

# PSYCHIC POWER IN PREACHING

J. Spencer Kennard, D.D.



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Psychic power in preaching

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PSYCHIC POWER  
IN  
PREACHING

BY  
J. SPENCER KENNARD, D.D.

Edited with Memoir  
by his son  
Joseph Spencer Kennard

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**In Memoriam.**



## In Memoriam.

**I**N the world of literature, of politics, of government, or of finance, when a man has become famous, has gained applause, has risen and overtopped his fellows and has become a leader, ruler or king, how the world is impressed with his personality, how filled with comment at his passing from this life to that which is beyond the grave! Yet when he is weighed there, in the balances of God, how small may be his soul, how pitiful appear his character!

Judged even by the world's standard, Dr. Kennard was a distinguished man. As a pulpit-orator, as the loved pastor of prominent city churches, as an earnest patriot, as a writer, as an evangelist, winning souls; his name is known, his reputation is established. This memoir, however, is not a panegyric. It purposes to give, very simply and very briefly, the record of a heart made great by goodness. It is a tribute to a life filled with noble purpose and radiating blessing upon his fellow-men. It is just one more testimony to the truth of God's word that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Because the life and work of this man so eminently exemplified this wisdom and brightened his crown with so many stars, a short account of that life and work should be the most valuable chapter in a book

whose aim and purpose is to help those who would win souls.

Joseph Spencer Kennard was born in Philadelphia, September 24, 1833. There his ancestors had lived from before the days of Penn. They had occupied prominent positions in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Colonies, and in the war of the Revolution they were leaders of men and patriots. In his long ministry in Philadelphia his father, Joseph Hugg Kennard, D.D., an ambassador of heaven, was greatly honored of God and men. There his son, Joseph Spencer, was dedicated to the Lord at the time of his birth. Under the care of parents who were remarkable for their strong spiritual nature, he developed a fine inward sensibility, which, grafted on an ardent temperament, gave to his whole life among men an undertone caught up in his musings upon the deep mysteries of Man and Eternity and God: an undertone now joyous, anon sad; as, indeed, the contemplative soul is alternately lifted to sunlit heights and depressed to the abysses.

At the age of twelve years he experienced conversion, and received baptism at his father's hands in the Tenth Baptist Church, Philadelphia. At school this profession of religion brought upon him ridicule from some of his fellows there; but his bright, sunny disposition, springing from a singularly beautiful soul, his uncompromising moral earnestness, needed no defense against their taunts. He was a natural orator, having a clear, powerful and perfectly modulated voice, graceful movements, a good command of language and a certain impetuosity of delivery

which visibly proceeded from inward conviction. This boy was father of the man. While he was a pupil in the Philadelphia High School he, with seven fellow-students, who, like himself at that time, were looking forward to a career in the Law, formed the Forensic Society. Among the first members of this society were several youths who afterward rose to eminence in various callings: Judge James T. Mitchell, of Philadelphia; William T. Richards, the marine painter; Frank Stockton, the novelist, and George Reshé. As a tribute to his high scholarship and character on graduating from the High School he was chosen valedictorian, both by vote of his class and desire of his teachers.

He then entered Lewisburg (now Bucknell) University, in the Senior Class. Shortly after entering he decided to fit himself for a career in the ministry of the Gospel. Through all his life thereafter there remained vivid in his mind the memory of certain passages of his spiritual experience in the retirement of his closet at the University, in which he was favored with sensible manifestations of the Divine Presence. The youth had in these Divine visitations assurance, which he never lost and never forfeited, that he was chosen to be a Vessel of Election and a messenger from God to the souls of men. That assurance, that conviction, was as deeply and as firmly rooted then and thenceforth in his consciousness as the sense of his own being; it was part of himself; nay, it was the principle and prime-motor of his life, of his personality; indeed, this is a Man sent of God, or he is naught!

He is still a youth, a novice ; but already he recognizes in its full measure the grandeur and the holiness of his vocation. In a letter to his mother, from Lewisburg, he writes :

I was sitting in my study, and I know not how it was, but I am sure that God has visited me. My soul was baptized in the glory of God. I was thinking on prayer, on intimate communion with Him, and of the glory of the redemption which Christ has purchased ; the completeness of the righteousness with which sinners such as I am are invested in Christ ; the reality of the grace of God in Christ ; the reality of the promises ; the certainty of their fulfillment ; the amazing, the overwhelming reality of my being permitted to come right into the presence of the great God : so near,—so near and to meet smiles—only smiles and arms of love extended to *me*. The three Blessed ones seemed to stand around, inviting my petitions. The Father, from whom I have gone like a prodigal ; the Saviour, whom I have crucified, and the Holy Spirit, whom I have grieved. Why those floods of joy ? I heard the precious words, “ Ask what thou wilt.” “ *O, then, give me love for souls.*” This is what I want. Oh, Saviour, who died for sinners ! Oh, Father, that would not that any should perish ! Oh, Spirit of Grace, who loveth to lead souls to heaven, give me this *burning, impelling love for souls, lost souls !*

Again he writes:

When I hear of my friends being instrumental in the conversion of sinners it makes me long to be engaged in the blessed work ; I am impatient to be about my Master’s work ; yet, alas ! how unfit I am ! My constant prayer is that God will make me an instrument for some good.



He entered Princeton Seminary in 1854, and remained there two years. He viewed the time he was to spend in the seminary as a season for diligent study of the Sacred Sciences, and of the art of Apostolical preaching, as also for disciplining his own will to make it in all things obedient to God's will, and himself a fit instrument to God's hand for the work of the ministry. A letter written by him to his mother about this time shows that he was already engaged in the study of the same problem which occupied his mind and his pen up to the close of his life—the Philosophy of Preaching—touching which this present volume is proof that he studied that problem to some purpose. But the letter shows that he was at the same time contemplating the whole field of evangelical labor with a view to discover wherein the defenses of the Church most needed strengthening. Meanwhile his own spiritual growth must not be neglected, and he searches his heart to find out what hindrances might there exist to the inflow of God's grace for his own sanctification and for the salvation of souls. He writes:

Since I have been here my ideas in regard to what is eminently desirable in the education of a minister "that needeth not be ashamed" have been enlarged, so that I have resolved to make myself master of the philosophy of the composition and delivery of sermons, and also to make myself acquainted thoroughly with Biblical and Ecclesiastical history in all its departments, and with Hebrew and Greek Criticisms, so as to be able to meet and refute, if circumstances require, the cavils of learned skeptics.

I have been reading in the letters and journal of Henry Martyn, and the example of that holy man has been like a great light to make my own darkness visible. I think my heart has been in some degree humbled—for whereof have I to boast? Were I the holiest of God's creatures, it would be surely of grace. I enjoy near access to God at the throne of grace; I feel reluctant to leave the mercy seat. God's word has an especial interest for me. Whenever I read its pages I feel a thrill of delight, and when I meditate on its precious words of encouragement and love, so peculiarly adapted to my condition, my heart is melted in tenderness, and a joy such as I experienced when first I realized the forgiveness of sin, only a sublimer and purer joy, reigns in my heart.

My plan of living, for the most part, is this: I rise before light, from half-past four o'clock to six; I spend some time in study and one-half hour in devotion, which is very sweet to my soul. Then I take a walk of about two miles. In my walk I select some subject for meditation, and I find this very profitable. I return to breakfast; after breakfast, study until recitations. The intervening time until dinner I spend in devotion. The afternoon I spend in the preparation and recitation of Homiletics and Greek exegesis. Evening chapel prayers follow immediately the recitations. After supper I generally spend in some prayer meeting, or committee, or society.

Oh that God would enable me, in future, to keep constantly in view the one and only object of all my study and all my labors, His glory and the salvation of souls!

Oh, come, thou mighty wind; come, Holy Spirit, and waft me onward and higher, and still higher, till my entire self shall be absorbed in the glory of the Sun of Righteousness! Like Him, to be meek and lowly; like Him, to be crucified to the world; like Him, if

need be, crucified *for* the world ; like Him, to weep for sinners ; like Him, to say, " not my will, O Father, but thine be done." Oh ! to have no thought but " Christ Crucified !" To have no ambition but to win souls to heaven !

Ah ! my dear mother, I feel that prayers, and strong cryings, and tears, and fastings, and abasement, and self-mortification, and self-examination, and fierce conflicts with myself and the buffetings of satan, all, all ! are not too great a price to pay for such glorious transformation—likeness to Jesus.

So eagerly did he pursue his studies in the seminary that his health failed him, and for a while he traveled in Canada, accompanied by his friend, De Witt Taylor. Having been licensed to preach, he made a missionary tour as agent of the American Sunday School Union, preaching and founding Sunday Schools. He also, while at the seminary, for some time preached in the Bordentown (N. J.) Baptist Church. In 1856, when his course of studies was completed, he received calls from two churches, one from the First Germantown Church, Philadelphia ; the other from the Bridgeton (N. J.) Baptist Church ; this he decided to accept, and December 23, 1856, in the Tenth Baptist Church, Philadelphia, of which his father was pastor, he was ordained to the Gospel ministry, and to that charge. Thus did he enter on his labors, which through a long life were never intermitted save for necessary rest.

It was in Bridgeton that he first met his future wife, Nancy Reed Jeffers, whom he married in 1858. She was the youngest of a family of beautiful girls, and

was endowed with every gift and grace that could make her the meet life-companion and helper of a minister of the Gospel ; in his labors he was ever sustained by her counsel, as well as by her active coöperation.

With a deep sense of the responsibilities of his office and of the importance of redeeming the time, he went about his labors in this his first pastoral field. In his journal of that time he is seen to be constantly struggling with what he calls his besetting sin, waste of time ; though in addition to the duties of his Bridgeton pastorate, he imposed upon himself the burden of mission labors at places a considerable distance from the town. At one of these outlying stations he conducted meetings almost every night for two or three months. In Bridgeton he set on foot sundry movements that went beyond the conventional limits of his Baptist pastorate, and were non-sectarian or inter-denominational. Thus, he organized a Bridgeton branch of the Young Men's Christian Association ; he induced the churches to join in weekly union prayer meetings ; once he prevailed upon the inhabitants of the town to give up to prayer and fasting one whole day ; on that day every place of business in Bridgeton was closed, and the city was, so to speak, on its knees. A memorable revival of religion followed. Hardly less worthy of note was another innovation wrought by the young minister—namely, that of ministers of different denominations uniting in meeting at their respective homes for social converse. And it was he that founded the Bridgeton Conference of Baptist Ministers.

He stayed three years in Bridgeton, and there his

eldest son and namesake was born. In September, 1859, having resigned that pastorate, he assumed the charge of the E Street Baptist Church, Washington City.

The change from the quiet of an inland town to the turmoil of the national capital was revolutionary. John Brown's raid occurred between Mr. Kennard's acceptance of the call and his removal. If the whole country was electrified with suppressed excitement, Washington was the storm centre, and one could scarcely mention the dangerous topic without causing an ominous flash. The spiritual atmosphere was cold. People were more anxious about the condition of the country than the state of the church. At E Street, as in many other churches, there were many Southerners, and a strong Southern sentiment before the election of Lincoln. Truly, there were lions in the path of the loyal young minister. He and his charming wife were received with a generous welcome by "Old Washington" society. He was asked to accept the nomination for Chaplain of the House of Representatives, an honor which he declined on account of the necessary electioneering. Ushered into the sophisticated life of a great city, his first battle was in the cause of Temperance. In the years before the "Women's Temperance Crusade" only a few independent and hardy souls dreamed of advocating total abstinence, but Kennard and his wife were among the few. In writing to his father during those early days he says :

I shall find it painful to maintain my principles

in regard to temperance here. The fact is, they have wine everywhere you go, and everybody drinks. The most sober and excellent members of the church, deacons included, think nothing of it. They think it strange I do not drink, as — did without hesitation, and expressed himself as doing it because we ought to enjoy all the good things which our Heavenly Father gives us, and be grateful for them. Since I have come — has not drunk at any of the companies where we have been together. I must and will lift up my voice against it. Every day I become more firm and determined in my principles. I have told them plainly, though kindly, that I am, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, an out-and-out temperance man ; that I am utterly opposed to the drinking practices of society.

In the early days of his ministry he found one of his most loved and valued friends in the Hon. Amos Kendall (Jackson's Postmaster-General), one of Washington's most distinguished citizens. The grand old man was immediately attracted by the young fellow of twenty-six, to whom life was at once so beautiful and so solemn. He was not a member of the church, but contributed largely to its support, and considered the young minister his special *protégé*. In their correspondence of later years Mr. Kendall's letters were always characterized by a fatherly solicitude, which was not hidden by his old-fashioned, dignified reserve.

After the installation of President Lincoln there was an exodus of Southerners from the city, the E Street Church losing some of its strongest supporters.

The news of the fall of Fort Sumter reached

Washington on a Sunday just before the hour of the morning service. This was war ! The city was dazed and frightened ; but to one man the immediate duty seemed perfectly direct and plain ; he determined to declare his position that morning. At the close of the services the pastor of the E Street Church spoke of the surrender, and urged his church to rally to the support of the government. After a moment of silence, the Southerners left their seats and went out.

What with the general turmoil in the city, what with the falling away of the Southern membership, the resources of the church were desperately impaired ; it was unable to pay the pastor's salary, yet never was need of a shepherd more pressing. Mr. Kennard applied in May for a position in the Treasury Department, which he immediately obtained. For a number of months he spent six hours a day signing Treasury notes, and gave the remaining hours to the work of the church, visiting the sick and attending funerals after four in the afternoon. While the church was united in love of the pastor, sectional feeling was too strong to be subdued or ignored. After a meeting, in which a majority refused to receive Northerners as members of the church, he sorrowfully resigned his charge. Soon after his resignation a large number of the loyal members went out and formed a new church.

The pastorship was offered to Mr. Kennard, but his health was so much impaired that he could not accept the charge, though he agreed to serve temporarily.

But the clash of arms had an echo in the new

church. In the Union prayer meeting, too, there was so much hesitation about mentioning the great question of the day that Mr. Kennard wrote the leaders that he could not have any part in the services unless he were free to "pray for the country." He was often on the field of battle with the Christian Commission, and ministered to the sick and dying soldiers. At home he was continually brought face to face with the horrors of war. At last, in October, he left the scene of conflict for New England, and settled in Woburn, Massachusetts.

The church at Woburn was strong, spiritual, peaceful and united, and after the turmoil and anxieties of his Washington pastorate, Mr. Kennard was greatly cheered by the abundant fruits of his labors there. Here his extraordinary spiritual force and sweet persuasiveness won all hearts, and through hearts his words found access to souls. Soon after his settlement in the town a revival in the church resulted in a great harvest of converts.

The pastor records in his Journal, "never so happy and never so much real satisfaction in my work." With the exception of an occasional visit from neighboring pastors, he carried on the work alone. From Mr. Kendall he received frequent reports of the new Calvary Church, in Washington, established by Mr. Kennard. To-day the church stands as a beautiful memorial of the courage of that little Gideon's band, as well as of the generosity of Amos Kendall.

While in the midst of his labors in Woburn, Mr.



Kennard received what he considered an imperative call to serve his country in the army. The nation was passing through her darkest hours. Volunteers were no longer ready to fill the breaches made by disastrous battles. The draft raised a tempest of indignation, of which the riots in New York were only a partial expression. Mr. Kennard attended many public meetings, and spoke earnestly in behalf of the government. His eloquence had much effect in changing the current of popular feeling, and his words were emphasized by the news that he himself had been drafted. The people protested, but he insisted upon going to the front. As he had said, "Every man should consider the draft the call of God to service." This was the occasion of a beautiful act of self-sacrifice on the part of one of the members of his church, who presented himself at the pastor's study early on the morning after the news had been received. "Pastor," he said, "you must not go. Your work here is too important. My wife and I have been praying over this matter all night, and I have decided to go in your stead." A little later the venerable Deacon Converse, who had been confined to the house for many months, appeared at the door and repeated, "Pastor, you cannot go. I will send a substitute in your stead." But though his heart was deeply touched by their devotion, the pastor's resolution was unshaken. When the time arrived for the physical examination he set out for Lawrence. In the evening a crestfallen "conscript" came home with patriotism as strong as ever, but somewhat less buoyant. Kennard had been refused on account of "deli-

cacy of physical organization." In the words of the physician, "he might last three months, but not longer, and would cost the government more than he was worth."

The climate of Woburn was severe, and each winter he seemed less able to withstand its rigors. After a vacation to recuperate his health, he returned to his field in Woburn and renewed his pastoral work, but continued to suffer with his throat. He was urged by his physician and family to go to a milder climate, and in September he accepted a call to Calvary Church, of Albany, and in December became its pastor. The pastorate in Albany was one of unalloyed happiness. Almost immediately after his settlement there the church received a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and many souls were brought to Christ. Ninety-six were baptized that winter. The church also received large additions by letter, and its strength was nearly doubled.

Two of Mr. Kennard's old friends had followed him to Albany—De Witt Taylor, the friend of his boyhood and youth, and John B. Mulford, his brother-in-law, who became superintendent of the Sunday School.

That same summer his father, Dr. Joseph Hugg Kennard, pastor of the Tenth Baptist Church, Philadelphia, who had been its pastor since its formation, in 1838, died. For his successor the "Old Tenth" chose, as of course, the son. Only sixteen months had Mr. Kennard been pastor of the Albany church, but already he was held fast to it by many spiritual

ties, and the alternative of severing these or of rejecting the affectionate call of his beloved father's children in Christ was for him an exquisitely painful trial. The Albany church protested against his leaving, and only after repeated appeals from their pastor would they consent to accept his resignation. The long-cherished wish and hope of his father and the kindly, affectionate invitation of the Philadelphia church prevailed.

The "Old Tenth," under the ministry of the elder Dr. Kennard, was a church ever alive, always "in revival"; its spiritual life never intermitted, but was always as a strong, steady flame. His son was not the man to suffer the sacred fire to die out; it glowed and flamed in his own soul; and thence it radiated through the church and beyond the bounds of the church, even into the outer darkness of vagrancy and godlessness. Being touched by the forlorn condition of the human wastrels issuing from the station-houses on Sunday mornings, with no place to turn to but the drink-shops, Mr. Kennard proposed to his members to invite them to a "Sunday Breakfast." A hall was opened, where a hot breakfast was served each Sunday morning to a forlorn company gathered from the various station-houses. After the poor fellows had been warmed and fed, they were glad to listen to the preaching of the Gospel in the meeting which followed. Many of these men were converted, many were saved from the curse of intemperance; and, with some interruptions, the Sunday breakfasts have been continued ever since that time, and are one of Philadelphia's institutions to-day.

As the city was at this time growing rapidly toward the northwest, Mr. Kennard realized the need of church extension in that direction, and opened a mission Sunday School, to which was given the name of "The Kennard Mission." From this lowly beginning sprung what is now one of the most notable institutional churches in America—Grace Church, known as "The Temple," with its college, hospital and other annexes—a noble monument to the pastoral zeal, the indomitable enterprise and the administrative ability of Dr. Russell H. Conwell.

After this Dr. Kennard was for five years pastor of the Pilgrim Church, in New York City, and in that period his labors were rewarded with conversions to the number of over three hundred. When, in 1875, Mr. Moody was holding that wonderful series of meetings at the Hippodrome, Dr. Kennard was his efficient co-laborer. He and his wife were constantly at work in the inquiry room; and in the auditorium itself his exhortations and his prayers were blessed by the conversion of souls. Of all those who spoke, no voice surpassed his in the power of reaching the utmost corners of the hall.

At the time of Mr. Kennard's residence in New York the Baptist denomination was passing through a very critical period in its history. Owing to the great intellectual activity of the past century, there has been a growing tendency to question all religious creeds. No branch of the church has been free from the struggle between the iconoclasts on the one hand, who attacked long established doctrines and usages, and

the conservatives on the other, who believed themselves defenders of the faith. The Baptists have suffered less than others from these contentions owing to their cardinal doctrine of the right of private judgment. In the seventies, however, quite a storm was raised over the communion question. The conservative element in the church suddenly awakened to the fact that among the younger ministers was a growing disposition to forsake the time-honored custom of limiting the invitation to the Lord's Supper to "members of the churches of the same faith and order." The theological position of the Baptists on the subject of "believer's baptism" and immersion was never disputed; but the corollary that only such "baptized" believers were to be admitted to communion at the Lord's Table, thus depriving them of fellowship with Christians of other denominations, found many dissenters. The Church in England had always taken a liberal view of the subject, and a small section of the denomination in America was distinguished by the title "Freewill Baptists," because of its open Communion position; but such had not been the general feeling in this country. The merits of the discussion have no place in this sketch. Neither party to the controversy was willing to yield in a matter of conscience. A number of valuable men left the denomination, and there was danger of an irreconcilable division in the ranks.

But the day was saved by the wisdom and courage of a few men who could see both sides and were not afraid to stand for justice and liberty as against party

feeling. Dr. A. J. Gordon, Dr. Kennard, Dr. Neale and a few others believed that the Baptist doctrine of soul liberty was of greater importance than any dogma concerning the order of the sacraments, however logically derived. While unflinchingly loyal to the faith of the Fathers, they set themselves determinedly against the spirit of ecclesiarchical coercion then rampant. At no small cost to themselves, they kept firm hold of the denominational helm until the ship should right herself. The contest was long and bitter. The question then at issue was not settled. It probably will remain a subject for discussion for many years to come, but it will never again become a matter of church discipline or threaten the solidarity of the denomination.

The strong reaction of his sensitive spirit after the theological controversy resulted in great nervous exhaustion. This was increased by partial sunstroke, and his apparently failing health caused anxiety to his family.

In August, 1878, his health being restored, he accepted a call from the Central Square Baptist Church, East Boston, and held that charge for three years, during which he devoted much of his time to the study, critical and historical, of Buddhism and other Oriental religions: one essay of his, of considerable compass, upon the life of Buddha, won favorable notice among European as well as American scholars. In this period, also, it was that he commenced a series of articles on Pulpit Eloquence, out of which grew, or rather which grew into, the present treatise. In

recognition of these valuable contributions to the sacred sciences and literature of theology, pure and applied, Madison (now Colgate) University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

He was chosen pastor of the Fourth Baptist Church, Chicago, in January, 1882. There the larger opportunities for work afforded by a great city were again his, and his vigor of body and mind was more than restored. In his journal he says: "My health at 51 is apparently better than at 21." Certainly he had greater power of endurance. The church building was inadequate in size, comfort and attractiveness to the needs of the congregation, but the people were alert, zealous in good works and devoted to the pastor. Soon after coming to the city, Mrs. Kennard, who had always been interested in practical temperance work, opened a mission on South Halsted street. From this mission reformed men were from time to time brought into the church, and were most kindly received. Some of these men have become active Christian workers, and one is a preacher of the Gospel.

For a number of years Dr. Kennard had felt himself called to preach the Gospel as an evangelist. He had talents peculiarly fitting him for such a high vocation, and he possessed every qualification necessary to success. A born orator, his commanding and dignified presence, his powerful yet exquisitely modulated voice, his abounding sympathy, his intimate knowledge of the way to reach and influence the hearts of his hearers, all combined to make him an almost ideal preacher. To these qualifications he added care-

ful preparation, unremitting study, and the "open mind" which is always ready to learn from others and profit by observation.

He entered upon the work of evangelism in 1887, and for more than seven years deprived himself of home comfort and the happiness of being with his beloved family for the sake of increased usefulness in the Master's cause. During the first winter he made a tour of some of the principal cities of the South—Atlanta, Montgomery, Macon and others—and, at the urgent solicitation of the churches, his labors continued until the heat of midsummer. In the brief period of eighteen days spent in Atlanta the church was greatly revived and strengthened, and more than a hundred were brought to Christ. In Montgomery his work was still more remarkable, as he was able to reach that most difficult of all classes, the young club men. There he received this letter from—

Two young men who have been greatly benefited by Dr. Kennard's preaching, and are praying for all the young men of this city. For God's sake, don't leave this week. Young men are talking and thinking about religion who have before treated it with utter contempt. Yours truly,

TWO HARD CASES.

The people thronged to the meetings, and, as usual, the preacher was unsparing of his own strength. He would hold a service at any hour of the day or night, when he could get an audience. Frequently he records a morning service from eight to nine-thirty, an afternoon service at four, and the regular preaching in the



evening, with an after-meeting lasting until ten o'clock. On Sunday he addressed the Sunday School, then preached, held a meeting for men in the afternoon, and the usual service at night. While intense and enthusiastic always, his preaching was never sensational. As the interest in a church deepened the atmosphere became tense with a spiritual emotion that did not, however, tend toward hysteria.

Here, as in Atlanta, the people vied with each other in expressions of love and appreciation. For, although a Northern man, Dr. Kennard was entirely free from sectional feeling, and the Southerners in turn were surprised and delighted to find him so completely sympathetic and "one of themselves."

In one of his home letters he says: "I wish I had a day or two to rest before beginning in Macon, but my engagements overlap by reason that they are bound I shall stay a few days longer at each place, and so the next has to be postponed, and I hate to ask a further postponement." In Macon he was received with the same cordiality, and his work was blessed in the same abundant measure. Very soon after his arrival an incident occurred which stirred his righteous soul. The Salvation Army had sent some of its officers to the city, but the intelligent people regarded them with suspicion, while the lower classes met them with ridicule and hatred.

Two of these officers, after being grossly insulted by the police and the mob, were arrested and thrown into jail. The next morning a "trial" was given them, and they were put under bonds to keep the

peace. That afternoon Dr. Kennard was to address a meeting in the Academy of Music. He invited one of the officers to occupy the platform with him, and introduced him to the audience as "a fellow laborer who has had the honor of suffering in prison for Christ's sake." Then the young man, an intelligent and modest fellow, related his experience of conversion and offered prayer, the evangelist kneeling beside him on the stage. Afterward Dr. Kennard commended and explained the work of the Salvation Army, and denounced the action of the Mayor, the City Attorney and the Recorder who tried the case. It was a dangerous stand for a stranger and a Northerner to take, and many men would have kept silence, feeling themselves justified in considering the possible injury to their own work. But the warm-hearted Southerners recognized his chivalrous spirit, and responded with cordiality. One of the men denounced asked to be introduced to the evangelist, and accepted the rebuke in a friendly way. The Mayor also announced that he would allow the Salvationists to hold meetings in any of the parks, and even offered to provide seats for their audiences.

