced beyond "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ." But the thousand sources of modern religious instruction have lifted up the ordinary Christian of to-day to a level far above that of those to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. The Christian assemblies of our time not only know the first principles of Christianity, they understand its weighter doctrines; it is not so much knowledge that they need as it is persuasion to make a right use of the knowledge they possess. The

largest part of the duty of the Christian minister and pastor now is, not to reiterate what is already known, but to enforce duty and build up character. Alas, that the pulpit so often forgets that the aim of Christianity is not simply to rescue men from final damnation, but to bring every man and woman into the realization of the highest ideal being; a realization into which they can be brought only through constant and unyielding compliance with every moral and religious obligation.

But here we must remember that as Christianity exists in our day under a diversity of denominational names, so we must expect to find diversity of estimates as to the relation of preaching to the other offices of our religion. To this diversity of estimate, it is necessary at this point to give passing attention. All who accept the New Testament as of divine authority agree in regarding the cross of Christ as the point of departure, whether in teaching Christianity to the ignorant, or in aiming at solidity and symmetry of character in those who already believe. They recognize the truth that it is "Christ and *him* crucified" that must be proclaimed; but there is diversity of view as to the method by which the proclamation should be made.

One large division of Christendom insists that in all public worship, and so in all public proclamation of the gospel, the sacrifice offered on the cross shall, by some means, be always represented to the eyes of men. Hence the use of crosses and crucifixes, of cruciform architecture, of symbolic vestments and incense. Hence, too, the

central point of worship is made to be the *mass*, a reproduction through priestly consecration of the bread and wine, of the personal sacrifice of Christ. Preaching is made subordinate, incidental and occasional. The altar overshadows the pulpit.

Another part of the Christian world insists that the sacrificial work of Christ shall be represented in worship, not by the mass, but by prayer and praise and Scripture-reading. Preaching with these is also subordinate, and forms a minor part of public religious services. The eucharist may or may not, as conscience dictates, be made an essential part of the service.

A third class makes all turn, in public worship, on the distinctive function of preaching. Rejecting wholly the idea of the mass, and making of the communion of the Lord's Supper only a monthly ordinance for believers, they concentrate attention on the sermon. To it, all Scripture-reading and prayer and praise are made subordinate and subservient.

By the first of these great divisions, the predominant conception of public worship is that it should be propitiatory; by the second, that it should be educational; by the third that it should be persuasive. The central point with the first is "the" sacrament or the mass; with the second, the liturgy or prayer book; with the third, the sermon.

You will see these three types of religious faith represented in any Saturday newspaper that announces the coming Sunday services. One of the advertisements says that "mass will be cel-

ebrated" at such an hour; another, that "there will be morning and evening prayer;" another, that "Mr. So-and-so will preach." Each advertisement sets forth what the adherents of each type regard as the distinctive part of public worship and the most effective method of proclaiming the religion of the crucified Jesus. The types, as thus represented, are, of course, as all types must be, general and, in some sense, extreme; but they are none the less real and clearly marked. Neither of the first two omits preaching wholly, though making no mention of it; but their attention to it is secondary and incidental. The first resorts to preaching only on special occasions; the second lays so much stress upon the liturgy that the sermon fails to get mentioned; the third makes so much of the sermon that it forgets to mention anything else.

Adherents of the first type may say that the gospel is preached by architecture, by statues and paintings, by crosses and crucifixes, by altars and altar-lights, by music, by priestly vestments and incense. All these, it is said, preach symbolically. But, it is a universal law of human nature, a law from which even the educated do not always escape, and which always controls the ignorant, that in due process of time, the symbol takes the place of what is symbolized; the form absorbs the essence; the letter kills the spirit; religion becomes a thing of forms; and worshipers, however earnest or devout, sink inevitably into a species of idolatry.

Nor can liturgical repetitions, abound as the liturgy may in Christian sentiments and in Scrip-

tural language, ever take the place of preaching. No one will pretend that they can. And they cannot be in the true sense educational, except as they precede, or are preceded by intelligent preaching. The commandments need exposition and enforcement; and the gospel in its compass, methods, and requirements, needs to be pressed on the conscience, if worship is to bring to the worshiper its expected elevation and refinement of soul, its intended discipline of mind and heart.

Here then may we not catch a glimpse of the true place of preaching? Surely it is out of its true place when relied on as a substitute for the convincing and persuasive power of character. Indeed preaching unsupported by character in the preacher is a mockery of truth and an offence to God and man. It is also out of its place when made to over-ride and exclude all ritual; it is not in its true place when prayer and praise and Scripture reading are slurred over to make room for and give prominence to it. Not a whit more is its true place assigned it, when an expanded ritual crowds it into a space too narrow for its own movement or for any enlightened persuasion in those who hear it. But to show still more clearly where preaching belongs in the Christian economy, let us look for a moment at some of the more immediate evidences of our need of the living Christian preacher.

We need him first, because there is a persuasiveness in a personal presence and voice that never exists in any symbolical act or thing, or in any liturgy or literature, even that of the Bible. The preacher teaches not only through the eye,

as do symbols and liturgy and literature, but also through the ear. Through eye and ear, unnumbered subtile influences flow in upon the soul, and touch the heart of the hearer. Tones of voice, expression of countenance, gleam of the eye, sympathy with surrounding auditors, all conspire to bring us under the sway of the speaker's thought, to lift us out of ourselves, and to bring us into harmony and communion with him whom we call Saviour and Lord.

It is, I know, quite the fashion in our day to decry the pulpit, and to laud literature; to place the preacher not only in disparaging comparison, but in sharp antagonising contrast with the writer. Thomas Carlyle, perhaps more than any other writer of the generation now ending, distinguished himself by his disparagement of speaking, and his laudation of writing. And, singularly enough, one of his most sweeping diatribes against speech was in his public lectures on "Heroes and Hero Worship." According to Carlyle, the primate of all England at any given period is not the Archbishop of Canterbury, but England's foremost writer, whoever he may chance to be. It is not tongues, but pens, that reach the heart of the nation and shape its course. It is not Parliament, but the true literary guild, that really makes laws, and determines policies, domestic and foreign. Speech is brazen and silence always golden. "The true university," Carlyle tells us, "is a collection of books." But what is a collection of books without living men to interpret, and to induce us to read them. What is a book, unless your imagination shall bring you into some kind of rela-

tion to the once living personality of its author. An excellent book is next in value to the companionship of an excellent man; but there is something in a living man which no book can ever supply. Figure to yourself the blind old bard repeating his Iliad or his Odyssey, and imagine the difference between hearing the tones as they should fall from his lips, and the vain attempt to imagine them as you pick up the words with your eyes from the printed page. Think of the difference between reading one of Paul's Epistles, and hearing him pour out its contents in animated discourse. We are sometimes told that it is not Parliament, but the London *Times*, that to-day rules England; but was it the *Times*, or the speeches of Mr. Gladstone and his co-adjutors, that restored the Liberal party to power? It has been said that it is not our national Congress, but the newspapers, that rule our own country; that it is not our Legislatures that really make our laws, but the writers, who control the thinking and the voting of our legislators; but is there ever a general election in this country in which either party is willing to rely wholly on the press, and does not send forth its stump-speakers? What party dares go to the polls before it has sent forth its living appeals to the electors? The press cannot be spared; neither can speech be dispensed with. In like manner, our holy religion needs its

Doctores, calamo, nec minus ore, graves.

Let us proceed then, to notice some of the grounds of the need of the living preacher. He

is needed, first, to provide for the progressive understanding of Christian truth. All revealed truth from the beginning was progressively announced; and the announcements have become progressively intelligible. The question is sometimes asked, Why, in the names of justice and of mercy, if Christianity is, as is claimed, a religion of Divine origin, it was not given to the race ages before it was? The answer is simple. It was given to the race just as quickly as it could be, just as rapidly as the race was prepared to receive and understand it. It could not have been given a generation earlier. And the delay was not alone that there might be a preparation of a special language, that should serve as a vehicle of its thoughts, but for the simple reason that thought can be given to any people, or to any generation of a people, only just as fast as they can become prepared for an intelligent use of the necessary symbols of thought. Go back, if you will, to the promise given to Abraham. Sometimes, a modern preacher will depict Abraham as having received, through the promise given him, as clear a conception of Christ and Christianity, as is possessed by a Christian of the present day. How groundless is all this is evident from the promise itself, to say nothing of the age in which it was given. Abraham had his conceptions which served their purpose, and which in due time gave place, through oral teaching, to others under the Mosaic dispensation.

Pass from Moses to the prophets. The Mosaic Institutes seemed to be established with the fix-

edness of unchangeable statutes. But the prophets, those earlier preachers, analyzed and brought out of the Institutes of Moses a depth and reach of meaning of which Moses was ignorant. If we pass on still further to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, we find him not only expounding Moses, but unfolding the prophecies, and giving to all a compass and fullness of meaning of which the prophets were unaware. So entirely beyond the mere letter of Moses and the Prophets were the interpretations of Jesus, that his contemporaries charged him with destroying them. Moses and the Prophets had served their purpose, and the preaching of Jesus introduced purer and profounder and more exalted conceptions of God and his service. And so, down the lengthening centuries, Christian preachers, through ever-changing types of Christian thinking and of Christian worship and of Christian living, have brought Christianity to its present position and power in the world: a position and power never equalled in all the past. So that we need not be startled at the statement that the teachings of our holy religion are better understood to-day than they ever were before; that the subtle spirit of Christianity strikes deeper into the heart of human society, and more effectively controls the policy, and the jurisprudence, and the inner life of nations, than it has ever done in any of the preceding centuries.

And how has all this been accomplished? Simply by taking the people through successive transitions from lower to higher levels of Christian thought and actions; by raising each suc-

ceeding generation to a higher plane than that of the preceding. All Christian thought embodies itself in certain formulas of belief. Many of these are founded on theories of the divine method of action. A theory, possibly suggested at first by a reigning philosophy, may do admirable service in its day. But its day comes to an end. Another, becoming necessary, takes its place. Let any one attempt to preach the gospel to-day in the formulas and modes of conception prevailing in the fifth, or in the tenth, or in the thirteenth centuries. Let any one now try to conceive and represent the atoning efficacy of Christ's death as it was presented in either of those centuries; or let any one try to preach the gospel to-day precisely as it was preached by the reformers in the sixteenth century; and he will see that we stand on another level than theirs. Or go no further back than a century and a half; the change that has taken place even within this period becomes at once apparent. Each generation, if its religion is to be vital and controlling, must have its own modes of conception and statement; and every individual preacher, if his preaching is to be effective, must have thoughts of his own and express them in language that shall be distended with meaning. When Moses Stuart, as a young pastor in this city in 1808, preached his noted sermons on the Atonement, he felt that the prevailing statements of that doctrine failed to convey what he regarded as the true teaching of the Scriptures. So still, in our own time, preachers of the gospel, with the New Testament in their hands, may accept neither the formulas of the fifth

nor of the fifteenth centuries, nor yet of any later theorists, but may formulate for themselves out of the words of the Master and his Apostles what in their innermost hearts they believe these to have taught; discarding all theory and traditional dogma, they may emphasize only the necessity of a living personal faith in the crucified and risen personal Christ.

But here we may be told that all the great transitional changes in doctrinal thinking and in consequent Christian living, have their origin in the closets of recluse thinkers, and not in the studies and sermons of preachers. True indeed is it that great thinkers and great epochs always make their appearance together. But great thinkers are quite as much the product as the producers of great epochs. The epochs originate in a thousand invisible influences which unite and break forth through some living soul only when the supreme moment arrives; just as innumerable drops from the heavens falling upon the earth and disappearing, are gathered into channels beneath layers of solid rocks, till, accumulating sufficient headway, they burst forth, carrying verdure and fruitage and beauty, whithersoever they are borne. But it is the teacher of the people, who, standing between the great thinker and the rest of mankind, becomes the medium through whom the new thoughts reach and affect them. It is the preacher by whom changes in types of belief and of worship and of conduct in the great body of the church are finally effected.

The order of these transitions, the succession of the epochs, is not always in a direct and con-

tinuous line. Sometimes it has been only by a circuitous and almost revolving course that great advances have been made. Many curious instances of these circuitous movements have been presented in the history of the church.

I am reminded, just at this point, that about the year 1745, there was a class of men in New England and New Jersey, who were well known and unapproved by the authorities of this College. They were known as *New Lights*. Their methods and views differed widely from what was regarded as orthodox, by the authorities here. When the College in New Jersey was chartered in 1746, the New Lights rallied to its support. Two of their most remarkable men were among its early Presidents. Princeton, in the estimation of Yale, was then heterodox. But, in the whirl of time, how all this has changed. At the College of New Jersey, the Cocceian theory of covenants which Turretin and Heidegger and Witsius had wrought into a system of covenanted imputation, was adopted by the successors of the New Lights, and Princeton Theology became one of the established systems of the general Theology of America. It has claimed for itself the exclusive title of orthodox. On the other hand, at the College in New Haven, a noted teacher of Theology, some three quarters of a century later, building on a basis traceable directly to the most distinguished of the New Lights, Jonathan Edwards, the third President of the College of New Jersey, particularly to his dissertation *On the Nature of true Virtue*, was stigmatized by Princeton as a teacher of heretical doctrines. Drs. Alexander and Hodge, at

Princeton, holding rigidly to their theories of imputation and limited atonement, preached the gospel to their contemporaries with noteworthy power; and all the world has heard how, at the same period, Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor at New Haven, having worked his way out into a very different conception of human ability and freedom of will, preached the same gospel with wonderful acceptance and effect.

And in like manner ought every preacher of the gospel to do his utmost to give his generation an ever deepening insight into Christianity, and to bring it more completely under its sway. And how many and formidable are the difficulties encountered by the minister of religion in our day! Young preachers, finding their hearers unmoved by traditional phraseology, and themselves incapable of filling it with meaning, are in danger of losing confidence in the power of the gospel. Never was there an age when the young preacher should be so intensely anxious to know, through a vital experience of it, just what the power of the gospel really is, and just what Christianity can actually accomplish for man. Only by the aid of such experience can he guide this questioning, doubting, disbelieving generation into some clear conception of the indestructibility of the gospel and both apprehend for himself and make clear to others its power to reach and lift up the lowest of mankind, as well as to hold in its grasp and guide into rest the strongest of its intellects. The world waits and yearns and struggles for a stronger faith and a purer Christianity than it yet possesses.

The living preacher is needed to build up Christian character. Growth of character is by taking on and throwing off. Growth of Christian character is very much like that of the bodily system. It never becomes fixed and unchangeable. That Christian man, whose character has ceased to improve, is like the tree that has ceased to grow; he has already begun to decay. Nor can mere verbal orthodoxy save him. Endless iteration of unmeaning phraseology is always fatal to the Christian life. One must constantly penetrate more and more deeply into Christian thought and into the Christian life which the thought implies; else, instead of growth, there will be feebleness and decline. Every Christian, in whom there is real growth, is taking on new thoughts and finding new meanings in old ones, just as the Apostle said: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things." We all have been children in Christian knowledge. There have been modes of conception and states of feeling many of which we have outgrown; but we have not outgrown, we never can outgrow, the divine life of our holy religion. That life, properly nurtured, will gather strength with every successive change. In fact, proper nurture will impel it ever onward and upward into higher thought and action. Spiritual life, like the soul, is ever taking to itself a new body. Every new experience lets the Christian deeper into the heart of Christianity, and imparts to him more of the true spiritual life. Old things are continu-

ally passing away, and all things are ever becoming new. "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." The risen Lord is ever raising us nearer to himself.

But to make a safe and healthy progress, to give to the average Christian a continuous and symmetrical growth of character, there is needed the intelligent pastor with his regular Sunday discourses—discourses prepared with special reference to the wants of his hearers. To have a healthy and progressive religious life, one must have wholesome religious instruction; his mind must be occupied with sound religious thought. He who begins to decay at the top, whose religious thinking has become feeble and sickly, will find in due time that religious decay is reaching his heart, and his religion is dying out. To save from this and to insure a vigorous spiritual life and thus a healthy Christian character, the Christian pastor, the faithful preacher, is indispensable.

Preaching is needed for another reason; that Christianity may be kept abreast of the race in its progress. Dispute as we may about it, civilization, unhindered by outward influences, is always advancing; it is never stationary. It is now advancing at an incomparably more rapid rate than ever before. In fifty years now, the race moves faster than it did in six times fifty, ten centuries ago. Science now sweeps the race along with astounding rapidity. It is bringing the nations of the earth into a daily interchange of thought; it threatens to make all things new

in both our civilization and our religion. Not only unlettered minds, but some that think themselves cultured, catching here and there a flying paragraph, get an impression that our Christian religion has had its day; that there must be some truth in the confident proclamation that the gospel which is hereafter to rule will not be the gospel of faith, but the gospel of science.

How now shall Christianity in its offices for man be kept abreast of the race in its onward movement? Certainly not by abandoning either the Divine authority or the Divine origin of the Christian religion. The historical facts of the beginning of Christianity can never be changed. The spirit of the gospel and the nature of the Christian life are, doubtless, the same now that they ever were and that they always will be. But the outward forms in which the spirit of the gospel and the Christian life have manifested themselves, have changed with the changing centuries; and the changes have occurred, not through the surrender of anything essential, but by appropriation of new methods and conditions, supplied by advancing civilization. In vain is it, that we attempt to preach the gospel to one generation by sermons that may have served well for another. There may be remote districts inhabited by Christian *pagani*, who do not know that the world has run away from them. They are the religious and social relics of a past century. But, to the busy and on-rushing people of this generation, the gospel must be so preached as to reach and control them in their hidden

springs of action; yielding not one iota of its original demands, nor changing in the minutest particular its original method of saving men, it yet should be so preached as to exorcise or sanctify the ruling spirit of a false civilization.

It is sometimes said, I know, that the preaching of our own time is inferior to that of other days. But to go no further back, suppose you try a sermon of one of the reformers, of Luther or of Calvin, on a modern congregation. What would be the effect? It has been affirmed that the sermons of Jonathan Edwards would be more effective with a modern assembly than are sermons of the type now prevailing. Would any one of you, young gentlemen, be willing to attempt the experiment of preaching one of them? The truth is, each age must have its own type. No one can make the past do the work of the present; the present cannot do the work of the future. The gospel, to do its work, must take society at the level where it finds it; must address it in language it can understand, plying it with motives it can appreciate, and penetrating to the heart of it through every open avenue. It must deal with the motives of men, with the morals of society and of private life, and with the duties of citizens, and of the state. It is idle and worse than useless to go on twanging the strings on which the reformers of the sixteenth century played their tunes, or to continue clamoring about issues which two hundred years ago were living, but which long since died, and to-day ought to be forgotten.

And equally idle is it for the pulpit now to in-

sist on habits of life to which Christians of an earlier time may have felt themselves conscientiously bound. In vain would one now assail the musical instruments of the home or of the house of worship, once so abhorrent to the devout; or the recreations and amusements which our Puritan fathers so bitterly denounced. But this generation needs, none ever more needed, the intelligent pastor and preacher who, with watchful eyes, with a well-digested knowledge of both the past and the present, with unswerving loyalty of heart to Christ, and with the charity that "never faileth," shall guard and guide amid the thickening perils that surround us.

I will name but one other reason for our need of the living preacher; it is that he may be a vehicle of the Holy Spirit. We believe in the personal Holy Ghost. We recognize the truth that without his aid our preaching will be in vain; and we also recognize that it is in and through the use of Divine truth that the presence and power of the Spirit are made manifest.

Now there are two or three mischievous errors in our time of which we are at this point reminded. The one is a vague notion that the Holy Spirit is somehow or other inherent in Biblical truth; that it reposes in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, as a kind of latent energy that can be elicited and applied. Something like this seems to have been the view of Dr. Thomas W. Jenkyn in his once popular book, "The Union of the Holy Spirit and the Church," and of Alexander Campbell, the founder of the sect of the Campbellites or the so-called Disciples. What these authors have more

or less explicitly affirmed others have implicitly though perhaps unconsciously held in their doctrines concerning the efficiency of divine truth. They forget that the Holy Spirit dwells on earth only in human personalities, and associates itself only with human spirits. "The Spirit shall guide *you* into all truth" and "Receive *ye* the Holy Ghost," said Christ. And of the day of Pentecost it is said, "they" (that is, the disciples, and not their words) "were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Another and still more mischievous error is that which supposes the Christian minister to be a mere functionary, and the function which he performs to be dependent for its efficacy on the nature of his office rather than on the character of himself as its occupant; which regards him as an official, and the efficacy of his offices as lying in the thing done rather than in him who does it; and which regards as the highest and most efficacious of his offices the administration of the Sacraments. This is sacerdotalism, and supposes that the Holy Spirit accompanies the sacraments rather than dwells in the man. He may be utterly indifferent in spirit and even dishonest at heart; but he has been ordained a priest and thus divinely commissioned; and the divine commission insures the divine presence and power in the function which he performs. This sinks the prophet or preacher in the priest and whatever else it may be is not in accordance with the Christianity of the New Testament.

Another error, less mischievous perhaps but far more common than those just mentioned, is the notion that the home of the Spirit is some-

how in the heavens, and that he comes to us only in answer to prayer. Hence you will not unfrequently hear people, both clerical and lay, praying that God "will pour out his Spirit." They forget that the Spirit has been poured out once for all—that he came to the praying Church at the day of Pentecost, but that his dwelling-place ever since has been, and still is, in the bosom of the Church, in the hearts of the individuals of whom the Church is composed. The Spirit thus dwelling in us, "guiding us into all truth," "helping our infirmities," and "bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," is the same Spirit that spoke through the prophets, that ruled in the minds of the apostles, interpreting to their Christian consciousness the prophets and the significance of the sufferings, the works, the words and the person of Christ. The apostles were "filled with the Holy Spirit." "While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." The Apostle Paul, moved by the same Spirit, spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance, and spoke "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "There were diversities of gifts but the same Spirit"; "To each one was given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal"; but the gifts then were, as they still are, to living persons and not to the sacraments, nor to rites, nor to the words, but always to persons by whom sacraments were administered, rites performed and the word preached. And this same Spirit, dwelling in you as preachers of the word, when you shall revolve in your minds the teachings of prophets, of Christ and his apostles,

shall interpret to you their meaning, and, animating you with the high and worthy purpose of proclaiming that meaning to others, shall enable you to wield with effectiveness "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

If now the office of preaching in the economy of Christianity be as here represented, then plainly it never can rightly be supplanted by anything else. And it is equally plain that for any young man gifted with heart and talent for the office of preaching, and honestly asking how best he can honor his Maker and serve his generation, no calling on earth is so high and so certain of enduring results. No other can so move his soul to its deepest depths, summoning to its service every energy of his being. As representative of the eternal God, he deals with truths which no human soul can safely neglect. Amid illusive and transient scenes he builds for eternity. May the Omniscient Spirit, without whose aid all preaching is in vain, so dwell in your minds and hearts as to impart to you and your words his own vital and vitalizing energy; so shall you build both effectively and securely, and your work when everything earthly will have vanished shall still abide.

I cannot close this lecture without allusion to one who, in years gone by, has added dignity to these occasions by his presence; whose countenance, radiant with intelligence, with emotion, with sympathy, lent inspiration to the lecturers who have preceded me. Few men in this century have better understood the relation of the pen to speech, of the press to the pulpit; few men

have had a higher and clearer and more inspiring conception of the true office of the Christian minister than the Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon. Full well and long—for more than a generation—did he illustrate in his life the power and the function of the living preacher, the place of preaching in the work of the world's redemption. It was a well-spent life; a life drawn out into a green old age; an old age that was beautified with the sweet spirit of charity; adorned with a gentle though sometimes caustic humor and wit, and the whole sanctified by consecration to the service of Him whom we all alike serve as Master and Lord. His life was a rare illustration of the true dignity and grandeur of the mission of the preacher of righteousness. He is not here to-day. He walks amid immortal scenes, is reaping the harvest of a well-spent life. He has entered into that rest to which we all are hastening; is admitted to that service in which, if worthy, we at the last shall be permitted to participate.

LECTURE II.

CONNECTION OF PREACHING WITH THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIAN NATIONS.

THE progress of Christian nations since the introduction of Christianity among them, is one of the most noticeable of the great facts of history. In explanation of this progress, the most diverse and sometimes conflicting opinions have been expressed. But foremost among the many forces contributing to it, and that which has given efficiency to all other forces, it can be shown, we think, has been the Christian religion. And this, we also think, will be found to be true whether we direct our attention only to the teachings of Christianity, or as well to the method by which a knowledge of its teachings has been communicated through preaching. As preaching in its distinctive sense is the announcement, exposition, and enforcement of Christian truth, the connection of this truth with a nation's advance will be included in the broader question of the connection of the advance with the oral proclamation of the truth. The topic of our lecture this afternoon will be: *The Connection of Preaching with the Progress of Christian Nations.*

Not all religions have ministered to the continuous progress of the nations that have accepted them. Some, that at first have carried nations onward with rapid strides, have soon exhausted all their power; and stagnation and decay have ensued. Mahometanism was immeasurably better than the idolatry it supplanted. Lifted by it to the worship of one Supreme Being, the peoples accepting it started at once on a new career. Exchanging polytheism for monotheism, the Arabs and Moors speedily made an immense advance. They were at once put in training for that progress in civilization, in science, and philosophy, for which, in due time, they became distinguished among the nations of the earth. But Mahometanism, in due time, also reached the limits of its power to elevate and carry forward. And now no amount of its preaching can evoke from it the elements of a continuous progress.

Any religion, even that of the lowest type, may yet be better than none. It will repress some evils. Every religion puts its ban on some kinds of vice, stanches some sources of moral evil, holds in check some passions of the soul; and so far, it may be said to furnish a basis for civilization, and to minister to the progress of a people. The very idea of religion is that of obligation. A religion that commands me to abstain from one kind of wrong-doing, though it permits, or even enjoins, another kind, is yet good so far as it goes. Any kind of religion, therefore, so far as it restrains is better than no restraint. When Archbishop Whately set himself deliberately to controvert this sentiment, he did so, it seems to me, unwisely;

and he did not make good his position. A religion that will hold back a people or an individual from complete moral degradation or ruin must have in it some power for good. A bramble-bush that can lift the creeping vine but an inch above the reeking soil, is assuredly better than no support. The halter that holds a vicious horse by the neck, though it be a halter with a slip-noose that threatens his life, is better than no halter. Religions, therefore, which only repress some evils, which only carry forward to a certain stage, and which for a long period only hold peoples at the point to which it has advanced them, are by no means to be despised. Brahminism and Buddhism have not themselves been progressive; the peoples accepting them as religions have not continued to advance. Confucianism, if we may call it a religion, has not carried forward its adherents however firmly it may have held them at the point to which it has brought them. But Brahminism and Buddhism and Confucianism and Mahometanism, so far as they cultivate any virtues or furnish any kind of a basis for civilization to work on, are incomparably better than no religion.

That there is an intimate and mutual relation between civilization and religion, is apparent enough to every one. It is a relation affording a wide field of thought: a field to which, however, we can give but a passing glance, and such glance only as is necessitated by our theme.

If we examine civilization, we shall find, at its last analysis, that it consists simply in the discovery and supply of wants. The man that first

discovered a want, and by energy and industry supplied it, took the first step toward civilization; for when one want had been supplied, a dozen others at once presented themselves; each of these brought its dozen others to light, and even with more than geometrical progression an endless line of them sprung into view. The individual or race that has started on a course of industry requisite to supply this ever ascending series of wants, has entered on the never-ending career of civilization.

Now, a civilization that is to be healthfully and continuously progressive, must be associated with a religion that can keep pace with it and support it. If unguided or misguided, it will return on itself and devour its own vitals. A civilization rooted and growing continuously without a religion, is a phenomenon that the sun has not yet looked on in this world. One of the earliest wants of which man becomes aware, a want which his latest experiences in life only make the more apparent, is his need of some kind of guidance to his innate and inexorable sense of obligation, and some kind of provision for the yearnings of his soul. Attempts to supply this guidance and provision, have given to the world an indefinite number of kinds and forms of religion. Seek to account for the origin of polytheism and of idolatry in any way you may, you will find it at the end of your inquiries, if at all, in the deep sense of need to which the soul is aroused by its surroundings. Even the old and now exploded notion that demons were the authors of all false religions, implied the existence of conscious wants which the religions were intended to supply. The

later and sounder view recognizes the truth that it is the voices calling to him from invisible sources, and conscience speaking with authority from within, which prompt him to provide as best he can a shelter for his soul and a quiet for his inward apprehensions. Even the positivist Comte, after exhausting his resources in attempts to overthrow the authority of both philosophy and religion, felt obliged in the end to recognize the soul's inexorable demand for some kind of religion, and so made for it the empty provision of a calendar of saints, Heathen, Jewish, and Christian, for every day in the year. Civilization and religion begin together and advance together; and if dissociated, both alike perish. This is the lesson of history, written in letters of blood, which all the world can read.

What Christianity can do for the civilization of Christian nations may be seen in the relation of the three great forms or types under which the Christian religion always exists. You always find it under the three great forms, of doctrine, of worship, and of conduct; of creed, ritual, and action. Behind one's worship and conduct always lies his innermost belief; outside and expressive of his belief, always stand his devotions and his deeds. Ascertain one's belief, and you know for a certainty what or whom he worships, and what is the quality of his deeds. Know what his worship and his deeds really are, and you know what he really believes.

Now, Christianity strikes at once for one's belief. Controlling that, all else follows naturally and inevitably. Controlling that, it controls con-

science and so rules the whole man. Controlling conscience, it produces a type of manhood known distinctively as Christian. A society or nation composed of such types, or largely abounding in them, presents a distinctively Christian civilization,—a civilization which, as compared with any other yet seen on earth, is pure in its morality, gentle in its spirit, unselfish in its charities, exalted in its aims, refined in its tastes, strong in its virtue, beautiful in its harmonies, and which carries within itself the power of a perpetual improvement. To control the belief and the consciences of mankind and thus to start them on this career of endless improvement is the aim of all true preaching.

But it must be admitted that Christianity has not always ministered to the progress of the peoples among whom it has been established. There are not wanting instances of a decline of civilization, and even of national retrogression, in spite of its presence and power. The fault has not been with Christianity, but with those who have claimed the exclusive prerogative of administering its offices. They have displaced doctrines and preaching from their fundamental positions, and have exalted ritual over both doctrine and conduct. They have transformed the Christianity of Christ into a system of sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism, which has deprived it of the very power by which national life could be kept pure, and national progress be ensured. They have re-enacted the history of the priesthood as it ministered religion in the days of the Jewish Republic,—a ministry under which the

Republic went rapidly downward, till its final overthrow at the great national disaster at Shiloh.

And Jewish history will throw light on our theme, if we follow it down from the time of the Republic through the kingly period. The relation of Judaism to Christianity makes the lessons doubly instructive; for never should we forget that the words of Jesus, "Salvation is of the Jews," contained more than the mere meaning that the Messiah was to be of the lineage of David. All that is distinctive in Christianity lay germinally in Judaism. In Christianity, the germs burst forth into full and final fruitage. The starlight of Abraham, the twilight of Moses, the reddening dawn of the prophetic period, vanished in the broad daylight of the Sun of Righteousness. But Jewish history is instructive to us, in dealing with our theme, chiefly by the illustration it supplies of the comparative influence of the priestly and prophetic or preaching function on the progress of the Jewish people. That the prophet of the Old Testament was the original of the preacher of the New Testament, no one can justly dispute. And that, under their prophets or preachers, the Jewish people advanced in civilization, in general and religious knowledge, and above all in moral character, beyond anything ever attained, or by any possibility attainable, under the mere priestly ministrations of their religion, no reader of the Old Testament will venture to deny. It was under priestly domination, as we have already said, that the Republic went down; it was with the introduction of the prophets that the onward movement of the nation clearly began.

From Samuel, and the schools of the prophets which he founded, sprang a power that never ceased its influence for good among the Jews, that is still perpetuated in the office of the Christian preacher.

When the last of the prophets had spoken, when the synagogue had become an established institution among the Jews, and when the writings of Moses and of the prophets, collected into a volume, were accustomed to be read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, and any one whose endowments, education and experience qualified him to expound what had been read was at liberty to speak—and you will remember what the evangelist Luke tells us of Jesus at Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia—then and thus was it that prophecy passed over into preaching, and the Jewish synagogue became the nucleus and the groundwork of the Christian church. Prophecy and the synagogue raised one nation from a low to a high estate; preaching and the Christian church—the church patterned after the synagogue and not after the temple—has lifted many nations out of heathenism, and to-day is taking them rapidly forward on careers toward goals which no prophecy has foretold, and no prophet seems to have been permitted to foresee.

But, in forming our estimate of the value of preaching as an element of national progress, we must remember, as before said, that the subject-matter preached is quite as essential as the simple act of preaching. Mere oral teaching or preaching of a religion does not ensure progress.

Islam has its religious discourses. It has been said that, "In the pilgrimage to Mecca the delivery of the sermon is the most impressive of all the solemnities." Travelers have given extracts from sermons which they say were delivered on that occasion with great energy, and which awakened great enthusiasm. But Islam is a crystallized religion, a species of fatalism which neither itself expands nor admits of expansion among its adherents. Christianity, on the contrary, fixed for a finality only in its historical facts, its ethical principles, and the religious truths which the facts and the principles necessarily imply, is yet in its spirit as expansive as the atmosphere we breathe. No region accessible to man is too high for it; no goal, to which the native endowments of the race can carry it, lies beyond its reach. Inexhaustible as the Godhead in its resources, its life-giving power is commensurate with the omniscient and omnipresent Spirit by whom alone its power can be imparted. Christainity can never be outgrown.

Let us now inquire how Christian preaching does thus minister to the progress of Christian nations. Let us begin with the subject-matter preached. Christianity provokes inquisitiveness, which is a first condition of progress. Its commands are: "Prove all things;" "Try the spirits." There is not a solitary word that commands or countenances a surrender of the right of private judgment to any earthly authority. The very idea of a real surrender of will to authority implies some kind of intelligent recognition of the ground or right of authority. Even Jehovah

himself—if I may reverently say so—plants himself over against both nations and individuals, and says: "Come now, and let us reason together." Christian faith, in any clear explanation that can be given of it, requires an assent of the intellect, in order that there may be a genuine consent of the heart.

Again, Christianity individualizes man. To move masses of men, there must always be a movement of the individuals of which the masses are composed. Christianity accordingly affirms explicitly that "every man shall give account of himself unto God." In dealing with men, it singles out each one, and places him alone with God. It aims at the solidarity of the race, but does so by making each one feel that he is one of the race, and to a degree responsible for the whole. It says: "Bear ye one another's burdens;" but then, lest the individual should think to escape his personal responsibility by merging himself in the mass, it adds, "Every man shall bear his own burden." Every man, thus isolated, is set to thinking, is awakened to a sense of obligation and of a need of exertion to fulfill it. There are planted within him the seeds of a new and ever improving life. A nation composed of such men cannot fail to advance with rapid strides, whatever the position from which it starts.

And so again Christianity furnishes a goal and appliances for reaching it, which admit of nothing short of endless progress. "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" is its standard. It not only enjoins truth, honor, justice, purity, charity, but the cultivation of every

known virtue and of whatever is praiseworthy among men. It forbids moral indolence. It sets the whole soul in motion. It puts a spark within the bosom, which, once kindled into a flame, consumes every other passion. It is, I know, a troublesome religion. It will neither compromise with error nor rest at peace for a moment in the presence of any kind of sin. He who introduced it into the world declared it would bring conflict. "Think not that I am come to bring peace but a sword," said he whose coming was announced by the angels as the coming of peace on earth. "I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I if it be already kindled." It is a religion which sets men into conflict with every form of evil, and never lets them stay in their course so long as there is a moral evil to be overcome, or a wrong to be righted. A nation thus moved will never rest content on any low level either of morals or of intelligence. So much for the subject-matter preached.

Now, for the act of oral teaching or preaching. All that makes Christianity the religion of progress is made doubly so by the living preacher. First, the inquisitiveness which the gospel provokes is intensified by oral address. The hearer is challenged. His mind is called into exercise by the very act of address. What is said may awaken antagonism; but antagonism is better than indifference. Better that he be roused into fierce opposition, if, thereby into inquiry. Inquisitiveness, honest doubt, even sharp controversy, give evidence of life; and life is better than death. Even the battle-field is preferable to the tomb.

So, also, the individualizing method of Christianity becomes still more apparent in preaching. Preaching is a direct appeal through an individ ual to individuals; for though the preacher addresses men in the mass, yet each individual hearer feels himself to be addressed by the speaker. Multitudes of individuals thus have truth forced on their attention, who otherwise would give no heed to it. Each one is made to think for himself of his relation to God. A whole nation is thus put in motion towards God and the right, because each unit of which the nation is composed is individualized and set moving.

Preaching, also, keeps the ideal standard for individuals and the race in continual view; and so it is ever impelling a nation onward in the path of improvement. The preacher, if faithful to his trust, overlooks no vice, loses sight of no virtue, but holds up, always high, the perfect standard. He sets forth the attributes of the infinitely Perfect One as being at once the pledge of all that humanity is capable of and the pattern of all it should aspire to. Such then is the fitness of preaching as an instrument of progress.

Let us turn now to what Christian preaching has actually accomplished in the past. We might begin with the marvelous changes wrought by it in the hands of the apostles and their fellow-laborers. Or descending a few centuries later, we might contemplate the work of Chrysostom, whose golden words, first at Antioch and afterwards at Constantinople, long held in check the forces of corruption and ruin brought into existence by confluence of the old and opposing civil-

izations of the East and the West. But let us come forward several centuries, stopping near the close of the eleventh century. Amid the darkness of that period, Peter of Amiens, known as Peter the Hermit, made his appearance. He was a preacher. His soul was on fire from what he had thought and felt and seen at the tomb of the Saviour.

He was inflamed, possibly, in part by memory of the treatment himself had received in his efforts to visit the Holy Sepulchre, but still more by recollection of the life and sufferings and death and triumph of that Lord whose life had been spent and whose body had been buried in the land he had visited. He was intent upon the rescue of the Holy Land and Sepulchre from the grasp of the infidel. Guizot, I know, tells us in his History of France, that it was not the preaching of Peter that originated the first crusade, but "the religious belief and feeling of the nations." But, pray, how did religious belief or feeling organize itself into that great movement, except as appealed to and roused into action by the preaching of Peter? And we greatly err if we suppose that the theme of Peter's preaching was alone the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. That doubtless was in general, perhaps uniformly, the chief aim of his discourses; but, in preparing his hearers for this immediate end—that they should hurl themselves upon the invaders of the Holy Land—he reminded them of what the Saviour had said and done and suffered. And in this, there must have been something of genuine Christian preaching. It was impossible, wild and chimerical as was the end he aimed at, that

he should have reached it by preaching, except by dwelling on what would even now be regarded as some of the distinctive truths and principles of the Christian religion. The preaching of Peter then was useful to Europe simply as a means of diffusing a knowledge of Christian truth.

It is not my purpose to dwell on the reflex influence which came back over Europe from that century or more of crusades, each of which was more or less directly carried forward by the office of preaching. This was an influence for good, in many ways; and to dwell on it might show the connection of preaching, though remotely, with national progress. But the preaching of Peter and of St. Bernard, that resulted in two crusades, did something more than affect Europe remotely, and by reflex influence. The gospel that fell from their lips, though mixed with error, fell into receptive minds, and bore fruit immediately and long afterwards. It remains for the peering eye of some minute historian yet to trace the direct influence of the preaching of Peter and Bernard in the moral improvement of the people of their time.

If we descend a century from Peter, or a half century from St. Bernard, we come upon other great examples of the influence of preaching. In 1170, there was born of one of the humbler of the noble families of Spain, a man who came early in life to possess a lively appreciation of the religion of his time, and a strong sympathy with its spirit. Crossing the Pyrenees from Spain, he encountered the Albigenses and their heretical beliefs. He heard of other sects, the Waldenses and Petro-

brussians. Among them all, were busy preachers setting forth doctrines, and presenting types of faith and practice directly in conflict with the established faith and practice of the Roman Church. In that church, all was overshadowed by ritual. Preaching was rapidly falling into disuse. St. Dominic saw that, as among the multiplying heresies of his time, the one great means by which they were spread was preaching. So the means by which they could be resisted and overcome must also be by preaching. He became himself a noted preacher; he founded a monastic order pledged to the one work of preaching. By papal decree, his new order, the *patres predicatorcs*, the preaching friars, was duly established in 1217. Within twenty years from the time that Dominic gathered the first members of his order, or before the end of the first quarter of the century in which the order was established, every nation in Christendom had its preaching friars.

And these friars, wherever they went, found willing ears. We err if we accept the popular notion that the thirteenth, or the last quarter of the twelfth century was a dark and stagnant age. There was not only great intellectual life in the universities, but the common people were also roused to thought and inquiry by the thousands of students who from every Christian nation were then flocking to all the great universities. Among the common people, and into the universities themselves, these preaching friars found their way, proclaiming the gospel as they understood it, and helping all onward towards the better days that were in store for them.

Scarcely had Dominic gotten his order of preaching friars fairly at work, when St. Francis of Assisi, born twelve years after Dominic, founded a new and similar order. Francis, the son of a tradesman, saw the people about him indifferent to religion, and the church edifices falling into decay. He renounced all claims to inheritance from his father, and throwing down even the clothes that he wore at the feet of the Bishop, pledged himself to absolute poverty and to preaching the gospel. The order of mendicant friars which he organized not only traversed all Christian lands as preachers, but became the foreign missionaries of that day. Their preaching may have been dreary, may have been laden with gross superstitions, but it was equal to their day, and sufficient for their time, and wrought wondrous results.

The preaching friars, both Dominicans and Franciscans, it must be admitted, in time became audacious, insolent, and cruel. The Dominicans, as founders and managers of the Inquisition, became execrable in the eyes of all lovers of justice and right; the Franciscans, as assailants of whatever was above the level of their acknowledged beggary, were unbearably impertinent. Both worked their way into the universities; at first as denouncers of philosophy and learning, but afterwards embracing in their ranks some most eminent scholars. But preaching as they did everywhere in vernacular tongues to the most ignorant and lowly, their labors were invaluable in quickening intellects, in purifying morals, and so in exalting the national character. They were

the forerunners of those preachers of a purer gospel who, three centuries later, lifted up their voices among the peoples of Switzerland, of Germany, and of England and Scotland.

But not the least valuable service rendered by these friars was that of making the common people aware that Christianity was not a mere matter of ritual, but of truths which were to be understood, believed in, and put in practice. The priesthood, the hierarchy, then, as always, whether in Judaism or Christianity, were profound believers in the sacerdotal principle. The mass of the priesthood, when these friars began their work, ignorant and not always virtuous, had unbounded confidence in the efficacy of the sacraments. The very idea of a priest, namely, that of one who transacts with God for others, makes it necessary that he, of all men, should be the most conservative. He would have things remain as they are, provided his ritual is duly observed. How strangely was this illustrated in 1861, when, all over our land, the genuine priests, the members of hierarchies of whatever name, hesitated, and mumbled and muttered, and see-sawed, uncertain which way to turn. And as to the men who to-day believe in the efficacy of the sacerdotal function; are they the first to assail any strongly entrenched evil? Were they the first to cry out against the wrong of slavery? Are they leaders against the great and growing evils of intemperance? Alas! it is not in the nature of the priesthood to originate or to push reforms. But the prophet, the preacher, whether preaching friar or evangelical pastor, by the very function

of orally dealing with ideas, necessarily contributes to an onward movement; and the people, in spite of their own inertia, and the deadening influence of sacerdotalism, are made to advance.

Pass to another period, three centuries later; to the introduction of what is called the Protestant Reformation. Certainly we cannot too decidedly recognize the great value of the learning of that period. But to dwell on this now would be irrelevant. We must look for its preachers. And we shall find these arresting our attention at the very outset of the great movement. Indeed, among the reformers who preceded the organized Reformation, were not a few who sought the pulpit, and gave no uncertain sound from it. And when the movement had once begun, it was oral proclamation of its principles that everywhere organized it, consolidated it, and gave it breath and strength. At Paris, we find John Calvin converted to the evangelical faith, preaching at the age of twenty-one with great zeal, frequency, and success. And afterwards, with all his multifarious labors as an author, theologian, and commentator, he never ceased to make use of the pulpit. Amid all his arduous and incessant labors at Geneva, he continued to deliver three sermons every alternate week. And it was his sermons, more than his writings, that first gave him his influence at Paris, and afterwards made him the great leader at Geneva.

But it is not to be forgotten that the preaching of Calvin and his co-adjutors never reached the lower classes of the French people. It reached some of the noble families; it found many hearers

in the higher grade of the middle classes; but it never took hold of the hearts of either the peasants or the humbler toilers of the towns. The Huguenots were almost entirely composed of the upper portion of the middle class. The lower strata of French society were never touched by the Reformers. John Calvin, associating from childhood with the better classes of French society, and blest with the very best education that could be given him, was naturally more in sympathy with the cultured and well-born than with the lowly and the ignorant. The training to which for a time he subjected himself, with a view to entering the legal profession, only heightened the tendency given by early associations and education. He never won the heart of the common people, even in his best days at Geneva.

Martin Luther, on the contrary, born of the lowliest parentage, was a preacher who thrilled the heart of the German people, reaching alike peasant, artisan, tradesman, and nobleman. At home as he was with the humblest, and yet familiar with such learning as was open to him, he not only spread by his preaching the contagion of his religious enthusiasm and faith in the ranks to which by birth and early training he belonged, but kindled a fire that ascended through all ranks to the highest. Hence Germany became a Protestant nation, made so primarily by the preaching of Luther and his associates, and kept so permanently by Luther's translation of the Bible.

So of John Knox's preaching. It was the voice of Knox that made the heart of Mary quake; it

was his voice that swayed the people of Scotland as the winds sway her fir-trees. His sermons, that seemed to vanish with the breath that uttered them, wrote themselves in indelible letters on the character of the Scottish people.

So, also, you will find it was Latimer who, always plain, often rude, sometimes almost vulgar in speech, at times greatly wanting in that dignity which should belong to the preacher of righteousness, yet found his way directly to the hearts of the English people, and, more than any other man, brought them into sympathy with the principles and aims of the Reformation. And, since the days of Latimer, how has the Protestant pulpit changed the whole current of English thought and feeling and life! Changed English character; made England to be what it is to-day. It is common, I know, to laud the political administrations of England, and to say of one, that it turned the wealth of the Indies into the lap of England; and of another, that it abolished the Corn Laws and established Free Trade; and of another, that it achieved great victories, or opened new channels of trade, or widened the suffrage; but after summing up all that governments have accomplished, the result is as nothing in comparison with what the Protestant pulpit has wrought in giving to England all that she can boast of as praiseworthy now, or as likely to be permanent hereafter.

It has been common, also, to deride the Puritans and their influence in English history. But long and tedious as were their sermons, narrow as were their views, and bigoted as they were in

spirit, they yet made lines on the English face that to-day help to give it dignity. It was the Puritan pulpit more than any other single cause that, directly or indirectly, lifted England from the low level on which Puritanism found it, and set it on that ascending way which has brought it to the point where it now stands.

The relation of the pulpit to national progress was conspicuously apparent in two great national revolutions, with which history has made us all familiar; namely, the English revolution in 1688, and the French in 1793. The last named lies nearest to us; let us begin with that.

From the beginning of the Reformation in France, its advocates had insisted in their preaching on the right to interpret Scripture for themselves, and to walk according to its light instead of yielding an unreasoning obedience to the authority of the Roman Church. Persecutions, persistent, cruel and bloody, drove hundreds of thousands from France and virtually ended for a time Protestant preaching. But there lingered in the minds of the French people as a result of pulpit teaching a deep-seated sense of outraged rights. Rights of conscience which Protestantism had so boldly insisted on, grew rapidly into political rights of man. On the rights of man the encyclopædists and their supporters rang endless changes. The hearts of Frenchmen, or rather of Parisians who in reality were France, were inflamed with the idea that they had been robbed of their rights. A perverted truth, falling among the tinder-like errors of the time was the spark that kindled the revolutionary fire which swept

away in a twinkling the creations of generations of corruption and tyranny.

In England, on the contrary, an untrammelled pulpit had dwelt long and assiduously on the duties of man. No characteristic of Puritanism was more strongly marked than its unyielding regard for duty. Out of that sprang, both the sternness of its temper and the vigor of its defense of all personal rights. What Kant afterwards taught metaphysically, they seem to have held to practically, namely, that all human rights are grounded in human duties. It was their deep and relentless sense of duty, duty to God, to their countrymen, and to themselves, that prompted the judges to send Charles the First to the scaffold. And from the death of Charles, down through the Commonwealth and the reign of Charles the Second, to the time of the Second James, the English pulpit never ceased to instil into the minds of Englishmen their duties to God and to one another. And when the revolution of 1688 came, and James was to be dethroned, and a new dynasty was to be established, could any revolution have been more complete, and at the same time more absolutely bloodless and peaceful? And all was due to the temper of the people, a temper that was the product of the Protestant pulpit. Good, noble, heroic, exiled old John Howe on the continent, conferring with the Prince of Orange, and the Prince of Orange entering into Howe's ideas and sympathizing with his spirit, give us a plain clew to the means by which the Revolution was brought about, and to the causes of its permanence as well as of its beneficent influence

in all subsequent English history; means and causes traceable directly to the English Bible, and the Protestant teaching and preaching of what the Bible enjoins.

But here it will, doubtless, be asked, Have you not forgotten some of the drawbacks and qualifications that should be made in thus sketching the influence of preaching on national progress? Has it not often happened that the pulpit has sounded forth its anathemas against some of the most useful discoveries of science? Has it not often insanely denounced some of the most self-denying and painstaking laborers in science? Was not Roger Bacon, that father of modern science, who more than three centuries before his namesake, Francis Bacon, wrote the Organon, persecuted and imprisoned by his fellowFranciscans, the famous preaching friars already referred to in this lecture, simply because he sought to make nature do what it is now so effectively doing in ministering to the progress of the nations? Was it not the Dominicans, the other great preachers of the thirteenth century, who in the seventeenth century persecuted Galileo, one of them aiming at him a sermon founded on the text: "Ye Galileans, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Has not the Protestant pulpit often denounced science and scientists? Do we not even now often hear pulpiteers launching forth their anathemas against the conclusions of modern science, arraigning by name, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and others, showing, by the very arraignments made, a lamentable want of acquaintance with the conclusions assailed, and still more of the processes by

which the conclusions have been reached? All this is true; and, true, because preachers have often either forgotten what their real function is, or, which is more commonly the case, have derived their knowledge of the views assailed from second or third hand sources, and so have assailed the bugbears of their own imaginations. If men who assay to teach from the pulpit would be wise enough to let alone the questions of science which they are not competent to handle; would abstain from anathemas which only strengthen the prejudices of the ignorant and sacrifice the respect of the intelligent, the pulpit might, as it always should, be the foremost agency in all healthy and continuous progress.

But here let us not forget on the other hand that it is an error into which too many have fallen to suppose that the Christian religion is merely a system of dogmatic truths, all of which can be resolved into a sharply defined creed; and that the office of the preacher is to limit himself rigidly to the dogmas of his Church or sect. The Bible is too broad a book to be cramped within the limits of a creed, whether it be Nicene, Athanasian, or Westminster, or any one of the hundreds of others of an earlier or a later date. The Bible is a book of facts, and of ethical and religious truths representative of the nature and will of the infinite God, and of the infinite God in his relations to a race that is capable of endless progress. On the ethical and religious principles and truths of the Bible, Christianity can rest its claims to universal acceptance and authority. And in the final great struggle between the Christian religion and

all false religions, now so close at hand, that one of them will prevail which can do the most and the best for mankind.

We might here, in conclusion, dwell on what is the manifest opportunity for the pulpit in our own land and time; its power to carry the nation onward from the point it has now reached. It is a most inspiring subject to contemplate: enough to set the heart of any young man, who is looking out into the future, aflame; to transport and lift him up with an ambition loftier than any other that now can fill the heart of the aspiring; he is invited to be one of those who shall guide the nation onward in that great career now lying before it, a career which only the Omniscient God can foresee and comprehend, and in which alone the Gospel of Christ can guide it in safety.

LECTURE III.

RELATION OF PREACHING TO FREE INSTITUTIONS.

AT the dawn of history, the king and the priest are found standing side by side. Sometimes the king and the high-priest are one and the same person. Civil government and religion first make their appearance as leaning on each other for mutual support. It was natural, therefore, that Moses should summon Aaron to his aid as High Priest; in so doing, he simply complied with established and universal usage. So when, many centuries afterwards, Constantine made Christianity the State religion, he did but place himself in line with all the kings and emperors that had preceded him. And when still later, there was the completely organized Holy Roman Empire, we find that the Church and the State were so united as to appear to be indissolubly one. And if we pass to the history that more immediately concerns ourselves, we find that when Henry the Eighth of England broke with Rome, it was not to place the State and Religion on independent bases, but to take to himself supremacy in both and to become head of the Church as well

as of the State. And from that time onward, in one form or another, all English history presents the Church and the State in some kind of conjunction.

Various have been the theories of this union which its advocates have propounded. At one time, it has been the theory acted on by Henry, and which oddly enough has since been called the Erastian, that the government of the Church should be wholly in the hands of the State; at another, it has been the Warburtonian theory of an alliance between two independent bodies and a relation of mutual helpfulness; and then again, it has been the theory of identity, hinted at by Hooker and earnestly advocated by Arnold of Rugby; a theory founded on the conception of a comprehensive Christian polity in which the State and the Church should be indivisibly one in purpose and government and in which to be a citizen or subject is also to be a member of the Church. And even with the Puritans, it was not so much separation of State and Church, and the absolute independency of each, that they demanded, and to establish which they fled to America, as it was separation of the State from the then existing Church, and their release from conformity to it. And the views of the Puritans in England they brought with them to America. Nothing was farther from the minds of the Colonists, whether at Jamestown or at Plymouth or at Boston, than a separation of Church and State. In the Massachusetts colony, a man was obliged to be a member of the Church in order to be a citizen; and to be a member of the Church,

he must have the consent of the clergy. The clergy were the rulers of both the Church and the State. How little did they dream of what is now a first principle in our national Constitution; of what has now for more than a century had full and fair trial; namely, that the State and the Church stand, each on its own basis; that each is independent of the other; and yet each sustains to the other a most intimate and inseparable relation! It has seemed fitting, therefore, that the subject of one of these lectures should be: *The Relation of the Pulpit to Civil Government in these United States.*

It is a relation which has never ceased to puzzle and to pain the advocates of Church establishments; a relation about which the defenders of State Churches and the hierarchies of all churches have always prophesied evil; but a relation from which European statesmen in these latter days are beginning to learn lessons to which their predecessors were willfully blind; a relation in which Religion asks simply to be let alone, and the State rigidly restricts itself to the management of its own affairs. Such is the relation of Religion and Government in this land, a relation of independence and yet of mutual helpfulness. But, in order that we may determine what the pulpit ought to do for a self-governing people, let us first inquire, what is the attitude of the Christian Religion towards all government, and what preaching has actually done towards procuring for us the government under which we are now living.

Christianity in its historical records avows no

preference for any special form of civil government. The words of our Lord when tempted on this point were: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The Apostle Paul distinctly declares that, "the powers that be are ordained of God." The Apostle Peter says: "Yield yourselves in obedience to all the ordinances of men, whether it be unto the king as supreme, or unto governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well." And yet nothing, I think, to any attentive reader of the New Testament is more plainly evident than that the whole tendency of the Christian Religion is towards that form of government known as republican.

That this is the tendency of Christianity may be seen in the briefest possible glance at two or three of its simplest principles. First, its method of individualization, referred to in our last lecture, awakens in every one, even in its most elementary addresses, a sense of his own personality and of his personal obligations. It appeals directly to every individual conscience. Every one thus addressed is aroused to reflection. A nation thus aroused is already on the high road towards self-government and a republic.—Again, most clearly and profoundly does Christianity recognize the sacredness of the right of the individual person; and everywhere in the New Testament, from the first teachings of our Lord down to the last utterance of the apostles, is the avowal that "one is your Master and all ye are brethren." The sacredness of all that belongs to the lowliest

and the weakest, as well as to the highest and the strongest, is distinctly recognized.—And so, again, Christianity in its final judgment of men places them all on a common level. The rich and the poor, the master and his slave, the king and his subject, all meet together. The only difference among them, in the eye of the Supreme Judge, is the difference in their moral characters. A religion whose principles are only these—to enumerate no more—is a religion that must lift men up to a recognition of the brotherhood of mankind, and of the right of the individual to a disposal of himself as well as of his own time and property, and above all, of the right to obey the dictates of his own conscience.

Christianity, however, as it has existed among men, has not always thus fostered personal rights, or led on to governments that protected the rights of all. As presented in a church, the offices and government of which were usurped by a hierarchy, it has been the supporter of absolutism. Well and pithily was this view of Christianity expressed in the saying so common in the later reigns of the Stuarts in England: "No bishop, no church; no church, no king." Thus the church was made the willing servant of the king. The religion which alone could effectually overthrow tyranny was prostituted to its support. The religion of Jesus was degraded by its professed representatives to ends the very opposite of those which, left to its own natural working, it was sure in due time to accomplish.

But some one may here ask: "What are the actual evidences from history that the Christian pulpit has been thus serviceable in humanizing

and liberalizing the governments of men; that it has contributed directly to the creation and diffusion of the ideas and spirit of national self-government?" Let us glance for a moment at a bit of English history.