It had now grown very warm, and Dr. Kennard greatly desired to attend the Southern Baptist Convention and seek a little respite from his labors. But the pastor of the Macon church was ill and could not preach, the meetings were continuously crowded and many enquirers were coming forward each night. He could not take the responsibility of leaving them. When the meeting was over he went to Albany,

Georgia, and from there to Cuthbert, finishing his work early in June, and having seen as the result of his personal labors more than six hundred souls brought to Christ. A letter from the last-mentioned place to the "Christian Index" voices the general sentiment. After recounting the fruits of the ten days' mission, the writer says:

"The preaching was all done, and the meetings were mainly conducted, by Rev. J. S. Kennard, D.D., of Chicago. Of all the evangelists from abroad whom I have met, he most nearly approaches my notion of a model New Testament evangelist. He may truly be called a powerful preacher, yet he makes no effort at elaborately intellectual discourse. His sermons are remarkable for plainness and simplicity. There is, both in his preaching and his methods of conducting his meetings, an entire absence of eccentricities and effort at mere sensation. With a lively, emotional nature, full of genuine tenderness, and abounding in the sweet arts of loving persuasion, he neither expends himself in awakening excitement in his hearers, nor gives any erroneous or uncertain direction to awaken feeling. With him Christ is emphatically all in all. Believe in, accept, submit to, the loving Saviour, who only can furnish the righteousness demanded by God's holy law, and who 'is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him,' is the burden of his every exhortation, warning and persuasion. The indifferent are most tenderly admonished of impending danger, the anxious are carefully advised to read God's Word inquiringly and upon their knees, while the cross is continually held before their eyes as the sure hope which they may and ought to accept now. None are hurried into the church without careful inquiry into their spiritual

state, and full instructions as to the nature and evidences of regeneration, and concerning the important obligations of a profession of religion.

One important characteristic of Dr. Kennard as an evangelist is his complete recognition of the rights and responsibilities of the local pastor. This characteristic is, unfortunately, not possessed by all who assume the evangelistic office. For the lack of it and on account of a free use of clap-trap, stage tricks and downright humbuggery, many who travel as dispensers of the good news of salvation have incurred the suspicion of ambition, self-seeking, and even of hypocrisy. The sacred office of evangelist has itself been brought into disesteem. Consequently, many careful pastors are slow to admit the professional revivalist into their fields. Yet among the classes of ministers catalogued in the New Testament we find evangelists; and observation shows that there are diversities of gifts to this day in the church. Many men who are of great value as constant instructors and as administrators of church affairs are perceived by others, as well as acknowledged by themselves, to be painfully deficient in the special work of awakening the unconverted and openly gathering souls into the church; while others, whose labors in the latter line are unmistakably and gloriously blessed, would be found equally wanting in some important qualifications for the pastoral office.

The entire community regrets his departure. Having had the privilege of entertaining him during his stay among us, I learned to love him very much. Thanking God for sending him this way, I earnestly commend him to the brethren everywhere.

JOHN T. CLARKE.

For the next six years Dr. Kennard spent almost all his time in active evangelism. In 1888 he went to the

Pacific Coast, and greatly strengthened the churches in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, San Diego and Riverside. Through special services he reached many young men who were not accustomed to attending church, and had the joy of reaping a rich harvest of souls. Great as was his desire to remain with his family, and in a settled pastorate, the call to field service seemed imperative. Again and again he crossed the continent from east to west and traversed the United States from north to south, laboring in cities as far distant as Brooklyn, New York, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Austin, Texas.

He was not content with preaching the Gospel from the pulpit. He carried it from door to door wherever they would hear him. Of this work he wrote :

“ You cannot tell how this individual work, directly to invite the people to Christ, goes to my heart. If I had my way, I would just go on a tramp among the destitute places, as Uncle John Vassar did. It is about as near Christ's method as anything I can think of.”

During his few periods of rest he occupied the time in writing. His home-coming was always looked forward to by himself and his family with impatience. When traveling he wrote almost daily, and never was satisfied if a day passed without receiving a letter from home. His arrival was the signal for general jubilation, and the family would all gather around to hear of his trip and tell of all that had happened while he was gone. He was interested in all the details of his

children's life, anxious about their studies and much concerned for their future. To his sons he was always an ideal man. As each one launched out in his business or profession he felt that his father had the strongest interest in his success and shared his anxieties.

His unaffected, courteous respect for womanhood was ever conspicuous, especially in his relation to his own wife and daughters. To the former he was always a lover, and constantly attributed his success and the happiness of his life to her. To the latter he was a friend and companion, never unapproachable, always sympathetic, while his keen enjoyment of a frolic bridged the difference of years. His childlike trust in people, even after repeated disappointments, occasioned a great deal of playful reproof from his children. He was extravagantly fond of music, and at any hour of the day or evening would suggest that "we have a little singing." When depressed or anxious, he could easily be brought to a cheerful state of mind by an appeal to his sense of the ridiculous, as he was always able to see the amusing side of a situation. His geniality and his readiness to share in the griefs as in the joys of other people won the affection of all with whom he was brought into contact. He asked little for his personal comfort or gratification, and was revered and loved by the poor and lowly. He had a naturally quick temper, but he had too sweet a nature ever to intentionally wound, and if he had spoken rashly in his "haste" was immediate in his repentance and sorrow.

At the earnest solicitation of his family he returned to regular pastoral work in the Belden Avenue Church, Chicago, but after two years resigned because of impaired health; that was his last pastoral charge.

Dr. Kennard and his family then removed to Pittsburg and became identified with the Shady Avenue Church, with whose pastor, Dr. Stanton, he had a most pleasant association. The following winter he went to visit his eldest son, who was living in Florence, Italy, and spent nearly a year in Europe. With the enthusiasm of a boy he absorbed the history and art of that country. He revived his old acquaintance with Savonarola, exploring the convent of San Marco, climbing the many steps to the little cell of the great preacher's prison, and hunting in dusty little shops for portraits of the "Prediche." The beautiful simplicity of St. Francis of Assisi fascinated him and, having made himself familiar with the saint's history, he paid a visit to Assisi to see the many spots made sacred through their relation to the saint. He was not less interested in the history and problems of modern Italy. He was burdened with the sorrows of Armenia, and he was moved to indignation by the "Concert of Europe." With most of us distance from the scene of sorrow seems to have a benumbing effect upon the feelings. But Dr. Kennard was more free from this insensibility than any one whom I have known. His heart was touched by everything that affected his brother man.

His soul instantly responded to the sublime in

nature. Though full of interest in art and architecture, he showed a greater delight in mountain scenery or the majesty of the ocean. As the train slowly climbed the Alps his face was radiant, his lips eloquent with appreciation of glacier and mountain stream, of snow-capped peak and verdant valley.

While in Florence he frequently preached for his friend, Dr. McDougall, of the Scotch Presbyterian church. On his way home he had the pleasure of attending the Keswick meeting in London and of hearing Joseph Parker; but his life-long admiration for Charles Spurgeon would have found his greatest satisfaction in a sight of that rugged face. That, however, he was not to see until they met in the Resurrection.

From this European trip, the only long vacation of his life, Dr. Kennard returned much refreshed, and at the earnest solicitation of the Pittsburg ministers he undertook the rehabilitation of the distracted little church at Connellsville. Through his tact, his courage, his wisdom and his piety he reunited the church and presented it to the denomination again "in its right mind." Of the next two years a part he spent in Pittsburg, and a part in Philadelphia, his native city. His mind was as vigorous as in youth, and in the pulpit he gave not the least indication of failing strength. Many of those who heard him in the Fourth Avenue Church, Pittsburg, a few months before his death, were astonished when they heard that he was gone. But his heart continued to distress him, and an attack of grippe sapped the springs of



vitality. He seemed to have a premonition that the time was short, and strove to complete his literary work and to put his house in order. In the month of September, feeling a great longing for the sea, he planned to go to Atlantic City, though at the moment of departure strangely reluctant to leave home. He stopped in Philadelphia for medical treatment, and there attended the Philadelphia Association, where he spoke and offered a prayer long to be remembered by those who heard it. He also preached in Germantown. His letters from the seashore show the growing weariness, the longing for his loved ones, but the still greater longing for "home." He recalled the forty years of his married life, and his heart went out to the wife of his youth as he blessed God for her love and faithfulness. But the old ocean had lost its charm. The monotonous waves were too boisterous for his tired soul.

Restlessness soon drove him back to Philadelphia to his son's home. The morning after his arrival he drove from Chestnut Hill to Germantown and visited the boarding-school where he spent part of his boyhood. In the evening he was not well. But, nevertheless, he went into the city the next day, "on his way home" stopping to bid farewell to the sister who from early childhood, and through school and college days, had been his confidant and counsellor. At her house he was taken ill, and two days later, October 16, 1899, he "went home." "Absent from the body, he was present with the Lord."

To his family and friends his death came with a

shock of surprise and grief; they were stunned. Letters and telegrams poured in, all with the same note of personal loss. One who had known him but a few months said: "I do not think you will understand me when I say that this is a terrible blow to me, and a deep sorrow. And yet, having had him for a father, you may be able to understand that his tenderness and loveliness of life and character endeared him at once to me, and I thought of him always with more affection than I feel for many people whom I have known much longer and, in a way, much better."

An old friend of his early ministry said: "Dr. Kennard belongs so essentially to youth and active life that any other life than this seems foreign and alien to his nature. I always think of him as in the old Woburn days—so bright, so buoyant, so happy, making sunshine wherever he went, gladdening the hearts of all with whom he came into contact. What a useful life he has had! What a multitude of lives he has touched, and always for good! What a throng of ransomed souls will welcome him to his Heavenly home!"

One who had known him only in business relations said: "It was with sincere regret and sorrow that I read the news of Dr. Kennard's death. My heart went out in sympathy to you and yours. I shall never forget the unequalled and never-failing kindness and courtesy of Dr. Kennard in all social and business relations." One who had never known him at all, except through extracts of his sermons and references to him found in her mother's Journal, wrote

that she had become a Christian through reading that Journal, and so thanked him for her mother's and her own conversion.

The assembly of those who had known him best and desired to render final honors to his mortal remains was most fittingly held in the dear Tenth Church, of so many blessed memories. If they could have come from East and West and North and South, all who had been blessed through his life, all who loved him and loved God and men more because of him, what a company it would have made! With more than four thousand persons who had been led to Christ through his labors, and the uncounted numbers of Christians whose Christian life was richer and fuller by reason of his teaching and example; with the united voice of the churches which he had helped and strengthened, and the churches of which he had been the inspiration and originator; with these and many others to sing songs of rejoicing, what a triumphant welcome awaited the Soldier of the Cross as he entered into rest!

And they who had assembled to do him reverence thought they saw heaven opened. The grief of the sorrowing friends was hushed as they were enfolded by the solemn peace of that hour and the glow of the autumn sunshine which fell upon the scarlet leaves. The simple service was conducted by Philadelphia pastors who had been at one time or another connected with his life and work. Dr. Hoyt, Dr. Peltz, Dr. Gordon, Dr. Rowland and the pastor of the Tenth Church all paid him their loving tribute. One had been with him in

school and college, and his voice quivered as he spoke of the stainless purity and buoyant courage of that young manhood. Another had labored in the same city during his pastoral days, and had felt the inspiration of his intellectual and spiritual vitality. Another had stood by his side in evangelistic work, and had had his heart warmed by the fire of love for perishing souls. Another had seen the last bright glow of that ardent spirit before it had been caught within the veil. No stereotyped words of comfort were needed by those who had been comforted of God. All thought of self was forgotten. The ordinary cares and pleasures of life faded into insignificance. In recalling the life of one so full of the mind of Christ they talked familiarly of heaven. One read the verses which their "Chrysostom" \* had written just before his translation.

The Hon. John Wanamaker came forward and said that he had pushed all business aside that he might come and mourn with those who mourned for his friend. "I have known him many years," he continued, "in early and in later manhood, and never has he been found wanting. To me the word which best expresses his message to us is 'fidelity.'"

One week later they laid him on a sunny slope in West Laurel Hill for his last sleep. Well might he rest, who, like Paul, could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown."

Of Dr. Kennard's literary work mention has been

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\* The name given him by Dr. George C. Lorimer years before.

made several times. That he had marked ability in this direction none of those associated with him doubted. Had his life been less laborious, had he been permitted the periods of comparative leisure which come to many ministers, he would have left behind him very much that was valuable. He was constantly looking forward to the time when he could "settle down and write."

Most of his writings were of the nature of essays, brief and answering to the passing occasions—fugitive pieces. He was a frequent contributor to several religious papers, "The Baptist Weekly," "The Watchman," "The Standard," and for a number of years to "The Homiletic Review." His articles on Buddha, on Savonarola and on St. Francis of Assisi, his three articles on "The Outlook for Protestantism in Italy," and his exquisite "Letters to a Restless Soul" are among the most notable of these. The series on Pulpit Eloquence (which are embodied in this book) brought him scores of letters of appreciation and requests for a more extended review of the subject. While living in Philadelphia he published a "Memorial" of his father, of which a critic said: "Portions of the work are written not only with the strict fidelity to truth which characterizes the whole, but with great beauty and power, especially the graphic pen-portraits of Brother Kennard 'in the Pulpit,' 'in Revivals' and 'in the Conference Room'; while the tender and touching account of his translation is the most affecting I ever read."

In his series of papers called "Clerical Table Talk"

he showed a keen appreciation of the peculiar phases and experiences of a pastor's life, which he illustrates with a wealth of interesting and effective anecdotes. His mind, however, was essentially poetic, and all his writing is livened by imagination. He wrote verse fluently, and some of his hymns have received their appropriate setting in music; but his finest work is done in vivid prose. In his earlier period the excellence is not sustained, though at times rising to heights of eloquence; but later we find a virility, a strength and a certain dignity of movement which makes us regret that he gave not more time to literary studies and to the work of authorship.

But he had a nobler mission than to make literature, and to it he gave himself without reserve. That work was the preaching of the Gospel. To this his highest powers were given, and to it all else was subordinated. Dr. Kennard always prepared his sermons with the greatest care, giving the best fruit of heart, and mind, and spirit to sustain his flock day by day. He preached almost entirely without notes, but did not trust to the inspiration of the moment. His sermon was first thought out, then worked out, until all the parts were firmly compacted, and the whole pulsated with life and power. The profoundest thought was presented in such simple language that "the laboring man, though a fool," might understand and little children feed upon the sincere milk of the word. He never was solicitous about giving to his sermons beauty of form, nor sacrificed a fraction of their dynamic force to literary excellence. Once he

wrote: "To have people say to me, 'I was pleased with your sermon,' or 'That was a fine discourse': if sinners are not converted, it seems all such a sham." Again: "I have a strong conviction of the supreme value of spiritual power and a desire for it, I think, more entire than my desire for any other gift or attainment."

Yet the thoughts springing from so rich a soil could not but clothe themselves with forms of beauty, and his poetic soul found illustrations of the truth in a thousand sparkling images. He was a natural critic, with a mind keenly analytical in argument and a ready wit with which to defend himself in repartee; yet he never indulged in satire. He was able to contend with a theological adversary without losing his own temper or wounding his opponent's feelings. At one time he took occasion to answer some arguments in a sermon on Evolution by Henry Ward Beecher, and received from him a cordial letter, from which the following extract is taken:\*

"I have read your reported sermon, delivered yesterday, with great interest. I have to thank you for your kindness of feeling manifested and the absence of that rigor of orthodoxy which seems to be but a covert form of saying 'damn you.' But I am not saying this as an expression of surprise. One would have expected this excellent spirit in you. But the point of my gratification is that the time has come for an honest discussion of the views of the old and new

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\* Following this memoir the letter is given in full as presenting most clearly and compactly Mr. Beecher's attitude toward "The New Theology."

theology. If conducted in a Christian spirit, good cannot but come of it. It is hardly to be expected that either side will have a whole victory. But another generation will find itself upon a higher level."

Generous as was Dr. Kennard to those who honestly differed from him, he had no patience with a scoffer or a wilfully blinded skeptic. One of his latest articles was upon "The Arrogance and Complacency of Modern Unbelief." That article was in type when his obituary notice was received, and appeared at the same time. Earnestly maintaining the divine mission of the preacher, he denied the supremacy of the press. Personal force can be best conveyed through personal presence; even "The Word" of God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Therefore he realized the tremendous importance of laying under tribute every faculty of mind and body, of discovering each element of power and reinforcing all natural ability by thorough training and education. And upon these best efforts of which a man is capable he invoked the blessing of the Holy Spirit in dealing with that mysterious, elusive, wonderful and precious thing, a human soul.



LETTER FROM HENRY WARD BEECHER TO  
DR. KENNARD.

CHICAGO, July 23, '83.  
Grand Pacific Hotel.

REV. DR. J. SPENCER KENNARD :

DEAR SIR.—I have read your reported sermon, delivered yesterday, with great interest. I have to thank you for your kindness of feeling manifested and the absence of that rigor of Orthodoxy, which seems to be but a covert form of saying "damu you." But I am not saying this as an expression of surprise. One would have expected this excellent spirit in *you*. But the point of my gratification is, that the time has come for an honest discussion of the views of the Old and the New Theology. If conducted in Christian spirit, good cannot but come out of it. It is hardly to be expected that either side will have a whole victory. But another generation will find itself upon a higher level. Allow me to say of my own position: that I know that I am orthodox and evangelical as to the *facts* and *substance* of the Christian Religion; but, equally well, I know that I am not orthodox as to the philosophy which has hitherto been applied to those facts. I am a cordial *Christian Evolutionist*. I do not agree, by any means, with all of Spencer—his agnosticism—nor all of Huxley, Tyndal, and their school. They are agnostic. I am not—emphatically. But I am an *evolutionist*, and that strikes at the root of all mediæval and orthodox modern theology—the fall of Man in Adam, the inheritance by his posterity of his guilt, and, in consequence, any such view of Atonement as has been constructed to merit this fabulous disaster. Men have not fallen as a race. Men have come up. No great disaster met the race at the start. The Creative decree of God was fulfilled. Any theory of Atonement must be one which shall meet the fact that man was created at the lowest point, and, as I believe, is, as to his *physical* being, evolved from the animal race below him, but, as to his moral and spiritual nature, is a son of God, a new element having come in, in the great movement of Evolution, at the point of man's appearance.

Man is universally sinful—not by nature, but by a voluntary violation of known laws. In other words, the animal passions of man have proved to be too strong for his moral and spiritual nature. Paul's double man, *the old man* and *the new man*, is a grand exposition of the doctrine of sin—especially in seventh Romans. But, enough of this. I am not in my preaching

attacking Orthodoxy. I belong to this wing of the Christian Army. But I cannot get my own views out, except by a comparison of them to the disadvantage of the standard views. If to any I seem to bring wit and humor to an irreverent use, I can only say, I do it because I cannot help it. So things come to me, so I must express them—but not as a sneer, or scoff—though often with impetuous feeling, and with open mirth.

My life is drawing to an end. A few more working years only have I left. No one can express the earnestness which I feel that, in the advance of science, which will inevitably sweep away much rubbish from the beliefs of men, a place may be found for a higher spirituality—for a belief that shall have its roots in science, and its top in the sunlight of faith and love. For that I am working and shall work as long as I work at all.

The discussion has begun. God is in it. It must go on. It is one of those great movements which come when God would lift men to a higher level. The root of the whole matter with me is, in a word, this :

Which is the central element of Moral Government, *Love* or *Hatred*?

I say Hatred, for in human hands that is what Justice has largely amounted to. I hold that they are not coequal. True Justice, in its primitive form, is simply pain—and this suffering is auxiliary, pedagogic—the schoolmaster until men are enough developed to *work by Love*. Love is not auxiliary. It is the one undivided force of Moral Government, to which God is bringing this Universe. Forgive my length. I should wish to live in the affection and confidence of my brethren in the Christian Ministry. But I cannot, for the sake of earning it, yield one jot or tittle of loyalty to that Kingdom of Love which is coming, and of which I am but as one crying in the wilderness “prepare ye the way of the Lord.”

I am affectionately yours,

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

A PULPIT OF POWER THE NEED  
OF THE TIMES



## CHAPTER I

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### A PULPIT OF POWER THE NEED OF THE TIMES

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OF the Italian Renaissance, no figure, not even that of Lorenzo the Magnificent, looms up so commandingly as that of Savonarola, the preaching friar. He stands there in the pulpit of the vast Cathedral of Florence, a city brilliant with art and luxury, and full of social corruption, gorgeous religion and graceless living. He had been summoned there by the entreaties of the despairing Signoria and people, from the seclusion of his cell into which his disgust at the seeming failure of his gospel of reform had driven him. He came forth to preach to that vast multitude of starving, hopeless Florentines, besieged at once by powerful armies, pestilence and famine, suffering and desperation marking every face. To that miserable throng, lately his enemies, Savonarola spoke as an ambassador of God; he won them to penitence, cheered them with promises of divine mercy, and lo! while leading them in a procession of tearful humiliation through the streets, a messenger galloped into the midst proclaiming that "salvation had come!" Friendly ships, driven by a tempest which scattered the blockading fleet, had brought food and reinforcements. The surging mul-

titudes cried out: "The friar's preaching has saved us once more!" Then followed those wonderful years in which the preacher successfully disputed with the Medicean despot the moral dominion of Florence; Lorenzo clothed in luxurious unrighteousness—Savonarola armed with the scepter of truth and flaming zeal for God's honor and man's salvation. And when we see him at last summoned to Lorenzo's dying bed and ministering there in the spirit of Elijah, we say: "There is a man of power—a man for the times!" He transformed Florence, at least for the time; literally enthroned Christ as King in Florence, and inscribed his title, "King of kings and Lord of lords" over the door of the Palazzo Vecchio, where it still remains, a testimony of what once was done by a Pulpit of Power.

Four centuries have passed since then, but human nature has not changed. Freedom, law, intelligence have wrought vast revolutions in society such as in that day were only the dream of poets, and this morn of the Twentieth Century is pregnant with a new history, with mightier issues and higher political and social ethics than any that has preceded it, but no age more imperatively needed a Pulpit of Power—a Prophet voice proclaiming Him who, for man and the nation and the age, is "The Way, the Truth and the Life." Are there not, now, social despotisms that need dethroning, a social life that needs purifying, a church that needs a Renaissance of primitive faith and sacrifice, revolutionary forces that need a controlling hand no less than Divine? Are the School, the Press

and the State proving their ability to deal with these perilous times and these transcendent issues? On the 400th anniversary of his martyrdom, Florence celebrated, with solemn pomp and festival of joy, the memory of Savonarola. Flowers strewed the place where the flames had swathed his dead body. From a stage where his gallows had stood in the Piazza Signoria eloquent lips eulogized him as preacher and patriot for all time. And the hope of Italy, the hope of America, the hope of humanity, to-day, is *such a ministry of heroic daring and spiritual power*.

Twenty years ago a smart writer in the *London Times* asked, "Why this preaching? Why does this man talk to us? Why not be content to worship only when we go to church?" About the same time, in a more serious vein, the *Edinburgh Review* said, "Divinity fills up her weekly hour by the grave and gentle excitement of an orthodox discourse, or by toiling through her narrow round of systematic dogmas, or by creeping along some low level of school-boy morality, or by addressing the initiated in mystic phraseology; but she has ceased to employ lips such as those of Chrysostom or Bourdaloue." And these utterances have had many an echo since, from sources of more or less importance. An English Church clergyman, a few years since, referring apparently to his own National Church, elaborately argued "The Failure of the Pulpit," and a New England religious periodical invited a symposium on the solemn problem, "Shall we go on preaching?" These voices, which are quite representative of a class not altogether frivolous, can-

not be silenced by indifference or apology. A radical and fearless reconsideration of the position and function of the preacher in this Twentieth Century—which is neither the apostolic nor the mediæval—is demanded. It need not be feared but that it will appear, whether from a religious or philosophical, a socialistic or humanitarian, a patriotic or a practical, an ethical or an evangelical point of view, that the pulpit is neither obsolete nor obsolescent. The preacher is, and should continue to be, a paramount power in human society.

The pulpit no longer rules as it did when, allied with the State, it was the chief fountain of learning and authority ; when the preacher alone raised questions, ethical and social, and answered them, with none to dispute his verdict ; when the seminary where the minister was educated was the mystic treasury of most of the learning, and his library contained the rest.

To-day a continuous stream of information and discussion of all subjects, and in popular form, rolls through the land and finds its way to every door. The most vital questions affecting human life and destiny are affluently treated, not only in books, but upon every platform, in religious and in secular newspapers, side by side with politics and trade. Everybody knows everything now-a-days, or thinks he does, and the awe which the pulpit once inspired has disappeared. In saying, however, that the power of the pulpit *as an institution* has declined, we would by no means concede that the power of the *preacher* has gone with



it. On the contrary, as the peculiar awe which invested the office has lessened, the greater is the demand that the man himself, as a living force among men and called to a supreme function, should heroically attain and maintain a personal power unaided by the buttressing of the State or the mystic authority of the Church.