The civil liberties of Englishmen are often ascribed directly and alone to Magna Charta. They were wrung, it is said, by the barons from King John at Runnymede. Doubtless Magna Charta did embody in elementary form some of the principles which to-day make up the civil liberty of England. But what the barons claimed and really obtained in that great contest, were immunities for themselves, and not liberty for the common people. Whatever was additional to the claims made for themselves, was incidental and intended merely to further their own ends. Thus a few special concessions to the clergy were wrested from the king; and for what reason? Simply because the barons knew full well, that against them stood Pope Innocent III. just as decisively and unrelentingly their opponent, as was King John. They wished to conciliate the clergy, and therefore wrung from the king certain privileges which they flung to the clergy as baits and bribes to be on their side. So also among the commonalty were a few wealthy freemen of whom it was for the interest of the barons to make friends. For these a few blind concessions were obtained, but fortunately they were concessions involving incomparably more than either king or baron suspected. The barons were feudal lords, who had no inducements to provide for the elevation of their vassals and retainers. For

these the Great Charter made no intentional provisions. Long after its provisions were in full force, the vassals were still in their thatch-roofed and earth-floored cottages, at the foot of the hill on which stood the castle; and if perchance, on some great holiday, they were permitted to ascend the hill and enter its halls, it was a boon for which they were duly but cringingly thankful. And if, in the peril of the castle, they were permitted to come and lie in the straw of the outer hall, it was something for which they did not fail to show themselves humbly grateful. So far as pertained to their real condition and relation to the barons, they still were vassals, ready to be ridden over and trodden on as the whim of their lords should require. Not till three long centuries after the concessions at Runnymede, did they begin to get fairly upon their feet; not till the Reformation had begun to do its work, and the preachers of God's word, earnest in purpose and eager to reach and to teach all the people, had summoned them to arise and walk. Then began that grand uprisal of the commonalty, which secured them recognition in the English constitution; then was born the self-respect which took the place of the spirit of slaves and retainers; then came into being that feeling of brotherhood which has made the lowliest of the nation proud to be called Englishmen. Then began that change in the English government, which has finally made it in every essential particular a republican government. With Kingship and Queenship nominal only, it is the English Parliament, or rather the House of Commons elected by popular suffrage,

that to-day rules the English nation. England herself is practically a great Republic, though her Queen be styled an Empress; and who have made it such? Simply the preachers of the righteousness of the gospel of Christ,—the Puritan pulpit at the first, and then the dissenters, who as successors of the Puritans, have gone everywhere, preaching the gospel to all classes, carrying Christian knowledge into all walks and homes, into the lowliest hovel and the proudest castle. To be an Englishman to-day is to be a freeman, and to be assured of the protection of his rights by the whole force of the Empire. And to the Christian Religion, and specifically to Christian preaching more than to any other single agency, should the credit of all this be ascribed.

Now what the pulpit thus did for England, it did in preparation for the foundation of our American Republic—a Republic of which, in our perhaps excusable vanity, we sometimes boast in high-sounding phrase. It is a Republic that does not give us, perhaps, a government which wise men can call perfect; but it is none the less a government for which we have abundant reason to be profoundly grateful. And never let us forget that the substructions on which its foundations rest, were planted by the preaching of the gospel.

Protestant preaching had set the mind of all England into a ferment. Political and religious rights were subjects of universal discussion. Even royalists and bigoted churchmen caught the infection. Colonists carried the conflicting ideas and discussions to America. The leaders

of the colony in Virginia were profound in their regard for King James, and in their reverence for the Established Church. Their settlement they named Jamestown, and the river on whose banks it was planted, James River. With their government, which at the first was anything but free, the Church was placed in the same alliance as in England. And yet, in every changing compact of the Colonial government, there lurked in its provisions the hidden leaven they had brought with them, which was sure in time to work itself out into democracy.

Pass now to the colonies of New England. Here at their very outset we have presented to us the distinctly marked product of nearly a century of English preaching. It was a sharp and varying conflict of religious ideas that had raged in England between the time of Henry the Eighth and the embarkation of the Plymouth colonists in 1620. But it was a conflict in which the definite ideas of the New Testament were apprehended with an ever-increasing clearness. They were ideas which touched first of all the relation of the individual to God, and then his relation to his fellowmen and the State. Some of the chief of these ideas were embodied in that compact of the pilgrims in the Mayflower, just prior to their disembarkation at Plymouth. They were the ideas which, in the end, gave to New England its free civil government, and the independence of both its State and its churches. And so also in the compact of the colonists at Boston. Mixed as were their notions, at the first, of the relations of the State to the Church,

and subordinate as they made the civil to the ecclesiastical authority, they nevertheless held principles both religious and civil which were sure to bring forth what in due time came to pass.

The interval between 1620 and 1776 is a most instructive portion of New England history; full of lessons on the question of the relation of the pulpit to free government in America. We might turn aside and listen to faithful pastors as they preached Christ and him crucified in obscure parishes, and show how effectually they prepared the people by their preaching for that great political revolution, which in the fullness of time came to them. But we will here notice those more public offices which the pulpit has been called on to perform. In 1633, began those "election sermons" which, after two and a half centuries continuation, are still delivered annually before the Massachusetts Legislature. I know of few kinds of reading less inviting than that of old sermons; and yet to run through some of that long line of election sermons, printed and bound together, as I did a few weeks ago, is to see plainly that the American people did not stumble ignorantly into the form of government which they finally adopted, and did not adopt it without understanding what would be requisite to give it permanency. What the election sermons did for the legislators, the annual fast-day sermons and thanksgiving-day sermons did in other ways for more private citizens in their parish churches. The people of New England, therefore, while ever reminded of their needs as sinners and immortal beings, were never left in ignorance

of their duties as citizens and as members of society.

In 1750, Jonathan Mayhew, a young man then in his thirtieth year, preached a sermon in Boston, which not only roused all Massachusetts, but reached the ears of all the other colonies. It was "A Discourse concerning unlimited submission and non-resistance to the Higher Powers, with some reflections made on the resistance to King Charles I." It was delivered on the anniversary of the "martyrdom" of Charles I.; an anniversary then provided for in the English Prayer-book, but since expunged from it. The discourse was not only widely read in this country, but found its way across the Atlantic; it procured for its author what was then a real, though now too often an unmeaning, honor; the University of Aberdeen conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The discourse assailed the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and defended the diviner rights of conscience. It enunciated principles that then were novel though welcome, but now are regarded as self-evident. There were twenty-six years for those principles to do their work in, before the outbreak of the war of the revolution; and the work was well done. Nor were other discourses wanting that treated of like questions of civil liberty. The preachers of New England by long and faithful teaching had prepared their people for the final upheaval. The desperate struggle which eventuated in what the world now calls the United States of America was entered on by a people who knew their rights and dared maintain them.

Nor was it in New England alone that the pulpit thus prepared the way for the introduction of the government under which we now live. A like service was done in Virginia. The Established Church there had fallen into indifference to the welfare of the people, temporal and spiritual, religious and civil; but preachers from the other states, specially New England, had found their way to Virginia, and spoken with plainness and effect. Among them were some of the most devout and faithful heralds of the gospel that ever blest any country. And these men, while aiming to save the souls of their hearers, did not fail to remind them of what they owed to themselves and their country, as well as to their God. The patriotic preaching of the devout and eloquent Davies, afterwards President of Princeton College, left an impress that still remains. A host of others, equally faithful and zealous, but less known than Davies, among whom were not a few Baptists, preached with such fervor and fidelity, that Jefferson, in his "Notes on Virginia," a book long ago out of print, tells us that in 1776, two-thirds of the population of that state had become dissenters; and he might have added that not a few of them had become active and consistent Christians. Dissenting preaching had fitted them to appreciate and to assert the sacredness of the rights of conscience. They were prepared to maintain the right of self-government; and when the hour came for striking final and decisive blows, they were ready to join hands with their fellow colonists of New England. The pulpit prepared them for a successful issue in that great struggle, and above

all, prepared them for the liberties which that issue secured to them. It was a service which no historian of the Republic has yet over-estimated, which most of the historians by no means sufficiently recognize.

But if such was the service of the pulpit in procuring for us our civil liberties, let us see what it can do in the way of protecting and perpetuating them.

Nothing in democracy is more apparent to the observing than its tendency to its own dissolution. Left to itself, its course is directly towards disharmony, disruption, anarchy, and chaos. Such was the tendency and ending of the great democracies of the past. Such was the fate of the earliest and most favored of the democracies of which we have any trustworthy records, the theocratic democracy of the Jews. What sadder or more instructive history is anywhere to be found than that of the Jewish democracy as recorded in the Book of Judges. It was a state of society in which, in the simple language of the historian, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," and, judging from the narrative, what every one regarded as right was pretty certain to be wrong. A government intended to be beneficent and just came to a calamitous end, and a monarchy was planted on its ruins. The fierce democracies of Greece and Rome ran their wild careers, ending in disorder, convulsion, and anarchy, and furnishing not only a basis and justification, but a necessity, for despotisms.

And it is natural that without the safeguards of morality and religion such should be the course and ending of a democracy. It furnishes a state

of society in which the worst elements are almost certain to come to the surface. The meanest are encouraged to regard themselves as not only the fellow-citizens, but the equals of the best. Under our own government, which gives citizenship and the suffrage to the refuse of other nations, this assumption of equality, without an element of preparation for it, is at once humiliating and ominous. Fugitives from justice, outlaws and communists, assailants of everything established and good, no sooner set foot on our shores than they assume an equality with the best citizens of the Republic. The Irishman that in Ireland cringes in humblest reverence in the presence of his superiors, receiving the smallest of favors with expletives of thankfulness, no sooner finds himself an American citizen than he wants his fellow-citizen Pat to be Chairman of the primary meeting, his fellow-citizen Mike its Secretary, and himself to be "Boss" for the party of the city in which he deigns to reside. Demagogues are the natural spawn of a pure democracy; the spirit that generates them is ripest in the lowest walks of society. The poor African hardly finds the shackles stricken from his limbs before he transforms reverential "Massa" into the half-contemptuous "Boss." Even in France, the blouse that a century ago would have left the sidewalk for the gutter, with hat in hand, now crowds for the inner side of the walk, whether he meet an ecclesiastical dignitary, or it may be the President of the Republic. The very atmosphere of democracy seems to inflate every vulgar mind with a sense of its own importance.

But that which most of all, in our American

life, should awaken apprehension in the breast of the thoughtful is the growing irreverence of youth for age, and specially of children for their parents. The one commandment of the decalogue that is accompanied with the promise of long continuance in the land, is the one now most conspicuously disregarded among us. But a moral law that, like this, lies at the very foundations of society, cannot long be violated without the social and moral and political disasters that despotism alone can repair.

What now can the pulpit do for us in averting the evils with which we are threatened? If the gospel leads to Republicanism, and Republicanism as pure democracy tends always to anarchy, can the preaching of the gospel help us? We answer: It can help us if preached in its completeness; if unfolded with all the comprehensiveness with which it is presented in the New Testament Scriptures. An incomplete gospel may save a man from final perdition, though it may leave him to struggle through a thousand ills from which it might and ought to have relieved him. It may save individuals and leave nations to decay, and governments to be overthrown, and whole generations to a loss of both this world and the next. In what respects, then, if any, can the existing popular conceptions of Christianity and the preaching of it be made more complete?

First, the pulpit ought, it seems to me, to teach more distinctly, more earnestly, more uncompromisingly, and more continuously than it is now doing, the duty of unswerving obedience to all rightly constituted authority and specially

to all moral law. The tendency of the popular Christianity of our time is to a forgetfulness of law. In the anxiety of many preachers to make the way of salvation plain and easy and assured, they overstate the extent of the gratuity of it. They so represent the efficacy of what Christ has wrought for us, as to leave the impression that it covers the whole range of our obligations; that nothing remains for the believer to do, but simply to accept salvation, and thenceforward do nothing more than rejoice in it as a free gift. This has been the fault of too many of our popular evangelists. They have fallen into it from a very natural desire to bring their labors to immediate fruitage. One of the most popular of these tells his audiences that he is wearied and out of patience with endless repetitions of do, do, do; why, says he, all Christianity is summed up in five letters, t-r-u-s-t; the whole Christian religion is reducible to the single word, faith. With such persons, the lines, "Jesus paid it all," and other similar so-called hymns, have a surprising popularity, and on the unreflecting a dangerously misleading influence.

If now this representation of the gospel be made to those who are anxiously asking what they must do to be saved, the representation is both proper and just. To be saved, one has simply to trust; but in trusting Christ and in accepting a free salvation, there is also an assumption of all the countless duties and obligations which that acceptance implies. And if any unreflecting pastor is weak enough to attempt a continuous imitation of evangelist methods of preaching, no pro-

phet will be needed to foretell what in due time he must expect. The truth is, that in accepting the free salvation of Christ, one accepts also the yoke of Christ. To believe in him, is to have fellowship with him; and fellowship with him in his offices for man as well as in his free gifts to ourselves. To believe in him, is to pledge ourselves to do with redoubled zeal and energy all the duties of life; and to do them for his sake and because we are his disciples. And the doing is to consist not merely in abstinence from wrong doing, but also in untiring endeavors by every species of well-doing to bring our whole natures into conformity to his will; is to consist, not merely in words of prayer and praise and exhortation, but in the upbuilding of personal character that shall proclaim the efficacy of the gospel with a more than human eloquence. Christian character shows itself in innumerable lights, and never in more than in our day; and every aspect of it speaks of the religion of Jesus. To each of these the pulpit should give its attention. And if the pulpit is to do its whole work, and to do it effectually, it must sharpen its vision and widen its horizon. It must deal with men, women, and children in all their numberless relations to one another in a common life. It must observe the thousand angles at which every individual now touches society. It must deal with him as a man, as a husband, a father, a neighbor; as one who buys and sells; as a citizen and a voter; as one who every hour of his life has duties which he cannot neglect without peril to his own soul, without injury to mankind, and without dishonor to God.

The pulpit furthermore needs to teach men the true relation of freedom to obedience,—of liberty to law. On this point, there is no little confusion in the popular mind. There is reason to fear that it is not altogether clear in the minds of some religious teachers. Endlessly are our ears saluted with the declaration that the gospel gives freedom. And it does give it. But what is freedom? Certainly it is not license. Analyze it. Of what does it consist? Can any man be a freeman who is not consciously, sedulously, and devotedly obedient to all just law? What is moral freedom, if it be not the harmonious working of all the powers of one's nature? And what pray is moral slavery, if it be not the state of him whose conscience dictates one thing, while his moral tastes and his will are insisting on another? No bondage is so pitiful and grinding as his whose conscience and will are in perpetual conflict. Of this bondage, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is a most graphic picture; a picture which every man acquainted with his own heart recognizes as too truthfully descriptive of himself not to have been drawn by a more than human pen. On the other hand, no man is so free as he in whom every power of his being is co-operating to hold him in strictest obedience to moral law. The infinite God is the freest being in the universe, and yet he is infinitely bound by the laws of his own nature. He is infinitely free, and yet infinitely necessitated to do right. He is absolutely free, because it is absolutely impossible for him to do wrong. Our freedom will resemble his just in proportion as our

whole moral nature is brought into conformity to his law.

And as with the individual, so also with the community and with the State. The most perfect civil liberty is where all just law is most punctiliously obeyed by every member of the community. Did the sun ever shine on a freer community than a century ago was presented in the New England town where three select-men were intrusted with the superintendence of all its public affairs? Prisons empty, sheriffs without employment, a community that needed no bolted door, nor barred windows; property and life perfectly safe; and why? Simply because every man, woman, and child, religiously instructed, was conscientiously obedient to law. No community on earth was ever freer, and no civil freedom was ever more entirely the product of obedience to law. If the pulpit in our land and day is to perform its whole office, whether for individuals, or for communities, or for the nation, it must make clear to the consciences of all, the indissoluble connection of moral freedom with moral obedience; and the absolute dependence of civil liberty on an unyielding regard for all just law.

Again, the pulpit in this country ought to take special pains to make clear to men the true ground of all real authority. On this point, the popular mind is in great danger of becoming mystified. The feeling has been rapidly growing of late, that authority cannot safely be trusted to rest on a bare basis of truth and right, but must be buttressed by traditions, and propped by arguments from utility. Some have reasoned that both cc-

clesiastical and civil governments should have some other foundation to rest on than that of mere truth. Church independency and church discipline, resting on truth alone, are regarded as unsafe. As if government could ever be administered, or penalty, by whomsoever pronounced, could ever be inflicted, except as enforced by a law which is seen to be grounded in eternal right. Men forget that while

> Bodies fall by wild sword law,
> He who would force the soul, tilts with a straw
> Against a champion cased in adamant.

If the individual is to be controlled, he must be made to see that the law which controls him has its ground, not in tradition, nor in factitious authority, nor in opinion, or convenience, or utility —but in reality and right.

And what is found to be true of the ground of authority for the individual, will be found to be equally true of the ground of authority for the State. Deliberate attempts are now made to rest the authority of all civil law on some other basis than that of moral truth and immutable right, and to trust in the diffusion of knowledge rather than in moral training for the perpetuation of our free institutions. The late Dr. J. W. Draper, who made some very astonishing generalizations, who indulged in dogmatism outrivaling that of any contemporary theologian, tells us in his "Civil Polity of America," that "in Europe the attempt has been made to govern communities through their morals alone. The present state of that continent at the close of so many centuries, shows

how great the failure has been. In America, on the contrary, the attempt is to govern through intelligence. It will succeed." But was there ever a government on earth that so completely laid its foundations in moral and even religious convictions, as this Republic of America? And was any ever so dependent for preservation in its infancy as this on the morals of the governed? And what, pray, can intelligence do for us, except as it helps to a discernment of the real and the true, on which all sound morality must rest. Our fathers laid a sure foundation, because they laid it intelligently in righteousness and truth. An unintelligent morality would have been a sandy foundation; unmoralized intelligence would have reared a tottering structure. Unintelligent building in the future will topple a structure that was both well founded and well built. Other Republics have failed through ignorance, irreligion, and immorality, the three enemies to liberty that always go hand in hand. We will not forget the dangers that ignorance threatens:

> Nor yet
> (Grave this within the heart), if spiritual things
> Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
> Shall we our humbler franchises support,
> However hardly won or justly dear;
> What came from heaven, to heaven by nature clings,
> And if dissevered thence its course is short.

We have inherited a government that was founded on strong moral and religious convictions. It will endure only as these convictions are kept fresh in the popular mind. To keep them fresh, there must be growing intelligence. To guide the intelligence there must be enlightened con-

science; to enlighten conscience there must be an intelligent pulpit. The pulpit must make it plain, that the laws which bind us to God and to one another, are only eternal truths reduced to precepts. They who occupy the pulpit must strike directly for the consciences of men, with all the vigor of those who know that they are messengers of the Omniscient and the Almighty.

But here some one may ask, Does not the lecturer in what he has been saying, propose to turn aside the mind of the preacher from the distinctive work of saving men through faith in Jesus Christ? Has he not forgotten that the one work of the minister of the gospel is the salvation of sinners? By no means. How much does the work of the minister of the gospel include? Is it simply to convert men—to give to them a comfortable hope of heaven? Is it not rather so to save them as to bring them into a realization of the largest possible manhood? Is it merely to save here and there individuals, communities, or to Christianize and to save nations? There is another world and there is this world. It is possible so to concentrate attention on the other world as to lose both this and the other; just as a man who is ever star-gazing may stumble over a precipice into destruction. He who is always looking into the future may forget that his future is already springing out of the present. No one has any right to expect either the approval of God, or an admission into heaven, who has not, in this world, done his utmost for the improvement of both himself and others.

I am, furthermore, lecturing to those who, with

few exceptions, are expecting to be pastors of flocks, stated preachers to the same congregations through successive years. You will preach to churches and communities who will look to you for enlightenment and guidance in all their Christian obligations. You are to preach to them salvation through Christ, but a salvation that makes them workers together with God in every conceivable kind of praiseworthy action.

You are also to be a part of that great brotherhood of American ministers of the gospel, to whom have been committed trusts such as never before fell to the lot of any clergy of any land or age. Here, in the vast territory of America, truth and error, good and evil, Christ and his foes, have met, without let or hindrance on either side, for their final conflict. In this conflict, you have been summoned to participate. Over you is a government, and all around you are institutions, given by the very religion that has called you to its service. The continuance of this government and these institutions will depend on the public conscience which it will be your duty to enlighten and guide, and the public opinion which it will be your duty to create and direct.

If you are wise men, you will never meddle in the pulpit with mere party politics. With all moral and religious questions, whether affecting the state, the community, social organizations, or individuals, your office as religious teachers requires you to deal, and to deal faithfully and fearlessly. Should politicians for base ends seek to pervert the right, or to debauch the public conscience, it would be moral cowardice not to warn

the people. In that case, politicians would meddle with the functions of the pulpit. And if the pulpit throughout the land should be true to itself, the right would prevail. The pulpit would then prove itself to be, what by right it is, the keeper of the keepers. The public conscience would be saved from defilement, the nation from guilt, and souls from perdition. And to do this, one need not imitate Nathaniel Emmons in his sermon on Jeroboam,—a sermon aimed at Thomas Jefferson, and intended to prevent his election to the presidency. Personalities, however covert, are always a breach of pulpit propriety. Fidelity to truth never requires them. Truth is always impersonal, and because impersonal omnipotent. In the presence of its majesty, persons sink into insignificance. Standing in the shadow of it, the preacher may preach with a power, before which petty politicians and would-be dictators melt away like frost in the mid-day sun. Let the Christian minister stand up in the fear of God, mindful of no man's politics or party, of no man's position, or wealth or influence, and he will preach with a power that all men will recognize, and no one can successfully gainsay.

When it comes to be understood that the Christian minister has an imprescriptible right to preach all righteousness, to deal with all truth, to deal with all law, whether law of the state, of the community, of the family, or of the individual; when it shall be understood that he is bound, by all the solemnity of a vow to God, to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, then will men rise to some degree

of appreciation of the dignity of his office; then will he be accounted a true minister of God; then will he be recognized as contributing to the stability and strength of all just government.

And if our Republic was worth the prayers and the tears and the blood that it cost to found it; if it was worth the prayers and the tears and the treasures and the blood of the fathers and brothers who twenty years ago laid down their lives to perpetuate it, then is it worth while for the Christian minister so to preach the gospel as still to preserve it. Here, the greatest experiment of all time is now being tried, an experiment that is to test as never before the question whether a great nation can be trusted to govern itself. Here has God put it into the power of Christian teachers, as never before, to test the infinitely higher question whether Christianity is equal to all the wants and emergencies of nations as well as of individuals.

You, young gentlemen, if faithful in your calling, will always preach Christ and him crucified. In every discourse, you will take your position at the foot of the cross, and whatever the breadth of your vision, or the circuit of your thought, will never forget that it is the crucified and risen Christ whom you preach, and whose right it is to rule the world. If you shall so preach, then may we have some hope that the souls of men will be saved, and at the same time that what our fathers founded in Christian hope and delivered to us with such tender solicitude, may still be preserved, and we be enabled to transfer it intact to those who shall come after us.

LECTURE IV.

THE WEAKENED INFLUENCE OF THE PULPIT AND ITS CAUSES.

THE diminished attendance at public worship in our day and land, as compared with a century ago, or even with a period within the memory of living men, has excited universal attention and remark. It is computed that nearly two-thirds of the Protestant population of this country now habitually absent themselves from the Sunday church services. There is about the same proportion of absentees in England. In France and Germany, but a fraction of the Protestant population are accustomed to attend the services of the sanctuary. Our attention, in what we shall say on the pulpit's loss of power, will be restricted to our own country.

Many and varied explanations have been given of this great change of regard for religious services and particularly for preaching. One finds explanation in one cause, another in another and a third in still another. But no one cause gives adequate explanation. Indeed, many and even heterogeneous forces seem by strange conjunction to be working together to divert attention from the pulpit, and sometimes to alienate entirely

from the house of God. Some of these are found in the state of the public mind, some in the new methods of diffusing religious knowledge, and some in the qualities of the pulpit itself. Let us notice a few of them.

First of all, it is undeniable that there exists in our day a wide-spread spirit of doubt; a spirit of what, in current phraseology, is termed, "general skepticism." I do not say atheism, nor even infidelity. These latter terms express a stronger and more decided state of mind than is meant to be conveyed by the terms doubt and skepticism. The former are applicable to a few; the latter describe a large class. It may be questioned whether atheism—theoretic atheism—is anything like so generally prevalent as many persons are disposed to believe. The truth rather seems to be, that the belief of mankind in the existence of God—of some kind of supreme Intelligence—was never stronger, or more entitled to be called universal, than it is to-day. Never were the ethical principles of the New Testament more generally accepted and put in practice than they now are. The belief in the immortality of man seems to be as universal now as in any past time. It may be questioned whether there is any more real atheism to-day than there was at the close of the last century or at the beginning of the present.

But there is doubt as to the authenticity and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and as to the justness of the traditional interpretations of them. There is distrust of the truth and worth of the creeds of the different churches and sects. There is a subtle questioning whether the systems

of doctrine, and the theories of man and of God and their relations, that have been current among Protestants for the past three hundred years, ought not to be subjected to new criticism, or brought into new forms of statement. On all these points, the minds of many are unsettled and drifting. As an outgrowth of the whole, there is looseness of view as to what is binding in private life; as to what is allowable in household and social amusements; and also as to what is proper license in the use of the Sabbath day. To show the groundlessness or the danger of these doubts, and distrusts, and questionings, or to criticise the growing license in Christian communities, is no part of my present purpose. I simply state the facts as having some bearing on the question of the present weakened influence of the pulpit.

Now, to this state of the public mind, the pulpit has not as yet succeeded in completely adjusting itself. What it can do, otherwise than it is already doing, is by no means clear. Whether it can so deal with the difficulties of doubters and skeptics as to induce them to come to church and hear what can be said for their relief, is a question not easily answered. But it is evident that great numbers, giving themselves the full benefit of their doubts, are indifferent to the ordinary preaching of the gospel and so decline to frequent the house of God. To say that these persons neither believe in Christianity nor in God, would be to say what may not be true. Many of them doubtless do believe in Christianity, and in a personal Christ; but their doubts have eaten out all sense of ob-

ligation to listen to a preaching of his gospel. Not a few men of skeptical tendencies spend their Sundays in reading skeptical treatises. They will have some kind of mental occupation and moral stimulus; but they will not resort for these to the churches. On many intelligent persons the pulpit has lost its hold; they no longer look to it, but elsewhere, for enlightenment.

This last remark suggests another cause now operating to withhold from attendance on public worship, namely, the cheap and abundant literature of our day. The time was, and in this country not long ago, when even a tolerably good library was the possession of only a favored few. Now the press teems with every species of production, from the ponderous and elaborate treatise down to the lighter reading of the magazine and the newspaper; and of the latter, some are specially intended to provide Sunday reading. Thus the library, with the magazines and the newspapers, are made rival competitors with the pulpit for attention; and with reading people, they too often become the successful rivals. The competition is also strengthened and widened by the great multiplication of cheap Christian literature. When Bibles were so extremely rare as to be only found chained to church altars, or hidden away in monasteries, people were dependent for their religious knowledge on the lips of the living teacher. Even a century ago, the Bible was a costly and not over common book. Now the man who has not a Bible in his house is poor indeed. Even the child that is able to read is expected to own one.

Christian literature for popular reading is the product of a comparatively recent day. Even living men can remember when attractive religious books were extremely rare. The pulpit was not long ago the chief, to not a few the only, source of mental stimulus and even of information. Now Christian literature abounds. Societies are organized for the specific purpose of printing and circulating it in every possible form. It is sold where it can be; is given away to the needy; even the poorest and most ignorant can have it, if they will receive it. Religious newspapers more than abound; they are in excess; and many of them regularly contain sermons or parts of sermons from distinguished preachers. What wonder is it, then, that the very means which have been adopted to diffuse a knowledge of Christianity, and to interest men in the preaching of the gospel, should have contributed to keep them away from the very place where alone preaching is to be heard?

Let us step for a moment, on a Sunday morning, into a Christian home. We find a Christian man, wearied with the cares of the week, sitting by his fireside. Near him, rests on its shelves a well-selected library. On his table lie magazines and newspapers, religious as well as secular. In his newspaper, he finds a sermon from some noted preacher, a better one than he is likely to hear if he goes to church. The fire in the grate is warm and glowing, while the raw and gusty wind does not invite him to the outer air. He yearns for rest and for the quiet enjoyment of his home. Is it surprising that, yielding to

the temptation, he settles into his easy chair, and devotes the day to reading? He simply reads rather than hears. Type and the eye steal the march on the tongue and the ear.

Or, instead of winter, be it a summer day. The garden, sky, and air, all conspire to attract attention. The distant church, with its close atmosphere, and bedizened assembly, and prosy sermon, do not allure. A book full of pious thoughts and inspiring motives awaits its owner's reading. Is it a wonder that the book and the open window or garden-shade, should win, as against the pulpit? And, leaving out the question of example, and the duty that springs from it, who shall say that the day may not have been as profitably spent with the book and the meditations it prompted, as it would have been with the living preacher and the emotions awakened by his discourse? Indeed, to bring the question nearer home, who of us has not known, in the summer vacation, the long July Sunday, when, finding himself on the mountain side, or in the woody dell, an admirable book in hand, every statement of which found him and strengthened him, he has read, looked up into the skies, out over the broad expanse of hill and plain, and then has said to himself, "Thank God that I am alone with him, with myself and my own thoughts." The very stillness around him has filled his heart with awe and worship; a stillness

> Where even the motion of an angel's wing
> Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
> Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

Can we blame our fellow-men, then, if they do not always come to hear us preach?

What would be the effect of habitual absence from public worship on the mind of even the most devout Christian man, it would not be pertinent to the object of these lectures to describe. What would be the result in a community where private reading, however universal and good in quality, should take the place of public preaching, it might not be difficult to conjecture, though it would be aside from our present purpose to say. Of one thing, however, we may be sure, and that is that literature of one kind and another is now detaining large numbers, and among them some of the best educated intellects, from the pews on Sunday; and that the press, as compared with the pulpit, is steadily gaining in influence.

The Sunday-school is another agency that has been actively at work in diminishing the audience that now waits on the preacher in his Sunday services. The Sunday-school, one of the most effective instruments for Christian work now in the hands of the church, is an agency for which good men can never be too thankful. The church waited long for the discovery of it. It was found at last among the hidden resources of Christianity, ready to be used whenever the time for its use had arrived. It is an instrumentality that may be misused. It may be relied on for service which it never can render. It never can take the place of parental instruction. No parent can transfer to it the obligations which God has laid on parentage itself. But it is, or may be made, a most effective agency in the early

conversion of youth. In this, when properly conducted, it is far more effective than the pulpit. It is the right hand of the intelligent and faithful pastor. Through its teachings and influence, more persons are brought into the church than through any other agency.

And yet the Sunday-school diminishes the audience at the preaching service. It does it in two ways: First, it taxes the teachers and superintendent to such extent that they very frequently feel compelled to absent themselves from at least one public service on Sunday. And, secondly, the children of the Sunday-school, in our towns and cities, are now rarely found at the public church service. There are several explanations of their absence. Most of them attend school on week-days; and medical men have said it is too much confinement for them to be kept at school all the week, and then be compelled to attend both Sunday-school and church. Children, furthermore, are often restive in church; they dislike its restraints; they cannot understand what is said; they prefer the freedom of home; and parents yield to their wishes. It has become the fashion for children to leave public worship to their parents. It is nothing unusual now for parents, in going to or from church, to meet their children going to or returning from the Sunday-school. One of the saddest thoughts to an observing man in looking over a modern town congregation on Sunday, is the fewness of its children. The boys and girls between ages of four and fifteen, in an ordinary church assembly, are all easily counted. The

audience seems unnaturally childless. Some of us can remember well the time when, with the parents sitting at opposite ends of the pew, the interval was filled up by children, the graded descent in height marking well the difference in their ages, from the oldest son by the father's side down to the youngest of the household, that, gently dropping its head into its mother's lap, slept away the weary length of the sermon. All this is now changed. The half-filled pews tell a silent, but suggestive, story. While the parents worship in the sanctuary, the children are reading their story books at home, or romping as suits their taste and will.

And there are those who claim that this is a more sensible way of bringing up children than that which would compel them to listen to sermons which they cannot understand, and to sit through a service which fills them with weariness and ennui. But let us remember how irresistible is habit. The child that for the first fifteen years of his life has been trained to the Sunday-school and not to public worship, will find, when he has outgrown the one that he has not acquired a taste for the other. His ruling habit will prevail; the voice of the pulpit will have no attraction for him; he will regard Sunday as a day for entertaining reading. The result is that, to-day, aside from those who in childhood have become Christians, there is a large class of persons who have been trained in the Sunday-school, but, having outgrown it in age, have at the same time outgrown and abandoned all religious use of Sunday. And even

those who, thus trained, have become Christians, have found endless cause for regret that the associations and habits of their childhood should have been so alien from the usages of public worship and preaching. Thousands of children in our land whose parents are not church goers are regular Sunday-school scholars up to a certain age; but after that, all thought and care for school and church alike are abandoned. They are never found among the hearers of sermons. Would that some plan could be devised whereby the Sunday-school and public worship, with its sermon, could be united. Better that we bring back the olden time, when the pulpit was liable to be disturbed by the cry of a child, or the restlessness of some unruly boy, than that we preserve our proprieties at the expense of our children. Better any annoyance from their presence, than the silence and solitude of the worshiping assembly of which they make no part.

But the Sunday-school sometimes works adversely to the influence of the pulpit in a wholly unnecessary way. It has come to be regarded as an essential qualification of its superintendent, that he shall not only be a well-informed Christian, genial in spirit, patient under trails, and in sympathy with childhood and its wants, but also endowed with a lively fancy and able to interest the young. He must be capable of telling a story racily, and, if need be, of garnishing it to suit the occasion. It is absolutely indispensable that he shall be able to interest all, and hold them to regularity of attendance. To please the children and to make them in love with the school

is too often the chief aim in its management. The spicy anecdote, the evening entertainment, the monthly concert, the Christmas tree, the summer excursion, are never lost sight of, while clearness of conviction and solidity of character receive only incidental attention. That this is a true portraiture of all superintendents is by no means true; it may not be of the average. But it is true of a considerable class. One such would be capable of incalculable mischief. Many who only proximately resemble such, are diligently disqualifying their scholars for the sober and serious discussions of the pulpit.

There is another general cause contributing perhaps a little to diminish the number found in our houses of worship, but of which entirely too much, it seems to me, has been made; I mean the costliness of church-going. The high price of pew rents, we are told, has driven away the poor. Sunday secular newspapers never tire of reiterating this charge. That the charge has foundation enough for the stress that has been laid on it, is more than doubtful.

The truth is, that with the extremely few exceptions of popular preachers whose houses are thronged to the discomfort of regular worshipers, the churches are only too glad to welcome every kind of hearer. What house of worship in this city is not open to all comers? What house is there in any other city that, unless there be to it an unwarranted rush of hearers drawn by unreasonable curiosity, has not its pews which any one can occupy without rent? What one is there that does not stand with its open doors and ushers

ready to seat any one that will enter? Nay, this cry against expensive edifices and costly pew rents is unmeaning and insincere. The costly pews are not in the midst of populations that are unable to pay for them. To complain of them is as idle and absurd as to complain of costly residences, or expensive equipages. They are simply in harmony with the means and other expenditures of their occupants. But to build such houses for the poor, and tax the poor to pay for them, were foolish and criminal. Churches and their occupants should be in harmony. Architecture and pews should be suited to their locality and the means of the people that build them.

But if there be ample means, why pray should it not be freely used in building for the worship of God? To build expensive churches to be paid for by those who shall come after us, is neither honest in the sight of God nor just to posterity. But, if we have the means, and are willing to consecrate it to the glory of God, in his name let us build, and, within the limits of good taste, let us build substantially, build elaborately, build with architectural beauty and with fitness for the uses to which the building is to be devoted. The effect we are sure will not be to repel people from the instructions of the pulpit.

Another explanation, and not an imaginary one, of the weakened hold of the pulpit on the popular mind of our time, is found in the eager rivalry of the sects. In large towns and cities, where churches are strong and their members numerous, this rivalry ought, it would seem, to work to the

pulpit's advantage. But even there, intelligent and discerning people are sometimes offended and hold aloof from all church-going. In the smaller villages, rivalry and antagonism work mischief. Think of it. In a country village, with a population of two thousand souls, there will often be from five to seven churches, all competing for hearers. Not more that eight hundred or a thousand souls, all told, can be counted as regular attendants at them all. A single pastor could easily care for the whole number; and five, possibly seven, preachers are all struggling to win them to their mode of serving God. Is it any wonder that there should be intelligent people in the village, it may be lawyers, doctors, school-teachers, or other educated men, who shall say, "These cannot all be right; they may all be wrong; I have no interest in any of them."

But the worst of the evil is, that out of the five or seven churches, not one is able to support a preacher who can command the attention of educated men. If the leaders care nothing for the preachers, need it surprise us that others become indifferent! This is a great and sore evil under the sun, that the sects in their eagerness to diffuse the gospel and their views of it, should stand in each others' way, and thus weaken their common hold on the consciences of men.

A single other item will suffice for this part of our subject. I refer to the foreign element that now shows itself so conspicuously in our growing disregard for the pulpit. The influx among us of millions of foreigners, who were not church-goers in their own land, and who here studiously

ignore alike all preaching and all divine authority for any sacred day of rest, swells to enormous proportions the number of those on whom the pulpit is making no impression whatever. The Sunday recreations of these people are familiarizing the minds of the younger generation of Americans with the idea that church-going, and listening to sermons, and keeping holy day may not, after all, be so much matters of duty as they had supposed.

Again, this foreign element is being introduced among us in a subtler form by our own foreign tourists. It is a rare thing for an American to spend any considerable length of time on the continent of Europe, and not be to some degree affected by its prevalent method of observing Sunday. Preaching is there but little heeded; Sunday is chiefly a day of social recreation and often of mere amusement. Too many Americans are thoughtless enough to be influenced by European example, and returning home become weak imitators of European habits.

From what we have thus found in existing society adverse to the influence of the pulpit, let us turn now to some of the sources of weakness in the pulpit itself. And here we come to one of the most delicate subjects to be touched on in the whole course of these lectures. That ministers themselves are in no way responsible for a loss in their power over men, as compared with other generations, no well informed man can maintain. What can be done by them, if anything, to recover their lost power, is a question that may safely be left to be answered, each for

himself, in the light of remarks that shall follow. Something doubtless is due to a reaction on their feelings from the popular indifference to their ministrations. A few other and more positive causes, we will now name.

First of all is the weakness that comes from breathing the modern atmosphere of doubt. Not a few of the younger class of preachers are strangely affected by it. You, young gentlemen, have doubtless felt it. You do not open your Bibles with the same feelings of reverent awe as did your grandfathers. Shadows of adverse criticism flit across its pages. No act of will can shut them out. Of many a text, the interpretation of your grandfathers seems invalid. The clear tones of divine authority which they heard from every part of the Bible you perhaps fail to hear. You may read the Scriptures devoutly; you may quote them as an authority from which there is no appeal; and yet, if you read and quote them with any other feeling than that of uttering the direct word of God to men, there will be a nameless something in the heart that will enfeeble the utterance.

Incomparably worse is it with the creeds. The authority of these has vanished. Even the apostolic * and Nicene, admirable as compends of doctrine, are now clearly seen and felt to be only the works of fallible men. No well-informed man now trembles at the anathemas of the Athanasian symbol. No intelligent preacher now quotes a

* The so-called Apostles' Creed has saved itself from the fate of all others simply by its extreme brevity, and by being couched, as nearly as possible, in the identical language of Scripture.

creed as an ultimate statement of truth; no one for a moment feels that its authority can be final.

And yet preachers are not skeptics. Far from it. They are believers, and honest believers. A more thoroughly honest class of men never stood on the face of the earth. But out of their very honesty comes an element of their weakness. Many of them have fought their way to such convictions as they have, through armies of doubts and opposing criticisms. They have learned to the last degree to be intellectually honest.* They will affirm nothing to which their minds cannot give full assent. But, striving always for intellectual assent, they too often forget another step —the test of experience—which alone can bring with it the full consent of the heart. Unless the heart go with the intellect, consenting to, delighting in all the intellect accepts as true, there can be none of that moral conviction and earnestness in the preacher, without which all preaching will fail of the end for which alone preaching has been appointed.

But again, on the other hand, a preacher may

* The cool assurance with which certain persons now speak of a want of intellectual honesty on the part of the modern preacher, is certainly suggestive. Does it never occur to these critics that possibly a minister of the gospel may be as honest as themselves; that a truth which vindicates itself in his moral consciousness may furnish even a better reason for believing it, than if resting on the mere evidence of the senses? It is a stale and borrowed cant that these critics indulge in—the cant of English scientists who taunt English churchmen with singing creeds and using a ritual they do not believe in—but a cant that in this country, where no one is required or expected to believe all that his sect is reputed to hold, is puerile and indicative of a bigotry of unbelief not to be looked for in generous and educated minds.

make himself uninviting and wearisome by a slavish and lifeless regard for the dogmas and phraseology of a theological system. The distinguishing points of the system may be its theories designed to explain the more difficult doctrines of Christianity, the whole being but the product of a philosophy applied to the facts of the Scriptures, and of the moral consciousness of man. The theories may have become the accepted traditions of the sect to which the preacher belongs. Tradition has given them a sanctity which he must not violate; they have become the tests of his orthodoxy. If he will be orthodox, he must use the well-known and well-worn phraseology. It was once fresh and plump with meaning: to-day, like husks from which the fruit has dropped, it is simply dry and worthless. To continue to repeat it is to talk to empty pews.

Let me illustrate my meaning. A preacher holds a sharply defined doctrine of sin and human guilt. He conceives of the unrenewed man as morally dead and helpless. He describes his condition minutely, depicts his inner state, shapes the whole picture to accord exactly with a given system of theology; but not a word is taken from the real experience of the preacher, and not a lineament of the character described is recognized by a single hearer as his own. The preacher has drawn his words from the Scriptures; his thoughts wholly from books or hearsay, his picture is unreal, but is carefully made to accord with an iron system of theology. The people care nothing for his picture, his theology, or himself.

Again, another preacher has a pet theory of

the atonement. It has been worked out into logical completeness. Every part of it has been carefully adjusted to every other part. He can state it with perfect clearness. It may be the substitution theory, or the governmental theory, or the life theory, or the theory of moral influence; but it exactly accords with the other doctrines of his system. It is in no sense the reflex of his Christian experience. It never cost him a struggle, or a tear, or a prayer, to work it out. Not a thought in it came from below his intellect. He has in no sense felt it out, but by the aid of his metaphysics and his books has simply thought it. He stands before an audience and states it with the utmost degree of accuracy. But as you look at him, the lack-luster eye, the uninterested and uninteresting manner with which he goes through the whole series of statements, shows that it has no vital significancy; it expresses no real life in himself; it carries no conviction to the hearers. There is wanting even the faint exhilaration that accompanies the solution of a sum in arithmetic. When a student at the black-board draws a diagram in geometry, goes through the successive steps of his problem, and reaches his conclusion, there is at least the feeling that he has proved something. He has talked of projections in space, and shown their relations; the preacher has taken his hearers into vacuity, and left them asphyxiated.

Or perhaps it is not formal doctrine that the preacher discusses. He has his special theory of regeneration. He regards the heart of man as a citadel to be taken and transformed. Every sermon he preaches, and every thought he handles,

he shapes to accomplish that end. His aim and his methods have become as familiar to his congregation as the features of his face. No matter what his text, or what the point of departure in his thought, his hearers know beforehand the route he will take and where his halting place will be. They know too well all his logical tactics and all his rhetorical equipments to be moved by any charge he may make on them. And yet, under all this, they could be patient, if only there could be a living and life-giving soul within him. But in vain. Familiarity with his own thoughts, and endless repetitions of himself have made him a mere functionary. His occupation has become a trade, and the people are indifferent to his wares.

And here is suggested another evil that detracts from the influence of preachers. The public regard them, they sometimes appear to regard themselves, as a special caste, standing quite apart from the rest of mankind. Some of them seem to take special delight in making themselves conspicuously distinct from all other men. Tone, dress, manner, language, all are specifically clerical. They deal with ghostly subjects, are leading to a ghostly future, and all they do and say is after a ghostly fashion. They seem desirous to have it understood that they are not made up of flesh and blood and bones and passions and hopes and fears and aspirations and yearnings like other men. The result is a feeling of unreality in whatever is religious. A spectral air is given to all religious objects. Rites, ceremonies, ordinances, sermons seem to belong to an unearthly region, neither relieving nor touching the hard, dry, mat-

ter-of-fact life of real men and women. Practical religion becomes perfunctory, and worship dreary and unmeaning, making many a man cry out with the poet:

> Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
> So might I, standing on some pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Another source of weakness with many preachers lies in an habitual and needless contraction of their whole being to the single work of sermon-making. In a desire to magnify their office as heralds of the truth, they neglect the very means by which alone this can be done. In all their studies and reading, in all their intercourse with society, in looking at every scene of nature or work of art, their one thought is, How can I use this in a sermon? Sermon-making is the one absorbing thought of their lives. They comply with an injunction which I remember to have read some years ago in a treatise on Homiletics, to "cultivate a homiletic habit." But he who so uses his mind is as unwise as the farmer who every year is intent on harvesting a crop, but never thinks of tillage. To that kind of husbandry, there comes inevitably the time when no crop can be gathered: to the preacher who so treats his own mind, the time is sure to come when no sermon he can preach will be worth hearing.

Sometimes the theological student begins his seminary life with this over-cultivation of the

homiletic habit. Everything in his thoughts is secondary to sermon-making. All study and reading are made subservient to the accumulation of materials for the sermons he has in hand. As the result of his work he strikes twelve when he leaves the seminary. Each successive year, continuing his seminary habits of study, he strikes diminishing hours. Long before he has passed middle life, he strikes one. When he should be ripest and fullest in his strength, he stands up to preach, but, like an old and worn-out clock, there is a muffled sound of moving machinery, a buzz and a whirr, but no stroke; he cannot strike one.

But let us proceed to notice another alleged cause of weakness in the Christian ministry; I mean the provision now existing among all denominations for the beneficiary education of candidates for the ministry. This method of providing for an increase of ministers has been vehemently objected to. It has been affirmed that the selection of men for the clerical office, before education and formation of character have determined their fitness for it, cannot fail to bring into it some men of inferior quality and some who ought never to have entered it; that it exposes during the period of education, to perils through which the wisest and best do not always pass in safety. That much has been said on this subject, to which no one acquainted with the facts can assent, it is needless, perhaps, to say. That there are however, grave evils connected with eleemosynary education for the ministry, no one will deny. To two of its sources of danger so far as these affect the pulpit, a passing allusion may be allowable.

The first of these is a possible loss of self-reliance and self-respect. To supply one's wants gratuitously, it is said, is to deprive him of a needed stimulus to exertion. Beneficiary aid may so act, but it need not. Sons are not necessarily ruined by the gratuities of their parents. There is no reason why the beneficiaries of the churches should be spoiled of their self-reliance. Until the appropriations made to them are greatly in excess of any ever yet allowed, there is little danger that any young man of spirit, any one worth educating and needing assistance, will not find in his own unsupplied wants stimulus enough for all the exertion of which he is capable.

Not to lose his self-respect will be more difficult. To keep it full and self-sustaining, he will need all the support that the consciousness of asking no man's gratuity can give him. And if God has called him to be a Christian minister, he needs to apologize to no man for being one. If he be right-minded, conscious of a purpose to do the very best and utmost he can in life, and ready to help himself whenever and wherever he can, then has he a ground for self-respect which no personal wants nor disposition of others to supply them should overthrow or for an instant shake.

But there is one peril here to which I must allude; a temptation into which too many have actually fallen. It often comes under the guise of superior sanctity. A young man expecting to preach the gospel says: "Oh, I have abandoned all unholy ambitions. I am not an aspirant for college honors. I have a nobler aim in life than to work for high standing as a scholar." Mistak-

ing indolence for piety and cant for religion, he drifts through college a third-rate scholar, wriggles through the Theological Seminary, a man of many words, of great expectations and of small performance. That such men have done their full share in belittling the ministry of our time, in weakening its hold on the public attention, cannot be denied. But if any man should feel himself called as by a voice from heaven to bend every energy of his being to the one work of securing to himself the largest possible measure of discipline of both mind and heart, and the largest resources of knowledge attainable, it is he whom God has called to preach the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

Again, the Theological Seminaries have come in for their share of blame for the diminished power of the pulpit in our time. That theological education in this country has, for fifty years past, been entirely superior to any other so-called professional training, is beyond all question. The really educated minister has been more highly educated than either the doctor or the lawyer. He has had more mental discipline, has been a better linguist, has been better read, has had a wider and more accurate acquaintance with literature and philosophy. The Theological Seminary, until very recently, has been every way in advance of the Medical School and the Law School; and is still ahead of them in the breadth of its culture. It so happens, however, that the decline in the influence of the pulpit has been subsequent to the origin of Theological Schools and has kept pace with the increase of attention to theological edu-

cation; but to place these in the relation of cause and effect is as irrational as it would be to charge the illiteracy of the south, on the existence of the Smithsonian Institution. The truth is, the Theological Seminary has served to retard a decline which it did not create and cannot wholly arrest.

But the specific charge is, that the Seminaries make scholars rather than preachers. Nor is the charge absolutely groundless. The Seminaries have undeniably sometimes made small scholars instead of great preachers. I say small scholars, because great scholars are the combined products of rare endowments and rare opportunities. So, indeed, are great preachers. But the one chief aim of the Theological Seminary is or should be not to make scholars, but to make the best possible preachers and pastors; not to make popular preachers, in the common acceptation of the word popular, (for, with very rare exceptions, the real usefulness of the preacher will be in the inverse ratio of his popularity), but preachers who can instruct, who can win and hold audiences, who can perform the real function of ambassadors for Christ.

And that even ordinary men of good understanding and education may be trained into successful preachers, in the sense we have described, both observation and experience sufficiently testify. And it is an evidence of great weakness and affectation, not to say of self-flattering vanity, when any man with a "Reverend" prefixed to his name, tosses his head on one side and says: "Oh, I do not set up to be a preacher; I am only a patient student and teacher of God's word;" the implication

is that preaching is below scholarship. Indeed, you sometimes hear it said, in disparagement of a superior preacher, that "he is only a preacher;" as if that were not just as much to his credit as to be only something else. The truth is, that first-rate preaching is too often disparaged by those whose duty it should be to cultivate it in themselves and to encourage it in others. And this has been one of the ways in which the power of the pulpit has been weakened.

Now, how does the prevalent method of preparing a man for the function of preaching actually deal with him? For ten years, he is shut up to uninterrupted work as a recluse student. At, or near, the end of his student life, he is told to write a sermon and deliver it to an audience. For the first time in his life, he finds himself addressing living thoughts to living men. What it is actually to preach, he does not yet know. Of course, he has had his college declamations, has had his college and seminary debates, has written sermons and criticised them as works of art; he has, to borrow a term from the Law School, had his "moot" preachings; but in delivering real messages from God to waiting souls, he is without experience. How to lay hold of an audience and control their thoughts and emotions, he has yet to learn. Alas! that so many never learn.

One other thing that has detracted and is now actively detracting from the influence of the pulpit may be glanced at, and your patience shall be relieved. It is found in the endless repetition of old sermons. A sermon that is to accomplish

an end and to be worth listening to, must embody real thoughts, thoughts that have some connection with the interests and issues of life, and must be instinct with the living convictions of the preacher. To be such a sermon, it must come from the preacher's mind and heart, warm with the very life-blood of his soul at the moment of its delivery.

But how a preacher can stand up before an audience, and proceed to read as a message to living men, a sermon just as he wrote it forty, thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago, I cannot comprehend. When written, the sermon, doubtless, was a real embodiment of the writer's thoughts, convictions, and emotions. But during the rush of intervening years, what changes, if there has been a soul within him, have passed over his spirit. To write that sermon now would be simply impossible. And yet he tries to put himself into it, and in that guise presents himself to an audience of thinking people. An old coat that he wore twenty or thirty years ago might be aired, and the dust whipped out of it, and he present himself in it with much more propriety than in the old sermon. No treatment of the sermon except complete revivification, can relieve it of its smell of age. Like an old bouquet of flowers, its once delicate fragrance has sunk into a sickening odor.

One of the sad thoughts connected with existing Christianity is that so many churches are willing to live on what are called "pulpit supplies." To begin such a mode of life is to begin at once to decline in efficiency and life. A

sadder thought, however, is that so many lean and hungry preachers, of whom the churches are not anxious to make pastors, are found with empty pockets, with thread-bare coats, with sermons long since in the sere and yellow leaf, waiting anxiously to be called for as supplies. Need we be surprised that in such churches, and with such preachers, there never should be any difficulty in finding a seat?

But here we may be reminded that actors will for successive weeks act the same play, and with never-failing power rouse their audiences to high enthusiasm; and may be asked, why cannot sermons be repeated with equal effect? If preaching were acting, they could be. But, if its end be to control conscience and mold character, its office must be something else than that of the player on the stage. Or, perhaps, we shall be reminded of the great preachers of the time of Louis XIV., who were wont to repeat their sermons, and whose auditors on the way to church, when some great sermon was to be repeated, were accustomed to dispute about the tone and emphasis and gesture with which some noted passage would be delivered. And if the Protestant pulpit is to be made what the French then was, a place for the display of oratory, the reminder is relevant; but if, instead, it is to be a place for instruction in righteousness, the example is not pertinent.

But of course sermons are to be repeated. On given conditions, a good one may be repeated as often as there is a new audience to hear it. Indeed, it may with profit be repeated to the same

audience. But the conditions are that the sermon shall be literally re-thought and re-elaborated with every new delivery. In this way, and in this alone, can it be filled up with the vital and vitalizing emotions of the preacher. It thus virtually becomes with every new delivery, a new sermon. And if young ministers who change their pastorates that they may re-use their old preparations, will use them only by literally re-thinking and re-writing them, the change will bring them growth. If they simply repeat without re-elaboration, they will begin to die at the top, instead of shooting out into new and wider branches.

The generation to which we belong is eager in its pursuits and impatient of everything unreal and unmeaning. The preacher who is to catch its ear must have thoughts pertinent to its life and words that are plump with meaning. No office ever vouchsafed of God to men was grander than that of his who is commissioned to speak in God's name to the people of this century. May the Omniscient Spirit give to you, young gentlemen, some just conception of the greatness of the opportunity and the responsibility of the work to which as heralds of Divine truth you have been called.

LECTURE V.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE PREACHER OF OUR TIME.

IT is evident that every age requires its own special style of preaching. It is equally evident that the preachers of every age should have their special qualifications. But there are requisites in the minister of the gospel which are common to all times and places. He must, of course, always and everywhere have some degree of familiarity with the historical facts of Christianity. And he must not only know these by reading and hearsay; he must know them as facts that relate to him personally. He must have penetrated to the heart of their meaning; that meaning must have awakened him to new life and power. He may know the Scriptures in their original tongues, and be able to explain them with historical and grammatical accuracy; but without spiritual discernment—a discernment that can be imparted only by the omniscient Spirit through whom the Scriptures were given —he never can understand or interpret aright their real and inward meaning. He should also know something of the tastes and habits and cur-

rent thoughts of the people whom he addresses. And, if he is to be a pastor, no matter when or where, his religious knowledge should be unquestionably in advance of that of his flock. The special requirements in the preacher of a given age will differ of course from those common to all ages rather in degree than in kind. Let us, as the subject of the present lecture, inquire into the special qualifications that should be looked for in the Christian minister of our time.

He ought, first of all, to be a man of real and ever growing acquaintance with Christianity as a power in his own soul. There is no way of understanding moral and religious truth like that of complete surrender of ourselves to its power. No one knows the ocean, till he has crossed it; nor the Alps, till he has climbed them. No one knows Christ, till he has communed with him; nor his truth, till he has felt its power within himself.

Ours is a preëminently skeptical age. An atmosphere of religious distrust pervades literature and society. It enfeebles the souls of men like a malarial poison. Preachers themselves, as said in a previous lecture, are affected by it. The only true antidote—the real prophylactic against the poison—is in an unaffected and ever deepening submission of the whole being to the personal Christ and his truth. Read as we will, and reason as we may, the conclusive evidence, after all, for the divine authority of our holy religion is that it finds us and renews us at the centre of our being. No man needs this ever present evidence so much as the preacher. He needs it not only as a

safeguard, but for the power it gives him; as a safeguard, because he whose business it is to be ever looking after other people, is in danger of forgetting himself; for the power it gives, because no man's words are so filled with electric energy as his whose thoughts spring from his heart.

And the requisite we have thus specified as being foremost of all, is equally the need of every kind of preacher. The evangelist, or so-called revivalist, needs it quite as much as the settled pastor. In fact, he needs it more. His calling exposes him to perils that are specially his own. He is always aiming at immediate results; he will sow and reap in a day. Every sermon is shaped with a view to the production of a definite stage of feeling and conviction, and his whole series of sermons to the culmination of feelings in a crisis. He is perpetually changing the field of his operations, and repeating his round of discourses. His greatest danger is, that endless repetitions, with sharp, business-like calculation of results, shall deaden his sensibilities and make him a mere actor. Playing upon the feelings of others tends directly to harden his own.

The qualifications of a modern evangelist are neither numerous nor difficult to acquire. Fewer sermons than would suffice for eighteen months of a regular pastorate; a facile and not over-accurate use of the Scriptures; a good stock of illustrations and well varnished anecdotes; a fervid manner; and withal that perfect mastery of his discourses which comes from repetition of them; and you have the equipment of the average evangelist. And if any man among men needs to be

watchful over his own soul, and to strive incessantly to keep himself alive to the solemnity of the truth he handles, it is he who is always at work on the sensibilities of others. But this lecture is not to him, nor for his particular benefit; it is to those who, I trust, are to be stated teachers of regular Sunday congregations.

To a genuine and ever-deepening Christian experience, the preacher of our time must have a critical knowledge of the Scriptures. Everybody who now goes to Church may be supposed to know something of the Bible and its contents. Alas, that the overwhelming majority of churchgoers are invited to listen to what they already know by heart. He who to-day can claim any right to be heard from the pulpit, must know something more of the Scriptures than the average of his hearers. This was always an assumed requirement in the Christian minister; to-day it is imperatively demanded. Everybody now knows that the helps for the study of the Bible surpass those of all past centuries. The Book was never so intelligible as it now is, if one do but know how to read it critically. Of the Christian minister who does not know how so to read it, intelligent hearers are impatient, and will not give heed to him.

Nor is this demand for a large and accurate acquaintance with the Bible on the part of him who is to teach its religion, either unreasonable or difficult to comply with. It is not unreasonable, because what he cannot justify as warranted by Scripture he has no right to preach as the religion of Christ. It is not difficult, because not

only are the helps for a knowledge of our sacred books in excess of those of all past times; but the meaning of the books is overflowingly full. The wells of the Bible are not dry. Their waters are as deep, and as cool, and as refreshing as at the beginning, if one do but know how to draw from them. And while a "saving knowledge" is possible from the most imperfect of translations, to the Christian pastor of our day, no method of extracting from the Scriptures the fullness of their meaning can ever take the place of that furnished in a knowledge of the original tongues in which the Scriptures were written.