The highest and most enduring elements of power, remain the same in all the mutations of the ages, and owe little to environment. They are at their best when called to conquer without the alliance of favoring conditions. If illustrations of this were needed, the career of that man who, in our generation, has divided with the world's greatest statesmen and princes the interested gaze of his cotemporaries—Charles Haddon Spurgeon—would be sufficient. Nay, the beneficent and acknowledged forcefulness of a Moody among the masses and a Phillips Brooks or a Maclaren among the cultured, would prove that this strenuous, conceited and materialistic age, not less than any former one, confesses the preacher's power. I go further ; I affirm that it is historically and rationally demonstrable that times of enlightenment and progress, like these, are more favorable to the preacher's power, more hospitable to it, more fruitful of the best results than any since the dawn of Christianity. In fact the preacher's power is as much nobler and more enduring than that of the Savonarolas or the John Knoxes of a former day, as that of the electrician, the biologist and the statesman of these times is nobler than that of the alchemist, the thaumaturgist and the

feudal lord of an age of ignorance and superstition. "Is he a physician of souls? He can better operate on wakeful than on torpid patients. Is he an advocate? He can better plead before an educated jury than a clownish one. If his appeal is to men's will, it is, at least to one unfettered by fear; if to the conscience, it is to one unclouded by superstition; if to the heart, it is to one never aching with unrest or hungry for reality and love."

The philosopher and poet declare that the times are barren of enthusiasm and heroism; and that a frivolous materialism in its dance of death is trampling out the torch of the soul. There is some truth and much folly in this despondent view of things. It springs from a shallow skepticism which looks only at the worst features of an age whose field of Christian activities shows divinest enthusiasm and heroism for humanity. But whatever truth there be in the pessimist's view of the times, it is all but a challenge to the best exercise of the preacher's power.

If never before were men so utterly "without God and without hope;" if, according to the poets of despair, materialistic curiosity has "ripped, one by one, the world's pretty dolls and scattered the sawdust along its starless path," then it is surely the fullness of time for the true Prometheus to appear again, if he but carry in his reed the celestial fire; it is time for the herald who has a real message of life and immortality, who has seen God face to face and gotten his message from Him, to lift up his voice like a trumpet.

In a word, if a man know how to preach the everlast-

ing gospel, if he be himself a living incarnation of its perennial freshness and force, its life and peace and joy, if he be a voice that can speak, not only the seminary lore, but the Saviour's love, then there never was a time when he could have a more open and inviting field, or a more grateful welcome among thronging men, or a fairer hope of success in the highest sense. If there is weakness in the pulpit in our day, it is not the fault of the "spirit of the age." The preachers of the apostolic era faced such pharisaic pride, such religious obstinacy, such depravity and frivolity, such fortified selfishness as is not equalled in our age; but they were not dismayed—by the power of their words they *conquered*. If the pulpit to-day is lacking in power, the sin lies at its own door and cannot be shifted to the shoulders of society. The people, the press, public opinion in whatever way expressed, so far from antagonizing, would eagerly welcome a pulpit of greater power, in fact are insisting upon it. The living preacher never had so many aids and openings; men's hearts and homes and lives were never more hospitable to his message, and all the more as he approaches them simply as a man sent from God with a practical hope and help upon his lips.

In saying this I would not ignore those palpable facts which tend to *repress* pulpit power. One of these is found in the very process of ordinary theological training in our seminaries. In spite of the elevation of religious scholarship, the development of pulpit power shows in our graduates little advance. The seclusion of the student, for the six or eight years of

his classical and seminary course, from contact with the real life of the toiling world to which he is at length to minister, and his constant dealing with abstract thought, and breathing a scholarly atmosphere, is not conducive to that "love of the people" which the Abbé Mullois tells us is the first qualification, or that "sympathy with their wants" which Vinet makes the foundation of the preacher's efficiency. His preaching is apt to be scholarly, theological, apologetic, classical, dogmatic, correct — everything but simple, natural, vital, enthusiastic, familiar, vehement, or, in other words, powerful.

Nor can we ignore the temper and trend of the age, its crowding of material activities and lack of moral earnestness, its abundant inventions, sciences, discoveries, enterprises, and its few spiritual lives; everything superficial—except human discontent, and that very deep, and not without volcanic mutterings. It is an era of fads, of laughter at everything, from Heaven's law and love to Hell's penalties. Life seems stripped of solemnity and sublimity, men's brains and hearts becoming taverns for the revels of *le jeune siècle* novelties rather than the home of truth and happiness. There is a strong temptation, with such surroundings, to accommodate our teaching to the mood of the people; to make the Word only scintillate when it should shine and burn; to consult people's whims rather than their wants, to be popular rather than powerful, and to avoid sinking into insignificance, not by the strength with which we breast the tide, but by the lightness with which we float on the current. The very famili-

arity of the preacher's themes may put his soul to sleep, while the panorama of the gay world may distract him, like the rest, from the pulpit's chief work. Is it any wonder if power wanes, and the preacher almost loses enthusiasm for humanity, and with scarcely self-reproach sees the vanishing of his early ideal?

It is against such demoralizing and enfeebling influences he is boldly to strive; his nobility obliges him to this; his responsibility is imperative. The objects which the preacher seeks to attain remain as unutterably and inconceivably great as ever. God, eternity, the soul, all that concern man's duty here and his destiny hereafter—these are his themes, and are as unfading as the blue of heaven, as inexhaustible as the sorrows and joys of humanity. What power ought that man to have who stands before an audience on whom he looks as immortal souls for whom he must give account, unto whom those men look with intelligent reverence, predisposed to be influenced for good, where prayer lends its inspiration and music its wings to the soul! He stands in a relation the most solemn of all this side the judgment; he speaks, as Heaven's ambassador, to the conscience, the heart, the life, of every one beneath his gaze; he pours the affluence of God's love, and light, and life, over dark and tempted and struggling and weary natures, probes the depth of human guilt, unveils the glories of salvation, and performs his work environed consciously by the powers of the world to come! What a boundless wealth of materials he has out of which to

weave the net in whose meshes the "fisher of men" is to catch souls! The whole field of man's experience in history, the whole field of current life in the world, the realms of nature, science and art, he may lay under contribution to illustrate and enforce the teachings of God's Word, which in themselves abound as much in variety as they do in sublimity. His divine call involves his right to summon all the powers of Heaven and earth as allies, but *his own personal power* is, under the Divine Spirit, the chief element of success.

What Père Lacordaire, in his illustrious defence, said of Genius may, with modification, be said of the power and inspiration the preacher needs. "Genius," said he, "is formed by two things—God and a dun-geon." If genius may be defined as energy exalted by inspiration, then we may say that the power by which we are to win and constrain the world to prostrate itself before the Cross is the outgrowth of three things—God and Solitude, and the Love of Souls. Panoplied in the learning of the schools and the skill of culture, we stand in the very focus of illumination and illustration. On all the subjects we are called to teach, and all the work we are called to do, we have books, periodicals, conventions, symposia, examples—what do we not have to make us a ministry of power? Only these we seem not to have, at least in impressive evidence—God, and Solitude, and the Sacrificial Love of Souls. We are responsible for the men of our generation; Heaven is expectant of their conversion; their blood will God require at our hands! Science

has not convinced us that they are the children of apes; neither are they the children of the Devil. Many of them are his bondservants, but they have wants, hungerings, fears, hopes that are deep, surgent and dominating as instincts, and these make them susceptible to God when he is rightly presented. But when is he so presented?

We offer to these lost brethren, who with a blind and dumb and aching instinct feel after Him if so be they may find Him; needing Him though they shun Him—we may offer to these bewildered men an orthodox God, a theological God, a historical God, a transcendental God, nay, even a rational and scientific God, and it may still be a *dead* God that we offer. We may paint him as liberal and complaisant as the Western Jupiter, or as dogmatic and cruel as the Eastern Moloch, and, failing to attract by the one or to terrify by the other, we will still have to cry to the heedless and far-off throngs, “We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.” Even Jesus Christ Himself, who appropriated these words to His own ill-success, did not get Himself believed and beloved while simply in the body, though He was the fullness of the Godhead incarnate. Crowned with a constellation of miracles and speaking as never man spake, He preached of God, yet ended His ministry with the bitter cry, “How oft would I have gathered you—but ye would not.” A few days after and those same Jewish peasants filled the air with their penitential cries, and by thousands surrendered to God. Behold the reason!

God must be seen upon a Cross ere men will be attracted to Him. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me"—and He will not thus be seen except as He is made to *live* while He dies in the eyes of all the people.

The world will not be drawn to a crucifix, but it may be drawn to a crucifixion, and its vital presentation in the burning words of a living ministry has never failed to command and convert a multitude of men. We must *see* Christ ere we can make others see Him. We are to inspire our souls with the silent, adoring, sympathetic contemplation of the Christ whom we are to preach, transfigured by the Holy Ghost, and blending His image with all our thoughts and feelings. His cross must be erected in the sanctuary of our hearts ere we can convince men of its reality. We can preach *about* Christ if we have some fine words in a paper book on the pulpit, but we can *preach Christ* only when He dwells in us as a living and luminous presence, possessing, engrossing, constraining by His ineffable beauty, and sorrow, and love, all our powers into the expression by which we offer Him to men. Even in our highest efficiency we are compelled to utter the sigh of Lacordaire to his friend Montalembert, when the eloquent priest was restoring to faith thousands of the young men of Paris by his wonderful preaching in Notre Dame, "How powerless is man for his fellow-man! Of all his miseries, this is the greatest!" We are doomed to see the stream of humanity rush past us, in its pride and passion, its gaiety and sadness, without hope and



without God ; and even while we gaze a multitude have vanished ! But we need not stand with paralyzed faith and fettered energies. Let the scene drive us to our knees and keep us there till we be endued with power from on high. We must command time, much time for solitude, contemplation of Christ and prayer. It is always from lonely heights of meditation men have come down to move the world. The human soul that dreams of spiritual power and revelation betakes itself naturally to solitude. Not only the prophets of Israel, saints of the Thebaid and founders of Religion in the mystic East have done so ; even the Greek Meneander recognized, though he sneered at, the phenomenon : "The desert, they say, is the place for discoveries." The Forerunner was there prepared for his heraldship and the Son of Man for his gospel and His Cross. The singer of the "Divina Commedia" betook himself to the lonely convent of Fonte Avellana and meditated there the cantos of his "Purgatorio," and St. Francis chastened and replenished his soul for his mission of sacrificial love in the caves and forests of Umbria. We must dwell more with God and gain power with *Him* if we would have "power with men."

It was by such solitary communion with God and the study of the Bible that Savonarola acquired that massive personal power, that energy of soul, that imperial will force by which, from his pulpit in the Duomo, he ruled Florence. He had little rhetorical culture, a bad voice, and, at first, indistinct expression ; but he was at home with his Bible and his God ;

he loved his people, he believed in his divine mission. One of his biographers, Burlamecchi, says: "The effect of his preaching, both on his hearers and himself, was wonderful. He soared into ecstasy and electrified men as with sudden shocks. Once, when he preached on the Deluge, as he ascended the pulpit, the people saw he was laboring under the strongest emotion. Gazing across them, he gave out the text, 'Behold I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth!' The words and tone struck terror into every heart." Pico della Mirandola, who was present, relates that a shudder ran through his whole frame and his hair seemed to stand on end; and Savonarola declares that he himself was not less moved than his hearers. Thus Savonarola demonstrates that *soul-power* counts for more than any other constituent element in eloquence. It was not his learning nor his logic, but *the eager embrace of his soul and the vehement pressure of his will upon the hearts* of the rapt audience that conquered and led them in the way of his divinely inspired purpose.

If the study of this little book shall shed any light upon this element of pulpit preparation and inspire any of my brethren with a determination to develop and employ this latent Psychic force, something will have been done for the furtherance of the Gospel after the author has been forgotten.

## PSYCHIC POWER IN PREACHING



## CHAPTER II

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### PSYCHIC POWER IN PREACHING

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WHAT depths of mystery and miracle dwell in that word "Power." Who can define it? Who tell us where its seat or fountain is? Who measure its dimensions or paint its features or analyze its substance? It dwells in the flashing lightning and falling dew, in imponderable air and moving glacier, in growing seed that lifts the rock and electric current that drives the train. It swings the planets in their cycles and wings a whisper around the globe. Physical power is a mystery, but Psychical power works greater miracles. A sentiment upheaves a nation; a passion overturns an empire. Soul-power! Who can sing its epic? What science determine its measure or method? In what ultimate brain-cell or blood-corpuscle does it reside? "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." And man, whom He has created in His own image, humbly shares in this divine endowment.

Luther said, "He that can speak forcefully to men is a man." That solitary monk who shook the world ought to know. Doubtless he meant by "a man" not simply a scholar, nor a homilist, nor a theologian, nor a rhetorician, but, in the full, radical and robust sense of the word—a man.

Much of the ineffective preaching that courts drowsy ears or falls upon the pleased inertness of a congregation is lacking in none of the features usually assigned in the schools to the model sermon. There is truth well and definitely expressed, logically compact, adequately illustrated and rightly applied. Yet the people are listless. The defect in many instances is in the want of the man behind the sermon to give it propulsion or the man in the sermon to give it human vitality and a grappling, victorious energy. Preaching is divine truth plus a man. For half a century the science of preaching has accumulated a large and opulent literature. To the garnered wisdom of earlier times it has added standard works, periodicals, reviews, text-books and lectureships. Yet, it has not kept pace with other sciences or with the periodical press, much less with the higher secular literature, in its grasp of public attention and control of public opinion.

It is a hopeful sign that the pulpit of to-day is less ruled by a bigoted fear of new ideas and methods than ever before, and more prompt to recognize and utilize whatever discoveries or results real science may offer to its hand.

It is profoundly significant to note the increasing interest of our ministry in the New Psychology. Emerging from the nebulous condition in which empiricism and superstition rule, psychic phenomena and laws are assuming the features and authority of a science, and surely in no field may they more properly have influence than in the development of the preacher's power.

The doctrine of the storage, conservation and transmutation of energy, in the physical realm, is one of profound interest and importance. It has furnished a new working hypothesis and larger views of God and man. But there is an energy invisible but of infinite potency in the psychical realm, whose operations are none the less real, and whose study is of paramount importance and fraught with stupendous results.

As the sources and conditions of psychic energy are being uncovered, they are sure to be brought more and more within the scope of the preacher's studies. The relation between psychological facts and forces and the science of preaching is so intimate and vital that their consideration cannot be neglected without irreparable loss, both in pastoral and pulpit work. These facts and forces are, by the scientific men of our time, carefully separated from whatever is visionary, fraudulent and empirical, and are accessible to fruitful investigation. The occult power which produces the phenomena grouped under the designations of hypnotism, mesmerism, animal-magnetism, clairvoyance and telepathy is not a modern discovery. Traces of its empirical handling may be found in the East many centuries ago. The "seer" is as old as human history; the "magician" has always been a recognized fact. His persistence and success are by no means to be accounted for on the theory of skilful deception practiced on the credulous, the superstitious and the weak, or to physical laws unknown to the mass of men. There may be—and the experiments of Mr.

Tesla and his co-workers point that way—physical media and physical laws yet to be revealed, explaining certain marvelous discoveries in the physical realm of electrical action ; so in the psychical realm there is a power, a medium and a law, whose phenomena are abundant, but whose form and content are yet to be searched out. It is claimed by skeptics that the investigation of these psychical phenomena will be fatal to the teachings of Christianity ; but as other developments of real science, such as astronomy, geology, biology and antiquarian discovery have, in turn, been announced as oracles of doom to the Bible, and as each has, in due time, blest what it was expected to curse, so will the “ New Psychology ” and the “ Society for Psychical Research ” and all conscientious Science prove to be the handmaid of the pulpit. The truth has nothing to fear from the truth.

Experiments, conducted for the last quarter century by many eminent scientists, prove the marvelous power which one soul may exercise over another, producing not merely physical movements but mental processes and moral emotions in the subject. “ If it be true,” a distinguished psychologist has said, “ that one mind can influence another and convey thoughts and ideas to it without using the ordinary avenues of the senses, such a fact is far more scientifically extraordinary than would be the destruction of this globe by another heavenly body.” Nevertheless, there is abundant and indisputable *evidence of the fact* produced by the several “ Societies for Psychical Research,” as well as other reliable testimony. If mind can thus



influence mind independently of the senses (just as we know electrical transmission can be made independently of the wire) certainly when we can call in the vehicular aid of sight and hearing, with their boundless resources, the pulpit should receive a new impetus in the evolution of power. This evolution should be in two directions—the increase of psychic force and the growth of spiritual power; and these two are intimately related.

By the preacher's Psychic Force I mean his personal force as distinguished from the force of his logic, his rhetoric or of the truth itself, on the one hand, and from the supernatural power of the Divine Spirit on the other. It is the *energy of the preacher's soul in contact with that of the hearer*. Says H. W. Beecher: "The living force of the living soul upon living souls for the sake of their transformation is the fundamental idea of preaching."

Psychic force is an active element in all effective pulpit work. If I were to group the three component factors in an *effective* sermon, they would be: 1. Adequate presentation of the truth. 2. Psychic Force. 3. Divine Influence; and that would be the ascending order of their relative importance. This Psychic force has its own function and action, as real as electricity in nature. Electricity may impel the machinery or light the town, but it cannot shape a flower nor make the deaf to hear. So psychic force does not reveal the truth nor renew the heart; its function is to quicken the soul's pulse, sway the will, awake to action. What it is in its essence we are unable in our present con-

dition of knowledge to state—just as we are unable to determine the genesis and content of electricity. Perhaps if traced each to its last retreat we should find they had a common birth. The worshipers of light in all ages have been the loftiest thinkers and the purest liver. He who said, “I am this world’s Light,” at once announced himself the “desire of all nations.” But it is only of late that light is found to be a form of force, and that it is not a simple element but exceedingly complex. It is not incredible that one or more of its forms and ingredients may reside, with concentrated intensity, in those natures we call “magnetic,” because they have a mysterious superiority over other natures in the way of insight and dynamic energy—are able to analyze, to attract, to excite and subdue others at will.

A man may possess a sound mind, be a good soul, in both senses, be of a loving spirit and yet possess little will power. He may be poured into any mould and keep shape in none. On the other hand, a man may have but moderate abilities and yet attain great success because he possesses a forceful will. It is the will that enables a man to project his intellectual processes into the minds of others. A remarkable instance of will power in conquering a hearing and establishing a permanent control over the minds of men is furnished by Benjamin Disraeli in the English House of Commons. An alien, handicapped by his early avocations, at first the House refused to listen to him. “You *shall* hear me!” he cried. And irresistibly he rose step by step till he not only swayed the House but the

nation as prime-minister, with a solid array of the best bred Norman-descended patricians of England at his back yielding ready obedience to his wishes.

Examples of this masterfulness may be profitably studied in the lives of such characters as William the Silent, Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon I., Warren Hastings, Bismarck ; still better in John Knox, Luther, Savonarola, Dr. Livingstone and "Chinese Gordon." George Dawson, that English reformer and preacher, whose varied eloquence so powerfully moved all classes of minds, used to say, "Whenever I address men I determine that they *shall listen.*" And they did, with rapt attention to the end. William Hazlitt remarks that "The orator is only concerned to give a tone of masculine firmness to the will, to brace the sinews of the mind. The speaker must be confident, inflexible, uncontrollable, overcoming all opposition by his ardor and impetuosity. We command others by power, by passion, by will."

But while the amount of this power differs in different men, and is variable in the same man, probably none are destitute of it by nature. There are latent and occult energies in all our souls that only need the excitation of an earnest purpose to impel men toward God and the right, and intimate touch with the source of all light and power in order to become, like His own, effluent, radiating and fructifying. By habitual inaction or excess such power may become torpid or enfeebled, and by normal exercise and education may be developed. A man whose nature is contributive and transmissive of moral and emotive life expends power,

in a conscious or unconscious way unknown to ordinary mortals. Contact with men taps his psychic reservoir just as the ripe olive drips at a little pressure, or the frankincense becomes odoriferous at the touch of fire. "There are men," says Professor E. P. Thwing, "who would exhale a spicy, pungent life, if they knew how to loosen and liberate the contents of their being. But all their life they are under some physical or social or moral restraint. Of course this donative, communicative nature is partly a gift, but it is vastly more—a growth. Thomas Aquinas's '*Baptisma sanguinis, fluminis, flaminis*' will surely melt these gelid and fire these fearful souls. They can develop a nature more porous and distributive if they would use proper means. A man who is in possession of that subtle something which enthralls men knows that he can emit or retain it. He can husband those psychic forces which are peculiarly his own, till he finds himself in conjunction with absorbent, responsive souls. Then he lifts the sluice-gates of his affluent and exuberant being and enriches them with its treasured contents."

But many a preacher, who is the life of a company of congenial friends, whose conversation at home or whose after-dinner speech is contagious wit and vital thought itself, finds himself in the pulpit constricted in soul and speech. He is no longer a man, but *presto!* has become a minister, a religious pedagogue, a dignitary, forsooth, or some other sort of unhuman buckram, careful to maintain the clerical proprieties and not to diminish the proper distance between the "pulpit" and the "pews." Confidence, sympathy,

spontaneity, reciprocity are all wanting, and this not with "malice aforethought," but through a false ideal, or nervous tension, or want of daily heart-touch with his people, or some other cause quite remediable, if he *wills* to be his real self and all there is of him offered and sacrificed for the people.

It is an indisputable fact that the building of the sermon in the study, its elaboration as a literary achievement occupies almost the whole horizon of the preacher's outlook in reference to his pulpit. In addition the devout man includes a fervent invocation of the Holy Spirit; but all the time he ignores the value and necessity of his own human spirit when in vigorous action, rallying and compelling the thoughts which his pen has armed with words, to move—to march—to charge—to fight, hand-to-hand, and to conquer.

In a large view, and yet a scientific one, it may be said that Conception, Imagination, Moral Emotion, Enthusiasm and Will, all enter into combination in Psychic Force.

Even in the planning and elaboration of the sermon we recognize the need of this force; when we feel the varying degrees of ability to grapple with the text and compel it to yield the treasure that we know it hides, the ability to "throw one's self into" the work in hand, as we often express it. At times a vital thrill pours itself from brain to pen, and the sermon is born a living and a holy thing, while at others it seems but a well-constructed and decorated dummy, with eyes that see not and a tongue that speaks not and hands that hold not forth the living bread.

But it is especially in the pulpit, confronting the people, in the critical hour of all the week for them and for him—the expectant hundreds looking into his face and ready to be moved, swayed and ruled by his message—that the need of psychic energy appears most imperative—that *personal force*, in a word, which quickens attention, kindles imagination, awakens affection, vitalizes the will and moves all in the direction of our purpose. The sermon is not an end in itself; it may not be even a power in itself; more strictly it is a *vehicle* of power, an instrument through which psychic force may produce certain intellectual and moral changes. Above all, the psychic energy of the preacher is the instrument by which the Spirit of God produces supernatural and eternal results. What Leibnitz says is in a higher sense true of the Divine Spirit: “*Un seul esprit, qui est universel et qui anime tout l’univers, comme un même souffle de vent fait sonner différemment divers tuyaux d’orgue.*” So the divine breath, animating all the universe of souls, will produce very different notes from organ pipes dust-choked and defective from what it would were every part of the human mechanism clean, compact, well-voiced and in perfect diapason. Pascal says man is “a thinking reed”—by which I suppose he means a *musical* “reed;”—but a trumpet-blast cannot be produced upon a flute, much less can the orchestral power of the organ come from the shepherd’s “wheaten pipe.” Hence psychophysical development is one of the most important parts of the preacher’s education. As a sword wielded by a nerveless arm will fail of execution, no matter

how fine its temper or how keen its edge, even so a sermon will produce but a still-born assent or languid indifference if it is not energized by vigorous psychical conditions in the man who utters it. The arrow of truth may be a polished shaft, flashing and straight as a ray of light, the bow may be an ideal of elastic strength, but for accuracy of aim and carrying power, all depends on the nerve-force of the archer, a nerve-force that has been healthfully generated, and, working through a thousand delicate ramifications, gives clearness to the eye, tensile grip to the fingers and steady contractile movement to every muscle.

There is a tremendous electric potency stored in the human soul when kept in harmony with God's will and made the channel of His vital purpose. And such a soul, guided by clear intellectual perceptions of the truth and moved by a powerful emotion, constitutes a psychic power which no mere marshaling of logic or rhetorical art can produce. It is *life*, that "fiery particle," τὸ δεινὸν as Dr. Brown would say. Its quantity and quality will largely vary according to the constitution and temperament of each man. The nervous, sanguine temperament, redundant in electrical vigor, will possess more of it than the phlegmatic nature. There are men susceptible and receptive who are almost destitute of the power to impart force. It may be said in general that a vigorous mind in a vigorous body furnishes a basis of psychic force. The brain must be healthy, nerves well strung and heart strong. From this substructure must spring the glow of enthusiasm, the outflow of sympathy, the reso-

luteness of conviction and the *will to conquer*. As if the cells of an electric battery each contained a different acid, and wires from each combined to furnish the electric current, so each of the reservoirs of power supplies its part in generating psychic force in its higher forms.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has said : "The orator—I do not mean the poor slave of a manuscript, who takes his thought chilled and stiffened from its mould,—impassioned speaker who pours it forth corruscating from the furnace—the orator only becomes our master at the moment when he is himself captured, taken possession of by a sudden rush of fresh inspiration. How well we know the flash of the eye, the thrill of the voice, which are the signature and symbol of nascent thought—thought just entering into consciousness, in which condition, as in the case of the chemist's elements, it has a combining force at other times wholly unknown!"

The experience of such a hearer, swept along by the torrent of the speaker's fervor, is familiar, but I think Dr. Holmes is mistaken in the idea that this is the only or supreme conquest of the hearer. Equally sure and more enduring in results is that deliberate girding of the soul to a life grapple with an audience by a calm, steadfast pressure of the heart and will to bring their minds and affections into subjection and response.

When Ole Bull, the fascinating violinist of world-wide fame, on one occasion had melted a great audience to tears, he said, speaking of it to a friend : "Do you



know that I do not produce these effects by the mere sound of my violin? I produce them by a direct action of my *mind* upon the audience. I employ the tones of the instrument simply for the purpose of opening the channels through which I, myself, act upon their hearts." Here is not the rush of a transient inspiration, carrying all before it, but a deliberate purpose steadily pressing forward to accomplish its end.