A right use of the Scriptures in sermons is by no means so common as it ought to be. Every sermon should, of course, be scriptural in the sense of both explaining the Scriptures, and being in strict accord with their teachings. But in order to do this, there need not be emptied upon the audiences long passages containing matter wholly irrelevant to the subject in hand. This is equally a misuse of the Bible, and an abuse of the patience of the hearer. It floods without giving a drop to drink.

Nor is it a whit more sensible to use the Bible as a compositor uses his case of types. The compositor stands before his case and picks out the letters that make up the word that is to be printed. The preacher stands before his Bible and picks out his proof texts, one from an Old Testament history, another from a Psalm, another from a Gospel, and still another from an Epistle; and by putting them all together, he spells out and preaches the doctrine of his ser-

mon. The texts are taken regardless of the connections in which they occur. Some are used by an accommodation of their real meaning to the wants of the preacher; some are used metaphorically; some only happen to have the same English words as are used in the theme of the sermon. The authors of the texts quoted may have originally used the words in connections totally different from one another, and with meanings wholly aside from those attached to them by the preacher. This is a misuse and an abuse of the Bible which would be tolerated of no other book.

Against that vulgar prejudice which supposes a sermon to be scriptural in proportion to the number of its allusions to the Scriptures, or of its cited proof texts, an intelligent preacher will guard himself as against a foolish and mischievous error. Many a sermon may be in the profoundest sense scriptural, and never formally cite a text beyond that on which it is founded; and many another may bristle with texts, and yet from its beginning to its ending be flatly unscriptural. A man shows his regard for the Bible as he does for its omniscient Author, not by wordy reverence, but by a conscious and rational submission of mind and heart to all his known will.

Again, well-trained and well-stored intellects are now demanded in the pulpit as they never were before. Mental discipline is always an element of power. Without it, the strongest intellect is but an unstrung bow; it can speed no arrow to its mark. And no one more needs it than he whose business it is to handle Christian truth. He is to treat of God and the divine

purposes; of man and human duties and destiny. He must take hold of thoughts that reach further and higher and strike deeper than any others that can engage the attention of man. And these thoughts he must present to audiences that are better educated and better informed, than were ever before addressed since the church was founded. This generation, among all nations, stands on a higher level of intelligence than any which has preceded it. Its religious teachers, if they are to hold its attention, must have the grasp and power which nothing but thorough training can give them.

And at the command of the trained intellect should be real knowledge. It is a conviction as old as history, that a religion to be entitled to respect must have the support of the best knowledge of its time. Hence, learning in the earliest ages was in the hands of the priesthood. And the earliest teachers of Christianity never were guilty of the blunder of denouncing real learning, or of ridiculing true science. In assailing false science and philosophy, the language they used in denouncing them distinctly implied the value and authority of true science and philosophy. They assailed the false, because these had been thrust forward into the place of the true, and above all had been pushed into antagonism with Christianity. The very method of apostolic dealing with the science and philosophy of their day, shows how distinctly they recognized the indivisible association of true religion with all sound knowledge and all good learning. And every genuine successor of the apostles has sought dili-

gently both to cultivate his own mind and to encourage mental culture in others.

And the conviction that religion and knowledge, if both true, must harmonize, was never so fixed in the minds of men as it now is. All men regard it as self-evident that God cannot contradict in his word what he has said in his works. With what physical science makes demonstrably clear as the teaching of nature, God's word, rightly understood, may justly be expected to agree. To the truth of not a little of the Bible's teaching, science has already borne its testimony; and over still more it is throwing the light of its own illustrative interpretation.

But pray do not here understand me as encouraging formal attempts at reconciliation of science and Scripture in the pulpit. To make these attempts is not to preach the gospel; is to edify neither scientist nor Christian. Attempts to make the Bible teach science are perversions of its aim. To force its oriental and poetic forms of expression into the cold and exact terminology of science, is to violate the plainest laws of interpretation and the first principles of scientific method. And withal the attempts are gratuitous. The sciences most vaunted as directly opposed to revelation are those whose theories are as yet too unsettled, whose conclusions are too crude and uncertain, to furnish any ground for serious alarm. Even the attempts that have been made to remove minor discrepancies suggested by the oldest and most demonstrably certain of the sciences, have not always been fruitful of the highest good. The value of the famous astronomical discourses

of Chalmers cannot be rated high. The apparent discrepancies between science and religion, if not magnified by undue attention to them, gradually fade away before the light of advancing knowledge.

But natural science is only one of the many fields of knowledge over which men are now roaming, and of which the religious teacher is not expected to be wholly ignorant. History, philosophy, and literature, all open wide their gates and whosoever will may enter. They offer richest materials illustrative of man's need, as well as of the power and glory, of the religion of Jesus. From them, have been abstracted weapons with which the enemies of Christianity have sought to destroy it; and from them must the teacher of religion procure the only weapons with which the enemies can be repelled. Nor can he afford to omit this part of his equipment. A suspicion of his ignorance in matters on which he may, and ought to be, informed will rob him of one element of his power. And yet here, as in dealing with those who would turn natural science against Christianity, the business of the preacher of righteousness is not so much to beat back the enemies of the Cross, as it is to instruct and encourage the inquisitive and impartial.

Manifestly, he who is to retain his hold on a mixed congregation of modern church-goers (and what one is not mixed?), must be a well-read man; a man who knows what the different departments of knowledge are; what the relation of most of these to Christianity is; how that relation has been perverted; how it ought to be understood and treated. He must know how to read

rapidly, intelligently, and profitably; how to tear through and tear out the vitals of a book with dispatch. Some men never learn how to read rapidly and widely. Their movements are always by a way-train that stops at every station. They always put in a mark or turn down a leaf, so as to be sure and resume their reading at the precise paragraph where they left off. They have never learned to run over a treatise, tripping lightly where the land is sandy, and stopping to sink shafts only where there is promise of ore. The secret of a happy dispatch of a book, and an intelligent appropriation of its contents, is a secret which every man must learn for himself, and can learn only by practice.

But there are two mischievous thoughts which sometimes get possession of young preachers, and make it impossible that they should grow and widen with their years. The first of these lies in a mistaken notion as to what will be surest to win them a hearing. Their own youthful taste is for rhetorical ornamentation. This also readily wins for them a youthful following. The older heads of a congregation in looking for a pastor, often regard it as all important that the man selected shall be specially acceptable to the young people. The young preacher sees what he thinks is his strong point; and his cue is speedily taken. Thenceforward, his distinguishing characteristic is the rhetorical. His reading is chiefly, if not wholly, in popular literature. His sermons interest rather than instruct. Even those who like them, are pleased rather than controlled by what they hear. If he does not sink into a mere

sentence-maker and dealer in the small trinkets and gewgaws of cheap rhetoric, it will be because a feeling of hidden want, or some influence from without, brings him to his senses, and saves him.

Rhetorical ornament is good if it be the natural adornment of real and just thought. Truth is never so beautiful as when standing in its native and unadorned majesty. The highest achievement of rhetoric is in so setting forth truth, that it shall appear in its own natural dress, color, and proportions. Literature has its place; but it is always after science and philosophy.

The second mischievous thought is in the notion that the gospel of Christ and human learning belong wholly to different spheres; that faith is dishonored by an alliance with knowledge; that human learning "corrupts from the simplicity that is in Christ." You will sometimes meet with men who seem to suppose that they honor the gospel in proportion as they succeed in throwing discredit on every thought or truth derived from any source but Scripture. With great show of piety they affect profound reverence for the "pure gospel," and contempt for all science and philosophy. This shallow and transparent cant often cloaks ignorance, and sometimes a criminal indolence. They who indulge in it forget that the deadliest foes Christianity ever encounters are its treacherous friends, bigotry, superstition, and fanaticism. These are the foes that fasten on its vitals; and nothing but the sharp surgery of exact knowledge—the very knowledge that science and philosophy and history furnish—can cut them out. Be assured, young gentlemen, that if you do not

trouble yourselves about science and philosophy and history, these will trouble themselves with you. They will either be your faithful servants, or your implacable foes.

Let the history of clerical education in this country instruct us. Every one of our older institutions of learning, you remember, originated in a desire to give to the clergy the best possible education, and to endow them with the largest possible measure of the learning of their time. Every sect that, in its humble beginnings, was obliged to recruit its ministry from the ranks of the unlearned, now strives to its utmost to secure to itself the most thoroughly furnished guides. The endowments also of Institutions for the cultivation of every species of learning are at once the wonder of our time and the glory of our country. They are fast lifting the whole nation to a higher level of intelligence. Woe to the religious shepherds that do not keep pace with their flocks. A double woe to him who does not see his opportunity and the ample means at hand for improving it.

Thus far we have dwelt on the requirements for successful preaching in all times, seeking only to emphasize the necessity of the largest attainable measure of these in him who in this generation is to be the minister of a stated congregation. We have sought to show that by just so much as this generation is in advance of those which have preceded it, by so much ought its preachers to be in advance of their predecessors. Let us turn now to their minor, but no less imperative needs, —needs peculiar to these times, and now specially manifest. They are needs the most of which a

high degree of the qualifications we have dwelt on, would readily supply. Let us see how, combined with a genuine Christian experience, a knowledge of the best results of all kinds of modern learning, will secure to the preacher of our time certain elements of power now too often most sadly wanting.

First of all, it will enable him to meet the universal and now intensified feeling that a religion to have authority with men must have the support of all that is clearest and most settled in their convictions. It will show the world that Christianity loves light, fall from whatever quarter it may; that it covets truth, brought whencesoever and by whomsoever it may be; that it is what it professes to be, an infinitely gracious gift from the Creator of the heavens and the earth, whose kingdom ruleth over all. It will show that the teachers of religion, if not now as of old the sole depositaries of learning, are yet its most earnest supporters and cultivators.

Again, the pulpit now needs, as never before, the power of whole-hearted convictions. It knows no weakness equal to that of uncertainty and half-belief. And no conviction is equal to his whose inner life is being constantly fed by an ever-growing knowledge of God from both his word and his works. Too many preachers, alas, hang between their knowledge and their faith. They are never able to fuse these into an indivisible unity. But man's nature is no sea-going steamer, divided into water-tight compartments, one of which may be broken and filled, and itself still be kept afloat. He may think that he can believe

in his heart what his intellect denies. But he will float at the mercy of every storm that overtakes him. If mind and heart supplement each the other, then his convictions will impart to him an energy before which waves and opposing storms will serve only to minister a steadier movement.

It is often complained that the pulpit lacks freshness and variety; that its themes are hackneyed; its thoughts commonplace; its range inexcusably narrow. Nor is the complaint wholly groundless. And at first thought, it would seem as if there could be no remedy. The gospel is an "old, old story." For more than eighteen hundred years, it has been the subject of incessant discussion and discourse. Its original history is limited; its doctrines definite and established; what new views can any preacher be expected to give of it? None certainly, if, in his reading, he is to be limited to well-gleaned commentaries, and to the dusty roads where all his hearers are travelling.

But Christianity reveals to us an infinite Being, a Being in endless relations to nature, and an onward moving race. Of this Being, every new aspect of nature, and every shifting phase of human society, gives us new glimpses. No one who knows a fraction of what mankind are now doing, can lack variety of topics for Christian discourse, or materials for setting old truths in new lights, or for exhibiting afresh man's perennial need of the redemption that is in Christ. The scope of the gospel is unwarrantably contracted and belittled by that conception of preaching which would limit it to the ceaseless iteration of a single

group of doctrines. The cross should be made to throw its radiance over the whole face of human society. The dromedaries of Midian, and the ships of Tarshish, should be made to bring all their treasures of incense and silver and gold to the service of the Lord. One most crying want in the average preacher of our time is breadth of knowledge, a knowledge that can be acquired only by systematic and most persistent work, and work to which he devotes himself with the regularity of the laborer, whose daily bread depends on his daily toil.

Acquaintance with what is true in science will add to the preacher's knowledge of divine truth. Both Testaments of the Bible pre-suppose a large amount of moral and religious knowledge derived solely from consciousness and nature. On this knowledge, the supernatural revelation builds as on a basis of acknowledged truth. But nature now speaks through science as it could not when any part of the Bible was written. Its older and mumbled utterances are now almost articulate. Nature and revelation, it is becoming increasingly clear, are not opposites, but harmonious wholes; each complements the other. Any truth which the moral consciousness and nature clearly teaches, is, therefore, just as legitimately used in the pulpit as if first announced in the Bible. And when nature corroborates a doctrine of the gospel, her testimony is as good as a Scripture text; or when a mawkish sentimentality perverts the doctrines of grace into an excuse for license, what antidote is equal to a strong dose of natural law? When told that the threatened penalties of God's law

are only for reformation and not for punishment; that God is too merciful to punish the minor sins of men; what tonic is more wholesome than a short, sharp showing from science that the effects of violated law, whether physical or moral, can be no more averted by arbitrary fiat than the force of gravitation can be reversed? The great truth that reconstruction of human character, the salvation of the soul, must come through faith in a crucified and a risen Saviour, is a doctrine to which even natural science can give its own independent testimony.

Again, the preaching of our time ought to be more distinctively doctrinal than it is. By this is certainly not meant that sermons ought to be more like theological essays than they now are. But doctrines ought to be so conceived and discussed in sermons that they will become what they really should be, the source of all religious life and movement. There is preaching enough that is descriptive, rhetorical, sentimental, hortatory, and expository, but little that firmly grasps and wields the profounder doctrines of the gospel. This last, for many persons, is not an easy kind of preaching; but it is a kind most painfully needed, and a kind for which only long and painstaking reading and thinking can prepare one.

Christianity, as it now exists in the world, is the result of many centuries of struggle and growth. As a mode of social and civilized life, it has reached its present stage through countless vicissitudes. As a system of doctrines, it bears the marks of endless controversies and criticisms. Not one of its doctrines, as now held, can be

fully understood, except through its history. All have been formulated with some degree of philosophical accuracy; and all are arranged into various systems according to the philosophies of the systematizers. And every intelligent preacher of this age has his conceptions of Christianity arranged into some kind of system more or less orderly, and more or less complete.

Now, no sermons are to my mind more dreary or profitless than those devoted to doctrines which the preacher knows only by hearsay, or to which he has merely assented as formulas of a creed. He may have received them as a heritage from his father, or as the heir-looms of his sect. He knows nothing of their inception, or of their growth, or of the reasons for the exact terms in which they are now stated, and very little of the texts on which they are founded. He may discourse ever so logically in support of them; every argument may be fortified by a text, and the whole be rigidly orthodox; and yet all be stale, flat, and unprofitable. So common is it now for such doctrinal sermons to fall dead on an audience, that young preachers, and not a few old ones, carefully eschew them. And yet, amid the tempests of skepticism that now beat on the church, what kind of preaching can be more serviceable than just that which shall root and ground the believer in the eternal verities of his religion?

Can such preaching, do you ask, ever be made acceptable and effective? Assuredly it can, provided that the doctrine to be preached shall first have been studied into by the preacher, both historically and scripturally, and so felt out in his

own religious life that it has come to get hold of both his mind and his heart; then he will find it the most effective kind of preaching he can adopt. No one doctrine of Christianity is a fiction; every one embodies an eternal truth. Traditional statements of the doctrine may be open at every syllable to criticism; but work your way through its verbal form down to the bed-rock of its truth. Planting your feet there, you will feel the firmness of the eternal foundations. You will then preach with an assurance, and a force of conviction, and a power of persuasion, that will surprise yourself and startle your hearers.

The demand is now every day growing more emphatic that he who will preach the gospel shall give evidence of an established and consistent character. And the demand is most reasonable. The preacher of salvation to others ought to present in himself some faint semblance of the salvation proposed. The conviction is every day gaining ground, is already deep-seated in many minds, that the best, the enduring, results of preaching are not to be looked for in those sudden gusts of emotion awakened by the preacher's skill, but in those abiding impressions produced by weight of character and not by wit of words. Nor does this conviction forget that the saving efficacy of all preaching is through the renewing agency of the creative Spirit. It believes that the Spirit works through words, but that he works most of all through the characters of those in whom he dwells.

All character is an organism and a growth, as much so as is the human body. At its centre

is its creative or organific spirit; every man being in reality just what the innermost belief of his soul makes him. The materials out of which character is formed lie in all those activities, temptations, and trials which make up the discipline of life. Out of such materials the innermost faith that is in you, young gentlemen, has been forming, is now forming, your characters. And the characters you will have formed, will be the living epistles by which men will determine your divine commission to preach. After the age at which you have now arrived, radical changes in your characters will be rare. But if change comes, it will come only when there has been change at the centre of the soul,—a change in the formative principles of the whole being.

The constructive forces of given types of character are necessarily the same with all men and in all times. They are so because human nature is everywhere the same. It is with the preacher of the gospel as with all other men. But the demand is that his character shall be exceptionally high. It is required that it shall not only be exalted and unimpeachable, but also transparent and symmetrical. The obstructive forces to be overcome by him may be more subtle and dangerous than those of other men; but to no one else is failure so absolutely fatal. We can here indicate but two out of the many sources of his danger, and these specially of the pastor. The first is a temptation to think too much of himself; the second to have too much regard for his auditors.

The desire to be well thought of is natural; and

Christianity does not condemn it. Within certain limits, the desire is both useful and wholesome. It becomes dangerous the moment it grows into craving for applause. Like any other perverted principle, its perversion corrupts and turns into deadly evil the very good it is capable of. But a reputation worth coveting never comes to him who directly seeks it. If it comes at all, it comes only as a reward to honest and self-forgetful work. He who thinks only of making a reputation for himself, may attract attention; but it will be attention to the pasteboard front of a wretched hovel. And he who enters the pulpit as a clerical flirt, coquetting for popular applause, will finally leave it as a detected cheat.

I remember many years ago, in a short pastorate which divine Providence allotted to me, there was residing in the city where I was, a gentleman who had formerly been a very noted preacher. His reputation had come down from thirty years preceding as that of a preacher of remarkable eloquence. He was then a retired clergyman; and I asked him one day if he would preach for me. He preached; and no sooner had he finished, than, turning to me, he asked: "How did it go?" Afterwards I asked him to preach again. "Oh, no," he replied; "I made a good impression, and I don't want to impair it." It was a revelation of the man; vanity had ruled him in his earlier days, and in his old age had eaten out the core of him.

A second danger lies in his flock. For many things, a pastor is dependent on his people. He will be more than human if their wishes do not

sometimes influence him. It is incredible that his character should be in no danger of being warped thereby. The proverb, "Like people, like priest," as well as its reverse, can show its striking illustrations. The pastor will also be more than fortunate if the will, or character, or conduct, or wealth, of some hearer does not lie as an obstacle in the way of his success. He may succumb, and yield, and so compound with his conscience; or, losing his temper and abandoning his claim to the spirit either of Christian or gentleman, he may, as the last resort of the morally feeble, indulge in personalities in his sermons. In either case, his character suffers detriment.

But to keep his integrity, and to fill out his character into completeness and strength, the Christian minister must have certain fixed and broad principles of action. First and foremost must be an unswerving loyalty to Christ. He is Christ's servant, Christ's messenger, and Christ's representative. At the very centre of his being must be the settled conviction that, come what may, no deed, nor word, nor purpose, nor thought of his, shall ever be contrary to what Christ has bidden him. But as safeguards to that central power of his soul, other and additional principles must hold him in his relations with men. What shall these be?

The French philosopher, D'Alembert, has been quoted as saying that "the motto of a literary man should be liberty, truth, and poverty; and that whoever is afraid of the last, will never be possessor of the first two." The inventory is not exhaustive of the principles of a noble character.

It is more striking than accurate. Make it liberty, truth, and perfect contentment with whatever fidelity to these may bring with it, and you have a motto that will answer till you can enlarge it into a better. It will serve as a basis for our present grouping of some of the principles of action whereby the preacher may preserve to himself the integrity of his character.

He should be intent on preserving that liberty, or personal freedom, with which Christ has endowed him; freedom from practice of moral evil, from selfish aims in life, from the dictation of man, from undue regard for the opinions of men; freedom from everything but the yoke of Christ; from whatever would hinder the freest and fullest discharge of all the duties of a preacher of the religion of Jesus. So, also, fidelity to truth should be so fixed in his heart that no bribe can move him a hair's breadth from what he conceives to be its exact requirements. With personal freedom thus prized and preserved, and with a loving obedience to truth thus kept alive in the heart, all unwarrantable regard for self or others will be impossible. The thousand elements that make up every true type of manhood, will come together within him by mutual affinity. The completed product will be apparent to all men. Its power none will be able to gainsay.

And it is easy to see what is always sure to come personally to one whose sense of freedom is complete, and whose attitude is always that of joyous welcome to every truth, as to a messenger from heaven. There will be serenity and strength and courage and gentleness and pa-

tience, of which no adversity can rob him. Christ's unclouded presence within him will irradiate every avenue of his soul. Standing up as a preacher, the majesty of God and of his Christ will so rise before him that self and all human interests will sink from his sight. Filled with a sense of his awful trust as an ambassador for Christ, he may speak with a fidelity that will start men from their seats; and not a tongue will wag itself against him. It will be the character of the man standing behind his words that will give them power. To such a preacher, no congregation of Christian people will fail to give heed; and on such the blessing of God is absolutely certain to rest. But, on the other hand, can you think of anything more pitiable, anything to make good men and angels sooner weep, than that one, who has power to handle truth effectively, whose tears and choking utterance apparently reveal profound emotion, who seems almost to bring heaven down to earth in his sermons, should yet be one whose heart is hollow and empty, and who plays on the sensibilities of his hearers as a skilful musician plays on the strings of his instrument. The demand is every day becoming more imperative that the Christian teacher who will claim a right to be heard shall first furnish in himself some practical illustration of the virtues he would inculcate in others. The man must be more than his words; or his words will be wind, and himself be despised as a fraud.

In close connection with the demand for personal worth in the preacher, is the necessity that

his sermons be level with his experience. The topics to be discoursed on have come, of course, by revelation, and transcend all human experience; but for the preacher to ply his audience with arguments and considerations uninformed by that spirit which his own experience alone can supply, is to waste his words and to misuse his office. Nor can there be any successful counterfeit of the spirit which experience gives. Strong language and vehemence of tone only betray its absence. The voice of the parrot, be it ever so distinct, is easily distinguished from the human. When the book of John Angell James, on "An Earnest Ministry," was published, some thirty years ago, many a young man set himself to a diligent cultivation of an earnest manner. A more direct method of self-enfeeblement could hardly have been adopted. All true earnestness springs unconsciously from the heart that is moved by strong convictions.

Strange and melancholy experiences sometimes come to young men who enter the Christian ministry with the purest of motives and the highest of aims. They have accepted with all honesty of heart the creed of their sect. To every article, so far as they have understood it, they have yielded a hearty assent. They are conscientiously anxious to prove themselves strictly orthodox. They enter the pastoral office and begin to preach their creed according to their understanding of it. The influences of the time are not in harmony with the terms of the creed they are pledged to support. Their convictions are weakened; and though their words still re-

main orthodox, the spirit of orthodoxy is not in them. Their sermons

> Are shouted from the pulpit back and forth,
> In such wise that the lambs, who do not know,
> Come back from pasture fed upon the wind.

Few personal histories are more sadly instructive on this point, than that of Frederick W. Robertson. Bred among the evangelical portion of the Anglican Church, he entered its ministry with the most devout of intentions, and began as the most orthodox of preachers. He was an earnest and faithful preacher, a devoted and diligent pastor at Winchester, at Cheltenham, and at Oxford; and with very small results. Nothing could be sadder than the agony of doubt into which he found himself plunged when the foundations of his faith gave way from beneath him, and he saw the beliefs in which he had been educated, and which he had been preaching, vanish like thin mist in the air. He found that he had been laboriously preaching what he only knew by hearsay. When afterwards, with a few broken truths which he had clutched with all the energy of a drowning man, he went before an audience at Brighton, he discoursed on these with a freshness, and force, and unction, that compelled the attention of all classes and conditions of men. And whence this new power? Certainly not because he now preached truth, and had previously preached fiction; but simply because his preaching was now level to his experience. Every word that came from his lips was like molten lava from the mouth of a volcano. His whole inner

being was fused to a white heat. And through every successive year of the ministry that remained to him before death called him, there was a steady and manifest regress towards the sentiments from which he had seemed so wholly to revolt. Be assured it is not orthodoxy that will make you tame and spiritless; but feeding on the husks of truth instead of its kernels. If you will have Robertson's power, let the truth you preach set your hearts ablaze as it did his; and possibly the people will be glad to bask in your light and warmth as they did in his.

One of the most painful and perplexing facts connected with the Christian ministry of our day, is the large and constantly growing number to whom the churches are disinclined to give any permanent employment. The fact is common to every division of the Protestant Church. The most varied explanations have been given of it. No remedy for the evil seems to be immediately at hand. But the question is at least worth asking, whether, if the word of the Lord come to man with such consuming energy that he is forced to cry aloud and spare not, some church will not be ready and eager to hear him? And, in asking the question, I do not forget that a craving for change and sensation has created a distaste for regular and wholesome instruction. A wandering evangelist who in a few weeks can reap a scanty harvest from the untilled field, is preferred to the wise husbandman, who can sow as well as reap. They forget that any kind of workman can reap, but only a well-trained eye and a steady hand can be trusted to sow. And yet, no harm would

be done if here and there an idle laborer should be so inflamed with a desire to plough and sow, as, uninvited, to force some fallow field into tillage and crop-bearing; possibly the doing this might prompt some pastorless church to invite him to a settlement.

In conclusion, let me say that it is a living Christianity which this age needs, and which it will have, or it will have none at all. It is impatient of all shams, and will give no heed to the empty sepulchre from which Christ has risen. It wishes to see the living Lord himself. And of what avail will be our equipments and accomplishments, if we know not the personal Christ? It was by him that the life of religion was begun in us; by him alone that the life can be continued and perfected in us; by him alone that our work as his ministers can be successfully prosecuted; by him that we and our work at the last shall be judged; and in him that at the end we and all things shall find consummation. Let our watchword be to the men of this generation, what that of the Apostles was to the men of their time: Jesus and the Resurrection.

LECTURE VI.

SERMON-MAKING.

In introducing the lecture this afternoon, it may not be inappropriate to say that, when the present lecturer received his appointment to give the course of this year, it was his misfortune not to have read the lectures of his predecessors. To avoid embarrassment, it then seemed desirable not to read them till his own had been delivered. It is not pleasant to know that you are telling a familiar story. And in so many courses of lectures, on a theme so limited as that of preaching, it is hardly possible that there should not be developed a considerable degree of sameness as well as of diversity of thought. In the present course of lectures, however, your attention, it must be admitted, has thus far been invited to certain ends to be accomplished by preaching, and to the requisite qualifications of preachers who are to accomplish the ends, rather than to preaching itself. But the lectureship was originally established for the special benefit of those who are to preach. Some discussion, therefore, of the methods of sermon-making, may justly be expected in any

course which is intended to fulfil the original design. At the risk, then, of travelling over familiar ground, let the subject of our present lecture be, the process of making a sermon; or, in more ambitious phraseology, the best method of sermon-building.

And there are good reasons why this topic should receive special attention. A bad method in sermonizing is sometimes equivalent to erroneous thought; it often results in a waste of thought, and always in a loss of power. A vicious method always reacts on the mental powers to their detriment, just as an unnatural gait in walking reacts on the muscles of locomotion to their weariness and an imperfect performance of their functions. There are some methods of sermon-making which no man can practice and retain either self-respect or moral honesty. A good method of thought is always the first condition of good thinking, and of right understanding on the part of the audience, and consequently of all thoroughly good preaching.

Whatever may be one's mode of procedure in the after construction of a sermon, there can be but one first step with all men; and that is the selection of a subject, or of a text, or of both. But with these selected, diverse methods are possible, and have their advocates. Let us look at a few of them.

One very common method sometimes recommended in homiletical text-books is the following: The selected text or topic is turned over in the mind, and whatever happens to occur to one in his reflections is jotted down. The process is

kept up till materials enough for a discourse appear to have been collected. The whole is then arranged into some kind of order. But the materials thus collected, except in cases where a chronological order is forced on the attention, are necessarily heterogeneous, and without logical connection. The first thought that came may have been suggested by the law of association; the second and third by the principle of contrast or resemblance: another thought may have sprung from a single word of the text, and another from the circumstances under which the text was originally spoken, or from its connection with the train of thought of which it forms a part; and another still from the benefits likely to flow from acceptance of what the text teaches. The probabilities are as ten to one, that the thoughts collected will be a medley which no amount of elaboration can reduce to unity. There may be the semblance of unity; but it will be the unity of conglomeration, and not of organic growth. You have seen a beetle in the road-bed on a summer day, with its head down and hind feet up, most industriously rolling backwards over and over, an earth ball which slowly grew in bulk as it rolled. It is not an unfit emblem of a sermon made in the manner we have described. It has unity of form, but not of substance. It grew, like the sermon, by accretion, by a blind tumbling of the thing over and over in the dust of the road. It hides at its centre a worthless larva, which you can find only by cleaving the whole asunder. We all have heard such sermons. They are not uncommon. Rounded into apparent harmony of

form, their purpose hidden, they leave no distinct impression on the minds of the hearers. Of all sermons, they are the ones a pastor can repeat without fear of recognition.

A second method is, having a text or topic, to rummage among books for thoughts. First, as many commentaries as may be at hand are examined for doctrinal and practical suggestions,—and many of the later ones are not parsimonious in their hints. The next resort is to volumes of sermons,—those least valuable, and, to the weak, the most treacherous of all the books a minister of the gospel can gather into his library. Tables of contents and indexes are diligently searched, for whole discourses or single thoughts bearing on his text, or his subject; and whatever is pertinent is appropriated. Years ago, there was a distinguished preacher in one of our New England cities—his name is still kept fresh as the prenomen of many a worthy man—whose sermons were uniformly made in this way. He now has imitators in other cities than those of New England. When making a sermon, his library floor would be covered with partly opened books, standing end-wise, and waiting to be culled from. His sermons were always fresh, piquant (he was fond of South), and sometimes brilliant. But they were like patch-work, much more ornamental than useful. They pleased the unlettered; but they trained none into habits of clear, connected and careful thinking. He left no sermons worth reading. And I have known men to defend this unacknowledged appropriation of other men's thoughts. I remember one

such. He was not, thank heaven, a native American, but came from, and was educated, beyond the seas. When once asked what he thought of the morality of such appropriations, whether he regarded them as defensible, he replied: "Most assuredly I do. If I buy a book and pay for it, its contents are my property; and I have perfect right to make such use of them as I please." It is needless to add that he put his principles in practice.

Another method, with nothing to commend it, and everything to condemn it, is to take a skeleton plan, text and all, from a mis-named "Pulpit Assistant," or a "Pulpit Encyclopædia"—books which no intelligent or self-respecting minister would permit himself to own, much less to use. On this skeleton framework, the preacher hangs his bits of thought and anecdote, as he would pieces of clothing on a lay figure. But no skill can galvanize the whole into the semblance of life. No sermons are ordinarily more worthless. Like other stolen property, no amount of disguise can give ownership to the possessor. The hands may be Esau's; but the voice will be Jacob's. And, though such sermons are by no means so uncommon among a certain class of preachers as one at first thought might be disposed to believe, to the discerning they are not difficult of detection.

Another very common method, and one every way more respectable than either of the three preceding, is for the preacher to lay down for himself at the outset of his thinking, a plan according to which all the thoughts of his discourse are to be arranged. The plan serves as a mold

into which his thoughts are to be poured. It is, of course, arbitrary, having been made before what is to be said under it has been thought out. Being arbitrary, it is also artificial; and being artificial, it prevents a free and natural flow of thought. No one can make sermons in this way without betraying himself into the habit of always making them after one or another of a very small number of given patterns. No matter what the theme, nor what the aim, nor what the style of thought, all must come under a given kind, and a given number, and a given order, of heads. And yet, many persons have no other idea of a plan or a skeleton of a sermon than that of an order of thought, which has thus been decided on before thinking has made plain what the order of thought ought to be. Even so clear-headed and highly educated a man as the late Dr. James W. Alexander, one of the most scholarly and accomplished divines and preachers that has yet graced an American pulpit, seems all his life long to have been haunted by just this idea of a "preconcerted," or "precomposed plan." In that posthumous volume, "Thoughts on Preaching," gathered from his writings and scrap-book, and in which there is many a golden nugget of thought, he is continually protesting against writing according to such a plan; but never a hint escapes him that a plan could be otherwise than "preconcerted," or that the order of thought is not just as essential as thought itself; that without logical arrangement, half the force of thought is in fact lost, and the sermon as a whole, to the same degree fails of its end.

Another method, unlike all that we have named and sometimes advocated in opposition to the last mentioned, proposes that one shall ruminate on the text or subject of discourse, till some definite thought or thoughts occur to him, and that then he shall begin to write, letting the thoughts flow on as they will. Not a few scholarly and literary men pursue this method. I have at this moment in mind certain gentlemen of high culture who always write in this way, whether it be sermon, or any other kind of discourse or essay which they have in hand. Their thoughts refuse to flow until, with pen in hand, they actually begin to write. This method was warmly commended by Dr. Alexander, in the "Thoughts" just now referred to, and, judging by his published discourses, was the one he usually practiced, though he often both thought and spoke without writing, and counted it a defect in any mind that could not think without the pen. And for sermons that are to be read at the fireside rather than listened to in the pew, this method of composing has its merits. The mind in reading is pleased at being led in circuitous and unexpected paths. There then is leisure for the little by-ways of thought which we should be impatient at being taken into by a preacher to whom we were listening, but into which our curiosity is gratified at being led as readers. Many is the modern book of religious essays which evidently had first done indifferent service as sermons in the pulpit, and beyond all question had been composed by minds that ambled and meandered according to their own sweet wills. And, as essays, they are

all the more picturesque for the irregularity of their lines of thought; just as a brook in a meadow, winding like a slight and silvery thread, now hidden among the bushes, and now gleaming in the sunlight amid flowers and the green grass, is much more beautiful to look at than a straight channel, however full and deep and strong and swift the current that runs in it. But a sermon is to be judged of solely by its fitness to its end. Its purpose is to enlighten and convince, and not merely to entertain and to please. The preacher is supposed to have a definite end in view, and only a limited time in which to accomplish it. The more direct his steps towards it, the more likely his auditors will be to accompany him. And they have a right to know what his aim is, and to demand that he shall take a straight-forward and open road to reach it. He need not blunt the edge of their curiosity by telling them at the outset what all his arguments are to be; but, the moment the movement of his thought begins, it should be movement with progress. There are few things of which audiences are more impatient than labored movement, and no apparent advance. To spin tops or play hide-and-seek among bushes may be suitable amusements in suitable places; but the places are not in the pulpit.

But if neither of the methods thus far considered be commendable, is there any one that can be commended as best for all minds? Should not every one follow his own bent? Is not untrammeled nature preferable to any one uniform method? Yes, certainly; provided that "bent"

and "nature" signify anything else than mere habits accidentally or heedlessly formed. There are, however, certain conditions without which lucid and just thought can be insured to no one; and it is just as easy to understand these conditions and comply with them, and so to think clearly and accurately, as it is to neglect them, and so to find ourselves often in bewilderment and confusion. And in no place known among men is there at this moment a greater demand for clear and just thought than in the pulpit.

There are two general classes of sermons, commonly known as topical and textual; and the distribution may be regarded as accurate enough for our present purposes. Let us begin with the topical. Suppose a topic with its text to have been chosen. What shall be the next step? Manifestly, it should be to decide, as definitely as possible, just what we propose to accomplish by the discourse. And, the more exactly that purpose can be defined, the better. And better still, the more specific the theme, the greater the likelihood of freshness and fullness in the treatment of it, and of distinctness of impression and conviction with the hearers. One can say much more that is specific and fresh about a single flower than about a whole bouquet, or about a single stalk and head of wheat than about a whole sheaf. But definiteness and singleness of purpose are attainable only through careful analysis; and this analysis which helps one to definiteness and singleness of purpose will bring him also into possession of the materials by which his purpose is to be accomplished.

Let me illustrate by an example: Suppose I wish to preach on man's inexcusableness before God. The question arises, what shall be my theme; shall it be inexcusableness of man for his sins, or for his unbelief, or for his non-acceptance of the offers of the gospel? Everything in the discussion will depend on the choice I make; and I can choose intelligently, only after careful examination of what the phraseology of each is intended to express. Let me finally determine to preach on man's inexcusableness for neglect of the gospel. And now, shall I take for my text: "And they all with one consent began to make excuse," and proceed to state and show the futility of the usual excuses for neglecting the gospel? Nothing could be easier, or more superficial, or probably more useless. One could begin anywhere in the enumeration, and stop at any point when the time allotted for the discourse was exhausted. But setting aside such a plan as puerile, let us analyze the language of our theme, and see what materials the analysis will afford us. Let us fix clearly in our minds what we mean by offers of the gospel and by neglecting to accept them. We may need this part of our materials, or we may not, and cannot decide till we come to the work of construction. We next inquire, what makes inexcusableness for the neglect? What makes neglect of any offer excusable? What would excuse our neglect of some great governmental bounty offered for some slight public service? Manifestly, ignorance of what is offered, or inability to comply with the conditions of the offer, or insufficiency of motive to comply, would

either unitedly or singly be an ample excuse. And these three would cover the whole ground; but if neither of these exists, there exists no excuse. They cover the whole range of excuses that can be pleaded in man's behalf. And to show that neither of these exists in a Christian community is no difficult task. But with the materials thus collected the text we have named is inappropriate. A better one is found in the Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle Paul there says that the heathen are "without excuse" for not rendering unto God the worship and service that are his due. All that they needed to know of God to make them inexcusable, had been revealed in the works of creation and divine providence. Enumeration of the steps in the Apostle's argument will serve admirably as an introduction to the discourse we found on his text. They prepare the way for setting in the strongest light the inexcusableness of any one under Christian enlightenment. Here, then, our analysis has given us a definite and limited theme, a comprehensive and complete plan of discourse, a pertinent introduction; and withal has supplied us with more than materials enough for the sermon.

Now it matters not what the theme we have in hand may be; to analyze it will be the most direct method of collecting the thoughts needed for a full discussion of it and for enforcing the duty taught in it. It is the only method of securing a complete presentation of any subject; and is equally applicable to any. No practical duty can be properly appreciated, or intelligently enforced, till through a complete analysis of all

that is included in it, its central principle has first been reached. Out of that central principle, as a plant from its tap-root, the whole sermon will then spring into form and harmony of parts. Then, and not till then, the preacher is prepared to decide what the order of his thought shall be in his sermon; is prepared to sketch the plan which, had it been made before, would have been misnamed the analysis of his sermon. And if made only when, after due examination, he is ready to put the whole into final shape, the analysis, as formal statement of plan, has its uses. It is just as essential that the sermon should have a plan as it is that the sermon should be made or preached at all.

And what we have said of topical discourses is equally true of textual, whether the text consist of a single sentence or of many sentences in conjunction. Few discourses are less interesting or less profitable to intelligent people, than those which consist of a series of disconnected paragraphs, hung upon single words, clauses, or sentences of Scripture, but disclosing no single principle that gives harmony and unity to the whole. At the outset of one of them, we are entertained, perhaps, with a vivid description of a bit of scenery, or of some august occasion; then we have a scrap of archæology: then a slight touch of exegesis; then a patch of doctrine; then a hit at physical science; then a word of exhortation; then a page from ancient history; then a snatch of poetry; and, in conclusion, a comparison or contrast between the present and the time in which the text was written. Does any one say

this is a caricature, or an exaggeration? Taken literally, it may be; but it only tells what a textual sermon sometimes is, what many a one has been, when the text has not first been analyzed, and its contents so laid open, that the whole could be arranged into an order and unity that would leave on the minds of the hearers a single and definite impression.

All real and true thinking on any new subject is, in a sense, by analysis. The mind begins with what is most apparent, and proceeds by degrees to that which lies within. This is always the true method of investigating; but it is not the true method of presenting the results of investigation to the minds of others. Inquiry must be by analysis; but instruction by synthesis. The latter begins where the former leaves off. The preacher who has thought out his sermon analytically, should reverse his process in preparing it for the pulpit, and put together his materials synthetically. If he thinks only while he writes, he will very likely end with the thought with which he should have begun. Some years ago, when discussions were heated and bitter over what was called the higher law, a gentleman of distinction in one of the middle states, was assailed for sentiments he had expressed during a political canvass. He replied to one of his assailants in a formal lecture. That lecture led to a second, and that to a third. And so on till several had been delivered. Each lecture was the result of his progressive analysis. Of the whole series of lectures when completed he printed a syllabus, which he was kind enough to ask me to look

at and criticise. The lectures, to have been properly appreciated whether as heard or read, should have been exactly reversed from the order of their original delivery. The principles on which the force of each and all depended, were not enunciated till the concluding lecture. I have heard sermons that would have been improved by turning them end for end. The preachers wrote as they analyzed. They should have constructed or synthetized only when their analysis had been completed.

Now, in what has been said, nothing has been farther from my intention than to imply that all sermons should be made in the same way or after any given pattern. Too great a variety of legitimate subjects, or too great a diversity of modes of treating them, is impossible. Monotony and sameness are as insufferable in the pulpit as elsewhere. In fact, one strong reason for insisting on a preliminary critical analysis of every subject is, that it will insure variety of treatment. Scripture topics and texts are endlessly diverse; and each to be properly handled, should be treated in its own special way. What the treatment of each should be, no one can determine till he has first resolved it into its original elements. The more careful and complete the preceding analysis, the more varied and natural will be the style of discoursing. The most monotonous preachers, those least capable of variety in their ministrations, are those who do least at critical dissection of their subjects.

And here let it be distinctly understood that the plan of a sermon is never for its own sake.

The less conspicuous it can be made, the better. The skeleton of a man is not outside of the flesh, but covered and concealed. It yet is none the less necessary because hidden. A sermon without a framework is but an intellectual mollusk; and mollusks can never do the work of vertebrates. The use and value of a plan is easily discerned. Even its necessity is apparent on a moment's reflection. Without it, those first two qualities of every effective sermon, transparency and unity, are impossible. All thought to be lucid must be orderly; and unity always requires articulation of parts. But it is not of the least possible consequence that the heads or divisions of a discourse should be remembered or even noticed. He who has climbed a tower from which to view a city or a landscape, does not care to remember the steps by which he climbed. The sermons that have made the strongest impression on us, and have remained longest with us, have been those whose plans have been forgotten, whose texts even have perhaps faded from memory. Like fixed stars in one's mental firmament, they may have guided through many a sandy waste of life, and have done so simply because the impressions made by them were definite and single. And yet many a preacher elaborates his plan, resorts to alliteration and a hundred little expedients to fix it in the hearer's mind, as if the plan or skeleton were the main end for which the sermon had been made. Even so admirable a preacher as Tholuck has left in print some curious specimens of this kind of sermon-making. It would be an awkward looking

house that had its framework of beams and studs and rafters, all standing outside the structure. The less seen of the real bones and framework of a sermon the better.

Let us glance now for a moment at that part of the work which may be called the filling up of the plan. The popular taste of our time is, happily, wholly averse to the obtruded formalities of logic. No sensible man indulges in these. The popular taste, also, unfortunately, is averse to compact thought. It delights in large infusions of illustration and anecdote. Light food highly seasoned is keenly relished by the majority of modern church-goers. The temptation to cater for the palates of the majority, is to some minds irresistible. The taste grows by gratification; and every day the popular mind for the striking and the sensational is growing wider and stronger. Will not our younger preachers make the effort to give to the rising generation a more correct taste than now threatens to rule? But let it ever be remembered that nothing else than thought, clear, strong, natural, and just thought, can do it. The truth is, all sound minds at bottom are rational. Every man's self-respect is appealed to when his reason is addressed; and every man, however much he may for the moment be pleased with the mere tickling of his fancy, will resent it in the end with revulsion of feeling, as if he had been imposed upon. Depend on it, no subject you can handle is so difficult, and no thought you can have on it is so profound, but that if the thinking be clear to yourself, you can make both your subject and your thoughts on it

clear to others. Lettered and unlettered alike will listen to clear and just thought, and they will be sure to come again for more. Sheep will follow a basket of corn, but not a basket of leaves.

There is a semblance of reasoning sometimes indulged in by preachers, that ought to be used with a little more caution than it commonly is. I refer to the use of illustrative analogies. An argument from analogy is as sound as any other, where there is an undoubted analogy to reason from. But it is an old device of sophistry to make an apparent analogy — an apt illustration — do the work of a real argument. And sometimes even well-intentioned public speakers, preachers included, are themselves misled by striking resemblances. It may be the habit of an animal, or it may be a process of nature, that is appealed to. Accidental points of resemblance are seized on; a parallel is carefully drawn; the result is an apparently sound argument from analogy; but it is nothing more than an apt illustration. Imaginative preachers often abound in these. Working them up with great skill, they are themselves often as much misled by them as their hearers. And it is not extremely rare that the resemblance appealed to is only apparent. Exact knowledge would show that, as an illustration even, not to say argument, the supposed analogue is wholly illusive.

The temptation to make striking points, or palpable hits, in the pulpit is not wisely yielded to with frequency. Reputation for making them will bring a certain class of hearers; to retain the hearers, one must continue to make them; but

they are not the fittest vehicles for sober truth; and the habit of making them will occasionally betray into the making of a manifestly false one. I remember once hearing such an one. The preacher had evidently just been reading Renan's Life of Jesus. He was commenting on Renan's criticism of Mark's account of the two thousand swine that the evil spirits had entered into, and that had rushed down a steep place into the sea and been drowned. Renan had said that the man from whom the evil spirits were reputed to have been expelled, was a maniac who himself drove the swine over the precipice. "One man drive two thousand swine!" exclaimed the preacher; "I would like to see twenty men drive one hog." This of course brought down the house; but it was none the less a false point. Gratuitous as was the suggestion of Renan, the preacher's witticism did not expose its error, but laid himself open to the charge of attempting to refute an error by the use of a manifest sophism. It is well known to be incomparably easier to drive a herd of swine than it is to drive a single one. The truth according to Mark's account seems to have been, that, when thrown into a panic by the unclean spirits, the swine rushed of themselves over the precipice into the sea.

But there are liabilities to err in filling up the plan of a discourse, so entirely peculiar to the preacher as to entitle them to special notice. The mistakes thus far dwelt on are common to all kinds of popular address. The sermon, from several causes, exposes the preacher to particular kinds of mistakes. One of these has its origin in

the iron usage which requires that the sermon shall be of a prescribed length. No matter what its subject, or what the amount of material which a proper discussion of the subject may require to be handled, all must be so expanded or so contracted (as the case may be) as to fill up the given number of minutes. It may be a subject which could be amply discussed in fifteen minutes; it may be one for which a full hour would no more than suffice; usage prescribes the same time for all. It is almost inevitable that without extreme care, one or the other of two mistakes should be committed. Either thoughts that are so familiar and commonplace as to require no more than the briefest statement, will be dwelt on to the weariness of hearers, and the injury of the whole effect of the sermon; or else, thoughts, whose subtle and numerous relations and profound comprehensiveness, require extended exposition and illustration, will be crowded into statements so general and meagre, and perhaps vague, as to give no definite impression, and thus to leave the audience in uncertainty and doubt.

Another and not unfrequent danger lies in a want of time for due preparation. Sermons are, often of necessity, very hurriedly constructed. The pastor's time may have been consumed in parochial duties, or ill health may have made mental exertion impossible. The temptation is strong to use only the thoughts that are most easily handled; or, if difficult ones must be dealt with, to dispose of them in the quickest manner possible. There is only a limited time to work in; the sermon of given length must be forth-

coming at the appointed hour; one must be more or less than human, if he is not betrayed into working in lines along which he can move with greatest rapidity. Self-repetition and an irksome sameness of thought are faults into which many a one falls without suspecting it.

Most preachers, furthermore, have certain subjects with which they are more familiar than with any others. These may be subjects of the greatest importance. The preacher's thoughts may be original. They may not have received the public attention to which they are entitled. The longer he has dwelt on them, the stronger have become his convictions of their importance, and the greater the facility with which he can treat of them. Such a preacher, ministering for years to the same congregation, may unconsciously bore them to the exhaustion of their patience. His ideas cease to be novel, and his repetitions become unendurable. Like a horse that moves at a lazy gait along an unfamiliar and a difficult road, the moment the wheels drop into well-worn ruts and his feet have struck the recognized way, he pricks up his ears and dashes away with redoubled speed; but unlike the horse, the preacher is in danger of thinking that the familiar thoughts which quicken his own mental movement, must also quicken the emotions of his hearers.

When all has been determined in respect to both the order and the kind of the thought of the sermon, then comes the clothing of the thought in language. To this part of the process of making a sermon, different preachers give very different degrees of attention. One makes all else subordi-

nate to it; another, subordinates it to everything else. There are sermons that are nothing if stripped of their rhetorical finery:

> They are like poppies spread;
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed.

No vital energy is in them; none can be conveyed through them to others. There are other sermons that stand in their unadorned strength, like leafless oaks against a winter sky. Every line of thought in them is unmistakably clear in its unadorned simplicity. They are imposing in their proportions; but they lack the attractiveness of leafage and color.

Just what attention should be given to the rhetorical dress of the sermon is a question to which no definite answer can be easily given. Two things, however, are certain: over-dress of thoughts, like that of persons, is always a sign of weakness: under-dressed thoughts, like under-dressed persons always create adverse prejudice and repel; the first is fatal to vigorous thinking, the second entails neglect of what is thought. Too much attention to the rhetoric destroys or cramps the life of the thought. Many a sermon from over elaboration of its rhetoric is open to the charge brought by John Foster against the sermons of the distinguished Scotch divine Dr. Blair: "They were chilled through in standing so long to be dressed." The style, furthermore, which diverts attention from the thought to itself, whether from excess of ornamentation or from deficiency of suitable attire is always a vicious style. And it is a vice that in a sermon is inexcusable. When

attention has been arrested by the style rather than by the thought, and hearers remember images and tropes and fine turns of expression instead of the truth discussed, the sermon is a comparative failure. The best style is like plate-glass, so transparent that in looking at the objects beyond it, you forget the medium through which you see them. Alas! that so much pulpit rhetoric distorts and discolors and half conceals, if it does not hide, the very truth it professes to be making clear.

Manifestly the surest guaranty we can have that our style will be the best we can command for our subject is, that we are complete masters of what we wish to say, and that what we wish to say has, in some sense, become master of us. When the thought, by due meditation, has become fused to white heat, it will pour forth in an easy flowing current like molten metal from a crucible. Language and imagery will flow unbidden with the thought. Clear and vigorous thinking always brings clear and vigorous expression. Genuine earnestness of purpose always breeds an unction that blends thought and its expression into an indivisible unity.

Like every one else who reduces thought to writing, the preacher is in danger of forming a style from which he never deviates. Accustomed to certain modes of expression, and to certain rhythmical constructions of clauses, his mind habitually and insensibly recurs to these, whatever he may have in hand. But no style is so excellent as not to have its drawbacks, if one never can vary it. Gibbon tells us that he made "many

experiments before he could hit" the style finally adopted by him in his great history; but he does not tell us that, having adopted it, he never deviates from it, whether describing the triumphal procession of an emperor, or the foibles of an empress. What a relief it would be to the reader of his monotonous pages, if, here and there, he could come unexpectedly on a paragraph written in one or more of the historian's rejected styles. The preacher who ministers statedly to the same congregation needs, above all men, the power, if he can possibly acquire it, of varying his style with the varying subjects of his discourses. No matter how admirable the style he may have acquired, it cannot be the fittest for all subjects. Always to use it, would be no wiser than, having once timed his steps to some favorite march, always to move in accordance with its measure, whether crossing a drawing-room, climbing a stairway, or marching in a grand procession.

The critical analysis of English styles is a department of study to which American clergymen as a body have given by no means the degree of attention it deserves and demands. Mastery of their native tongue is far from being so common among them as it might and ought to be. It can be acquired only by painstaking and drill and self-discipline that are early begun and long persisted in. It is not a little to the discredit of our American methods of education, that with all our provisions for instruction in the various departments of knowledge, so few of our educated men prove themselves adepts in the use of their mother tongue. And among no class of

men is this lack of proficiency more to be regretted than among those whose business it is to win to a knowledge of the truth and a practice of the right. There is but one remedy; and that is for every young preacher to strive with untiring diligence, and thorough study of the best examples, to avail himself of the resources and the subtle strength of the language he is so constantly using.

A critical study and comparison of the sermons of noted and successful preachers will help to one's improvement in all that pertains to the making of sermons. Our language abounds in admirable specimens for this kind of study. The present generation is rich in them. But to speak of the sermons of living men, or even of those of the recently departed, might be invidious. Let us drop back then to the first quarter of the current century, when some of the most noted preachers in our language were in the fullness of their powers.

Foremost among these was Robert Hall. Few preachers ever received more universal or more unqualified praise; none, perhaps, was ever more eloquent. Nothing could be simpler or more complete than the plans of his discourses; the compass of his thought was unsurpassed. Every sermon had a distinct and clearly-defined purpose; the purpose was made apparent to the audience from the outset; and of that purpose neither he nor any intelligent hearer, whatever the subtleties of his logic or the flights of his imagination, was permitted for an instant to lose sight. And, whatever may be said of the style of his published discourses, as being too elevated and elaborate for

popular effect, his spoken style, we have been assured by those who have often heard him, was not above the needs of an ordinary assemblage. And all these were admirable qualities. But he was not faultless. His theme was not unfrequently discussed as if for its own sake. He was so absorbed in contemplation of its vastness and grandeur, as to be apparently unmindful of his audience, and of the practical ends it was intended to accomplish. Often, also, the larger part of his discourse was so elevated in the range of its ideas, though not in its language, as to be above the reach of the humbler of his auditors, though even these, we are told, waited patiently under the unintelligible portions, confident of ample reward for their waiting, in the peroration. In his earlier days, if the preceding evening had been spent with Sir James Mackintosh, in philosophical discussion, the sermon smacked of the discussion. If, on the preceding afternoon, he had been among impressive scenery, the teeming imagery of the discourse revealed it. If some book had moved his ire, there was sure to be a tinge of polemic in his tone. A great, impressible, and impressive preacher; but, by no means, a model to be imitated.

Sixteen years younger than Hall was Thomas Chalmers, the foremost of Scottish preachers. In several respects, the two were so dissimilar as to furnish almost a contrast. Hall, in his sermons, opened vast breadths of territory over which he took his hearers with breathless speed. Chalmers presented a single mountain of thought, and, planting his hearers on its summit, pointed out to them the various prospects that lay before

them. Hall's sermons were never written before delivery; Chalmers' were always read. Hall was always fastidiously select in his language, no matter how impetuous his delivery; Chalmers marshalled his words in tumultuous troops, often calling to his aid, such as could have found no place in Johnson's Dictionary. Hall, when he had once entered on his course of thought, never could tarry for a moment to point out to his hearers some goodly prospect brought to view in his progress; Chalmers devoted his whole attention to the goodly prospects, without stopping to tell his hearers of the route by which he had brought them where the prospect was to be seen. Hall was the more intellectual; Chalmers the more emotional; the former lifted up and thrilled; the latter awed and impressed.

Contemporaneous with both Hall and Chalmers, and the superior of both these in originality and profundity of thought, and yet greatly their inferior as a preacher, was John Foster—whose style Robert Hall characterized as "a lumbering baggage wagon loaded with gold." Hall and Chalmers always had clearly marked lines of thought to which they rigidly adhered, and every one of which converged to a commom center. Never a sentence escaped either of them that did not bear directly on the simple end in view. Foster, on the other hand, often awoke on Sunday morning uncertain on what he should preach. The most trivial incident on his way to church might change the current of his thinking, and compel a change in the method if not in the purpose of his discourse. He preached as he

wrote in his essays, the sinuosities of his thought depending on causes too hidden in their action to be detected by the casual reader. The man whose sermons were so constructed, no matter how profound or how massive his thought, or how expressive or fitting his language, never could be a successful preacher.

When Hall and Chalmers and Foster were in their prime, the vicar of Trinity Church and senior fellow of King's College, Cambridge, Charles Simeon, had passed his meridian, and was rejoicing in what were regarded as the good results of many and laborious years devoted to the cultivation of a better style of preaching in the Anglican Church. Born to a position in life and to opportunities entirely superior to those of the men with whom he is here named, he was in no respect the equal of either of them. He was a prolific, but not an original or vigorous author. To him, more than to any other man, the evangelical party of the Anglican Church was indebted for its organization; and to him more than to any other is it indebted for what it now is. And so long as the memories of Henry Martyn and Henry Kirke White shall remain fresh in Christian hearts, so long will the name of Simeon be remembered as that of their patron, tutor, friend, and counselor. But Simeon's ideas of the function of preaching were not of the highest. Useful as he was to many of the younger clergy of his time, no great preacher has sprung from his influence. The very means adopted by him to elevate the standard of the Anglican pulpit, helped to lower it. The book

of "Skeleton Sermons" prepared by him to assist beginners, proved the snare that entangled and pulled them down.

But let every man be distinctively himself. If any real results are to be accomplished, your style and your thinking and your method must be your own and not another's. No man is efficient unless free; and no man is free who is an imitator of others. Individuality and spontaneity are indivisibly one. The larger your endowments, the greater the reason for giving them full and free play; and no one is so small or weak, but that, if he be strictly himself and no copyist, he may not make himself eminently respectable in his appropriate sphere. Whatever, therefore, may be your future fields of labor, and whatever the subjects on which you may attempt to preach to others, pray strive to be true to yourselves as well as to him whom you call Lord and Master. Serve God with all your heart and strength; be content to serve him with the talents he has given you, and in the sphere he shall assign you; so shall you keep your manhood and your self-respect, so shall you serve God most acceptably and your generation most usefully, and so shall the blessing of the faithful eternally rest on you

LECTURE VII.

KINDS OF SERMONS.

VARIOUS attempts have been made by writers on Homiletics to distribute sermons into clearly definable classes. No classification has yet been made that is not open to objection. Others will doubtless be made; but there is no good reason to believe that they will be any more satisfactory. The difficulty has been, and still is, to find some one principle according to which the distribution can be so made that the sermons of one class shall not intersect or overlap those of another. And the difficulty exists with the most general classification; it becomes specially apparent when the attempt is made to classify according to species.