Talma, the tragedian, used to say that thinking and feeling made the largest part of his art. To move requires not only what Cicero calls "the eloquence of the body," but that of the emotions as well. The intimate relation between thought and language; between feeling and its true, yet varied, modes of expression; the wonderful symbolism of a heart yearning to communicate itself: all prove how profound and subjective are the sources of power in preaching. Nor can we over-estimate the value of this spontaneous impulse or vigorous determination to grasp the hearer's mind and heart with our own, to project our thought, emotion, will, into his. In how many cases where the argument is complete and the style ideal is the sermon powerless because the insinuating, embracing and resistless force of a glowing heart, a blending sympathy and a resolute will are wanting to the whole demonstration.

The following words of M. de Cormenin, in addressing a body of French preachers, may properly close this chapter, as it is full of lively suggestion and in the line of our thought:

"Select with a quick and confident instinct, from among the methods available to you, the method of

the day, which may not be the most solid, but which, considering the disposition of men's minds, the nature of the matter in hand—may be the best adapted for making an impression on your audience.

“Take strong hold of their attention. Stir up their pity or indignation, their sympathies, or their pride. Appear to be animated by their breath, all the while you are communicating yours to them. When you have in some degree detached their souls from their bodies and they come and group themselves of their own accord at the foot of the pulpit, riveted beneath the influence of your glance; then do not dally with them, for they are yours, your soul having, as it may be truly said, passed into theirs. Look, now, how they follow its ebb and flow! how they will as you will! how they act as you act! But persist, give them no rest; press your discourse home—and you will soon see all bosoms panting because yours pants; all eyes kindling because yours emit flame, or filling with tears because you grow tender. You will see all the hearers hanging on your lips through the attraction of persuasion; or, rather, you will see nothing, for you yourself will be under the spell of your own emotion; you will bend, you will succumb under your own genius, and you will be more eloquent the less effort you make to appear so.”

# THE PERSONAL FACTOR IN PREACHING



## CHAPTER III

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### THE PERSONAL FACTOR IN PREACHING

A YOUNG Jewish peasant stood beneath Judean heavens and said, "I am the truth." Only One could have said that without madness. But as we study His history in the gospels and in the ages, we recognize Him as the Son of God and Son of Man, Source of eternal life and light.

The personal Christ still lives in that Gospel of which he said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The word which the preacher is called to hold forth is distinctively "the truth as it is *in Jesus*." So completely is the *personal* quality and quickening interblended with the message, that while it takes dogmatic, scientific and philosophic forms, its most real and, indeed, its only perfect expression is through the preacher's own character and life to the degree in which Christ dwells in him. The truth must not come alone through the laboratory of his brain, but must be a living product, conceived and carried in his soul, growing and struggling toward birth—a living thing into which the man has poured the warm blood of his heart and the energy of his will. Some preachers are scarcely more than talking manikins; the sermon is no more a part of them than the telephonic message is a part of the wire which conveys it.

The true preacher utters his message as one of the consummate results of his personal knowledge ; it has the arterial blood-streak of experience ; in a finite and secondary way he is the incarnation of the truth, even as Christ was in an original and infinite way. For this reason the book can never supplant the preacher.

It was the large infusion of this personal force that made the throng press around Paul at Athens, and Chrysostom at Constantinople, and Savonarola in Florence ; and it is the same with every preacher that draws men to God—with Robertson of Brighton, and Spurgeon of London, and Brooks of Boston, and Beecher of Brooklyn. The multitudes have not wearied of preaching, but only of the average preacher. Let any man put a large, loving, vital manhood, rich with the humanities, into his ministrations, and people will respond to him. The preacher's soul is a prism through which the white and dazzling light of spiritual truth passes, and receives in passing human coloring and refraction along the lines of human want and sensibility. *Truth is transmuted into life only through personality.*

The preacher's personality is not obtrusive, hardly objective, in his pulpit work : in so far as he is self-conscious he is weak, in so far as egotistic he is offensive. In his self-forgetfulness, his *abandon*, is the hiding of his power. He who confronts an audience with " I am Sir Oracle " depicted in his manner or message, only amuses or repels ; the personality of which we speak reveals itself in spite of him, and is felt

by the audience like an invisible radiation or intangible perfume. In revelation, the prophet, poet, historian, evangelist, apostle is recognized by the careful student by his individuality. He is not a mere type-writer obeying the divine finger-touch.

The sermon is a birth from two worlds—the father is divine, but the mother is human, even as it was with Christ, “the Truth,” in the beginning; and it bears the *features* of the heavenly and the *countenance* of the earthly parentage. A wholesome, virile, genial *character*, therefore, will impart itself to the sermon; the same is true of one that is weak, vain and sordid. Emerson says: “The reason why we feel one man’s presence and do not feel another’s is as simple as gravity. This is a natural force; the light, heat and all nature co-operate with it.” So it may be said character is an element with which the light, warmth and energy of truth co-operate and, as by an elective affinity, impart and receive, reciprocally, quality and tone.

Herein we see the need of genuineness, disinterestedness, strength, spirituality, and—in a word—Christlikeness. What he is as a *man* is of primary consequence; what he will be as a preaching man is dependent on that. Some men grow in theologic and rhetoric fullness and felicity without a corresponding growth in manfulness, and will orate about truth and charity while consciously or unconsciously false, self-centered and self-circumferenced. Such a man is sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The building of character is the highest ideal and

the most serious work of life. In the preacher it is not completed when he begins to be a builder of character in others. He is bound to raise the volume and value of his own manhood to its highest perfection. He must be educated manward, as well as Godward, through the whole range of his tripartite nature.

To this end the *physical* basis of manhood must receive attention. Herbert Spencer says: "He that with men is a success must begin with being a first-class animal." The Abbé Roux quotes a lecturer in Notre-Dame as saying: "If one wishes to preach well one must have the devil in one's body." If he had added, "and God in his heart," we should have seen more clearly his point. Robust and surgent animal force and instinct, such as spring from splendid health and natural passions, are a huge element of power in the preacher, when reined and guided by the dominating power of the Spirit of God. The interdependence of the mental and even the spiritual with and upon the physical is such that the culture which improves the organs and regulates the functions, enlarges muscle and toughens sinew, will, at the same time, develop brain, broaden the soul and invigorate the will. An erect, elastic, graceful and firm bodily condition has no small effect in inducing alertness, beauty, decision and firmness in mental and moral action. The healthful action of all the vital and nerve forces gives to the speaker an added poise, dignity and reserve power which are of high value in acting upon an audience. When both mind and body are in action, their reaction on each other is especially felt. The



audience also will take critical measure of the preacher from without. His physical appearance and movement is to them an indication of character. Muscular integrity is a natural ally of moral wholeness. Robust health and vigorous movement are generally magnetic. Mental and moral power sometimes proceed from a man who, like Robert Hall, is a martyr to physical pain, but as a rule the aspect and tone of the physically feeble are at a discount on his impressiveness. There are men a large part of whose magnetism is in their fine, impressive physique, men who command attention largely by a massive figure, a noble bearing, a masterful air and an organ-like voice.

*Courage* also he needs, the courage of conviction, of the faith which sees the invisible; the courage of his calling and commission as an ambassador of Christ. He must dare to be independent of "isms" and "ologies." The courage not only to do but to suffer must be his. When that knightly preacher, Robertson, of Brighton, was warned by a woman that his doctrines would expose him to ostracism by the authorities of the Church of England, he calmly answered: "I don't care!" "But, Mr. Robertson," was the ominous warning, "do you remember where '*don't care*' brought the man?" "Yes," said he, with utmost seriousness, "to a cross." To every brave preacher the pulpit will be both a cross and a throne. Crucified to self-interest and to fear of men, he attains a sovereignty over men's souls. When the aged Horatius was told his son was fleeing from the combat which decided the supremacy between Alba and Rome

and, seeing his indignation, they asked him what his son should have done against three, the old man replied, "He should have died!" A sublime answer springing from a great soul and bearing the man above all the weakness which pleads within us against self-sacrifice for the truth. Of all the legitimate objects of contempt, none is more conspicuous than a timid, compromising or neutral minister. The poet Crabbe is represented, in the *Rejected Addresses*, as illustrating a type of neutrality not altogether extinct when he says: "In the view of life and manners which I present, my clerical profession has taught me how extremely improper it would be, by any allusion, however slight, to give uneasiness, however trivial, to any individual, however foolish or wicked." On the other hand, the spirit of a Chrysostom, a Savonarola and a John Knox still lives in a multitude of men, who daily illustrate a fearless independence as champions for God and humanity. By courage I do not mean the *sang-froid* of ignorance and conceit, nor the stolidity of the stoic in whom contempt of others is a shield, but the rational and modest courage of conviction, faith and self-abnegation.

The secret of many a man's failure to rule others is not in the weakness of his cause or of his logic, but of his own spirit. When Admiral Dupont was explaining to Admiral Farragut the reasons why he failed to enter Charleston harbor with his fleet of ironclads, Farragut listened till he was through, and then said: "Dupont, there is one reason more." "What is that?" "You did not *believe* you could do it!" It

has been said that a surgeon ought to have "the heart of a lion and the hand of a woman," and it is certain that the physician of souls needs a relentless fortitude as much as delicate tact and yearning compassion.

While his mission brings with it many fears which oppress the stoutest soul—leading even a Luther to pause trembling at the foot of the pulpit stairs—yet there are many things to inspire his courage. Among these is the beneficent relation he sustains to his people and their trust in him. He is to them a father, or at least an elder brother. An apostle of grace, as well, he stands there in "the solemn joy of responsibility," and ministers to people who are saying in their hearts, "We are all here present before God, to hear what He will say unto us through thee." He ought to be courageous who knows that he is representing a throne of infinite authority and love; who preaches to save, and who hears resounding through his soul the word of God to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee," and of Christ to his heralds, "I am with you always." If, at times, surveying the vastness of his task in turning men to God, and the smallness of his native powers, his soul cries out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" he has only to survey his spiritual allies to shout in triumph, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!" Above all, what courage ought he to have who is consciously borne upon the tide of infinite power in the direction of God's supreme plan, purpose and work for man's salvation! Like the Gulf Stream, which in the greatest drouths never fails and in the coldest regions never

chills, displacing with its majestic course waters mightier than the Amazon and Mississippi combined, so that divine current "which makes for righteousness" is as much broader and mightier as the heavenly is superior to the earthly, and is able to carry him on to results as incalculable as they are supremely glorious.

The preacher should possess *leadership* as a personal trait. An English statesman once said that the great need of the people was for men of "light and leading." There are men of light—some of them even belonging to the higher *illuminati*—who fail in efficiency because deficient in leadership, and there are men able to lead, who, being lurid but not luminous, destitute of the true light in themselves, lead men into a wilderness or over a precipice. Light and leading *combined* make the safe and successful preacher. As a man of serene and spiritual life he interprets to human souls the eternal, divine order and the meaning of life—reveals to men their heart and God's heart as well. He is, through the light that is in him, the poet of human nature, the prophet of human attainment, the guide of human aspiration. It is because he addresses himself, like his divine master, to human nature's deeper wants that he gains a hearing. His message articulates the low, trembling whispers that wander through the soul, he brings from afar faint memories of a bygone purity and bliss, he lifts the veil of the future and gives man a glimpse of another and eternal order of things.

"He points to higher worlds  
And leads the way."

He needs to be masterful as an Alpine guide, to have the generalship that inspires confidence and heroism for righteousness. Such a leader was Arnold of Rugby, and Chalmers, and Robertson, and Gordon. Such a leader will have that *self-reliance* which gives robustness, elasticity and firmness in utterance and action. Self-distrust is weakness; a consciousness of strength is impressive upon an audience, when it is not colored with self-importance or diluted with self-consciousness. "Be not dismayed at their faces," is addressed to the modern preacher as well as to the ancient prophet. His power of leadership must be *comprehensive*. A stern and vehement man, like Peter the Hermit, may be needful for a great crusade against the vices that infect society or the despotisms that trample on souls, but a brotherly leadership that inspires men to the daily conquest over indolence, and procrastination, and selfishness in an unheroic life is more needful. The light that shines from him must not be the flaring torch of fanatical radicalism any more than the cold, electric shining through opal shades of criticism. It must be the glow of sympathy which wins while it illumines and inspires to effort while it reveals duty, even like that fair guiding Star in the East, ever leading to a new birth of Christ in the cradle of the coming years.

He must be a man of *strong and settled convictions*. He must have reached conclusions in which his judgment, conscience and whole heart firmly rest. If a man's love rebels against his logic, if his doctrine and his conscience clash, he is to that extent crippled.

There are men who are never quite sure. They seem to consider every question an unsolved problem, every doctrine held by the fathers open to suspicion. Such men may entertain by their aerial balancing—they cannot lead. In a certain trial Daniel Webster said of the argument of his opponent: “Gentlemen of the jury, this man neither alights nor flies forward. He hovers. Why does he not meet the case?” We have too many preachers who merely hover over the great questions of doctrine, life and destiny, who neither fly forward nor alight, and who think the highest philosophical glory is in holding things in solution and never announcing a conclusion. More than one preacher might be the original of a flashlight picture a parishioner made of his late dear pastor: “He was a nice old man with an evenly balanced mind: one part of his mind thought he would and one part thought he wouldn’t.” A strong personality means a rooted and muscular confidence in the great verities of the Gospel and in man’s susceptibility to them as the power of God unto salvation, aye, as the foremost power in the world, having always the “right of way,” as invested with the prestige of splendid supernatural triumphs in the past and unwasting energies for the future.

That was a bold reply of Mirabeau to the king’s messengers, when, speaking on behalf of the French Assembly, he said: “Go tell your master that we are here by the power of the French people, and that it shall not be wrested from us except at the point of the bayonet!” But the preacher can say: “I am here

in the name and by the authority of God ; O earth ! earth ! earth ! hear the word of the Lord !” Moreover, he is backed by eighteen centuries of learning, and virtue, and victory, all springing from the Gospel, by more than ten millions of martyrs who have died and unnumbered heroes who have lived to attest the truth of what he proclaims ; he is the exponent of a fact the most stupendous and a force the most irresistible in the history of the race, and he is the tongue which a present God uses and to which he says : “ Speak, and be not afraid, for I am with thee.” If these things be rooted in his soul and have become native to the soil of his thought, he will not lack power, and will often say with Bossuet, “ The human heart is the most indomitable of all things, and when I see it conquered by the truth I triumph and adore.”

Another trait the preacher should possess and cultivate is *freshness of feeling*. This is a virtue which the men most eminent in the world’s varied life, and who have shaped the thought of their day, have possessed. It reveals itself in their art, their poetry, their literary work, their statesmanship and pre-eminently in their platform and pulpit. I have only need to mention the names of Shakespeare, Burns, Michelangelo, Mozart, Gladstone, Beecher, Guthrie and Spurgeon to bring up portraits of men who suggested a perennial youth of heart and brain. A sympathy with the ever new phases of the natural world, with brightness of sky and bloom of earth, a quick interest in the passing panorama of the world’s current history and moral trend, an active and influential partici-

pation in the social and civic reforms of his day, and especially in the movements that interest the young people, all will impart zest and heartiness, marrow and momentum to his preaching.

True, the faithful minister carries many burdens ; his contact with the seamy side of human life has much in it to age him, the tragedy of the world's sin and the weariness of its sorrow, the ponderous problems connected with the kingdom of God and the stress of men's daily wants have a tendency to wear out his freshness of delight in life and produce a preternatural gravity, if not grimness of spirit. These influences he must conquer. Really there is no life so joyous, as there is no vocation so elevating, as that of him "who bringeth good tidings and publisheth peace." His mission brings him into relations of moral beauty and pathos and inspiring hope and tenderness with a multitude of all ages and conditions, who look trustfully and affectionately up into his face. If he be a normally strong and healthy spirit, the delights of his vocation never stale ; every phase of his calling, every period of his ministry, supplies some new charm and inspiration. He should be

"A man of cheerful yesterdays and bright to-morrows."

It is true there are preachers who grow stereotyped, whose hearts grow prematurely gray and whose brains become a mere dusty sermon factory. Their minds and their discourses are not a blooming and moist garden full of fresh perfumes, but like a herbarium among whose dried flowers even the Rose of Sharon seems to have a stale and musty odor. Their smiles



are solemn and studied, their tears are deliberate, they excite themselves mechanically, their passion is theatrical, their pathos is warmed over, in their thunder you hear the rattle of the sheet-iron and they rise on the pinions of eloquence like the tame eagle when disturbed from the perch. Praxiteles gave animation to the marble statue ; they petrify living truths.

But a man may keep his brain and heart forever fresh and springlike by drinking of the river of God's pleasure, in nature, in human life, in the life especially of the young, entering with sympathy into their jubilant spontaneity, hopefulness and good cheer, above all, by browsing in the perennial dewy and blooming fields of the living Word.

A certain quality of vigorous youthfulness may be gained by an original and natural communion with the real world of human activities and motive forces, keeping in the living current of to-day's thinking and passionate ambitions. The man of affairs must not be lost and submerged in the student, the dreamer. Much, to be sure, may be learned of the phases of human life and the working of men's passions from our libraries. Poets like Shakespeare and Goethe and philosophers like Bacon and Plato may open to us, if we are critical students, much that is valuable in this realm ; history may set before us illustrations, ideals and models ; teachers may suggest to us methods of study, but all these helps will not take the place of close contemplation of the concrete and living specimens of humanity among whom we move. What is it we say to all who would learn to paint ? We tell them

they will never learn by copying ; they must draw from life and paint in the open laboratory of the master-painter, the Sunbeam ; they must *see* and record with their brush what they see ; then they will be true and, therefore, ever new in feeling and expression. The mere copyist never paints either with pen or pencil that which is his own or that moves the heart by its novelty or reality. A habit of looking deeply into natural phenomena, of studying springs of action, the psychology of life and character, will impart breadth and richness and perennial freshness to our currents of thought and emotion.

Freshness of feeling will also be preserved by maintaining a *healthy appetite and digestion*. Dyspepsia and the worries that wait upon its leaden steps are terribly ageing. Care for the hygienics and athletics of his entire nature will reward him openly. He must not only work faithfully, but play regularly ; must not only gird with mighty tension, but relax and rest at frequent intervals and give himself abundant sleep. Even the all-enduring camel must have his burden unloosed at night, but many a preacher never lays aside his heavy pack ; he carries his church burdens the whole twenty-four hours and the whole twelve months through, and is writing sermons and settling disputes and raising church debts in his dreams. Is it any wonder that his soul grows seedy, and that he becomes mentally round-shouldered and decrepit ?

The preacher's work, to one who loves it, whose soul is free-moving and eager in it, is itself an in-

spiration. It contains in itself, in its very processes and habits, direct and wonderful power to invigorate body and soul. When we consider the intimate connection and interdependence of the mental and physical realms of our nature, this ought to be manifest. The stimulus the body receives from the awakened, girded, active mind, the gladdened heart and the upborne soul in its entirety ought not to be other than refreshing to the whole nature.

Passing upward, I remark that the preacher should have a *consecrated* personality. In a materialistic and ambitious age this consideration is none too popular. In the pulpit work (and pastoral work as well) of many a popular but powerless and perplexed minister this is the one thing lacking. When the necromancers of the middle ages were spending their days and nights in experimenting toward the making of gold by chemical process, it used to seem to them that only one thing was needed to crown their efforts with complete success. Often their combinations would seem to demand but a single substance to precipitate or crystallize into golden metal. But this one substance they never found, and so their mortars and crucibles contained nothing precious. Somewhat similar to these worthless compounds lacking only a single element, are those pulpit ministrations which omit "for Christ's sake" from their strivings after success. This is the one thing which combines all thought and effort in a divine result. The one thing whose absence leaves but a poor residuum. An audience can commonly detect the absence of this element of highest

worth. Christ enthroned in the heart, every ambition, every personal aim, every effort concentrated in a sublimely humble surrender to His purposes, His love inflaming, constraining—this is power. Christ shining in the life is eloquent and persuasive ere the lips are opened, and is felt warming and illumining all the utterances of the lips. The explanation of the marvelous pulpit power of certain men of very modest talents is in one word—*consecration*.

Bring your heart and brain and tongue, each time you prepare to preach, and each time you ascend the pulpit to God's altar, and invoke the hand of fire to be outreached to take them and hold them while you proclaim the message of Him whose you are and whom you serve. The living force of a self-forgetful, sacrificial soul, pressing, urging itself upon other souls for their impregnation with the truth and their transfiguration from the dark and sordid life of the flesh into the true life for which Christ made and redeemed them, is indeed a spectacle for angels and men. And this was Paul's conception of preaching when he said: "For tho' ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ Jesus, I have *begotten* you through the Gospel." (1 Cor. iv : 15.)

This predominance of the personal factor marked the apostolic age of victory over the nations. The Holy Light was in them, and Christ had said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." They shone as lights in the world. "They brought to bear upon that corrupt age not only the

searchlight of absolute truth, but the influence of clean hearts and lives ; upon an age of glittering shams they brought to bear the penetrating power of a character and life vital and vigorous with eternal realities ; upon the darkening and dying faiths of their day they flashed the energies of a triumphant Faith, both in God and human redemption, and they created a new social conscience and wrought marvelous transformations in that first century, not by exploiting a new socialism, nor by the subtleties of theology, nor by the fascinations of a gorgeous ceremonial, but by the witness of *lives* beautiful with philanthropy, sublime with self-sacrifice, commanding with the courage of conviction and inspiring with enthusiasm for humanity." And there are men not a few in our day, who are the worthy successors of these apostolic preachers ; they are in the line of the true and only "Apostolic Succession."

The personal factor might be said to comprehend almost all others. As the recovery and rebuilding of men upon a Christly model are the preacher's great business, the structure of his own character and the style and tone of his own life must play a conspicuous part. The chief thing, indeed, that a man contributes to his age is his *tone*. The "dignity of his profession" can avail him little if his personal quality is effeminate or false ; the grandeur of the truth he represents cannot conceal a narrow or timorous soul, even though a man swagger in the pulpit like a Bombastes Furioso. A character that, mountain-like, swells from deep, broad, interior foundations, rock-anchored in the immutable

verities of God, and rising toward heaven in spirituality, while spreading out in genial humanities toward the whole world; or, to change the figure, a manhood that finds its springs, like the Mississippi, among heaven-lit peaks, and flows down, gathering many a rivulet and stream, and, deepening, broadening, flows majestically to the ocean of Eternity, making everything live where it goeth—such a *personality* will prove a *psychic force* in preaching.

Such a personality is to be *developed*. It must be remembered that the compilation of all that he has learned in college and divinity-school cannot construct that type of the effective speaker which Aristotle (*Rhet. lib. 2, cap. 1*) indicates as embracing “manliness, kindness and wisdom,” any more than a mechanical arrangement of a child’s block alphabet can evolve a poem. Nor can a man dream himself into such a breadth and independence and geniality of character as he may covet; he must hammer and forge himself into it through the fires of the Holy Spirit, and the study of such men as a St. Paul, a St. Francis of Assisi, a Chalmers, a Guthrie, a Robertson, a Kingsley, a Gordon, a Phillips Brooks, and other typical men, and, above all, by a perpetual communion with the ideal type of manhood—the Christ, who, “holiest among the mighty and mightiest among the holy, lifted the gates of empires from their hinges and turned into new channels the course of the ages.”

## COMMANDING THE ATTENTION





## CHAPTER IV

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### COMMANDING THE ATTENTION

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**H**E who possesses the art of awakening and holding the attention is a "Master of Assemblies." Psychology has concerned itself largely with the *results* of attention—only of late have its *laws* and *mechanism* been carefully studied. As a factor in pulpit work, its importance, from a psychological point of view, can hardly be over-estimated. The attention may be said to underlie all other mental operations, so that its genesis and characteristics and phenomena are an essential part of the preacher's study.

An adequate definition of attention would involve the quotation of a number of authorities—a "composite photograph" which, even if practical, would be confusing; but every one of my readers sufficiently understands what the term means. It is the *bringing of the consciousness to a focus in some special direction*. It embraces all degrees, from the momentary and languid thought given to a passing remark, to the state of complete absorption known as "ecstasy." It is subject to every degree of intensity and duration. Whether considered objectively, as directed to external things, or subjectively, as directed to internal events, it is required to convert sensation into that grasp of particulars which constitutes perception. Without

attention we have meaningless and inconsequent reverie instead of coherent and productive thought ; nor can we conceive of any act as being strictly voluntary or intelligent without its direction. Hence the Psychology of the Attention is a study of the highest importance to those who would by persuasive speech lead men to action. It should be studied as a *science*. As a feature in the course of Homiletics in our divinity schools it has been given a scant and incidental regard ; it should have a more full and specific treatment. A candidate for ordination is carefully examined as to his orthodoxy, but if he were asked to define attention and state how he could go about awakening and holding the attention of a congregation, he would probably be quite nonplussed, or at least give crude and unscientific answers. And yet this is a primary and essential factor in pulpit address. To preach without awakening and holding the attention is but a waste of energy and a squandering of thought.

The attention is the "coupling" by which the locomotive draws the train ; if there is a "missing link" there, the engine, though well built and well driven, spins away in rattling isolation, leaving the passengers in provoking immobility. To awaken and retain the attention is, therefore, imperative to successful preaching. There are sensational and empirical ways of doing this, and also others that are in harmony with the constitution of the mind.

Attention has been defined as "the concentration of consciousness, or the direction of mental energy

upon a definite object or objects." Its mode of operation and the effects produced by it may be compared with the concentration of *visual* activity upon some definite part of the field of vision, and the clearer perception of that limited portion which is thus obtained.

The preacher's work is to make men first *see* things, then *feel* them, then *act upon* them. If the first result is not gained, the others, of course, fail; often if the first is obtained the other two go along with it. The Arabian proverb, "He is the best orator who can change men's ears into eyes," has application here.