Thus, it has been common to divide sermons into two general classes, known as topical and textual. This division was recognized in our last lecture as sufficiently accurate for the purpose for which it was then cited. Many sermons are so clearly marked that they may, with strict propriety, be distinguished as belonging to one or the other of these classes. But there are very

many others that are manifestly both topical and textual. The very language of the text may enunciate a distinct theme; and ample discussion of the theme may be obtained from a simple exposition of the language in which it is stated.

A more minute distribution was made many years ago, by Principal Campbell, author of the "Philosophy of Rhetoric," in his lectures on "Pulpit Eloquence." He classified sermons according as they were addressed to the understanding, the imagination, the passions, and the will. But few, if any, sermons, properly constructed, can fail in one part or another to address all these in turn. The final aim of every real sermon, evidently is, or ought to be, to win the will of the hearer to the views of the speaker.

Another and later classification groups as doctrinal, practical, experiential (not experimental, —we experiment in physics, we experience in religion and morals), historical, occasional, etc. This is but little, if any, less open to stricture than the others. No doctrine can be properly treated in popular discourse, which is not at some point exhibited in its practical bearings, and which does not at all points ground itself in the Christian experience; and none can be fully understood, except as seen in the light of its history. Doctrine and duty, in other words belief and practice, are only two sides of one and the same thing. Analyze a doctrine, and you will find it to be only the theoretic statement of a duty; analyze a duty, and you will find it to be the preceptive form of a doctrine. Truth underlies each, and you may state the same truth theoretically as a

doctrine, or preceptively as a command. Resolve either one into its simple elements and we are brought necessarily to some kind of conception of the other. A duty without a doctrine is as impossible as a tree without its roots; and a doctrine which does not lead to duty, is as impossible as a living root without its growth above ground. Why should I discuss a doctrinal truth except to fasten it in the mind as something to be put in practice; and how can I enforce a duty except as I ground it in some great doctrinal truth?

Theological essays may discuss doctrines as abstractions; sermons should discuss them as vital truths, as truths that quicken the soul into energy and impel it to action. But one of the perplexities of the young preacher is to know how to handle the great doctrines of Christianity in the pulpit in such way that his discourse shall be a sermon and not a mere dissertation. In his study of systematic theology, he has become familiar with doctrines as a series of dogmas founded on Scripture texts, and reasoned out and systemized. He assents to them as formal truths; he can justify his assent by exegesis and by exact logical processes; but how to make these doctrines so instinct with life that they shall become living principles of action both to himself and his hearers, he is at a loss to understand. Happily, the old New England style of treating doctrines in the pulpit very much as a demonstrator of anatomy treats parts of a human body in the dissecting-room, is no longer tolerable. Even so admirable and so comparatively recent an example of this kind of preaching as that of

Nathaniel Emmons, the finest, unquestionably, that New England ever produced, with his carefully supplemented "Improvement" of the doctrine, cannot now be followed. He has left no successors. His method has passed away to return no more.

Discourses devoted to experience are still less common than those that are distinctively doctrinal. They were, no longer ago than the last generation, extremely common. Men of little learning and of narrow resources but of many inward conflicts, were often eminently successful in them. They were men whose knowledge of the Scriptures had been derived from only an unaided study of the English version, but whose inner life had been made deep and strong and mellow by vicissitude and trial. Preaching in our time—a time of great bustle and outward activity—is every year coming more and more from books and from outward observation, and less and less from the inward experience of the preacher. We know more of the grammar and of the philology and of the contents of the Scriptures than our fathers did; but whether we know as much of that inner life which a devout study of them is sure to awaken within, and for which a more quiet and meditative age than ours would be favorable, is a question which may be left to the thoughtful to answer. The purely experiential sermon, like the strictly doctrinal, is no longer in fashion; the practical also has largely given place to the hortatory. Other and mixed types have taken their places.

But if the doctrinal cannot be justly divorced

from the practical, nor yet the experiential from either of them, is it possible to unite the three in due proportions in the same discourse? Can a requisite degree of each be combined in one and the same discourse? Can the sermon that builds on experience, both instruct the understanding and impel the will to action? Let the example and experience of the apostles instruct us. We have brief sketches of their sermons in the Acts; we know how they combined the three in their epistles. At the outset, they manifestly had only the words of Jesus, and the facts of his life. Out of these, by aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit, they evolved, each in his own consciousness, the great doctrines which they preached in their sermons and unfolded in their epistles. Every doctrine came like a living truth from the depth of their own hearts. Every word was big with religious emotion—they spoke out of the fullness of their own experience; and every word was supplemented by its correspondent action. They were always instructive, inwardly illuminative, and intensely practical. He who would preach as the apostles did, must have something of the same experience that they had. Guided by the same Spirit that animated them, we must live over again the great truths of Christianity as they lived them. No doctrine can be fully understood by us, much less effectively preached, until we have worked ourselves out into a clear apprehension of its meaning and power through Christian experience. We must know, both by inward experience and outward test, what we preach, or we shall fail in our calling.

Again, attempts are sometimes made to classify according to some one predominant element in the treatment. Thus we have the argumentative, the explanatory, the polemic, the didactic, the descriptive, the narrative, the biographical, the hortatory, the pathetic, the imaginative, the sentimental, and sometimes, to the disgrace of the pulpit, we might add, the fantastic and the grotesque. And, doubtless, there are sermons to which one or another of these epithets may not unjustly be applied. But not one of the sermons so designated can be symmetrical in form, or do its work completely, if it does not embody elements which no one epithet can cover. An element so predominant as to hide or override every other, is like a virtue so excessive as to border on a vice. Unfortunately, however, he is almost a prodigy who is not so habituated to some one kind of preaching as to expose himself to the unqualified application of one or another of the epithets we have named. No matter what the subjects discussed, most men, unintentionally and unconsciously, fall into uniform methods and styles. They do so, not so much because of any peculiarity of original endowment as from some accidentally formed habit. Happening at some earlier period of their education to write successfully on a given subject and in a given way, and to be commended for their work, they tried the same kind a second and a third time, and speedily both taste and habit were confirmed. Growing into the maturity of their powers, they became incapable of success through any other than their habitual methods. Just as among school boys,

one of them falling into the hands of an incompetent teacher of mathematics, contracts for that science a dislike which he never can overcome, while his taste for an ancient language, skillfully imparted by a wise teacher, becomes strong and as enduring as life; and another boy badly instructed in languages, but well taught in mathematics, may be animated through life by tastes the reverse of the first. The first finds more pleasure in literature than in science and philosophy: the other more in science and philosophy than in literature. Mental tastes and habits are perhaps quite as often the result of accident as of original endowment.

The mistake or bent of the student in his earlier studies may be perpetuated in the Theological Seminary. The young candidate for the pulpit finds himself inclined to write only a given kind of sermons. His reading and habits of mind have fitted him for one kind, and apparently for no other. He is tempted to cultivate only what he regards as his special gift. Cultivating that exclusively, it soon becomes excessive. A characteristic that would be admirable if existing in due proportion with others, by its very excess gives deformity to the whole. He is a wise man who, looking forward to the Christian ministry, cultivates with assiduity his taste and his capacity for just those kinds of discourse to which he finds himself least inclined and for which he may, for the present, think himself least qualified. It is not one kind, however good it may be, that the people always wish to hear. And no one method, whatever its merits, can be fitting to more than a

limited number of the indefinitely numerous subjects that ought to receive attention.

But easy and natural, and possibly excusable, as may be the formation of these self-limiting habits of thought, to which all are prone, there is no excuse for indulgence in the fantastic and the grotesque in the pulpit. This is an offense which no plea can justify or extenuate. It is not chargeable to deficiency or disorder of intellect. No church ordains half wits or lunatics to its ministry. Pure perversity—an inexcusable vitiosity of taste —alone can explain it. The plea that it brings to church the coarse and vulgar, who would not otherwise come, is idle and refutes itself. As well plead that counterfeit money promotes commerce. At bottom, it is the weak vanity of the preacher that prompts it, and is most gratified by indulgence in it. If he who indulges in it, only knew that he not only offends good taste, but fills with disgust the right-minded, it might cure him of his folly; but alas, vanity is both blind and deaf.

And yet, in spite of all that can be said or done to the contrary, certain natures are so compounded, certain temperaments are so exaggerated by habit, that whatever comes from them must be the extreme of its kind. Thus one man is sure to discuss all subjects with the same unvarying degree of energy. No matter what his subject, there is always the same array of formalities and the same vehemence of spirit and manner. His theme may be the gentleness of Christ, or the grace of humility; he starts out in the discussion of it with the drum and fife and bugle of high sounding rhetoric, and

moves off with the dash of one who is charging on the camp of an enemy. He is nothing if he is not impetuous and ardent.

Another is always soft in tone and meek in spirit and gentle in word, even when denouncing the vilest of iniquities. No one is ever startled by any word that falls from his lips. All are soothed by the rhythm of his sentences. His theme may be the sublimest that can occupy the mind and heart of man; he speaks with all the serenity of a summer evening. It may be the awful doom of the wicked of which he speaks, but he will not disturb the tranquillity of his hearers. His audiences are always lulled into perfect repose. You hear him, and are reminded of the poet's—

> —noise like a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods, all night,
> Singeth a quiet tune.

But there is a kind of so-called sermon, the expository, that may be entitled to more attention than it has thus far received in the present course of lectures. Very much has been said and written of late in behalf of it. I have both heard and read very warm praises of it. It was the uniform method of the church Fathers. Our own generation has furnished some admirable examples of it. But to succeed in it is not easy, though success is not so much dependent on a high order of intellect as on certain degrees of diligence and tact. That it is the kind of preaching most needed by this generation, is by no means evident. That it may, like any other kind, be made the vehicle

of truth which this generation needs specially to hear, no one can doubt. But whether the same truths may not be more effectively taught by the logical and rhetorical methods of modern thought than through any strict exposition of Scripture, is a fairly open question. I say strict exposition, because it is not difficult for a man of lively fancy to find in the Scriptures many things which are not there; and it is not uncommon, through a loose interpretation, to bring out of them many things that are certainly not in them.

Legitimate exposition is the telling us precisely what the writers of Scripture meant to say. To tell that, one must know the age in which they lived, and, so far as possible, the exact circumstances under which they wrote. But to import into Scripture the ideas of the nineteenth century and attribute these to the writers of the first century, and to draw out of the language of Scripture meanings which, by accommodation, we have now come to attach to it, is not to expound, but to misinterpret. Under the guise of exposition, I have heard meanings extracted from the language of prophets and apostles, that I am sure would have roused them into indignation to have heard ascribed to them. To distinguish between what the progress of Christianity has developed as Christian thought, and what the Scriptures actually teach, requires a discernment, and an extent and accuracy of knowledge not always brought into exercise in expository preaching. Many an expository discourse puts into the Scriptures the larger portion of what it claims to find in them. The amount thus put into the

Bible under plea of expounding it, would be found to exceed the belief of any one whose attention had not already been given to the subject. No other book in the world could long be subject to such treatment and retain the reverence of mankind. The consequences to religious life and faith that in due time must ensue, unless a sounder exegesis can be made to prevail, it requires no special sagacity to foresee.

The temptation to the expository preacher to find more in the passage he has in hand than it actually contains, is easily explained. He must bring out of it more than the printed commentary does, or he will win for himself no hearing. The commentary is accessible to all, and is limited to the prosy work of telling just what the passage means. He must tell us how much the passage may mean, and what it can be made to teach. He must "open its dark sayings upon" his own "harp." Taking a clause or verse out of its real connection, and placing it in a special setting of his own, he can make it luminous with thought decidedly new. He can make it utter what no prophet or apostle ever dreamed of. He can "behold" more "wondrous things out of the law" than the Psalmist even dared pray for. And it is wonderful how the passion for popular and "fruitful" exposition will grow on one who is capable of once beginning it. Every text is looked upon as having some hidden meaning which it is his special duty to lay open. A passage of moderate length can be made by him to serve as an armory of religious equipments. And it is surprising with what diligence and skill persons of

this class will labor to turn a barren passage into a "fruitful field." Words descriptive of some common incident of history are laid hold of and made to teach doctrines of grace, with which the words can only be arbitrarily associated. But nothing must be left to stand in its own simple and natural sense. This would be to fail in availing ourselves of all the riches of the word.

> And so they labor, deeming holy writ
> Disgraced by aught that seems content to sit
> Beneath the roof of settled modesty.

Another style of expository preaching is not so much dependent on the ingenuity as on the imagination of the expositor. Old Testament scenes are filled out with materials that only the imagination can supply. New Testament occurrences, by the aid of the same faculty, are depicted with all the minuteness of eye-witnesses. Perhaps we are treated to a sermon on the Transfiguration. We are entertained with an imaginary conversation between Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Moses is made to tell of the dispensation that had been entrusted to him, and of what he had thought of it when on earth, and of the flood of light which the teachings of Jesus had thrown backwards over it and its laws, both ritual and moral. Elijah is made to tell what he had thought of the Pentateuch, the puzzle he was in to understand the relation of the prophetic to the priestly function, and how dim were his conceptions of the then distant reign of the Messiah. And Jesus is made to explain and unfold the connection and harmony of the work of both Moses and Elijah

with his own. All this might be interesting and perhaps instructive, but it would not be exposition. Many an expository sermon has thus been drawn from the brain of the preacher, rather than from the text he was professedly expounding.

Now that the Scriptures never can properly be used to teach anything more than the mere letter of them affirms, no reflecting person will venture to say. Doubtless, a side lesson can and ought sometimes to be drawn from an apparently barren incident. Many a moral and religious truth may be adduced from purely historical facts. And, possibly, an ingenious and imaginative man may, and not illegitimately, educe a medley of doctrines out of words that have no doctrinal significancy; but, pray, do not call his work an expository discourse. A religious salamagundi is not a Christian sermon.

That Scripture exposition might profitably be made a part of public worship much more commonly than it now is; that it might well take the place of much that is called preaching, can hardly be disputed. But it should be genuine exposition. And maybe the good time is not distant, when Protestant Christendom shall awake to a more just apprehension of the relation of preaching to Bible-study than now prevails; when one sermon a Sunday—a sermon that from the nature of its subject, and the mode of its treatment, shall be worthy of the name—shall be regarded as enough for any preacher and for any congregation; when a second and afternoon service, for parents and children alike, shall be devoted to the special study of the Bible; when the age, the

people, the civilization, and the spirit of the time in which the portion studied was written, and the character and peculiarities of the writer shall be made so plain and real that every word shall be made vital with meaning. Then the Bible may be made a living book, speaking to living men. Then may the historical imagination and critical exegesis, joining hands, enable the preacher to lift expository preaching to the dignity and usefulness that are rightfully its own.

But there are two kinds of sermons, or, more properly speaking, two kinds of subjects, not unsuited to many kinds of sermons, to which more attention, it seems to me, ought to be given than they now receive. The first relates to cases of conscience, or casuistry; the second, to the ethics of Christianity. The two are closely connected; neither one can be fully discussed without raising questions that run directly into the other. From various causes, neither of these now occupies the relative position among other subjects that they once held. Let us see what their true position is, and what can be done towards placing them in it.

Casuistry, I know, has at present a very bad meaning. The Jesuits have put into it a sense of which nothing avails to relieve it. The opprobrious meaning has expelled it from the mind of many, and with it and its evil meaning, all the good things it once represented. Cases of conscience with the Jesuits were imaginary cases, and often such as no imagination should have been allowed to picture. They also taught, in the exposition of their cases, that the attainment of good

ends would justify the use of evil means; in other words, that the end justifies the means. But casuistry is not necessarily Jesuitical. Cases of conscience have always existed, they always will exist, and will ask for solution. So long as society exists, individual perplexities will arise. Guidance out of these perplexities into the plain and open way, is one of the prime offices of the religious teacher. No persons are surer to be found in their places of worship on Sunday, than those by whom the need of guidance is most keenly felt.

And it is not alone those who seek that need to be thus guided. They often need it most, who seek it least. The young and inexperienced are surrounded by invisible dangers; they are haunted by treacherous thoughts, and dogged by temptations that flatter only to betray. But they ask no advice, because they apprehend no danger. If their feet begin to slide, and their hearts to yield, they are still confident of their ability to stand. Never were the dangers of the young greater than in our own time and land.

Nor yet, is it to the inexperienced alone that casuistical instruction can be made serviceable. No one is so old that no new trial can come to him. New days are ever bringing new complications. Nor can any degree of experience make him who is in the midst of the complications the most competent to bring himself out of them.

But in casuistical preaching, the cases dwelt on should be neither the actual well-known ones of the hearers, nor the imaginary ones of the preacher. The first would be personal, and, as such, offen-

sive, and so fail of their object; the second, from their very unreality, would be profitless. Amplest materials are found in the bits of personal history scattered throughout the Bible. The Bible is a mirror for all men through all time. Human nature being the same in every age, the preacher, who paints the real portrait of Scripture personages, presents what all recognize as genuine; and if he dissects a Scripture character, showing the difficulties, the trials and triumphs or defeats, through which it was formed, he cannot fail to throw a most useful light on existing conflicts in the hearts of his hearers. This kind of casuistry in the pulpit is always useful. It is specially needed in our time. The materials for it are, to a great degree, an unworked mine of the Bible. To succeed in it would require a minute study of personal narratives; but success in it is not impossible for any one of ordinary endowments, and a fair degree of patient industry; and success in it would be an immense relief from a monotony of subjects that sometimes becomes unendurably wearisome.

To give to cases of conscience the kind of attention here advocated, would be to secure to experiental preaching its rightful position. It would restore all that was good in that once common, but now neglected style of preaching. The style fell into desuetude from several causes, not the least of which was the feeling that it is not in good taste for one to lay bare to the public the sacred privacies of his own heart. But in expounding Scripture cases, the preacher could draw on his own experience as much as he should choose, but without declaring it; in fact, he could expound

intelligently only in the light shed from his own bosom. Guided by his own experience, he could expound his Scripture case, and thereby give light to the darkened, and minister relief to the troubled among his hearers.

Protestant churches have now for a long time been discussing the great doctrines of Christianity, and enforcing its practical duties; but it is a grave question whether they have given due attention to that "cure (care) of souls" which provides for individual guidance amid anxious and often most perplexing trials. Protestants have discarded the confessional as more dangerous than useful. They have banished books of casuistry as untrustworthy and misleading. With the exception of pastoral advice for those who will seek it, no uniform and systematic provision is made for individual guidance. Methodists, it is true, have tried their class-meetings, and Baptists their church covenant meetings, but not with a success, in either case, that is likely to prolong the trial, even where it has not already been virtually abandoned. Habitual introspection, for the purpose of reporting the results of our observations, is not the surest means of promoting the best kind of spiritual life. Spiritual activity is a condition of spiritual hygiene for which there can be no substitute; and no gymnastic is so conducive to health of soul as untiring exertion for the good of others. To supply motives to exertion, the grand reliance of Protestants is the pulpit; but Protestants should be careful to make the pulpit do its whole work. One part of that work is so to shape its instruction as to throw light in upon the conflicts of individual

hearts, and thus relieve from painful and, often, most dangerous, bewilderments. Total neglect of what transpires within the chambers of the soul is to leave the castle to be betrayed into the hands of the enemy by traitors from within. More casuistical preaching would give us fewer of those instances of lamentable lapse from Christian integrity that now so often startle the Christian world.

Inseparable from casuistry are the ethics of Christianity. No real case of conscience can be truly solved except under the authority of inexorable moral law. No one can tell what he ought to do, except as moral law with authority declares it to him. But by the ethics of Christianity, I do not mean merely the practical duties which Christians as such are expected and required to perform. This is a narrow, and in its effects a mischievous, notion. But by the ethics of Christianity, I mean that fundamental conception of it, which makes the aim and purpose, though not the methods, of the gospel to be one and identical with the aim and purpose of moral law; which conceives the gospel to be a scheme, not for evasion of moral obligation, nor yet for mere removal of moral penalty, but a scheme for bringing man into the completest obedience to the whole law of God.

But to every intelligent observer of the tendency of our popular Christianity in recent years, it must have been painfully apparent that a new and subtle spirit of antinomianism has been very rapidly gaining ground among us. It shows itself in some of our latest religious songs, not in our old psalms and hymns, but in new songs that do not always

rise above the level of doggerel; it animates a large amount of our Sunday-school literature; it inspires many preachers who are wholly unconscious of its presence or its tendency in their religious thinking. Many causes have contributed to the creation and diffusion of this new antinomianism. Among these, may be mentioned the notion that the one test of a pastor's usefulness is the number of additions to his church; that the end of the gospel is accomplished in conversion; that the doctrine of imputation, so effective in the hot-bed process of the evangelists, should be the foremost truth in all pulpit ministrations; that the ethics of Christianity will be fully provided for, if only the religious emotions can be kept alive and sufficiently fervid. In consequence of these notions, a sermon is accounted useful in proportion as it awakens a certain class of emotions; the degree of one's emotions is taken as the gauge of his piety; and worst of all, one's religion is allowed, in no small degree, to expend itself in fervid expressions of emotion. Antinomianism and emotionalism need not long be in the ascendency to introduce an incipient fanaticism, against which every intelligent pastor will wish to guard both himself and his flock.

A more distinct and emphatic presentation of the ethical side of Christianity would serve as an antidote to the rapidly growing license so characteristic of our time. A comparison of the social life of to-day with that of a century, or even of a half century, ago, reveals a marvelous change. Doubtless, in many respects, the change has been for the better. But extremes are always

dangerous. Various forces are now bearing us unmistakably onward towards the extreme of license. Among these are, a manifest reaction against the Puritanic strictness that once ruled among us; the introduction of foreign customs and ideas; and the seductions of wealth. Let us glance at these in their order.

Puritanism was not lovely even in the softened aspects under which it showed itself no longer than fifty years ago. It never was truthfully representative of the religion of Jesus. Its legalism was foreign to the real spirit of the gospel. But its origin was natural; it was the inevitable reaction, under Biblical enlightenment, against the reigning profligacy and prelacy of England. But the Puritans have received unmerited abuse. Incessant disparagement, under the ever-present law of revulsion in all social and religious extremes, has produced its natural result. Already, we are well nigh at the flood tide of reaction against the Puritans as extreme as was theirs against the looseness of their day. Our only safeguard is in a clear apprehension of all the requirements, as well as of the provisions of our holy religion. The one remedy for self-indulgence and social laxity, in any age, is in a proper presentation of the ethical side of Christianity.

Directly in line with, and intensifying the reaction against a former and over-rigid strictness, are the imported influences from other lands. Foreign travel, now grown to enormous proportions, has familiarized many of the more prosperous classes of Americans with customs and modes of life very unlike our own. Not a

few of these customs have been introduced under the guise of improvements in our civilization. Introduced by those who in some sense are accounted leaders in society, it is natural that the rank and file should readily follow their example. The result is that the social forces among us are now moving with almost resistless current towards a license that our grandfathers would have contemplated with horror. Added to all, is the influx of the representatives of many nations and races whose customs and religious ideas are the reverse of what we have regarded as not only American, but as distinctively Christian. The social and Christian life, and even the Christian ideas, of Americans are in an alarming state of transition. And it is not a religion of merely pious sentiments and fervid emotions that is to lead us on and out to a land and time in which we can be grounded in truth and established in righteousness. If Christianity is to do its office of controlling all the conflicting forces now at work in our country; if it is to organize these into a harmonious whole; if it is to give to us a consistent and healthy Christian life; if it is to create and perpetuate among the American people a type of truly-Christian civilization, it must do it, it can only do it, by setting forth with ever-increasing distinctness that moral law which is at once the beginning and the end of all true religion.

In co-operation with all the other forces that are now hurrying us onward towards the extreme of license, are the seductions of wealth. Never since the race of man began, were the av-

enues to wealth so many, or so wide open to all who will enter, as they now are in America. Never before were fortunes colossal "beyond the dreams of avarice," so easily and so quickly acquired. Never before was the heart of society so universally inflamed with desire for acquisition. The one absorbing thought of the young is, how to accumulate a fortune. A feverish unrest leaves little time, and still less taste, for religion. The present pursuits of gain throw into the background, if not entirely out of sight, the realities of a future life. And when wealth is gained, the thousand forms of self-indulgence to which it tempts, are all in harmony with that general laxity towards which society is from other causes already so rapidly moving. Too much honor can hardly be given to the many among us who, amid all the allurements of wealth, have maintained unsullied purity of character, have practiced the strictest self-denial, and with never tiring beneficence have scattered their gifts far and wide. But in our country, as a whole, it cannot be denied that one of the perils of our religion—one of the forces leading directly to laxity of morals—is the desire for, and the accumulation of riches. To men and women amid such trials, the gospel should speak with the tone and emphasis of the beatitudes, with all the searching and sifting spirit of the ethics that runs throughout the Sermon on the Mount.

In acceleration of the tendencies away from strictness of moral life, of which we have thus far spoken, are the influences of two theoretical errors, now diligently disseminated. One of these

is a theological assumption respecting what should be our fundamental conception of God that underlies no small amount of current religious teaching; the other is the proposition advocated by a growing number of scientists and philosophers, that morality and religion are wholly distinct and separate, the former being in no way dependent on the latter, and the latter furnishing no sure and permanent ground for the former.

As to the theological assumption, it is claimed by many professed teachers of the Christian religion, that the most fundamental conception we are authorized, either by nature or revelation, to form of God, is that of an infinitely benevolent Being. It is evident, they tell us, from the whole constitution and course of nature, that the foremost thought in the mind of the Creator was the welfare and happiness of man. From the laying of the corner-stone of the world until now, all things, we are assured, have worked and were intended to work together solely for human good. The origin of man, it is said, was from an irrepressible overflow of Divine beneficence. The universe is made for the express purpose of ministering to his pleasure. And what nature is thus made to teach, the Bible is cited as confirming. Thus, it was the infinite love of God that prompted the gift of his Son to die for men. The one Divine attribute that underlies and covers and controls every other, is love. Every other attribute of the Godhead is subordinated to the display of that. Jehovah is thus represented as the infinite Caterer of the universe, and his Son Jesus Christ is specially deputed

to the one office of proclaiming his supreme regard for man. Instead of setting forth his love, as the Scriptures do, on the background of his infinite holiness and justice, they give it with no background whatever. God is nothing but love. Punishment is accordingly, only reformatory; hell will be temporary; all the race will be finally saved. And for all this mawkish sentimentality, there is no antidote like that of the sterner aspects of the gospel as given in the teachings of our Lord himself.

Another and very different notion from the last named is now working insidiously towards a much greater laxity of morals than has yet been reached; it is the notion that morality and religion have no necessary connection, the one being strictly a matter of prudential calculation, and the other of sentiment. Man is moral, it is said, simply because he sees that morality is best for him; he is religious, because of the emotions of awe which the immensity of the universe and his own sense of dependence awaken within him. Natural science, under guidance of the doctrine of evolution, now claims to have placed morals, or the science of ethics, on an immovable basis wholly dissevered from religion. But to divorce morality from religion is to contradict the moral consciousness of man; is to deny the authority of conscience that rules in both religion and morality, uniting them into one; is to overthrow the foundations of both morality and religion alike. Without the authority of conscience, and a loving regard for its behests, morality loses the only principle that can give it life; it is an empty shell, a painted

semblance. And a religion without conscience, is a shadow without a substance—the spectral creation of an imagination that has no trustworthy materials to work with.

That there have been religions that were not moral, that were even immoral in both spirit and form, no one will dispute. That there have also been types of morality among different nations that were not rooted in their religions, may be readily admitted. But if there be any one characteristic of the Christian religion more marked than any other, it is its unyielding regard for moral obligation. At the foundation of Judaism, out of which sprang Christianity, lies the moral law. And nothing is more noticeable in the teachings of Christ as recorded in the Gospels than the persistency and emphasis with which he enforced the ethics of his religion. And the Apostles, even when dilating most on the relation of Christ's death and of our faith in him to our salvation, never lose sight of the connection of the whole with the moral life of the believer. They never give a shadow of ground for the grievous blunder of so magnifying the vicariousness and gratuity of our salvation, as to disparage the office of law for the believer; or of implying for an instant that it can ever be the office of the gospel to erase from the heart its sense of duty: or of implying that its completed office can ever be aught else than that of re-writing the whole law on the heart of every believer.

The one great office of Christianity is to bridge the gulf that separates man from God, to throw across it a highway of righteousness, over which

all peoples may travel in gladness and peace. But it is a highway that rests on the eternal laws that bind man to God. And never a soul can cross it, whose every foot-fall is not on some duty that holds him firmly to the great laws that underlie the whole; laws anchored at one terminus in the eternal nature of God, and at the other, in the nature of man that bears the image of God; laws as unwavering in their hold as the pillars of the eternal throne. The gospel is the fulfilment and consummation of all that the creation contemplated, all that the government of the world has provided for, and all that the death and resurrection of Christ have made possible; it transforms men into law-loving and obedient sons of God.

LECTURE VIII.

METHODS OF DELIVERY: EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING.

EVERY one looking forward to the pulpit finds himself, sooner or later, endeavoring to decide what shall be his method of delivering his sermons. Every one wishes, of course, to adopt the best method. What method will be the best for each one personally, experience alone can determine. That one, however, will ordinarily be adopted to which taste or accident first leads, and practice soon habituates.

Of the three prevailing methods, each has its advocates, and each its special advantages and disadvantages. According to the first method the whole sermon is written out and read with more or less closeness of attention to the manuscript. The second, writes in full, commits to memory, and repeats as nearly as possible, just what has been written. The third, elaborates the thought beforehand, but trusts to the occasion for most of the language in which the thoughts shall be expressed. But the classification is only general and by no means exact; one and the same sermon may partake, in different

parts of it, of all three of the methods of delivery.

As to the first method, much may be said both for and against it; but all that can be said on either side is sufficiently obvious at a glance. It insures greater accuracy of language than either of the others. It ought to insure more carefully digested thought, though in this it not unfrequently fails. But, where sufficient pains are taken, it gives opportunity for a completeness of thought and a finish of language that can be attained in no other way, and for this reason, most educated people prefer it to any other. The thought once written out can also be used again, though this is an advantage that is to be reckoned with some degree of allowance No other method makes so little draught on the nervous energy of the preacher. But, in reading, to say nothing of the time consumed in writing, the manuscript always comes between the preacher and his auditors; a written style is always more elaborate and bookish than an unwritten; reading is more monotonous than speaking; no degree of excellence in reading, however high, can ever give the best written sermon the effectiveness with an average Sunday congregation, of one that, having been thoroughly thought out is delivered in the best unwritten language that careful preparation and previous training make possible.

As respects the practice of writing and committing to memory, less can be said in support of it than of any other method. This much, however, can be said in favor of it; it can insure all

the accuracy of language and thought attainable by reading, and it releases the eye and head from the awkward restraints of that method, thus giving all the apparent advantages of extemporaneous address. But this is all that can be said in its behalf. Much more, on the contrary, can be said against it. In the first place, it requires more time to prepare for it than any other. Useful as it may be on great and rare occasions, to adopt it uniformly is to incur a prodigal waste of time. No amount of facility in committing to memory can make it an economical way of expending either time or nervous energy.

Then again, memorizing entails very many of the drawbacks of reading, without giving any of the real advantages of extemporaneous address. Monotony and wearisome sameness of cadence are almost inevitable. The speaker's supposed advantages with the audience of appearing to speak extempore, is largely an illusion. Every discerning hearer sees through it. The abstracted look and the lusterless eye at once betray the action of memory. The mind's eye of the speaker, instead of reading the countenances of his audience, is in his library running down the pages of his manuscript. The whole process is mechanical. Memory alone of all his mental powers is brought into exercise. Reason is dormant; imagination is held in abeyance; even the sensibilities are comparatively unmoved. The whole power of the speaker is concentrated on the single act of recalling what he has written.

Then a third objection to the practice of uniformly memorizing one's sermons, is the injury it

entails to the memory. To misuse any faculty is to abuse and to weaken it. It is a misuse and so an injury to memory to employ it habitually and purposely in a merely temporary retention of what is committed to it. A sermon is committed to memory simply for the occasion, and is forgotten almost as soon as delivered. Where the practice is continued from week to week, each new sermon washes away all traces of the preceding. Each one slipping away from memory as soon as delivered, takes along with it also something valuable that was connected with it—some historical fact or philosophical principle, that should have been retained as a permanent possession. A memory trained to temporary retention, soon acquires the habit of retaining only temporarily, and of dealing in the same way with the larger portion of whatever is intrusted to it. No one can practice this method and grow rapidly either in mental resources or in intellectual power; very few, if any, can continue it through a lifetime, and develop any considerable degree of ability, or any marked excellence as a preacher.

The third general method of preaching is the so-called extemporaneous. But the designation is unfortunate. No sensible man goes before an audience with unpremeditated thought, nor with wholly unpremeditated language. In fact, to think out thought at all is to think it in words; and when the attempt is made to express the thought, it will be expressed in the words in which it has been thought out. All that can justly be expressed by the term extemporaneous is that the final and complete clothing is given to the

thought at the moment of delivery. Citations of Scripture and quotations from authors must, of course, be committed to memory. Paragraphs where the thought and expression need to be precise may be written out and made thoroughly clear to the mind and perhaps memorized; but to be extemporaneous, the language of a sermon, as a whole, must be unwritten and simply spoken.

In defense of this way of preaching, for very many, and, possibly, for a majority, of Christian pastors, very much can justly be said. In behalf of it, for the larger proportion of Sunday congregations in this country, still more could be said, but will not be, in this lecture. But to recommend it for all men and for all congregations is another thing and something which this lecture will by no means do.

One of the most evident considerations in favor of extemporaneous preaching is its economy of time. Never was time so precious to mortals as it is to-day. Never was the minister of the gospel under such obligations to husband his use of it as in this generation. Never were his duties so numerous; never his opportunities of all kinds so manifold; never the demand that he shall be well informed so imperative. The religious teacher and leader, who in this day will have any following from intelligent people, must have a well-furnished mind, and to have this, must waste no hours in needless work. But the amount of time that any one who is to read all his sermons, be they but one a week, must spend at his desk in writing them, will make an enormous deduction from the sum total of time at his disposal

for work; a deduction that forbids the acquisition of materials that would be of inestimable value to him in his calling. Ten hours a week is a low average allowance for it. Many men spend twice as much. After deducting for exchanges, summer vacations and other reliefs, we have, at the least, four hundred hours, amounting to forty days a year of ten hours each, spent in the purely mechanical labor of writing. The truth, probably, is that the average of ministers, who write and read their sermons, spend nearer fifty days a year in the mere labor of putting their sermons on paper. We say nothing of the effect on the health of sitting or standing with bent head and cramped chest in this toil of writing; of writing large amounts of what will never be worth a second thought the instant after it has been once read from the pulpit. Let another man spend his forty or fifty days a year in pushing his inquiries along the thousand avenues of knowledge now open to him; and is there any doubt which of the two should in due time become the stronger and more effective as a leader of thinking men? The one spends some of his best strength in the clothing of his thought in language; the other in gathering materials for thought and in giving to his thought mass of muscle and strength of sinew. The first will be very likely to remind you of the lamp and the library more than the second; and the second more than the first of the existing relation of Christian life to the world of living thought and action. He who preaches unwritten sermons can make them as he takes daily exercise in the open air; as he passes to and fro in his pastoral visita-

tion; as he lies down at night, and as he rises in the morning. Many a minor point can be thought out into clearness between the moment of awaking and the instant of beginning work in the study. Sermons thus made in the open air, on the street or by the wayside, will have a tone of reality, an odor of life, that mere library thinking and writing can never impart to them.

In unwritten sermons, spoken freely and freshly from the mind and heart, the preacher comes into an immediateness of relation with his auditors that never is attainable by him who is dependent on his manuscript. There exists a nameless something acting and re-acting on the hearers and the speaker as they look into each other's eyes, that no skill in reading with stolen glances at the audience, can ever render possible. The hearers catch the speaker's thoughts and emotions, and he, from their responsive looks, gathers new inspiration as he advances. The extempore speaker, who is master of both his subject and himself, has at the same time a mastery over his audience, such as no other can ever possess.

The extemporaneous discourse admits of an easy naturalness of tone and manner of delivery, and, more than that, of an inartificial simplicity of language that never can be given to the written discourse. Writers of sermons have sometimes labored assiduously to give to their language the air and construction of unpremeditated speech, but never with much success. The writer mentally repeating his sentences as he makes them, inevitably chooses his words with more care, and gives to his sentences a more formal and artificial

construction than when he speaks straight on, intent only on conveying his meaning with clearness and force. In unwritten speech, the probabilities are that the thoughts of the speaker will find utterance in words of Saxon rather than of Norman or Latin origin, in the more common language of every-day life, and not in the rarer language of books and the schools. If he chooses, he can, with naturalness and propriety, descend to the colloquial in both language and intonation; or he can, if occasion and his ability warrant, rise to the level of the sublime in thought, and of its fittest expression. And many a man, under the strong mental excitement and inspiration of extemporaneous address, finds himself giving utterance to thoughts that then for the first time occur to him, and uttering them in language more felicitous than he could possibly have commanded in his study. And as to elocution, particularly in the matter of intonation, emphasis and cadence, in which the pulpit has always been most lamentably at fault, the extemporaneous preacher has, if he will but use it, incomparably the advantage of the reader of sermons.

Another advantage to the speaker who is not tied down to his manuscript, nor to the memory of what he has written, is one that some persons at the first blush may be disposed to deny to him. It nevertheless is one of which he always may, and ought to, avail himself; it is the opportunity he has to secure to himself a more lucid and exactly logical order of thought than is possible for one who writes and reads, unless he shall read what has been written again and again. Very

few men indeed—scarcely one in a thousand—can make the order of all the thought of their discourses, at the first writing, to be precisely what they shall afterwards deliberately approve. The order of thought in the unwritten discourse may be modified and improved up to the very moment that delivery begins. And you can readily see why this may be so. Unwritten preaching as we have before and distinctly said, is not to be regarded as the preaching of unpremeditated thought. On the contrary, all the thought is supposed to have been most carefully analyzed, and every part adjusted to its place in a symmetrical whole. No man of well-disciplined intellect will be willing to go before an intelligent audience with an unwritten discourse, unless perfectly familiar with the line of thought he intends to pursue. He knows full well that his attention will be too much engrossed in the expression of his thought, to admit of an instant of uncertainty at any given point, as to what the thought should really be. All this he has settled beforehand And he has settled it by repeatedly running through it, with minuteness of analysis, from beginning to end. Any want of connection is at once detected; any deficiency in logic is seen and set right. But he who has written, can change only by writing again—a remedy not always at the preacher's command; hence the awkward devices of phraseology for holding together the disjointed thoughts of many a hastily written sermon; or the still more awkward turning forwards and backwards of the pages of the manuscript by the preacher in his clumsy attempts to

readjust the order of what he had written. The truth is, that any clear thinker, who prepares himself to speak without writing, is compelled, by the very necessities of the case, to give special attention to the order of his thoughts, and the relation of these to one another. And as between the written and the unwritten, with the same grade of intellects, the superiority in point of logic will be found with him who speaks without the manuscript.

And so again, with due preparation, more thought can be dispensed in the same length of time by unwritten speech than by writing and reading This, I am also aware, is directly the opposite of what is generally believed. The belief is, that, without writing there is always diffuseness, prolixity, generalities and vagueness, and needless repetitions. And the belief is not wholly without ground. With the faults named extemporizers are not unfrequently chargeable. But they are also faults of men rather than of methods. Writers are by no means free from them; but he who is liable to them in writing will be sure to show them in excess when speaking extempore. A verbosity which only the pen can hold in check will run wild if left to itself. Before half through with the thought laid out for a discourse, the verbose man will tell an audience that his time is exhausted, and the remainder of what he had intended to say must be reserved to another occasion. By all means let the verbose man never fail to write and to cleave to his manuscript. But after making all needed exceptions, it still remains true that more thought can in the same

length of time be packed into a well-digested spoken discourse than into one written out in full and read. And this is so, for a few plain reasons. One speaks more rapidly than he reads; the speaker spends less time than the writer in filling out and balancing his sentences; shades of thought, qualifications and the like, which the writer feels compelled to express in words and clauses, the speaker throws in by tone, look, gesture; and not a little of what the writer feels to be necessary to a rounded fulness of his thought, the speaker, intent only on distinctness and vividness of impression, safely and not unwisely omits. And that all this is true, any one may certify to himself by writing out a well-compacted extempore discourse after its delivery. He will find that, to make it as intelligible in reading as it had been in speaking, there will be more manuscript than can be read in the same time that had been required in the speaking.

But it must be admitted that extempore preaching, with all that can be said in its favor, is attended with many and serious drawbacks. It makes large demands; it has its own special dangers and trials. No one should attempt to practice it without counting the cost; without having some degree of assurance that he possesses the strength of nerve to bear the strain and the will to endure the humiliations and to resist the temptations he is sure to encounter. Many young preachers are too strongly attracted towards it. It is always in popular demand. Some try it and fail; not many ever succeed in carrying it to any very high degree of excellence. It is well, therefore, for us to look at it from all sides.

Extempore preaching levies a severe tax on the nervous energy of the preacher. He is anxious while preparing his sermon; and no method of preparation he can adopt can relieve him of his anxiety. He goes into the pulpit with his nervous system excited possibly to a point of extreme tension. Mind, brain, and every fiber of his frame are concentrated on the one work of delivering the sermon. In preparation by writing, the preacher's anxiety, however great at the start, gradually subsides as the sentences multiply, till it passes into agreeable exhilaration. With the completion of his sermon comes the serenity of one whose task is ended. Putting the sermon into his pocket, he enters the pulpit with the calm composure of one who is perfectly sure of himself. With the extemporizer everything is contingent and uncertain till the sermon has been delivered. He can only hope and tremblingly strive, until the end is reached. No past success can wholly assure him. Experience has taught him that no failures have been so certain and complete, as those which were preceded by over-confidence; and no success has been without its accompanying condition of anxiety. He cannot, if he would, wholly allay his fears. When his discourse has been delivered, he leaves the pulpit with the feeling of one from whom a great burden has been rolled: but with nerves relaxed, with brain wearied, with heart agitated, with the feelings of one who has been literally in the throes of delivery. He who reads, steps down with the feeling of one who has performed a pleasant task that could easily be repeated. No one can long continue the practice

of going into the pulpit with the sermon in his mind instead of in his pocket, and not feel that he is paying a heavy tax for the privilege in the draft he is making on his nervous energy.

Whoever resolves to preach without first having written his sermons, must also expect some humiliating disappointments. By no amount or kind of preparation can he provide for every emergency. His physical condition may at the last moment prove to be such that his powers are not wholly at his command. His subject may be one to which his auditors are indifferent; and, instead of being quickened by their sympathies, he may be depressed by their apathy. Or, maybe, the subject proves of far less interest to himself than in preparing his discourse he had expected. Possibly, he slips, and trips in his introduction; and so all that follows goes wrong; for it is a curious fact that a mis-step at the beginning is pretty sure to entail successive stumbles throughout the discourse. To trip at the outset is to have one's attention diverted from his subject to himself; diversion of attention brings discomposure; and discomposure, once begun, rarely if ever knows a stopping-place short of the end of the discourse. Diversion of one's attention from his subject to his audience is equally fatal. Many a well-prepared extemporaneous sermon has been ruined by an unexpected auditor, and many another by auditors unknown to the preacher, but by whose presence his attention has been diverted and his thoughts discomposed. Nothing can save the extemporizer from disaster, when once his attention is divided between the subject

of his discourse and some auditor about whose presence and whose opinion of the discourse he is beginning to speculate. The highest excellence is his alone whose soul is so filled with his theme that himself and the criticisms of his hearers never so much as once occur to him. But, alas! poor human nature is never wholly secure against the upspringing imps of vanity and pride. Nothing but the hard discipline of experience, and the abounding grace of Christ, can so lift a man out of and above himself, that in preaching he shall think only of his message and of the infinite God who has bidden him utter it. Until experience and grace have thus wrought for him who will preach without writing, he must expect many a sad and humbling failure.

A greater danger still, to him who will preach extemporaneously, lies in the temptation to venture into the pulpit with insufficient preparation; and I may also add in the temptation to general intellectual indolence. As one advantage to him who will so preach, I have previously mentioned the leisure it affords for reading and investigation. But human nature is almost always as lazy as circumstances will permit. And circumstances will ordinarily permit the preacher, whatever his method of delivery, to amble along at his ease, producing at the utmost his two sermons a week. He does not feel the iron necessity of every-day work in his study. And he who does not write his sermons is less constrained to daily toil than he who does. He discovers that in an emergency, he can succeed in acquitting himself respectably, even on a minimum of preparation. Possibly,

under some sudden gust of inspiration, he transcends himself. His auditors are delighted. He has made a calamitous discovery. What has come once, he half unconsciously says to himself, can come again. Thenceforward, his sense of the need of hard work and of careful elaboration of his sermons is weakened. And withal, his congregation is one of limited intelligence. They are more than satisfied with his ministrations. They offer the incense of their flattery. He feels no immediate need of larger stores of knowledge; is not moved to the acquisition of it by inward desire for it; drifting in his reading from one superficial treatise to another, squandering, perhaps, some of his best hours among newspapers, he finally awakes, at a time when he should be at the fullness of his fruitage, to find himself a man of mere leaves, whose time of figs has never come. He finds that the people to whom he has long ministered have grown weary of his preaching. He has so often repeated himself that he has become to them a thrice-told tale. Facile utterance and superficial work, have betrayed him into endless iterations. He began well, but ends a third-rate preacher, when, with due industry, he might have been among the first.

It must be admitted, however, that self-repetition is not the danger of the extemporizer alone. The veriest slave of his manuscript, the man who never ventures a word beyond what he has written, likewise repeats himself, though with less sameness of language. It will surprise any one who has not made the experiment, to find how difficult it is to select, out of any two hundred of

a man's best written sermons, twenty-five in which there are no repeated thoughts. There may be variations in phraseology and modes of statement, to suit the thoughts to the connections in which they occur; but they are none the less repetitions. The truth is, that, while no one, whatever his mode of elaborating his sermons, can avoid the pitfall of self-repetition, except through the most tireless industry, none are so liable to fall into it as they who habitually venture into the pulpit without carefully-written discourses. Let no man form the habit of preaching without writing, who has not first formed the purpose which he is sure nothing can break, that he will work in his library with all the regularity and patience and fidelity of a man whose daily bread depends on his daily toil.

But supposing the weight of considerations on the whole to be in favor of extempore preaching, for whom shall it be regarded as the best method. No one, I think, who has duly reflected on the subject, can venture to say that it is best for all minds. Some men are so constituted as to be incapable of succeeding with it. Chalmers tried it and failed. For a mind so much more rhetorical than logical as his was, and for one who thought so much more in imagery than in exact terms as he did, the only safeguard against a promiscuous tumble of words and images into a confused and confusing mass, was to put all in writing, and to hold fast by the manuscript. And among the very last men also, who should be encouraged to discard the manuscript in preaching is he on whom nature has bestowed the gift of

extreme volubility. Of all men, he should be held rigidly and uniformly to the habit of careful writing. To him the well-known phrase "fatal facility" should be a never-forgotten warning. They have attained to the greatest proficiency in unwritten speech who, like Sheridan and Robert Hall, have broken down utterly when first attempting it. Let him, and only him, try it, who, trembling at the thought, yet feels that the capacity for it is in him, and by the grace of God ought and must come out; and it will come.

But having resolved to speak rather than read, and to speak without having first written, the question at once arises, how shall the resolution be carried into effect? How can the power to extemporize be acquired? To that question the most varied answers have been given. Different men have acquired the power by very different processes. The essential thing is the purpose to acquire it. Where there is a will, there is always a way. A resolute will is sure to find its own best way. One man, caught perhaps in some unexpected emergency, is obliged to speak without his manuscript, and discovers to his amazement that he possesses the power without having suspected its presence. He had been slowly but unconsciously acquiring it. Others set to work deliberately, though sometimes in very strange ways, to acquire it. One writes in part and practices in filling in extemporaneously,—like one trying to learn to swim by the aid of cork floats and bladders. Another reads carefully in the pulpit, but endeavors to fit himself for laying aside his manuscript by the practice of off-hand

talking in the conference meeting and to the Sunday-school children, utterly forgetting that off-hand talking is in no sense proper training for good extemporaneous preaching. Loose talk is neither itself good preaching, nor a fit preparation for it. The extemporaneous sermon, to be acceptable or even tolerable, should be as rigid in logic, as compact and exact in thought, though not as formal in the construction of its sentences, as any writing could make it.

One thing we may regard as certain: whoever will acquire the power of suitably discussing the great themes of the pulpit in unwritten language, must first train himself to close thinking and careful expression. Rant and rhapsody and declamation and rambling garrulity, sometimes known as extemporaneous preaching, are a disgrace to Christianity and always offensive to people of discernment. The first thing always is, clear and just thought, with its appropriate expression. To give this extemporaneously is possible only for him who has trained himself to just thinking and speaking. To handle real and logical thought of any kind and anywhere extemporaneously, will prepare one to handle good thought in the same way in the pulpit. Forty years ago, in all our New England colleges, students were trained in the then existing debating societies for this kind of public speaking. Unfortunately, in the secret fraternities that have supplanted the old debating societies, the pen and the social instincts have either driven out debate or from paucity of numbers reduced it to insignificance; and the young men now entering public life have little of the

power of extemporaneous address that characterized their fathers. The only point at which most young men now looking forward to the pulpit are accustomed to begin thinking and speaking on their legs, is in the Theological Seminary, and thither, unfortunately, most of them take along with them the spirit and the habits of the college. Every Theological school, it seems to me, ought to have its debating society, and every student should participate in its debates, voluntarily if he will, compulsorily if he must, as an essential part of his clerical training.

To speak uniformly well without writing, one should also accustom himself to uniform correctness of speech in his ordinary conversation. Too many educated men allow themselves to use inaccurate, not to say inelegant, colloquialisms in their every-day talk, in which nothing could induce them knowingly to indulge in public address. But in their unguarded moments out slip the offensive words and phrases, even in their most elevated and solemn discourses. Their only safety is in always eschewing them. Choice language is not like a dress-coat that can be put on or off as occasion calls; it must come, if at all, from within, and to be natural and effective must come without effort. The best language, like true gentlemanliness, has its seat in the depths of the soul, and cannot be put on as we change our apparel.

But pray let no one suppose that mere practice in extempore speaking is the only requisite to real success in it. Practice may give self-possession and facility of utterance; but these are by

no means the prime qualities of the art. The kind of utterance is incomparably more important than the mode of it. Facile assurance may catch the ear of the vulgar; but it can neither hold nor instruct. No one can acquire that mastery of language which entitles him to dispense with the use of his manuscript, who has not first trained himself to accuracy by a most painstaking use of his pen. Every man has his own style, his peculiar collocations of words, and his special methods of constructing sentences. And every one's style is simply the result of his practice and his pruning. To make sure that his style is the best of which he is capable, let him write, so that, in criticising it, he may have his eyes as well as his ears to help him. He who proposes to extemporize his sermons should write, not *multa*, but *multum*—a little, but with the utmost care—a care that shall expend itself in tireless revisions and re-revisions; as long as he continues so to speak, he should continue so to write.

And whoever will preach without previous writing, should also use all diligence in making himself the possessor of as ample a vocabulary as possible, and should become as skillful as he can in the use of synonymous terms—as expert as possible in the selection of the one out of many that shall express the exact shade of his meaning. His besetting dangers are stereotyped language and vagueness of expression. Against these dangers, the best safeguards, next to one's own careful writing, is a critical study of the best English authors: that kind of study, I mean, by which an

author's paragraphs are so thoroughly dissected, that one gets a kind of insight into the very process of his thinking in constructing them; a study in which various authors are critically compared, and a study to which, unfortunately, by far too little attention is given in our American educational institutions. The ideally perfect system of education in our schools of learning will not be reached till our mother tongue, the language in which students are afterward to plead at the bar, to write for the press, or to preach in the pulpit—the language on a skillful use of which the preacher's success so largely depends,—shall be made the subject of more systematic, more continuous and more thoroughly critical study than it ever yet has been.

Assuming now that one has gone far enough in his practice and experience to resolve on appearing before an audience with an extemporaneous sermon, the final questions come, How shall he proceed, and in what form shall he take the sermon, or any part of it, into the pulpit with him? In respect to the first of these questions the one true answer, doubtless, is, let him be sure that he has a thoroughly clear conception of precisely what he proposes to do, and let him assure himself that he has complete mastery of the entire thought that he intends to present. But in order to definiteness of purpose and to mastery of his thoughts, his subject must have been so minutely analyzed that he sees through every part of it. When thus analyzed and completely grasped, the whole subject is within his control, and can be molded into shape as easily as the potter molds

his clay. When one thus has his subject in hand, he is prepared to preach on it extemporaneously. But to get it thus in hand requires, in the beginner, patience and study and concentration of mind more than sufficient to have written it out as sermons are ordinarily written. And even to the practiced hand, everything depends on complete mastery of one's subject. It need not surprise us then that when Robert Hall was asked to name the first requisite for extemporaneous preaching he promptly replied: "preparation;" and when asked to name the second, with equal promptness replied: " preparation," and for the third gave the same answer.

Please banish, therefore, from your minds all notions of great sermons on small preparations. Impromptu thoughts and deep emotions cannot be safely expected to come just when wanted. The only inspiration that any man who is to extemporize can rely on with safety, is that which springs from being filled with the thought and spirit of his subject. Once in a great while, a man of large resources may under sudden and severe pressure be able on the spur of the moment to call a great sermon into being; but his ability to do it is the product of a life of toil, and of uniform fidelity in all his ordinary preparations. No man can make something out of nothing. There must be latent resources somewhere that he can fall back on and call into use. Many of the famous specimens of impromptu eloquence, of which tradition tells us, were either, like Sheridan's wit, the result of the most careful preparation, or were the outburst of pent-up thought

and emotion that had slowly accumulated and only awaited the occasion that should let them forth.

But granting that thoroughness of preparation is the one great requisite, there still remains the choice to be made among methods of preparation. Here there is ample opportunity for choice. And it is plain that the method of preparation must materially affect the actual delivery. The mind in speaking will repeat the precise processes which it passed through in its final preparation for speaking; in other words, the speaker will take his sermon into the pulpit with him in the precise form in which he has prepared it. Let me explain: he can write out parts of the discourse, which he commits to memory, filling in the interstices extemporaneously; or he can write and memorize simply the heads or divisions of his discourse; he can write the several heads, and, placing them before him, recur to them as he passes from one to another; he can write out a full skeleton, to which he momentarily recurs as he advances; or, thinking the whole discourse minutely through from beginning to end, he may carry the whole in his mind, not as something which he has written out and memorized, but as something mentally elaborated, and having a present conscious mental existence.

Now, of all the methods we have enumerated, or others that might be named, the last mentioned seems to me to be entitled to a decided preference. All the others either expose to needless risks, or hamper the mind in its action. If in the use of the first two methods memory fails one, it

throws him into helpless confusion. While memory is in action, also, the offices of the other powers are suspended. No one, furthermore, in extemporaneous speaking can recur to any kind or amount of written aid while speaking, without a momentary arrest of mental movement. Every such arrest is a direct loss of mental momentum. It is like shutting off the motive power of machinery, all of which comes suddenly to a standstill. But, if the subject of the discourse has been properly analyzed, if the line of thought to be pursued has been clearly and logically laid out, and has been brought mentally and completely in hand, then no written brief, or plan, or skeleton, to be recurred to in speaking will be anything else than a clog, an actual obstruction to the mental movement of the speaker.

Now, that this is so, will be evident, I think, to any one who reflects for a moment on the several mental processes that must be simultaneously carried on by the speaker during the act of speaking. First of all there stands in his mind the proposition or theme, on which every thought or argument presented is supposed to have a more or less direct bearing. That bearing must be kept distinctly in mind. Each argument or thought is to have its special relation to all the others; that relation must not be lost sight of. Each argument, also, is to have its parts or steps, expressed in paragraphs, each of which is related to all, and all of which the speaker must keep distinctly before him. Every paragraph is composed of sentences, and sentences may have their clauses, all of which must be properly adjusted, one

to another. And, finally, all the words of the clauses and sentences must be marshalled into place on the instant, and the whole fashioned into form just as rapidly as the words can find utterance.

But in all these several processes, it is evident that the less of special attention required by any one of them, the better for all the others. If all shall have been so completely provided for by previous thinking, that neither one requires more than its specific share of attention in speaking, the speaker can bring each faculty to its distinctive work, and thus be able to do his best. And the more completely each and all those processes, that have been previously gone through with, can be kept in mind at the moment of speaking, the freer will be the mental movements of the speaker. And no method of preparation can insure so immediate and so exact a reproduction of the processes, and can so enable the mind to keep them all in parallel movement, as that which elaborates all mentally and carries them all into the pulpit, not on paper, nor as memorized from paper, but as in the mind itself, ready to spring into consciousness the moment they are wanted.

Nor need there be any difficulty in carrying them all in the mind. Just thought always has its own natural order of arrangement. That order may be simply logical, it may be chronological, it may be the order of place or time, the order of cause and effect, of resemblance, of contrast, or of other relations; but it is always an order that once clearly seen will afterwards suggest itself

without effort of memory. A sermon once clearly thought out, and the just order of its thoughts distinctly seen, needs no paper to assist one in keeping it in mind.

But there is one requisite in preparing for the pulpit, whatever may be the method of delivering one's discourse, that is more vital than all others. Of that, permit me, in concluding this course of lectures, to remind you. The mental preparations, on which we have so much dwelt, are indispensable; but that of the heart is still more so. Mere work of the intellect can reach and move only the intellects of your hearers. But Christian truth is more for the heart than for the intellect, though it be only through the intellect that the heart can be reached and changed. It is the heart only that can move other hearts. Be assured, there is no real power in any kind of preaching that springs not out of the hidden depths of the soul, that is not an embodiment of the real experience of the preacher. Attune then, first of all, your own hearts to the truths you propose to urge on the attention of others. In an age like ours, of great apparent penetration but of shallow emotion, there is no means of protecting one's self against error and no resource in battling against it or in enforcing the authority of truth on others like that of a complete surrender of soul to the control of the personal Christ. Let his gospel do its full work in molding your characters after his divine pattern; then will your words be instinct with a life no eloquence can impart, and carry with them something of the authority with which the gospel was first spoken

to the world; and then, finally, so certain as truth shall ultimately prevail, yourselves and the gospel you have preached shall be vindicated before the eyes of the universe, and the blessing of the eternal God shall be your unending reward.

THE END.