There are two qualities of attention—*intensity* and *duration*—which are characteristic; their combination at the same moment raises it to its highest condition. We must distinguish between *spontaneous* and *voluntary* attention. The former is natural and primitive; the latter is mechanical, artificial, the result of education. The former is the basis of the latter; and both are to be found in every degree of development, from the feeblest to the most intense. A part of the preacher's science is to be able to discern the degree of voluntary attention in his congregation—when it begins, when it increases, when it declines and when it ends. This is not easy, but a degree of facility and proficiency may be gained by study and observation. He will fail in carrying his hearers with him if he has not this *tact*, that is, if he is not in conscious and intelligent *touch* with them; he must throw out his mental tentacles (which should be electrical), or, better, he should sink from the pulpit to the pews his sympathetic grappling-

hooks and "*get hold*" of the people, or he might as well stop before he begins.

He must reckon with the actual human material with which he has to deal. He stands before a mass of faces and forms clothing an infinite variety of souls—conscious, egotistic factors—each an independent organism, an animate cosmos, in which involuntary attention and sensation are found largely foreign to his own. Could he study, as in a vitascope, the psychic condition and movements of the average auditor, he would see a constant coming and going of thoughts, images, events, incidents, and emotions, which follow each other in no rational order, but mingle with or expel one another according to some law of association which psychologists as yet only partially comprehend. It may be, in a degree, compared to a kaleidoscopic effect—forming, unforming, reforming various combinations, only with different elements. His business is to clear the field of these native vagrants by the orderly invasion of his marshaled and moving ideas, images and arguments.

He cannot mould the individual or the mass as if it were plastic clay, or even in the fires of his fervor. Men are sensitive, volatile, evasive; many of them ignorant of and indifferent to the things they most need to be persuaded of. To many the message is "a thrice-told tale," or it is not congenial to their mood or prejudices. Not a few, as soon as the text is announced, lock their doors and close the blinds from an unconscious or active antagonism to what they think is coming. In some there is a chronic mental

indolence or vagrancy of thought, some are dull and slow-witted and some cold and unemotional. He is to adapt his methods to reach each and all.

The capacity and readiness of attention are largely a matter of education and habit. With people trained to think consecutively, to observe objects and events, to compare, contrast and draw conclusions, it is at its best.

But the *exercise* of the attention is not always proportionate to its *capacity*. The cultured are often so surfeited, so *blasé*, so self-complacent or so fatigued with more exciting or pleasurable mental occupation that they yield only a languid attention to the preacher's voice. Men and women of society are so fagged with the dissipations of the week that it is hard to arouse in them a quick interest in the message of the Sabbath, while with many the browsing of the interminable Sunday newspaper has tired their brain to begin with. On the other hand, men and women whose daily routine of humble toil presents little to waken or satisfy the mind often make excellent listeners if the theme and its treatment be attractive to them. To awaken attention, we must concentrate and hold the hearer's mind to a given idea, or train of ideas, to the exclusion of those others, many and vagrant, which normally or accidentally fill his horizon. It means an *effort* on the part of the speaker, and a reciprocal effort on the part of the hearer. His attention becomes the voluntary subjection of his entire mental and physical activity to his own use in harmony with that of the speaker. It involves a *unity of*

*consciousness*; the whole being converges toward the object presented, and is held in captivity—ears, eyes and limbs, and almost the very breath are under the same spell.

The speaker has not won the attention when there is merely a decorous quietness, an uplifted face and even a "hearing ear"; for just as a man may read a page of a book and not derive the slightest impression from it, because his thoughts are elsewhere, so in listening to a discourse. "People habituate themselves," as Bishop Butler says, "to let things pass through their minds, rather than to think on them. The great number of books and papers of amusement have in part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with this idle way of reading and considering things. Review and attention, and even forming a judgment, becomes a fatigue."

If this was true when written in 1729, how much more is it applicable to the mental habits at this beginning of the twentieth century, dissipated and feverish through the daily and desultory browsing over the interminable field of a cheap and often sensational press. He who would command attention from the pulpit must not underestimate the *difficulty* of his task.

What, then, is the process by which voluntary attention is gained? Prof. Ribot \* says: "It may be reduced to the following single formula: *To render attractive by artifice what is not so by nature, to give an artificial interest to things that have not a natural interest.* I use the word 'interest' in the ordinary

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\* *Psychologie de l'Attention*, Chap. 2.

sense as equivalent to the paraphrase—*anything that keeps the mind on the alert*. But the mind is only kept on the alert by the agreeable, the disagreeable or mixed action of objects upon it, that is by emotional states, with this difference, however, that here the feelings that sustain attention are acquired, super-added, not spontaneous, as in primitive manifestations.” “The whole question,” says he, “is reduced to the finding of effective motives; if the latter be wanting, voluntary attention does not appear.”

To arouse attention we must awaken pleasure, pain or surprise. The themes the preacher deals with are intrinsically adapted to this end, more, indeed, than any others, but it is not what things *are*, but what they *appear* to be, that awakens interest, and the eyes of the human understanding are naturally darkened by sin so that the “things that accompany salvation” do not appear in their true colors and proportions, but obscured and distorted. Through Satanic devices men are led to think evil good and good evil, and through the glamour and fascination of things purely secular, the supreme greatness and glory of things spiritual are eclipsed, and even through passion or fear they become repulsive. Human nature has not ceased to turn from the sublime teachings of Christ with the cry of impatience or contempt. “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” Christ is still to the multitudes “a root out of a dry ground without form or comeliness, and there is no beauty that they should desire him.” Now, just as a man incapable of pleasure or pain would be incapable of attention, so, unless

we can awaken surprise, pleasure or pain by specific psychological methods, we fail of gaining attention. Voluntary attention must be excited by novelty addressed to the senses and through them to the intellect and the emotions, and thus calling into action the will which, with effort, purposely or unconsciously, bends the whole man to that which is thus presented. This impulsion of the mind in attention is not *steady* like the pressure of the trolley arm upon the wire, it is, rather, intermittent like the oscillation of a pendulum. Continued tension speedily exhausts the power of listening. To preserve its freshness and elasticity there must be momentary rests for the mind to unbend; it will return enlivened. Voluntary attention, in its durable form, is really a difficult state to maintain. The speaker should remember that. There is always an effort and a feeling of effort. When this is reduced—as the skilful speaker knows how—to its lowest point, voluntary attention approximates to the *spontaneous*, and so can be held to its work for a longer time. We only do that easily which we do unconsciously.

Sometimes attention is grafted upon a purely selfish feeling—as the hope of reward or fear of punishment, but there must always be an emotion prompting to physical effort, an action of the will both summoning the mind and inhibiting distraction. As attention always depends on emotional states, we must continually keep this in mind. In man's physical organization the states designated as *need*, *appetite*, *inclination*, *desire*, constitute the true basis of emotional life. **As**



these have become more or less mental habits, attention does not depend wholly upon *present* causes, but upon an accumulation of *primary* causes. (Ribot.) Habitual motives thus have acquired the force of natural motives. The work of the preacher is also aided by what psychologists call "anticipative attention" or pre-attention. Happy the preacher to whose well-known brightness and life the expectant people turn, as house-plants to a sunny window. A man of established reputation for brilliancy, wit or even eccentricity will be met, on confronting his audience, with this pre-attention, and is likely to hold it, for obvious reasons. Without these exceptional gifts, a preacher may secure a measure of the same advantage by winning the *confidence* and *affection* of his people and the community by his constant, wise and sympathetic intercourse with them. Force of character, moral strength and geniality combined, personal magnetism and even a reputation for pith and brevity will secure this anticipative attention.

In general, it may be said, *attractiveness* is the sceptre of attention. It may reside in personality, in subject, in delivery, or in all three. The *subject*, of course, is of supreme importance. If it does not make a natural appeal to men's hunger and thirst, to their hearts and homes, it is almost impossible to secure attention, even though the preacher's personality and elocution be attractive in a high degree. *Bigness* is a prominent law of attention; it is always attractive even when not pleasing. Advertisers understand this, and all business is conducted on that principle.

Pettiness is the bane of our pulpits. A fraction of a verse, with a fragment of pretty poetical sentiment drawn from it, as a silken thread is spun from a cocoon, satisfies the preacher, and the drowsy people permit it. The men who command attention deal with the great, vital questions which affect the men and women of to-day for weal or woe, and they treat those questions, not in an empirical, narrow or abstruse, but in a concrete and practical way, yet always with the magnifying and interpreting light of gospel teaching and of eternal issues. Like God, they see everything in the *present*, yet with an infinite perspective and in the broad search-light of the Judgment Throne. The preacher must be at once prophet and herald. "Never forget," said Phillips Brooks to the Yale theological students, "that you are above all things else heralds." He is to declare "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—"the kingdom of God is within you." He must treat the "powers of the world to come" as projecting themselves into this world, right among the marts and factories and politics and schools and amusements and homes of his own neighborhood.

People are not greatly interested by things in the remote future; "the life that now is" absorbs them, but they can be made to see its greatness. They are not attracted by pictures of their dying hour, but are eager to know how to live happily and successfully. They are attracted by crystallized demonstrations—the abstract and metaphysical bore them. It grates upon men to be asked to assist in the slaughter of some

comatose heresy when they are hungering for the solution of the problems of their daily life. They look listlessly upon the rearing and buttressing of a tottering theological dogma, but they prick up their ears at a trumpet-call to nobler living with strong hands held out to help them.

Another law of attention is *brightness and intensity*. The intensity of a sensation influences the amount of attention given to it. Sermons should be constellations—they are too often like the milky-way. Another law is the manifest sincerity of the speaker and the heart-force that touches the most indifferent. You sometimes hear men of whom you are convinced that they do not believe, or at least do not realize, a word they are saying. David Hume, when charged with inconsistency in going frequently to hear Rowland Hill, said, "I like to hear sometimes a man who *believes* what he says." The accent of conviction and the blood-streak of experience have a *fascination* that is wanting in the most decorative theories. People wake up when they not only *hear of* the historical Christ, living in Judea twenty centuries ago, but *see* the *living* Christ shining through the minister's face and sermon as through a lattice, and scent the perfume of the Rose and the Lily fresh from the gardens of Heaven.

Another rule is, create *expectation* and *surprise*. Charles Spurgeon used to say, "Take the people in a way they did not expect, let your thunderbolt drop out of a clear sky, cultivate what Father Taylor (the New York preacher to sailors) called 'the surprise

power,' avoid long introductions, leap into your subject, let your first sentences have something striking in them, vary your speed, dash like the lightning, move calmly like the flowing river, use the bass notes, the clarion tones, be conversational, be dramatic, have *variety*—that is what human nature craves."

Command of the attention will be affected by the *structure of the sermon*. As I shall treat of that under the "Psychology of Style" in the next chapter, I will confine myself here to one or two general principles: First—*order* and *unity*. Some one has said that sermons might be divided into two classes—"vertebrate and molluscos." With the latter there seems to be no framework on which it is built, and it might as well be delivered from the middle to both ends. Sermons of the molluscos kind discourage the hearer before they have been rambling long. It is impossible to keep up the attention. To concentrate thought the discourse must be vertebrate. We do not want to *see* the anatomy, but we want to know that it is there. Phillips Brooks says, "The true way to get rid of the bonyness of your sermon is not by leaving out the skeleton, but by clothing it with flesh. Give your sermon an orderly, constant progress, and do not hesitate to let your hearers see it distinctly, for it will help them, first, to understand, and then to remember what you say."

While George Herbert in the *Country Parson* warns us against "crumbling up a text into small parts, by which a passage ceases to be Scripture and becomes a dictionary," I am convinced that a clear

statement, in the exordium, of the main points of which the preacher means to treat, is adapted to keep up a livelier interest than the modern practice, which might be called the *evolutionary* style.

A lively curiosity may be excited when a prestidigitator draws out of his mouth an indefinite length of ribbon, and the attention is kept up by its seeming endlessness, but exactly the opposite effect is produced by the flow of discourse in which there are no resting places and no breathing spots. The divisions should, however, be few in number and show unity and progress. By these milestones the hearer will know that you are hastening toward a goal, "*Semper ad eventum festinat.*" The attention is fagged by detail and discursive matter. Cecil used to say, "*Above all things, disencumber a sermon.*"

Now this we may do by a clear plan before we begin—what have we to say and what limits will we fix to our subject? We must not commence our voyage till we have a distinct course on the chart and a near and definite port in view, and the hearers should expect that.

"Firstly" and "finally" should be joined by successive links, and they should be few. A sermon should be like the grape-vines of California, which are not grown for ornament, but for fruit. The branches and foliage are "cut back" close to the stem, which itself does not rise above your head, instead of wandering over a high trellis; and so you have the big, purple bunches of fruit which one can gather right at hand.

**Most men** put too many distinct thoughts into a

sermon and go too much into detail. They are afraid of repeating the same thought even in a different dress, or of appearing too limited in their range, or too simple and elementary. We must remember that we are not addressing an audience of savants, but men, women and youths, who, outside their own profession, trade or home duties have very vague and inadequate ideas of the subjects that to us are familiar and of which we can take in a wide horizon at a glance. The charm of some of the greatest preachers, like Chalmers, was in clinging to a few points and holding up new phases of them till the people saw them clearly.

Indeed, an eminent preacher when asked the secret of effective speech said, "Repetition—repetition—repetition." A Supreme Court Judge said to Mr. Finney (Autobiog. p. 85), "Ministers do not show good sense in addressing the people. They are afraid of repetition. Now if lawyers should take such a course they would ruin themselves and their cause." "When I was at the bar," he added, "I learned that unless I did so—illustrated and repeated and turned the main points over—the main points of law and evidence—I should lose my case." The Duke of Wellington, speaking of an eminent British pleader, said, "When Scarlett addresses a jury there are thirteen jurymen." The secret of winning in such a case the ear of a jury by implicating your thought, your predilections, your questionings with theirs is equally available as an element of pulpit power.

The preacher should not ignore the *physical* basis and conditions of attention. The activity of the brain,

the quickening and continuity of its physical movements are conditioned by the *activity of its circulation*. Professor Ribot observes that the blood is to the gray matter of the convolutions what oxygen is to the burning fuel: it is at once an imperative need and a natural stimulus. "The consciousness," he says, "will fail to respond to any impression, if the circulation be impeded or lowered below a certain amount." It follows that as physical conditions enter largely into a man's actual power to think consecutively and with concentration and interest, they should be studied. Drowsiness, vagrancy of mind, dullness of perception, mental languor and fatigue are, thus, the inevitable results and concomitants of an imperfect circulation. The presence of carbonic gas in an ill-ventilated auditorium and a temperature too cold or too warm are the enemies of attention. Demosthenes or Paul could not interest a partially asphyxiated or half-frozen audience. And then there are distractions from uncomfortable seats, garish decorations, giggling choirs, fretful children and *outré* attires, all helping to make the preacher's task embarrassing.

Since attention is so shy, capricious and easily distracted, the preacher must catch it when it is most free from burden. Sometimes the audience is tired before the sermon begins. Where intelligence, unction and brevity control the order of service they stimulate and lead up to the sermon, but they are often unduly elaborated. By the time the organist has achieved his "prelude," the chorister finished his programme, the hymns read and sung, the Scriptures read and expound-

ed, the "long prayer" completed, a volume of notices read with comments, the attention of the people has been occupied nearly an hour. If the worship that precedes the sermon be full of life, unity and originality of thought and fervor of feeling, it should be an uplifting preparation of the mind and heart for the sermon that follows, and this the wise preacher will secure.

Attention and *quicken*ed emotion are reciprocal. The preacher has the whole diapason of the motives on which to play—as a skilful organist, he must understand his keys, stops and combinations. His congregation includes every variety of life, every degree of sensibility to impression. His ability to gain the attention of the larger number will rest on his confining his art to the *simple* and *universal feelings* in which all share alike. Such are curiosity, hope of gain or pleasure, fear of loss or pain, love of freedom, of rest, of companionship, life in all its pleasurable forms—in other words, the *egoistic* sentiments. Rising higher, though reaching a more limited number, we may appeal to the sentiments of justice, benevolence, sympathy, social responsibility, patriotism, mercy, enthusiasm for humanity—in other words, the *altruistic* sentiments. Rising still higher, and reaching a still smaller number, we have the moral emotions—love of the good, the beautiful, the true; the sentiment of honor, nobility, magnanimity, of the special obligations and privileges of the prosperous and the strong. Pleasure in the harmony of things, yearnings for an ideal state, all these in all their combinations form the wide range of



motives and emotions which will on the one hand produce attention, and on the other receive development and vigor through the result of attention.

We can detect the degree of attention by noticing the stillness or restlessness of the congregation, for its direct effect is a concentration of physical movements. A state of immobility prevails. There is an adaptation of eyes, ears and muscles, a tendency toward concentration of consciousness and concentration of movements. As Nature enlivens our attention by her *infinite variety*, so the attention is held by frequent transitions from the didactic to the pictorial, from affirmation to interrogation, from description to dialogue, now a quotation and now an anecdote, now a verse of poetry and now a flash of humor, sometimes a deliberate pause, especially after a passionate passage, and a new commencement in a different key, the quiet conversational manner following fiery declamation. All these variations tend in the same direction of relieving and, therefore, freshening the attention. Attention cannot be gained by hammering the Bible, nor screaming at the people. Often a whisper or an emphatic pause is very effective. We should remember also the psychic power of the *eye* in this connection. A silent, searching and penetrating look wakens the attention when words have failed. George Herbert says, "The Country Parson, when he preacheth, procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestness of speech and by a diligent and busy cast of the eye among the auditors, with letting them know that he observes who marks and who not, and with particularizing now to

the younger sort, now to the elder, now to the rich, now to the poor, this is for you, and this is for you; for particulars touch and awake more than generals.”

I conclude with the remark that attention will largely depend on the good-will and love of the hearers. If the preacher possesses those magnetic qualities which Aristotle specifies (Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 1), which may be rendered, *Manliness, Kindliness and Wisdom*, he has won half the battle to begin with. If the people know he is not speaking in a perfunctory way, nor as a schoolmaster, but as a father, brother, friend; and especially if they know, from experience, that he will not lose them in a labyrinth of speculation, but lead them by a short, direct path to living fountains; if he preach as one who knows what he and his sermon are about, and has something that *has* to be said, and that *he intends to be listened to*, they will listen; they know that he will say plainly, frankly and briefly what he has to say, and stop when he has said it, and before they want him to. That man will have practically solved the problem of commanding the attention.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STYLE



## CHAPTER V

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### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STYLE

IN the preceding chapter we have shown that the Attention is the coupling by which the hearer is drawn after the speaker—the gearing by which all the machinery of his mind and heart is kept in motion by the speaker's power. Unlike material coupling and gearing, however, it is neither of iron links nor leather bands, but as fragile as a spider's web. We are concerned, then, to see that no unnecessary strain is put upon it. The attention is with most, not only limited, but capricious and impatient; easily distracted, easily wearied. Hence, if we would get our message over the hearer's telephone before his ear is removed from the transmitter, we must study the psychology of Language as well as of thought.

Herbert Spencer, in his profound and analytic essay on the *Philosophy of Style*, says: "Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for the conveyance of thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result. A listener has, at each moment, but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols pre-

sented to him requires part of this power ; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part, and only that part which remains can be used for realizing the thought conveyed." Keeping this law in view, it is clear that *simplicity, lucidity and directness* of address, both in vocabulary and rhetoric, are of primary consequence. As in the transference of electrical energy, it is important to avoid waste in the process, so there is no more important problem in the transmission of thought than *how to produce a maximum of impression with a minimum of tax on the attention*, since whatever mental energy the hearer expends in getting at the speaker's meaning leaves so much less for grasping the value of his thought.

The familiar *mot* of Talleyrand, "Language is a vehicle for concealing thought," derives all its point from the fact that though words are the windows of the mind, they are not absolutely crystalline, but varying through all degrees of transparency down to actual opacity. Hence within a limited range Pantomime or Picture Language has a superiority over words. Thus, the beckoning or repelling hand, the pointing finger, the dilating eyes and raised eyebrows, or the shrugging shoulders—each conveys thought with a swift vividness that defies etymology.

Coming to words,—an ejaculation, "Oh ! Ah !" with their inflections, or a single word, as "Wretch !" "Horrors !" "Huzzah !" could not, in elaborate sentence, find paraphrase.

Seeing, then, that in language we have an organ of impression that is, at best, an *imperfect* transmitter of

our thought and emotions, we should seek to discover the psychological *laws* by which attention may be economized. According to Herbert Spencer, "The friction and inertia involved in the application of rhetorical machinery to the mind, reduced to its lowest point, indicates the secret of style. The choice and arrangement of words and sentences, the right introduction of imagery, and all figures of speech, the use of quotation, even of omission and pause, are all involved in the process."

In a rich and mosaic language like ours, there is wide scope for *selection* of words, the law of selection being fitness to the subject discussed and the audience addressed. For the work of the preacher the simplicity and force of *Saxon-English* has commended it to all experts in the Science of Speech. It is terse and transparent, robust and rugged, picturesque and illustrative. It abounds in monosyllabic and dissyllabic words, whose sound suggests their sense more frequently than any other language. It is near neighbor to primitive language, it is the dialect of youth and of the common people, and what it lacks of the elegance of the French or the grace of the Latin and Greek it makes up in vigor and grip of the attention. It is even most approved for ordinary address by the cultured, and is a characteristic of the writers and speakers who have commanded the ears of men in modern times. It is pre-eminently adapted to preaching, which is not a work of art, but an effort to convince and persuade through manifestation of the **truth.**

① If the secret of effective style be in the economy of the attention, we should select words as brief and sentences as concise as clearness and perfect expression of the thought will allow. Hence words of one and two syllables are to be largely used. Thus: "Return to thine abode" may be more smooth, but "Go home" is more vigorous. "'Tis yours to live," is a flash-light sentence, while "Life is the privilege and prerogative of all men," tires the mind as an axiom. Saxon being the language of our earlier and more impressionable years, the power of *association* makes such words more vivid than the Latinisms, Hellenisms and Gallicisms with which the language of the schools is leavened.

Nothing pleases, arouses and rests a congregation like the vernacular of the heart. An illustration of the liveliness and force of monosyllabic Saxon is found in the familiar words of Goldsmith:

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form  
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm:  
Though 'round its base the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head!"

Translate that into sesquipedalian and slow-moving latinity, and we shall see how nerve and vigor degenerate into dropsical feebleness, thus: "As some stupendous mountain that elevates its magnificent proportions develops its dimensions as it emerges from the valley and intermediately surmounts the tempest: the rolling clouds may gather around its foundations, but perpetual luminosity envelops its apex." In the contrast it seems absurd, yet it is such grandiose turgidity



that is sometimes heard from the pulpit. If the Frenchman's *mot*, "Le style c'est l'homme," be true, then it is to be feared there is a vein of pomposity in not a few preachers. Addison speaks of a man who "wrote upon the sublime in a low and grovelling style," and truly it is appropriate sometimes to carry the emotions of the hearers gradually upward to our thoughts by words that have in them a sonorous majesty.

It is *sometimes* better to say "magnificent" than "grand," or "illimitable" rather than "vast," but for the ordinary work of the pulpit the Saxon monosyllable is most forceful. It has an advantage, also, in being often descriptive, the symbol picturing the idea to the mind. Note such words as "*split, crash, gloom, roar, click, croak.*" There is this additional advantage, that such words adapt themselves to the speaker's elocution with more ease than those which are more arbitrary and complex.

Again, and for the same reason, a vocabulary that abounds in *concrete* rather than *abstract* and in *specific* rather than *generic* words will enliven the attention and save extra mental exertion. DeWitt Talmage is a conspicuous example of such a style, carried, perhaps, to excess. To illustrate: "The assembling of a multitude of townspeople to listen to the discussion of current political issues is an interesting study to the public-spirited citizen." Translate into the concrete: "To see the farmers and shop-keepers, bankers and lawyers, the hobbling veteran and gaping school-boy flocking to the town common to hear Major Jones's talk on tariff and taxes is a study to the patriot."

2 Economy of attention is next secured by the right "assembling" of words in clauses and of clauses in the sentence. Our rhetoricians furnish many rules for composition with a view to transparency and elegance, but one does not need to understand the gardener's art in order to have a fine flower-bed, nor does he need to memorize rhetorical rules in order to clothe his thoughts in fitting style; natural taste and instinct will come to the aid of an educated judgment and the study of the best writers. To this the extempore preacher will need to add the constant exercise of the pen, which is the instrument of thought and gives orderly march to the mind; if it be neglected, the style becomes vague and slovenly; with it not only will his vocabulary become enriched, but in the collocation of words he will acquire facility. "His words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and, in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places." (MILTON, *True Eloquence*.)

3 In the arrangement of predicate and subject the attention is excited more effectually by pronouncing the predicate first, especially as it determines the interesting fact about the subject. Thus: "Sweet are the uses of adversity." "Heroic is the spirit of sacrifice," instead of "The spirit of sacrifice is heroic." Again, the qualifications of the subject should not be multiplied, for the attempt to simultaneously remember them requires a mental strain that is fatiguing, and hence the effect is weakened.

The matter of *climax* should be carefully observed. Lord Kaimes, in his *Elements of Criticism*, tells us that

“to give the utmost force to a period it ought, if possible, to be closed with the word that makes the greatest figure.” But such a rule will have many exceptions. Intelligent experiment with various arrangements of the words and clauses will reveal the one that is the best. A general rule may be followed, however, that the subordinate parts of the thought should precede and lead up to the main thought and thus avoid a reaction of the attention, which is always weakening.\*

Again, *concentration* is to be studied. If brevity (1) is the soul of wit, not less is it the life of speech. The Abbé Roux says, “Thoughts are fruit and words are leaves; let us strip off the leaves in order that thought, thus exposed to the light, may gain strength, beauty and flavor.” We would rather say, thin out the leaves when they hide the fruit and exhaust the strength of the vine, but let us not forget that words are the nursing mothers of thought.

In the next place the various forms of *imagery* (2) and *word-painting* give force to style. Not as an ornament are they to be used, but to increase the quickness of perception, to stimulate attention, imagination and emotion, to open the gates of the soul to the invasion of thought. They carry burdens that the mind is thus relieved of. In a metaphor a whole paragraph of explanation is condensed. It is easier to x

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\* There is a style like that of Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, where the writer sees the totality of a sentence or passage and then projects it entire. And there is another like Shakespeare's who, as Coleridge (“Table Talk”) says, “goes on creating and evolving B out of A, and C out of B, and so on, just as a serpent moves, which makes a fulcrum of its own body and seems forever twisting and untwisting its own strength.”

grasp part of a thing than the whole; thus: "banners of omnipotence" is more striking than "armies of omnipotence." When the speaker says "like," the attention starts up to meet the simile. For example: "Like a thunderbolt from a clear sky fell the verdict." Sometimes the simile comes last; as, "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold." The force of these and other images is in the surprise and pleasure they awaken by associating objects in nature and life with facts that we want vividly seen. Care must be taken, however, to avoid overloading with elaborate descriptions or redundant figures—excess is always weakness. It is well, often, to give a mere hint of the image and sometimes to omit the formal comparison, leaving the imagination to outrun the speaker's expression and fill the gap,—a thing always gratifying to the hearer. We must always be sure that the illustration really illuminates, and is within the range of the hearer's comprehension. If the light that is within our illustration "be darkness, how *great* is that darkness!" There is a marvelous charm and witchery in that style which may be termed dramatic-pictorial, the bringing-up the scene as if it were going on before the eyes—"word-painting." "Painting," says Coleridge, in his *Table Talk*, "is the intermediate somewhat between a thought and a thing," and it applies equally to word-painting and that of the brush. A picturesque style is the most vivid for putting ideas in the luminous concrete. The improvisatore, the impassioned conversationalist, unconsciously uses this power, and without it, in some

degree, eloquence cannot exist. This power of word-painting is born more of nature than of art, and, though the most powerful of the forces which the preacher can put in motion, is, strange to say, the one that is most neglected. He who cultivates and uses this has an infinite range before him and mighty forces at his command. It was when Thomas Guthrie adopted this style (though he carried it to excess, as he afterward confessed) that he found his great pulpit power.

Quotations from eminent writers or preachers always awaken interest and lend authority to expressed thought, and poetical quotations that are both illustrative and brief are effective with most hearers; they must, however, be rare, both in quality and quantity. There is force in giving to Scripture incidents a modern setting, a familiar face. Mr. Moody, among moderns, is an adept in this line. By all means the trite, stereotyped and tame should be shunned. I would give, however, no encouragement to a style that seeks effect by startling eccentricities. There is an extravagance of expression and a garishness of illustration that is worse than tameness. Some sensational preachers court the ears of a curious crowd by lowering the style of pulpit address to the level of the *opéra bouffe*. The mania for "wild and whirling words" is contagious, and not a few of the preachers, imagining that "the pulpit is losing its power," believe they can demonstrate the contrary by stunning the senses of their hearers with flaming superlatives and rhetorical rockets. Simplicity must never degenerate into silli-

ness, nor must flash be mistaken for force. "The expressions of thought," M. Jules Claretie has somewhere said, "should be a little like lightning,—rapid, luminous and electric, and the more of this rapidity and electricity it has, the longer—unlike the lightning—it will last.

Few things are more effective than *anecdote* when brief and pithy; few more demoralizing when wrongly used. Christ used anecdote as well as other forms of illustration, but how apt, how luminous! The abuse of anecdote in these days of abundant lay evangelism is a conspicuous evil; its effective use is a matter of keen discrimination and of true oratorical tact.

Illustrations in general are like windows to a house, but they should be such as let in and let out *uncolored* light. They should not be fanciful, or far-fetched, or foreign to the hearers' appreciation. Nature in her infinite variety, human nature in its familiar traits, social life, current events, every-day objects of the home, the shop, the farm, the street are more easily comprehended and more effective than those from the realm of history, science or literature. The latter are, however, eminently appropriate to a well-educated congregation; and, indeed, may be made effective with the uncultured if rightly handled. Introductions and supplements to illustrations should be eschewed. Illustrations should be like sheet-lightning—quickly come, quickly gone—but lighting up the landscape.

An illustration can often be condensed into a word, *e. g.*, "the rust of neglect"—"a vitriolic

sneer"—or into a brief clause, as where Dr. Guthrie says, "A selfish man whose heart is no bigger than his coffin,—just room enough for himself," or the French wit, Rivarol's criticism of Condorcet, "He writes with laudanum on lead paper." Could a whole chapter describe so well a soporific and sodden style?

Most valuable illustrative material in compact form is found in the proverbs of all nations and ages. They are cut gems of practical wisdom that, in the setting of a sermon, shed lustre.

In general, we may say that the preacher, like the poet, must speak the language of our common humanity, not the dialect of a class. He is to please, not the few cultured in the congregation, but all; and the natural style, that which springs from the depths of sincerity, earnestness and affection, which is the child of reality, will be the realistic and effective style. "When we meet with the natural style," says Pascal, "we are highly delighted, because we expected to see an author and we find a man." Contact with men's actual experiences, observation of the incidents lying all around one's path, open eyes and open heart, a companionship with writers who have seized and held the attention of mankind,—Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Dickens, Le Sage, La Fontaine, Guthrie, Robertson, Beecher, Talmage, Spurgeon, Brooks, etc.,—all differing, yet all presenting some features that a student can easily grasp, will go far to develop a psychic style.

Dr. Guthrie says the aim of style is "to prove, to paint, to persuade;" it remains, then, to speak of

the adaptation of language to these ends; they each have their own place, and neither should be overlooked.

A style should be *exact in definition*; it should hold out in open hand the point to be proved, and then its logical process should be compact,—no loophole for doubt to insert its sword-point. For the proving of a proposition, elaborate sentences and arguments should be shunned. Here, brevity and condensation are jewels. Nothing is so wearisome as overdoing in the process. There are men who do not think they have proved a thing till they have corralled all the known proofs in the world, and to make weight, have heaped on top all the analogies, and the mind is overburdened and confused. As you listen to some men enlarging the proofs of a self-evident proposition you feel like uttering the rebuke the Athenian populace hurled at the rhetorician, who began his harangue with the praises of the strength and prowess of Hercules, “Does any one doubt it?” Cut short the reasoning and paint the whole matter to the imagination and feeling, so as to lead to action.

People are largely moved by their imagination and sympathies. We must carry them along familiar ways of thought and then beyond them. Sometimes a *word* will awaken in the hearer a lively picture of a scene or object, and if we associate our thought with such a memory, we have made an impression. To raise the curiosity on the instant by some surprise, interrogation, exclamation or apostrophe throws open the gateways of fancy. An effective style must



always have regard to this powerful ally in the effort to persuade. As a rule, the onset should be bold and vigorous, that the audience may catch a glimpse of the strength of your position. "I prefer," says Montaigne, "those writers who level the first charge against the strongest doubt. I look for good and solid reasons to come after."

What shall we say of the craving for originality in the aspiring preacher?—originality in modes of thought and expression? It is to be commended—with discrimination. Only the lower order of minds are content to travel in the worn ruts of conventionality and axiom. But originality, like happiness, is apt to elude those who seek it directly and for its own sake. In avoiding the stereotyped they may only fly to the eccentric; the fear of being commonplace has driven men into the outlandish. Montesquieu says, "When people run after smartness, they capture silliness." (*Quand on court après l'esprit, on attrape la sottise.*) But if a man would be original in a safe, sensible and sane way, let him make an independent and absolutely free study of the great facts which cluster around the soul, which have their centre in the Cross and their circumference in the eternities; let him closely and perpetually study human nature with his own eyes and through the eyes of its great interpreters, and above all, its divine interpreter, the Bible; let him go forth and patiently study the infinite variety and freshness of Nature's symbolisms; let him descend reverently and sympathetically into the depths of Christ's sacrificial soul; let him wed his heart and

thought to the actual and true in human life *to-day*, and he cannot be commonplace.

There is no Pierian Spring like that fount which the lovely bosom of nature offers to her true children. If a man be natural and perpetually replenished, he will be sufficiently original to be true. If he be artificial, he is an imitator, whether he knows it or not. True originality is unconscious, simple and child-like in its spontaneity and modesty.

Psychic energy in style is that quality which gives a sense of power in the speaker or in the truth he speaks, and thus forces attention to the subject in hand and stamps it on the mind of the hearer. It belongs to that force of nature, thought and character which are pre-eminently personal. Strong character generates strong thought, formulates a strong style in composition. This is the general rule, but specific interferences of an abnormal and conventional character may limit its universal application.

A psychic style possesses that vital, sympathetic, human relation to a man's language by which he makes the words personal to his own idiosyncrasy, fills them with his own quality and tone of feeling and gives his hearer the vivid consciousness of being in direct electric touch with a living, sensitive, mental and spiritual force. If he wields the vocabulary as something outside of himself or decorates himself in rhetoric, as in a garment, he does not fulfill this idea. "Style," says Schopenhauer, "is the physiognomy of the mind, and is a safer index to character even than the face." A psychic style is the identification of the man with his thought.

The great source of energy of style is energy of thought. A certain largeness of nature is essential. A man may be, as Pascal says, "a thinking reed," but a trumpet blast cannot come out of a flute. A man may be both logical and instructive, and his style still lack psychic energy. Cicero the philosopher and Cicero the orator are like different men. "You say thus and thus," calmly affirms the writer. "Do you mean to tell us thus and thus?" demands the impassioned speaker. The writer asserts that "the excesses of Catiline became at last insupportable to the patience of the Senate." "How long will you abuse our patience, Catiline!" exclaims the orator. What a thunderbolt from a clear sky with which to commence an exordium!

Of the relation of style to the emotions and will I shall speak in another place. I close here with the remark that we must in composition keep in sight the true aim of the sermon. If a man work as a sculptor on the marble or a painter on the canvas, to produce something *artistic* he will be likely to have his reward, viz.: the approval, more or less, of his audience before whom the work is displayed; but he will not reap much other fruit from all his labor. A locomotive, a printing press or a machine gun may be a work of ingenuity and art, but that is not its object, and its sole worth is in its power of execution. The same is true of the sermon; fashioned symmetrically, adorned with illustration, welded and tempered in the fires of genius, its *aim* is to convince, convert and reconstruct men. "A great sermonizer!" you say. What I want to know is, Is he a great soul-saver?

What Prof. Guizot said twenty years ago has, unfortunately, a present application. Speaking from the point of view of a professor of history in a great university, he thus compares the pulpit eloquence of the seventh and eighth centuries with that of modern times. "I said just now, gentlemen, that in the seventh and eighth centuries the character of literature had ceased to be a literature—that it had become, in fact, a *power*; that in writing and speaking men aimed only at actual and immediate results; that they sought neither science nor intellectual pleasure, and that for this reason the age was fruitful in nothing but sermons and similar works. This fact is impressed upon the sermons themselves. Those of modern times have a style more literary than practical. The orator aspires more after beauty of language, after the intellectual satisfaction of his hearers, than to reach the depths of their souls to produce real effects, notable reforms, efficacious conversions. Nothing of this sort—nothing of the literary character in the sermons of which I have just been speaking to you; not one thought of expressing themselves nicely, of combining images and ideas with art. The orator goes to the point; he wants to do a work; he turns and turns again in the same circle; he has no fear of repetition, of familiarity, not even the inelegant and commonplace. He speaks briefly, but recommences every morning. *This is not sacred eloquence; it is religious power.\**

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\* Guizot's "Histoire de la Civilisation," Vol. II., p. 24.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EMOTION AND WILL



## CHAPTER VI

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### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EMOTION AND WILL

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THE crowning aim of the preacher is to lead men to action towards good—towards the best—towards God. Subjective psychology is the philosophy of action. A knowledge of it will teach him how to touch those springs of action—emotion, desire, will.

“Always throwing light upon the matter—that is the only sort of speech worth speaking,” said Thomas Carlyle; but He who “knew what was in man” said, “Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light.” Light alone is not life, nor has it power to create love. The intellect, however illumined, has in it no force.

There is a pathetic, and often tragic, gulf between knowing and doing. It is the preacher’s crucial work to bridge that chasm. Bunyan’s “Slough of Despond,” into which tons of theological works had been dumped without filling it up, is solid ground compared with this yawning crevasse. The Divine Preacher realized this when, in closing His marvelous sermon on the mount, he said, “He that heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them not,” etc.

Knowing, feeling and willing are the triumvirate that move and direct life, the verdict of neither of them apart from the rest is effective—at least it is not

normally nor permanently effective. Feeling alone is inoperative and unproductive. It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The natural history of an emotion is to arise, to increase, to culminate, to recede and to vanish; and this history is usually very brief. The will has no originating or self-determinating power, but is under the stimulus and control of the emotions.

It is the work of the preacher to carefully study the co-relation of the emotions and the will, for of these he must become, in a sense, the master. What Plato calls "the divine art of ruling men's souls" belongs to him, and if he would not dishonor his throne, he will realize the glory and responsibility of his vicegerency. There is no work so sublime as to influence souls, and its responsibility is infinite.

It is said that in moving a finger a man is starting a force that may take the round of the universe. It is certain that in performing a particular act or in uttering a word a man may be putting in motion a moral potency which may reach to the limit of a man's life, and even over the world itself, and go down through generations, as did the appeal of the humble minister when he touched the chords of Robert Moffat's heart.

Some general considerations of the psychology of the emotions and the will every earnest preacher will grasp:

I. Emotion is a tremendous power; it may be called the *electricity* of moral life—a magnificent, a wonderful and also a perilous element. Under the



direction of a skillful leader of men emotion may furnish the motive power of conversion in an individual or a nation. Savonarola from his pulpit transformed the Florentine republic from moral debauchery to a theocracy, and amidst the wildest enthusiasm had Christ proclaimed "King of Florence." Sacred songs superseded ribald ballads in the streets, and the carnival of depravity gave place to festivals of religious chastity. On the other hand, Robespierre and his atheists, working upon the same elements, turned Paris into a pandemonium of incredible crimes and enthroned a prostitute as its tutelary divinity under the name of the "Goddess of Reason."

II. The excitement of the emotions may lead to faith or fanaticism, according as it is guided by the moral intelligence. Ignorant or unscrupulous preachers have seized this susceptibility and wrought up excitements and startling and harmful manifestations. On the other hand, anæsthetic preachers have suppressed emotion to the extent of producing a moral atrophy and spiritual paralysis. There are innocent young sermons that touch the emotions as a breath wakes a faint note on the æolian, that exhausts itself in a sigh; and there are storm sermons that gash, like lightning, the murky clouds of the soul and send awful reverberations through its depths. Between these extremes there are all degrees of the emotional element in sermons. Those which address themselves chiefly to the reasoning powers should not be destitute of this feature; at least it should appear in the application or peroration, while those which appeal chiefly

to the affectionous should spring from and be controlled by reason. The metaphysical and the sentimental sermon both are equally deficient in psychic energy.

III. *Men are led to action in all spheres of life by the excitement of emotion.* The very word carries in it that meaning. Love, hate, delight, dread, sympathy, contempt, joy, grief, etc., are essential and potent factors in the drama of souls. The distinction sometimes drawn by theologians between *natural* emotion and *religious* emotion is, I think, as unfounded as the distinction which a late distinguished professor\* draws between *sacred* and *secular* music. Emotion, like music, is a *simple element*. Love is love, whether it embrace sin or holiness; it is awakened in the same way by that which is lovely (or seems so), and it acts in the same way, drawing its subject towards the object.

When the Spirit of God, through the Word, so acts upon the soul as to reveal to the soul both sin and holiness and the heart and God in their true character, the corresponding emotions are awakened and act in their characteristic way. Thus it is not the emotions that are changed in character, but "the eyes of the understanding are opened" to see things in a *new light*. Emotion is not religious nor irreligious; it is a psychic element, absolutely under the sway of the objects presented to it, either external or internal, as they are or as they appear to be.

IV. Our higher emotions are not only faculties of feeling, parallel and ranking with our powers of

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\* Dr. John A. Broadus, Sermon on Worship.

intellect and will, but they are of extreme value as the greatest aid we naturally have in the pursuit of all that is truthful, beautiful and good.

The place of the emotions in religion is clearly defined. Their existence is a sign of moral worth, and carries in it the hope of salvability. Any state in which they are absent must be that of a fatally maimed moral nature. To be "past feeling" is, in Scripture, equivalent to being past hope. Consequently, appeals intended to arouse the emotions from a latent or feeble to an active state are in the highest degree reasonable and important. In fact, the culture and development of the emotions is the true object at which all the higher arts aim.

V. Emotion is awakened by either physical or mental stimulants. We produce certain effects upon the nervous system through the media of the senses. All the senses are thus instruments of emotion, carrying along the nerves to the soul appropriate impressions and awakening corresponding emotions. The same is true of images and ideas presented directly to the mind by the exercises of the mind itself—as by memory or imagination. The function of the Divine Spirit, which must never be lost sight of, is to create those *appetencies* which will receive these impressions in a way harmonious with his own nature—*i. e.*, with righteousness. The preacher does not need the aid of the Spirit to awaken emotion, but that the emotion awakened shall act in a righteous, that is, in a normal way, free from the morbid tendency of man's fallen nature.

As a rule, ideas, to be quickening, must be presented in a concrete form; abstractions do not kindle emotion. The teachings of Christ and all of those who have moved men's hearts and changed their lives have been pictorial, parabolic, incarnated in the facts and memories of actual life.

VI. The preacher must reckon with the antagonizing current of perverted and chronic feelings as it affects trains of thought. Conceit and settled prejudice are among his veteran foes. He must also remember that opposite or contrasting emotions exclude one another, the more powerful remaining; as, for instance, dread excludes hope, while feelings of the same or allied kind intensify one another. Intense feeling lords it over all the other powers; a tidal wave of emotion will sweep away, for the moment, every vestige of opposing arguments and facts. "Feeling is not merely a nihilist, but an iconoclast; we even repudiate what we have felt, insisted on and revered." Our feelings sometimes distort our common sense by smiting us with mental strabismus. The emotion of fear or hate, for instance, can produce the most incredible beliefs. A chronic self-complacency so braces the confidence of the self-righteous man in his course that, in spite of habitual failures to satisfy his conscience and judgment, he persists in his self-righteous effort with as full assurance as though all the others had succeeded.

VII. "Special regard should be given to the tender emotion. It surpasses every other life interest because of its social relations, its touch of nature,

which makes the whole world kin; its sympathy, which enters into the feelings of others for their behoof—a vicarious impulse in opposition to the self-seeking spirit.”

The congregation as a whole and each individual thereof represent two sentiments, the egoistic and the altruistic. The degree in which each is developed varies greatly. With some the altruistic is in excess; their concern is for others; they scarcely consider themselves to a degree needful for their own preservation. With others, the egoistic is so supreme that everything that passes through the alembic of their thoughts is made to take its quality and character, as it is advantageous to themselves. Between these extremes there is every gradation. The preacher is to act upon both these sentiments, to stimulate by proper excitements and guide in proper directions both these springs of action.

Concerning the egoistic, ideas and images, memory and imagination are to be invoked which will awaken the hope of pleasure, of acquisition, of possession, and those which awaken fear of personal pain, privation and penalty and peril; while in the case of the altruistic we are to present the sorrows, dangers, distresses, necessities of others whereby compassion, sympathy and benevolent self-sacrifice are awakened. One man's emotions are aroused chiefly by appeals to his self-love, self-preservation, self-gratification; he can only be constrained to action by fear of present and future loss and suffering, or hope of gain, enjoyment and reward, while another is most effectually

aroused by the picture of how others are to suffer pain and injury, or be made happier by the way in which he treats the Gospel message.

*It is vain and useless to appeal to men to feel as a matter of duty or reason.* Men are never afraid of sin because they ought to be, nor do they love God because to love Him is of the highest reason. Men are simply wearied and antagonized by such vague and impotent exhortations.

The link that connects feeling with action must be studied. It springs from the law that connects pleasure with larger sense of life and the converse. Desire and volition are directly related to action. Desire naturally prompts volition. Action is the child of both. Desire is often estopped by conscious or imagined inability to act. Hence we speak of the "pain of longing" and of an aching desire. In general, desire springs into pursuit; thus avarice is the pursuit, not the enjoyment, of wealth.

Motive, strictly speaking, denotes not the intrinsic value of the object presented, but its value *as it stands in the view of the mind*; not reality, but appearance governs decision. For instance, suppose Christ, in His true character as revealed in the Scriptures, the incarnation of all that is supremely lovable and trustworthy, be presented to the contemplation of a worldly man and his will rejects him. Now, as the mind is incapable of rejecting a good or choosing an evil *as such*, it is plain that the reality and appearance of good is in the state of the mind. Here lies the essence of erroneous choice—the will preferring an

object which is apparently, but not really, preferable. Objective appearance is the determination of choice.

VIII. *The preacher must not trifle with the emotions.* This he may be tempted to do in order to show his power, or simply for the gratification of the hearer himself; for there are those who are pleased to be wrought upon by the pulpit in the same manner that they are pleased with an exciting play or novel. But the preacher has a serious aim. If he excites emotion, it is to win the heart, to induce decision and to build character. Emotion wrought up with no ulterior object is both an abuse and an injury to the moral nature. When the attention is thoroughly awakened and steadily held, the hearer is like a well-tuned harp, each chord a distinct emotion, and the skillful speaker may evoke a response from one or more at his will. This lays him under a grand and serious responsibility. Let him keep steadily at such a time to his divine purpose, to produce a healthful action, a life in harmony with God and a symphony of service.

It has always been found that of those hearers who have enjoyed an instructive ministry through a course of years when, in a time of religious awakening, they are powerfully wrought upon, the emotional excitement does not vanish fruitlessly, but usually leads to intelligent conversion; while those who have grown up under periodical excitements become seared, as by fire, and often skeptical.

IX. It must be remembered, however, that the most powerful feelings are sometimes independent of the reasoning powers. As a careful student of motives

has said: "Reason, reason, as much as you like; but beware of thinking that it answers for everything. This mother loves her child; will reason comfort her? Does cool reason control the inspired poet, the heroic warrior, the lover? Reason guides but a small part of man, and that the least interesting. The rest obeys feeling, true or false; and passion, good or bad." (*Abbé Roux.*)

X. Emotion is the power whereby the man in the pulpit and the people in the pews are physically unified; it must be, therefore, coming and going between them with a trustful sympathy. Gladstone characterized as the supreme influence of the speaker the "power of receiving from his audience in a vapor what he pours back upon them in a flood." The preacher who would sway an audience must not be anxious about professional dignity; must be willing to let himself go with what the French call *abandon*; letting nature assert herself, fearless of criticism, indifferent to conventional ideas. How manifest is this free emotional element in Christ and in the Apostle Paul!

If a preacher is deficient in it, he must develop that side of his nature; if it be in excess, it must be controlled and disciplined if he would gain in power. Even congregations may, through long training under an unemotional ministry, become defective in susceptibility; while others, through the over-stimulus of emotional preachers, become either *ennuyée* or hysterical. If emotion is awakened habitually without a basis of reasoning and the guidance of truth; if it be



not the fruit of Scriptural ideas, it will be abortive. Hence a preaching that is sweetly sentimental or persistently exciting, as in certain kinds of "revival meetings," becomes debilitating, and even hardening. A healthy excitation of the feelings through a vital presentation of the truth should bring forth the fruit of vigorous action.

XI. Emotion, I said, is not an end in itself. While as a faculty it adds its own characteristic element to human life, giving to it its deepest interest, yet, in the attainment of life's essential aim, which is not pleasure, but achievement and character, emotion must subserve that regal faculty of the soul to which all the others are subject, viz., the will. It is this which develops character and shapes the issues of eternity.

XII. The sermon aims at the will. The philosophic or didactic treatise may attain its end in reaching the understanding; the æsthetic discourse appeals to the taste and sentiment; but the sermon only achieves its mission when it *rouses the will to action*. Will consists in capacity for free choice. Its function is to choose between the various objects of attraction or desire, or, in certain circumstances, to act in accordance with purely intellectual or moral motives and in opposition to impulses and desires.

Emotion develops into motive and desire into will. An essential condition of willing is an adequate psychic cause. The will has no self-determining power. It is swayed by the feelings, motives, desires, passions—a vast variety of influences from within and

without. While we present motives to a certain course of conduct, we are to present those which will lead men to resist the appeal of motives that are counteracting. The will is certainly led to choose by the presentation of motives, but the influence of motives which ought to govern the will depends on the state of the heart. Hence the need of the "new heart" and the "right spirit," which only God can bestow. Still, God works with men, *i. e.*, gives the heart which will feel the influence of good motives at the time they are presented.

The preacher should continually bear in mind that while the will is governed in its decisions by fixed laws, the element of a perverted nature must always be reckoned with. The heart is so full of errors, prejudices and delusions that things most excellent in themselves are commonly rejected through the "deceitfulness of the heart." We address people whose ethical ideas are misty and confused by false popular maxims and social customs.

We must also keep in mind the feebleness and vagrancy of the will power in many. In most it is weak towards good and strong towards evil. The feeble will is one that needs to be wrought upon by the more powerful emotion; a greater severity of pain or a greater attraction of pleasure must be presented to the mind.

This is equally true where the conscience has become blunted and where familiarity has generated indifference. The physician of souls has to deal largely with settled habits of levity, indolence and

procrastination. In such conditions, to arouse the will to action requires intense vitality and startling, alarming, pathetic and vehement address. Many of the most powerful preachers of former generations aimed, like the prophets of old, to awaken terror. I speak not of rude and fiery exhorters, but men of the best culture and piety of their age, such as Chrysostom and Savonarola, Massillon and Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield and James Parsons. A phenomenon worth studying is the almost entire absence from the preaching of to-day of the appeal to fear and the presentation of the "terror of the Lord," of which Paul speaks—a persuasive factor which is never obsolete. Is the lapse of that once powerful feature rational, scriptural, evangelical, or simply super-æsthetical? I am not speaking of the form, but of the fact and spirit of it.

It is the preacher's object to awaken such feelings and present such motives as are strongest with his particular hearers. They must, therefore, spring from *their* level, from *their* memory, *their* experiences, *their* familiar observation, since motives drawn from a region remote from their actual life meet no response. The trend of consciousness, as determined by past experiences, always enters into our willing.

*Imagination and enthusiasm*, which may be regarded as twin sisters, are valuable factors in arousing the will.

The power to think visually, to picture spiritual and invisible things as present and acting together with actual and passing events and the outgoing fire of the speaker's glowing soul, is irresistible. Malle-

branche says, "*Un passionné émeut toujours*" (an impassioned man always moves). And he adds: "Although his rhetoric may be confused, it fails not to be very impressive because his air and manner make it felt, agitating the imagination and touching the heart." "The secret of oratory," says George Eliot, "lies not in saying *new* things, but in saying them with a certain power that moves the hearer." The primitive meaning of enthusiasm is God-within-ness; and the enthusiast is an *inspired* man, to whom mind and heart and will respond, as feeling that a moral power is acting upon them which they cannot resist. Some men's natures are like seething geysers; others, like the genial glow of June; but to carry a popular audience with him, there is nothing that helps the preacher more than the psychic force of the contagious warmth and outgoing impulse of enthusiasm. But the effects of enthusiasm are largely evanescent—the iron must be shaped on the anvil of facts by the hammer of truth while it is at white heat.

XIII. Some of the new psychologists hold that "*character* is the sole immediate cause of voluntary action; motives are only mediate causes of them." If by this they mean the normal, voluntary action, it is true; a man's habitual actions are the fruit of his character; but this only proves the need of diverting him from his natural trend, lifting him above his normal action by the stimulus and stress of motives and emotions adequate to produce such an effect. An illustrative and typical case of such action is in the declaration of Paul, "The love of Christ *constraineth*

us." Notice the comprehensive movement indicated by the Greek—*seizing upon and carrying us above and beyond our natural selves.*

XIV. The preacher must ever bear in mind that the dominant and permanent passion of human nature is the insatiable desire to *enjoy life in its fulness*, and take that as the key to the situation, the strategic point of his campaign.

Pascal tells us that "desire and compulsion are the source of all our actions—desire of the *voluntary* and *compulsion* of the *involuntary.*"\*

(*La concupiscence et la force sont la source de toutes nos actions; la concupiscence fait les volontaires; la force les involontaires.*)—Pascal: *Pensées* I., p. 220, Paris ed.)

I suppose he uses the word "desire" in a broad, generic sense, embracing every inclination to act in obedience to intensive feelings of whatever class. All animal nature is surging with the swell of this vast tide of intensive desires. In every direction we have objects to stimulate them; on the one hand, attractions, charms, allurements and enchantments, hopes, aspirations, longings, ambitions, determinations; on the other, we have fear, dread, apprehension, abhorrence, envy, rivalry, jealousy, anger, fury, sorrow, repentance, shame and remorse as the expressions of the unattained, misdirected or irretrievably lost. Even satiety, surfeit, tedium, *ennui*, become intolerable demands for the exercise of our moral, physical or psychological functions.

The universal struggle is for happiness, which in

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\* See Ward, "The Psychic Factors of Civilization," p. 72.

the popular sense means the enjoyment of the pleasures afforded by the satisfaction of social, æsthetic, moral and intellectual desires and tastes. If men could be made to see in which direction happiness lies, that soul force, the connate impulse of desire, will urge them toward it, and the preacher will be saved a vast amount of superfluous pleading.

XV. In popular speech the "heart" is spoken of as the seat of the emotions, desires and will. This may be due to the fact that the physical heart is the seat of the sympathetic nerve plexus, and also the force pump of the life current and the seat of vital power. It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of winning over the heart to the side of God; that is, to create desires after God; that is, to lead men's will to choose God because believing that happiness is to be found in Him.

XVI. Finally, a firm *belief* in His power to *do* is a condition of a man's willing. A man fettered by poverty and toil may read of the delights of foreign travel and wish to enjoy it, but he cannot *will* to do so while conscious of his inability. The doctrine of the "Moral inability of the unregenerate," as held by the Calvinists of a former generation, was naturally paralyzing. The hearer's consciousness was always against it, and he must secretly repudiate it ere he could exercise his *will* in choosing Christ. It is an undeniable fact that we are conscious of a free will; hence fatalism is ruled out. Only the man who knows that he is free is capable of being constrained. "Freedom and constraint are reciprocal ideas."

Hence, while the preacher's hope of influencing the will is ultimately based upon the operations of that Spirit who is said to "make one willing in the day of his power," he is never to forget that such divine power operates along the lines of our human endeavor and according to the constitution of the soul itself, which is never ruled by physical force. It is of the utmost importance that such objects, such motives, should be presented as are best adapted to lead to a choice, and that they should be presented in the most vivid, comprehensible and striking manner possible; nay, that they should be re-enforced, wave on wave, motive propelling motive, only avoiding that excess which is weakening.

*Choice* is the pre-eminently important and central factor belonging to the will; it is the culminant and decisive act of the interior life. By it the soul asserts its sovereignty over the conduct. We must convince men of the dignity, solemnity and responsibility of this eminently personal act of free choice. To secure the action of the will being of such importance, the preacher must not fail to *lead up to it*. His peroration or final appeal is in some respects the most important part of his effort. Let him not stop short of it, nor let him spend so much time on other portions that he must close in a hurried and weak way. Some preachers habitually apologize for their undue length, and think to propitiate their hearers by omitting the "application." This is both psychologically and, rhetorically a serious fault. In an intelligent congregation it will be found that on many subjects which

the preacher is called to present the people are familiar with the argument and motives, and they are pleased when the preacher treats them as in that condition. His chief work will then be to awaken their memories, to illustrate confessed truths by fresh and objective stimulants to the imagination and affection, vitalize desire, give spur to impulse and make the focal point of the will the chief attack of the sermon—"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "Behold, I have set before you life and death, therefore choose life!" We must carry the citadel of the will, or the opportunity is lost.

A single shock may be sufficient, when a chemical liquid is saturated with some salt, to precipitate it at once into crystals; and he is a wise preacher who, watching his audience, discovers the moment when a brave, authoritative, confident challenge to immediate decision is all that is needed to crystallize conviction into conduct, impulse into immortal action.



## THE SERMON IN ACTION



## CHAPTER VII

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### THE SERMON IN ACTION

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WHEN Saurin, the eminent French Protestant, was preaching at The Hague, and places in his church engaged a fortnight ahead by the first people of the city, men even climbing on ladders to get a sight of him through the windows, the celebrated scholar, Le Clerc, for a time refused to hear him, declaring that oratory was below the dignity of the Christian pulpit and that he "distrusted effects wrought more by a vain eloquence than by the force of logic." One day he yielded, and went on condition that he should sit behind the pulpit screen so as not to see the preacher's delivery. Before the sermon closed he found himself in front of the preacher, listening with rapt expression, unconscious of the tears that trickled down his quivering face.

The incident is but one of the many historical illustrations of the fascinating conquests of the sermon in eloquent *action*.

The sermon is like the tent which the fairy gave to Prince Ahmed, which, when folded, seemed like a fan for a lady's hand; but spread it, and the armies of powerful Sultans might gather beneath its shade. The preacher's composition alone is like a folded tent; a right delivery gives life and expansion to his every thought, propulsion and impregnation to his whole

mental and literary work. How can we over-estimate the vital importance to the preacher, to the hearer of that half hour in which the work of days (we might almost say of years) is to be focussed upon the congregation!

*The sermon in action.* The place is a "valley of decision;" the hour, a time of supreme effort, on which the history and destiny of many souls may hang. It is not a review of platoons of ideas, garnished and drilled in the study, but a real struggle on the part of the preacher to conquer his hearers and win them over to the truth for which he pleads, and to the life of the Spirit. The message which he utters is freighted with the very excellence of saving truth, and carries in it the supreme effort of Divinity in man's behalf, and in its success or failure all heaven is interested. The preacher in the pulpit occupies the supreme strategic point in the moral universe. This fact ought to stimulate his energies to their highest effort. No wonder the lion-hearted Luther trembled as he ascended the pulpit steps!

When Demosthenes answered that "action" was the first, the second, the third quality in the orator, his dictum seemed exaggerated. Lord Bacon is surprised. "A strange thing," he says, "that that part of an orator which is but superficial, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed above those nobler parts of invention, elocution and the rest, nay, almost alone, as if it were all in all!" But he evidently took the word in a much narrower sense than the Greek orator intended; he meant it to cover the substance of

the thought as well as the manner of its utterance. The same misconception has led others to substitute "energy" as the correct translation. But Demosthenes was supported by Cicero and Quintilian in giving "action" the foremost place in oratory, and they are justified, if we regard the word as including all that is legitimately expressed thereby as the *universal movement* of all the psychical and physical powers, to achieve the end the speaker has in view. An intelligent, harmonious and sustained action is not only the prime essential in preaching, if it is to produce something more than a still-born assent; it is also according to the laws of nature, and not artificial. It is, therefore, capable of being studied as a science, cultivated as a fine art, developed in all its parts and applied with as much certainty as can electricity, gravitation or heat. The laws which govern it are not less exact than those which control other natural forces.

Very much that is germane to this subject I shall leave to the professional teachers of elocution and delivery, confining myself to principles.

I. All true action in the pulpit must first proceed from the soul. In other words, it has a psychic base and spring. If the man's soul is in a healthy and vigorous state, inspired by his theme, his thought will swim to the surface and reflect itself in his physical features and organs. By a subtle psychological law the whole nervous and muscular system responds to the sympathetic impulses of the emotions and will; feeling and purpose mysteriously and spontaneously

press at every gate of the eyes, the lips, the cheeks, the hands, the feet, for *expression*. The preacher's heart, swelling with inspired, energetic conviction and emotion, lifts itself up like a great tidal wave, overflows its banks and pours itself forth in expressions of the features, glances of the eyes, quivering of the mouth, tones of the voice and movements of the limbs, so that the physical structure becomes simply the complex and delicate organ of expression for the brain, and heart, and will.

And this distinguishes pulpit action from stage acting. The former is in a large degree spontaneous and natural; the latter is mainly the result of study, art and imitation. The prejudice against what is called "theatrical" preaching is due to the attempt to copy the arts of the actor instead of gaining the fullness of life and its natural utterance. Art is by no means to be despised; it has an important place in the correction of faults and the development of grace and impressiveness; but while it may guide and rectify the forces of nature, when through bad examples they have become cramped or distorted, it must always be subordinate.

A sympathetic and yearning *heart* must give to action its finest intelligence, beauty and radiating warmth. Not only must the preacher dip his pen in his heart when he writes his sermon, but he must let his heart pulsate through the delivery of it. When one puts a conch-shell to his ear he seems to hear the echoes of the sounding sea on whose shores it had been cast up; but science tells him that what he hears is

the booming of the red sea of his own heart, rushing through arterial channels and, from his living hand, filling the convolutions of the shell with its mysterious whispers. The same shell in a dead hand would have no voice. The Word of God is such a shell, brought from the eternal shore and held in the preacher's hand. A living heart must pour its thrills of passion and surges of pathos and waves of inspired emotion through it, or its convolutions will yield no language the inner ear can appreciate.

When the preacher is not satisfied merely to have his discourse in "black and white," nor even in his memory, like a recitation, but when, above all, he carries it in his *soul*, if his soul dilates with it, travails with it, then he is sure to deliver it with an "action" that shall have at least the qualities of *naturalness* and *reality*, which are essentials of success.

Without this, all the rules of the elocutionist regarding gesture and voice will avail little. Even in dramatic training the first canon of instruction for the actor is to so incorporate himself with the character he represents and the scenes he depicts as to catch the mysterious, but essential, inspiration of reality. And the triumph of his art is in so acting as to make his audience forget that it is all a spectacle and to sway their passions as by a real tragedy.

The triumph of the preacher is reached when the infinitely solemn and glorious realities which he feels shall express themselves with full weight of demonstration by every physical organ, as well as by every mental and moral faculty. A man may have command

of his sermon, and yet, like the late Dean Stanley and some other able preachers, stand like a speaking statue; but if his sermon has command of him, he cannot fail to wield a weightier weapon, because he is electrified into appropriate and eloquent movement, so that the whole man becomes a visible, and audible, and living sermon.

The overflow of thought-illuminated nervous vitality reveals its presence and quality primarily in the highly susceptible nerves and muscles of the face, since they belong to the vaso-motor system which acts automatically and largely unconsciously. The will has but little power to veil the emotions that surge in the soul, and they betray themselves in the countenance. "Nothing speaks like the countenance," says Fénelon (*Rien ne parle tant que le visage*). What, in fact, is the "countenance" but the secret soul and habit of thought and feeling revealing itself in the features. Words can only gradually unfold our meaning, but the countenance gives expression to the speaker's feeling before he utters a word. Vividness and intensity of expression usually depend upon the liveliness of the inward passion or thought. It is not, however, altogether involuntary; it may be somewhat controlled by the will, and may also be cultivated by study and practice.

\ The *eye* is, among the silent factors of pulpit action, a wonderful instrument of psychic expression, and too little appreciated by the preacher. It can flash like lightning and beam with love, invite with sympathy, wither with scorn, burn with indignation, subdue with



a steadfast, penetrating look that seems to read the heart. Mirabeau quelled the ferocity of the French Assembly with his lion eye, while that of a Napoleon or Webster was a gateway, out of which marched conquest.

The preacher who has not learned to look his hearers fully in the face, individually and collectively; who has not acquired that "visional grasp" which fixes attention, and at the same time gives him a commanding survey of his field of battle, loses an element of power inestimable. Nothing can take the place of this subtle, electrical influence.

Standing in momentary pause and contemplation of his audience, before a word is spoken, calm, earnest, genial, commanding, the preacher can sweep, as with a mild and awakening searchlight, his congregation till every eye is fixed upon him and they feel the luminous thrill of his individualizing, yet all-comprehensive, gaze. And then having become *en rapport* with every man, he pours forth from that same fountain of impressions scintillations that interpret, invite, convince, persuade, appeal, and whole volumes of tenderness, enthusiasm, good cheer, trustfulness and expectation may be read in his frank, kindly, unflinching eyes! How much is gained by the penetrating, soulful gaze at the asking of a question or the launching of a truth! How much is lost when the eye is tethered to a manuscript or wanders helpless to the ceiling or out of the window!

Another of the silent factors is *the mouth*. While the eye is perhaps the most expressive feature, the

mouth is the most sympathetic. Here, as in a nest, gather a brood of emotions; the tenderness of love, the quivering of pain, the curl of contempt, the firmness of purpose, the smile of pleasure. Says Lavater: "The mouth is the interpreter and organ of the mind and heart. In repose, as well as in the infinite variety of its movements, it unites a world of characters. It is eloquent even in its silence; it speaks, and will still speak when it can never open again." A well-formed mouth, generous in size, mobile, quick and sensitive to the movements of the inner thought, is a bow that abides in strength. Its conspicuous beauty and moral importance impressed the philosophic Herder, who says: "It is from the mouth the voice issues; interpreter of the heart and of the soul, expression of feeling, of friendship and of the purest enthusiasm. The upper lip translates the inclination, the appetites, the inquietudes of love; pride and passion contract it, cunning attenuates it, goodness of heart reflects it and the passions incarnate themselves there with an inexpressible charm."

According to Delsart, the mouth has more than 2,000 phases of expression. Of course, the mobility of the mouth, as well as the versatility of the eye, varies with temperaments, with the acuteness of nerve action, the keenness of susceptibilities, but it is largely trained by habit and education. Its habitual expression reveals the constant action of the inner life. The lips, like Wordsworth's mountains, look familiar with forgotten years, curved and channeled with memorials of a thousand impulses.

Another silent factor of psychic action is *gesture*. By the varied and vivid movements of the hands and the limbs thought may be vividly portrayed without the utterance of a sound. Indeed, there are few moral or physical emotions that pantomime cannot express. The study of pantomime is almost entirely overlooked by the preacher, as though it were lacking in dignity and only fitted for comedy, whereas it is Nature's first and most vivid interpreter of thought and feeling. The hands are uplifted in prayer or appeal, outstretched variously in pleading, inviting, protesting, repelling, blessing, bestowing, welcoming; they are clasped in entreaty, wrung in anguish, joined in fellowship.

The student of action might profitably exercise himself in his study by trying how large a part of his discourse he could express by the language of pantomime alone. It is lamentable to see how generally a constrained and awkward action, resulting from bad education, fear, or the bondage of the manuscript, or mere neglect, prevails in our pulpits. How many men of taste revolting from "theatrical," "sensational," "demonstrative" preaching run into the opposite extreme of tameness, monotony and reserve!

Some men dread to look the people in the eyes; others, transfixed in clerical propriety behind the desk, fear to stride forth like men to meet their hearers, lest they seem undignified. And while some, anxious to be "eloquent," whirl their arms in the affrighted air, like the tattered effigy in the cornfield, others still—wedding paralysis to piety—stand, like Lazarus, just

risen from the tomb, bandaged in every limb, for whom we feel like praying, "Loose him, and let him preach!" How few there are who learn to tread the pulpit platform with confidence!

The eloquence of the body, the impression of pose, gesture, facial expression and every muscular movement are, however, all but humble allies and servitors of that regal power—the *voice*.

It is in the pulpit that the crowned and sceptred voice is enthroned; it is here it performs its sublimest function. We marvel when we think how God has made it (not the pen) the chief implement of man's recovery to his allegiance. Whatever may be said of the silent might of the printed word, it is and ever must be the incarnate word, welling fresh from a human soul, that commands the world's attention, sways the heart and will and decides destiny. For so has God stored up in the human voice a strange, divine magic that it reaches depths, awakens responses, electrifies the will and persuades to action in a way unknown to written language.

"The true preacher," says Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, "has nothing to fear from rivalry, for the human voice has no adequate substitute. The heart will not disdain any instrument of expression, but the instrument which it loves with all its love is the human voice—all instruments in one and all inspired. To some, indeed, all voices are alike; but so are all colors, all lights, all landscapes; their spirituality is at zero, and what life they have is mainly in their blood. What if the vocal powers be in reality spiritual rather

than physical? That they are capable of intense spiritual excitement is evident both in music and speech, and none will deny that a tone will convey a meaning which can never be properly expressed by symbols."

In all history God has put highest honor and responsibility upon the voice. And no wonder, when we consider the vastness and variety of its powers! There is no musical mechanism, from shepherd's pipe to orchestral organ, that has such power to charm, to soothe, to thrill, to awe, to melt to tears, or rouse to wrath, or wake to love. Now it is a battle trump, and now a harp of praise; it can thunder as on Sinai and drop as the dew on Hermon. There is no sentiment or passion of the soul which it cannot arouse and express. There is no ear so dull but it has some tone to pierce it, and no truth in all the range of revelation that is not dependent upon it for perfect interpretation.

Why, then, does not the preacher use his voice as not abusing it? Why does he not see that, like the incarnate Word, it should be "full of grace and truth?" And yet, through neglect of study and training, it comes to pass that the celestial music of the Gospel gets about as much interpretation from the average preacher as one of Beethoven's sonatas would if rendered by a village brass band. If the dead strings of a violin can be made to wake to rapturous sweetness under the skilled hand of a Paganini, what may not the painstaking student of oratory evoke from these vibrating, living cords in the throat, which

the fingers of God have fashioned in order that His breath may become vocal!

These being the materials of pulpit action, the preacher will habitually drill and discipline his forces to their highest efficiency.

*First.*—The animal or physical basis must be built up and brought into its best condition. If a preacher presents a vigorous and imposing presence, like a Chalmers, or Guthrie, or Phillips Brooks, he has a great natural advantage; but men of less impressive physique may make up in healthy intensity what they lack in stature, breadth and muscle. Instances will occur in all spheres of leadership where men have radiated psychic power from a very limited amount of the "mortal coil," who were second to none in swaying an audience or winning a battle, tho' they would hardly pose as a model for Hercules or Jupiter Tonans.

At the same time, physical vigor, girded loins and steady nerves, a freedom from debility and a fullness of health, erectness of carriage and decision in movement, a fearless and commanding poise, may be attained in all ordinary cases. It is certain that the rapid, robust and effective working of the brain, the creative imagination, passion and will depends greatly on vital and vigorous physical conditions.

There is, indeed, an excitability of the emotions, the fancy and the other powers in a state of disease and nervous irritability, but it is spasmodic, hysterical and without carrying power. It does not awaken and propagate itself in the hearer if he is in a healthy state. An abundant and sustained physical vigor and

elastic spring must be maintained; for without it the will is variant, and energy of every sort, timid and vacillating, working capriciously; it is the *steadfast* and *elastic* impact of the soul alone that moves the hearer to the point of action.

Hence the culture and care of the physical instrument of psychic power should be a part of the preacher's education as much, surely, as the study of Hebrew or Hermeneutics, and his vows of ordination should bind him as much to communion with nature abroad as with God in secret; while a dyspeptic stomach, a limp manner and a whining voice in the pulpit should be reprobated as much as a weak argument or an effeminate theology.

He is bound to confront his audience in as perfect a physical condition as an electric dynamo. He should stand there as an incarnate galvanic battery, stored not only with spiritual fervor, but with earthly vitality. Burning the midnight oil is a psychic heresy, and coming to the pulpit with brain surcharged with blood, nerves all a-quiver, vitality exhausted, countenance "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of"—sleeplessness, and quite unfit to give masculine propulsion to his sermon, is unfaithfulness to his high calling.

*Second.*—Freedom and integrity of soul must also be cultivated. There is a "bondage of the pulpit." Some men are fettered by doubt, even of their own standing before God; others are in bondage to the criticism of their hearers; a morbid diffidence enfeebles some; hasty and imperfect preparation, fear of failure or want of sympathy with their theme, or a chilling sense of unreality causes the heart to sag; they cannot

bear to look themselves in the face as heralds of God. All this is weakening, and must by all means be conquered.

*A preacher's soul also must be freed from conventionalisms in matter and manner.* Imitation is debilitating; he must not even imitate himself, much less his seminary professor or the man who draws the crowd, for he will be sure to lose tone and facility. He must break the forms of scholastic thinking and speaking acquired in the schools and be free to think and speak along the simple human ways of the people. He must implicate himself in the folds of their thought and affection. He must annihilate the distance between the pulpit and the pew and stoop to conquer. He must acquire the habit of being master of the situation, feeling at home in the pulpit and knowing just what he and his sermon are about; and his frank and genial manliness of bearing will prove magnetic of itself.

*Third.*—Earnestness of aim is also essential to effective action. If a man shows no moral earnestness, his action will be sure to betray him, his freedom will appear careless and his energy seem artificial.

If he makes the occasion a dress-parade rather than a battle, if he is more intent on displaying the jewels in his sword-hilt and the gracefulness of his fencing than in cleaving shields and dividing men from their sins, his action will be void of dignity and his audience will be quick to discover it. He has his reward. Some simpering sister may tell him that the sermon was "beautiful," he may hear others whispering, "Elegant," "Fine," and he strays home with



his head among the stars. But alas! what playing at preaching is that!

Physical, intellectual and moral earnestness—all must combine in psychic force. There is a mere enthusiasm over syllogisms, a heat of argument, a mental excitement, such as led the old philosopher to rush into the street, *en déshabillé*, crying: “Eureka!” And there are preachers as enthusiastic over their own brain babies as that, and they think they are in “earnest.” I have heard them as they clenched their fists at their imaginary antagonists, got red in the face and strained their utterance to the verge of apoplexy in demonstration of a thesis of which their stunned hearers were mentally asking: “Well, what of it?”

But there is a soul earnestness, as of mariners pulling the life-boat; as of a father pleading with a wayward son; as of a Moses in the gate of the camp, and an Elijah on Carmel—a thing of life and power. Whitefield was carried to conquest, in preaching, on the torrent of such victorious earnestness; his soul panting to get the truth lodged in the heart, his imagination on fire, putting the torch to theirs, and his well-trained dramatic action and voice, like a grand organ that thrilled with its *vox humana*, plead with its viola, roused with its trumpet notes and overwhelmed with its full diapason, so that women would weep convulsively and men cry out with fear or joy.

*Fourth.*—Again, a serene and courageous *will* is a factor in psychic action. “The will,” says Van Helmont, “is the first of all the powers and the property most dear to all spiritual beings, and displays

itself in them more actively the more they are freed from matter." And Paracelsus, "The Divine," as he was called, adds in the same strain: "Faith must confirm the imagination, for faith establishes the will." Magician that he was, he may teach us a truth in the dictum that "determined will is the beginning of all magical operations."

Though men are born into the kingdom of heaven, "not by the will of man, but of God," yet the divine Will finds its only adequate human channel in the will of man. Hence a limp and languid will in the pulpit makes the preacher an ineffective instrument. The dynamic energy of a victorious, faith-inspired will must be brought to bear on the vague and vagrant spirit of the hearer. That is of the very essence of psychic power. A free and persistent will—free because disciplined by wisdom and guided by law; energetic because a sane and benevolent purpose nerves it—is, above all things, the conquering and building force in the effective speaker.

It was the difference in will power that made Chatham, with all his defects, a success, and Burke, with all his excellencies, a failure in the British Parliament. It is due to this, also, that an uncultured evangelist will bring men to a decision for Christ, who have long listened with pleased immobility to the superior discourses of their pastor.

It is the quickened passion that changes the sermon from a camp into a march, and it is the aroused will that transforms that march into a victorious charge. Without the will power a sermon may be an æsthetic treat; with it, it becomes a moral triumph.

## SYMPATHY AN ELEMENT OF PSYCHIC FORCE



## CHAPTER VIII

### SYMPATHY AN ELEMENT OF PSYCHIC FORCE

THERE is a sympathetic insight of human hearts that enters largely into pulpit power—a subtle inspiration, wherein dwells the soul of preaching, and which must pervade its faculty and form, even as the living spirit of a man pervades organ and structure.

Mere theology has little interest for the masses of men, and sermons on dogma and ritual weary the empty pews to which they are addressed; but man is ever an object of profound interest to himself, and was never more seriously studied by himself than in this day, when the minds of the people and the discussions of the press teem with earnest, eager questions that affect his nature, condition, social franchise, political status and all that concerns his development and destiny, but all, of course, limited to this material and present world.

The drift of popular philosophy toward despair of the future and the abandonment of the goal of personal immortality leaves man the subject of a life without an aim and a heart without inspiration. Beneath its bubbling frivolities the spirit of this generation is sad; the purple robe of material prosperities and the abundant viands which load its table mock an orphaned and empty soul.

It is the concern of the preacher to feed this famished flock, leading it away from gilded husks and sand-choked wells into God's green pastures and by His waters of rest. It is not metaphysics that men want, but bread; not the revel of imagination, but the river of life, and an ounce of crystallized sympathy will have more weight with them than a ton of theories and speculations.

Therefore, to have power with men we must have sympathetic insight into their nature and needs—such an insight as comes, not from viewing them through the medium of books simply, but through the transparent medium of intimate personal friendship. Human nature is usually masked. Its real sentiments and deepest convictions shrink from the cold gaze of curiosity, and run to covert on the approach of a stranger; and the way men avoid close contact with the average minister is a familiar experience. Yet, somehow, people flocked in throngs around One Man, and the most timid children and troubled sinners sunned themselves in His presence. It was because "He knew what was in man" and touched them at all points with His healing sympathy.

It is not enough that we know men as they appear with Sunday manners in the sanctuary; we must know them when off guard and self-revealed—in their real and not their artificial life. It is not enough that we know what they say or even what they think, but what they are at the motive fountains of their conduct and character.

We must reconnoitre and explore the fortress

which we are to besiege, discovering its secret galleries, mines and magazines, as well as the guns that frown from its walls; or, to change the figure, we must study the patient whom we would cure, whose natural constitution, temperament and habits have so much effect in helping or hindering our healing work. A comprehension of human nature in all its phases has always been one of the strong points in the true leaders of the world. Men of splendid intellectual and moral qualities have failed to sway their fellows just for want of understanding and feeling with the men of their age.

This insight is essential to our deepest earnestness. Beneath the surface of moralities our eye must fix upon the rooted alienation from God; beneath the gay exterior we must see the secret woe, and through the trappings of wealth and fashion behold a soul shivering in rags and secretly moaning, "I perish with hunger." These deeper facts of humanity must engage us; but we must also view the grandeur that still lingers in the ruins of the Divine image in men, discover the jewels buried in the earth and see the groping and hear the sighing of that royal prisoner in the citadel of sin, and behold what a worthy being it is whom we are seeking to liberate and enthrone.

It must be a *sympathetic* insight. Cynics like Diogenes and Swift and Voltaire and Carlyle have had insight of men, but to despise or despair of them. Wits like Rabelais, Cervantes and a swarm of satirists and comedians have had insight of men, but only to laugh at the frailties and absurdities. Our insight is

to be that of the Christian, the brother and the friend. With purged eyes we are to see his sin and folly, his want and misery, and at the same time his greatness and possibilities, his sorrows and struggles, his yearnings and all-embracing hunger and thirst after some real good. And all this we must view in charity, our love for men being something more than a sentiment ; being, indeed, a sacrificial passion for their spiritual and temporal well-being.

There is a study of man which is purely critical, which has no reference to his spiritual value or concern for his welfare; a study of him in the spirit of the mental and moral anatomist ; of the philosopher, or sociologist, or sentimentalist. To many students of human nature and human history man is only a discouraging and distressing problem. Said one of these bitterly, "The more I know of men the more I love dogs." Antipathy to men's sins sometimes degenerates into a scowling dislike of the sinner. The frivolity, selfishness and hypocrisies of society result in a morbid and growing alienation from the haunts and homes of men ; the gulf widens, and the man becomes a recluse. In the solitude of his study he tries to forget the ignoble, unresponsive crowd, with its petty perversities and pauper sensualities.

But this is of itself a form of cowardice and selfishness that must be crucified, or he will surely lose personal power ; it will be sure to reveal itself in a coldness, or austerity, or haughtiness of manner which chills and hardens and repels those to whom he should be a friend, a father and a counsellor.



If the minister be in sympathy with Christ and with His work, he will be in sympathy with men; he will glow with the enthusiasm of humanity. Protracted years of college and seminary training and exclusive association with books and students often results in the preacher entering upon his work more in love with ideas than with men, in sympathy with his own class rather than with men at large.

The true minister faces the world like the Byzantine Madonna, with hands outstretched toward all the race. He takes mankind into the light and warmth of his heart. He studies man through the eyes of Jesus Christ, along the lines of his nature as God made him, of his failure and of his needs and of his possibilities of perfect restoration and happiness. The effect of this is to impart pathos, intensity, patience, eagerness and hope. No man now appears "common or unclean;" the soul is of incalculable value: that solves everything, leads to every sacrifice and effort. The study of man's original and indestructible preciousness is a constant support to his reverence and courage, stimulates an infinite and active and yearning love. This love being recognized by those to whom he ministers, awakens a confiding response and gives him a peculiar psychic power.

Such a sympathy is higher and broader than pity, solicitude or condescension; it is a feeling with and for men in the whole range of their life struggle. It is more than passive sensitiveness; it is a lively and steadfast outgoing of heart and hand, a struggle to blend helpfully with other hearts and lives. It is an

electric nerve, as delicate as the thread spun from the insect's bowels, which, floating in the air, attaches itself easily to the nearest object and becomes an aerial bridge. It projects itself into other natures and establishes an invisible link of intercommunion, a spiritual telegraphy, that makes the interpretation of thought and feeling clear, and effective, and welcome withal.

There are natures cold, reserved, selfish, which quite unfit their possessor for the true work of the preacher. And there are natures that, from ungenial environments, have grown undemonstrative and retroactive, or have found a narrow channel for their affections and interests, so that literature, theology, criticism, science of some sort, have won, fascinated and enchained sympathies that the whole struggling world might otherwise have enjoyed. Such men cannot expect that outflow of psychic energy in preaching which comes from a larger, livelier interest in men.

The effective preacher will have heart-force; an affluent, genial, frank, confiding nature that yearns to blend itself with others, helping them to bear life's burdens. Philosophical, idealistic and abstracted habits of mind tend to paralyze psychic force by alienating the preacher from the living touch of the actual, current and concrete conditions and needs of men in their daily trials, and sorrows, and cares.

Enthusiasm for man is fed by actual communion with the flesh-and-blood humanity, as found in garrets and mansions, in the roar of factories, the harvest-field, counting-room, nursery and school; aye, at the village grocery, the local "primary," the court-room

and the jail. The decorous festivities of the college and the grim passions of the labor strike, the pathetic sweetness of childhood's faith and the dark abysses of the aged skeptic's soul will all be included in the broad horizon of the preacher's sympathies; nothing that concerns humanity will be foreign to his feeling. For all he will spend and be spent out of the affluent tenderness of his own heart.

Dr. O. W. Holmes, writing in the *North American* some years ago, deplored the weakening of the pulpit resulting from the "destruction of the priestly character of the preacher" at the Reformation. He forgot that the true preacher is essentially of the priestly spirit, just in the degree that he possesses the heart of Christ, who, as the high priest of humanity, sympathized in all its temptations, sorrows and wants. He may hold the key of human hearts without claiming to have the keys of heaven and hell hanging at his girdle. His Christly manhood survives, even though he has sloughed off mitre, stole, chasuble and dalmatica. The fierce communists of Paris, scorning priestly pretensions, opened their hearts freely to the simple-hearted McAll and his gospellers.

To contribute to psychic force, sympathy must be robust, and not effeminate. It is never indulgent to obstinacy, pride or indolence. It holds fast by God's righteousness, while it compassionates man's miseries; it condemns his sins, while stretching out strong hands to rescue him from them. It disdains to flatter or apologize, even while it refuses to cast stones at the transgressor, recognizing the peril of all and the

proneness of each to sin. It is no languid pity, but an alert, hopeful and practical quality of soul that floods the sermon with life, warms it with charity and propels it toward the hearer as the sinewy sailor propels the lifeboat toward the wreck. Sympathy with no nerve of truth in it makes a complaisant preacher, but he has no masculine grip of his hearers. They may feel his velvety touch, but will not be quickened by his tonic grasp.

Sympathy must have in it inspiration to effort rather than mere soothing under life's misfortunes; it is false when it leads men to pity themselves; it should have more of cheer in it than tears, and heal wounds by rallying to further battle rather than by bearing them to the hospital tent.

God's method with the despondent Elijah was to summon him to duty, and Christ's way of comforting Peter was to set him to strengthening his brethren. The modern pulpit seems to accommodate itself more to women than to men. It needs more iron in its blood, more of the heroic quality that strung tightly the nerves and sinews of the primitive Christians, the Puritans, the Covenanters; otherwise, how is this materialistic age, with its compromising and conventional Christianity, to get vigor and enthusiasm? The Protestant pulpit has no weapon but the truth, and that truth to most men has become trite. The people are already familiar with all things sacred and profane through the omnipresent press.

They come to church after a week's grazing of the cyclopædic newspapers and magazines, so mentally

*ennuyé* that they are not as easily interested in ethical abstractions, creed championships and apologetics as they were in more primitive times, when the catechism, a devotional book or two and the almanac were their mental and moral pabulum, when John Bunyan for fiction and Fox's Book of Martyrs for tragedy and Watts's Hymns for poetry formed the library of the people.

To-day the news from all over the world of every kind competes with the oft-repeated teachings of the pulpit. Nevertheless, men are still susceptible to the real and the natural when flowing fresh from heart-fountains; and if we would make our message effective among the rival voices claiming their interest, if we would woo them to a life of consecration in a world that was never so fascinating, we must bring the gospel pulsing with soul throbs, overflowing with helpful humanities.

In some men's nature sympathy is native and congenial; it grows wild; perhaps needs pruning and training. In others, it is almost an exotic; it needs cultivating; we must fertilize its soil and give it sunshine and irrigation. It must be developed at whatever expense, if we would be effective. Some men have to tear themselves away from their libraries, their metaphysics, their sermon-writing and mingle with the people in the home, the shop, the street, by the sick bed, wherever they are found in real life. To develop sympathy we must confide in the people, open our hearts freely to them, shorten the distance between the pulpit and the pew, win the people's confidence,

be to them father, and mother, and brother, and friend; find out what lies at the root of their daily history, what they love and fear most. We must share the troubles and delights of the children and youths, the struggles and cares of toiling men and burdened women, and let the experiences of all, both high and low, touch us, blend with and color our thought and feeling; and thus the sermon will be more and more a thing of life and reality. We must find out what men are hungering and thirsting for, and seek from God the supply.

The preacher is in communication, not with a merely philosophic dream or theory of life, but with its actual, stern and pathetic facts; with the seeming cruelty of nature and the illusions of the world; with the vanity and turbulence of youth; the obduracy of unregenerate years. He combats the half-formed sin and lukewarm repentance, the sharp pain of regret and the rankling sting of unkindness, the weariness of hope deferred and a joyless life, the sickness of a present sorrow and the bitterness of a new bereavement, the consuming fires of unbridled passion and the weight of trouble that casts down the soul, with none to raise it again. He talks to the fathers of thankless children, to the young man about to enter life, to the weary seamstress, with her poorly paid work, and the young woman who seeks some clue to her destiny and the best mode of expending her energies, to the widow and fatherless, and to the prosperous, with their dangers and responsibilities.

The contemplation of all these and many other

phases of life, and the dealing with them in gentle, firm and loving truthfulness, will multiply and strengthen the cords of sympathy by which the preacher draws men to God. He will find his congenial as well as his proper function and field in the common experiences of life—its business, sufferings and pleasures—not in the emotional transports of a vague and purposeless enthusiasm which has no reference to anything beyond itself, its circle or its church, and which leaves every-day virtues and simple offices of good for transcendental emotions, whose effects die with themselves. Alas for the congregations whose pastors give them gems of polished thought instead of bread; who blow for them iridescent bubbles of sentiment instead of offering the cup of salvation!

When the preacher is *en rapport* with his hearers, when a strong sympathy moves his own soul, it gives him power to read the souls of men, to comprehend what is transpiring within the bosom of at least certain individuals. "Man," says Carlyle, "carries under his hat a private theatre, wherein a greater drama is acted than is ever performed on the mimic stage, beginning and ending in eternity." "Not a heart," says Amiel, "but has its romance; not a life which does not hide a secret, which is either its thorn or its spur. Everywhere grief, hope, comedy, tragedy; even under the petrifications of old age, as in the twisted forms of fossils, we may discover the agitations and tortures of youth. This thought is the magic wand of poets and preachers." Sympathy (*συν*,

παθος), a feeling with another, is a sort of normal clairvoyance, an elementary thought-reading. This was one thing which gave George Whitefield such power over an audience, that men cried out and women fainted under the revelations he made to them of their heart and life history. It was a familiar thing for him to "indicate what his hearers were thinking about at the moment; and sometimes this was so striking as to give them an impression of almost supernatural insight."

Human nature, while in its essential features it is the same in all men everywhere, yet presents a boundless variety of phases in detail. The preacher must study these phases in the actual people he ministers to. Many a person is alienated from preaching because the man in the pulpit does not touch him. The teaching seems abstruse, metaphysical, idealistic—anything but human, familiar and practical.

The minister is liable to judge of the thoughts and feelings and needs of the people by those of his own class, or by those of fiction, of the dramatist, or historian; and hence he is often addressing conditions of mind, phases of feeling, forms of temptation and experiences of life quite foreign to those to whom he preaches. He is too often addressing creatures of his own imagination, wasting his ammunition on men of straw, exploding shells in trenches long since deserted. He must find the real men, and women, and boys, and girls of his own parish, where they are most at home with themselves; where they are most sensitive, most conscious of need. He will thus set his sermons to



running along the channels of their habitual thoughts and aspirations. "There is a man that understands me; I will listen to him." People love the man who comprehends them in a brotherly and helpful way.

Thomas Hughes, in *Tom Brown's School Days*, gives us a boy's impressions at hearing Arnold of Rugby's first sermon: "It was not the cold, clear voice of one giving advice and warning from serene heights to those who were sinning and struggling below, but the warm, living voice of one who was fighting for us and by our sides, and calling on us to help him and ourselves and one another."

The value to the preacher's whole being of this constant study of human nature cannot be over-estimated or over-stated. The exalted value of men's souls and the pathetic mysteries of human life will have for him a fascination far greater than that of his printed book. It will be pursued, not in a critical or inquisitive way, but with the serious enthusiasm of one who has alighted upon an inexhaustible treasure—a problem of the highest moral interest.

The student of history, of art, of the physical sciences, finds exhilaration and development, yet in these there is limitation. But in the study of men as immortal souls, freighted with infinite treasures of faculty and affection, infinite possibilities of happiness and misery, an endless career of growth and achievement, one finds stimulus for all his psychic powers without a parallel. Here is a mine that grows richer the deeper we delve, a nature that grows grander the higher we ascend. Even the biologist, the novelist,

the poet, the historian, finds mental and moral enlargement and excitement in the study of man; but the preacher who loves souls approaches his subject in a different spirit—with reverence, faith and affection—with both solicitude and hope. His concern is with the ethical, psychical and spiritual man, and here he will find scope for his intensest and broadest grasp of thought and feeling.

Imagination also comes in to broaden our view and quicken our sensibilities.

We think of each man as a little cosmos, populated with thoughts, feelings, purposes and passions—an arena for tragic battle. We think what he has passed through in the bygone years and of what he may yet have to experience. We picture him as solving the problems of life, as choosing the better or the worse part, as yielding to God or resisting His Spirit. We think of him as renewed in soul, starting out on a redeemed life, loving God and climbing heavenward. We picture the powers of heaven and hell striving to win him; we think of the heart of Christ loving him, and the imagination has added its force to the pathetic enthusiasm of the soul.

And thus if the preacher has a parent's or a shepherd's heart, he will grow daily in love for his flock, in tender sympathy for his children; he will find in his parish constant food for both his joy and his sorrow. He fears for them, hopes for them, yearns for them, till Christ be formed in them. He keeps in daily touch with them; is the recipient of their most sacred confidences. His sympathy is a magnetism that draws

them to him. Thus he gains a power that may prove men's salvation. He will discover that almost every one of them, whether converted or not, has had a religious history. This is true even of the most godless man who has come to adult years, however much his soul may be trodden into worldliness by respectable sin or trampled into the mire by the rush of swinish sensualities.

There is a soft spot in every heart; would that we could find it! But the man guards it jealously and fiercely, with an instinctive feeling that this is the very citadel of his soul, which no cold theological hands may touch and no human eye must look upon. Yet, to the magic touch of frank and genial sympathy these men will yield—even with the trust of children.

It is this power of insight that discovers to the pastor the hearts of those who for months and years have worn an aspect of utter composure or restless defiance, while all the while the inner spirit was trembling on the verge of conviction. At last, under the penetrating warmth of the pastor's life and love, these hearts melt with the rush of a river whose ice barriers yield to the tender solicitations of the springtime.

Let the preacher, then, cultivate his power of sympathy. Let him in every breath breathe in the life of his fellow men, every nerve of his body becoming a conductor of the electric force between his own heart and brain and those of his fellow men. The insulation of a human being from his fellows is death, and is complete in the grave. Our physical nature owes its

existence and preservation to society. Neither life nor the propagation of life is possible for the solitary individual. Our emotional nature lives by love and self-surrender; if these die, it is dead.

Even our intellectual nature can scarcely live and flourish in solitude. Surely, then, if as preachers we would become a healthful inspiration, a reforming, regenerating and uplifting force in society, we must implicate our brain, and heart, and life with the vital essence of that society. When the prophet laid his staff, by the hand of his servant, upon the dead boy, he remained dead; but when he drew near and stretched *himself* upon the lad, mouth to mouth, heart to heart, hand to hand, then the lad, thrilled with returning warmth, arose to life.

THE PSYCHIC POWER OF AUTHORITY AND  
LOVE



## CHAPTER IX

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# THE PSYCHIC POWER OF AUTHORITY AND LOVE

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THE history of mankind, in every age and sphere, is a demonstration of the psychic power of authority, both in its objective and subjective forms, whether that impression be clearly defined to the subject or an irrational conviction. Whether among men the most degraded and brutal, or among men the most civilized and cultured, all are swayed and led by what impresses them as authoritative. There is an instinctive perception and recognition of a something which carries with it submission and obedience. Pride, passion, conceit or self-will may for a while rebel against recognized authority; but they are conscious of the unequal contest, and the conclusion is either the fatal violence of desperation or the humiliation of surrender.

Authority in the moral realm makes its appeal to reason and conscience, and the combined consent of these two will generally carry the citadel. This is emphatically true in matters of the soul. The extent to which religious authority, as represented by the Church, the priesthood, the Pope, the creed and even the visible symbol, has dominated the world, is one of the marvels of history. It has been seen in the abject

submission of lofty intellects and haughty crowns, as well as in the slavish obedience of the more docile of men.

In modern times and in Protestant churches there has been a marked declension of authority. The vicious excess to which Rome had carried its exercise brought about a reaction which has reached an extreme in our day; which amounts almost to abdication. Men whose calling it is to represent Him who "spake not as the scribes, but with authority," have so generally renounced their high function that, in substance and manner and spirit, their message to the world is as void of authority as it is of virility.

The vague and inconsistent attitude of not a few ministers of religion doubtless suggested the cynical division of the race into "three sexes—men, women and the clergy." Almost the only men who seem to speak with authority are those speculators in ideas who, assuming the title of the "advanced" or "the higher critics," utter their oracular bulletins from the dim caves of German universities; and their Anglo-Saxon competitors who trot out their callow brood of speculations with not enough meat on them to furnish a child's lunch.

Are there not many pulpits which count it a virtue to treat every postulate of theology as an open question, which give the people their opinions instead of "the truth as it is in Jesus?"

He is not altogether a fictitious character who is represented as saying to his congregation: "The Apostle Paul remarks" (thus and thus), "and I par-



tially agree with him!" There are not a few who, if not exactly afraid to claim their soul is their own, are at least too morbidly modest to utter themselves with the boldness of conviction. "I venture to say, although you may not agree with me," and similar phrases are too familiar forms of address. The shepherds seem ambitious to put themselves on a level with the sheep, and consult their preference as to which way they should be led. They shrink from the appearance of claiming superior wisdom and leadership, and some are content to be recognized as simply "a preaching brother," or, at most, the exponent of the average sentiment and life of the congregation. With some, it is oftener "thus say the scholars," or "thus says the poet," or "the philosopher," than "thus saith the Lord."

The days of "proof-texts," which were like the hammer and the fire in driving home and clinching the truth, seem to have been superseded by the days of cloudy illustration and fanciful analogies. The power of the prophet has been lost in the pathos of the pleader; and the pulpit, for the most part, is no longer a throne from which the Eternal speaks through anointed lips, but a platform for popular discussion of current social and religious themes.

There are many notable exceptions to this statement, and not a few men of prophetic fire and pentecostal boldness, who make our hearts cry out, "Would that all the Lord's servants were prophets!" but the decay of authority in the pulpit is none the less conspicuous in this age of material earnestness and

mental levity. A perverted and presumptuous socialism has subjected many of our pulpits to its leveling process, and the latter seem struggling to secure popularity with the "masses" at the sacrifice of power. But the world will never be led by following it, and the church and ministry that is to control men, that is to win confidence, and inspire reverence, and mould character, must speak with authority. Men in their more serious moments, in their real mental perplexities and religious inquiries, yearn for authority, and can find repose in nothing else. There are in every congregation many sincere but unlearned souls, with an incapacity or disinclination for independent investigation, who are in a state of perpetual hovering, unable to alight; or having timidly touched ground, they are still fluttering and restless. To such the voice of authority falling from the Shepherd and Physician of souls is a vast benediction, and their only way to certainty. It brings peace and rest; the tossed surface of their mind becomes like a calm lake, in which the heaven of truth may mirror itself. The clear recognition of authority is, to the critical and contentious, a quietus; even dislike of the truth cannot hold its own for long against it. Like the Roentgen "X-rays," it has a power to penetrate even the fleshly indifference in which men's consciences are often imbedded, and so reach that slumbering faculty as to give it enlightened action.

As the world grows in intelligence it refuses to submit to shams which masquerade in the garb of infallibility, yet the history of the last half century

shows that many of the most earnest minds, after tossing on the shifting waves of speculation, philosophy and doubt, have taken refuge in a so-called "infallible Church," because they had been led, by a logic (in which there was a lurking fallacy) to believe that authority resided there: and this largely because its priesthood and literature persistently claimed and pressed it into the foreground. That authority it insisted on, which antiquity, universality and unity warranted. With dignity, solemnity and unfaltering accent of conviction the Roman hierarchy has defended this claim till, in spite of many opposing facts, it has carried conviction to minds of a high order, as well as to the ignorant.

The yearning for authority is natural and of the highest reason when the question is one that concerns the immortal soul; and the church and ministry that fails to answer it will fail to satisfy the heart or sway the will. Men are creatures of faith, and faith can only rest on the bed-rock of sovereign truth.

There must also be the conviction of the immutable. Faith only hovers restless if there be a symptom of change. It must appear divine also—must bear the credentials of a throne of eternal verity. Men yield to the authority of the man who speaks as an ambassador from the Heavenly King. Let the preacher carry in his word and manner, and tone, this quality, and it adds an almost irresistible power. And this is a quality that cannot be well assumed. It must spring from a deep conviction, a consciousness, solemn and controlling, of his commission and anointing for the high service of voicing the word of the Lord.

When we have uttered God's truth we must not be over-anxious to defend it. It is better simply to keep on repeating it. It will vindicate itself. The truth has nothing to fear from the truth, nor from error, either; but it has something to fear from its over-anxious apologists, and we may even abandon the truth in our pursuit of its assailants. Despotic logic does not always mean divine persuasion.

The temper of this age seems to oscillate between intensity of concentration and recklessness of consequences, between a passion for tragedy and a limitless frivolity; but if we look a little deeper, we shall discover that a multitude of men are weary equally of the philosophy of despair and the *opéra bouffe* of social hypocrisy; and they will put confidence in the man who has a serious faith, whose gravity of manner and depth of tone show his sense of the reality of things, the importance of life, the perils and possibilities of the men and women to whom he speaks, and the value of his embassy to them.

Authority must wear the garb of gravity. Men have ceased to stand in awe of the minister as a "ghostly confessor"—as holding the keys of life and death; but they are not yet willing to listen to a pulpit popinjay who prides himself in not being "ministerial." There is a gravity which has nothing in it oppressive or chilling—a gravity which is the child of earnestness, and carries in it the pathos of a soul burdened with a great responsibility and a great love.

To possess authority a man must have a clearly defined creed. He must know what he believes, and

believe it with his whole soul. His Christian feeling may be broad in its sympathies and free from bigotry, but his doctrine must be a clear, deep stream, flowing between solid banks, else it will become a swamp or a morass. The expansive lake avails nothing to generate electric power. But how different when its water flows through the close and rock-ribbed banks of Niagara!

To possess authority a man must have the spirit of mastery—mastery of himself, of his subject and of his method. Some men are by nature masterful—are born to rule; but even in such, self-command must be cultivated if they would command respect. Paul said to the people of Lystra, ready to give him divine honors: “Sirs, we are men of like passions with yourselves.” Preachers of the true apostolic succession have learned how to “keep under their body and rule their own spirit.” They were “competent to curb erotic, erratic, eruptive forces in others, so far as they had recognized, developed and subjugated their own vehement and palpitating passions—no further.” Masculinity must not be sacrificed to meekness. Passive and passionless natures are destitute of magnetism. As in chemistry, fermentation, which, unrestrained, tends to corruption, rightly regulated, preserves substance and heightens quality; so the surgent passions in strong and disciplined men impart steadfastness to the will and dominion over other minds.

Equally must he be master of his subject and the method of presenting it. “The words of the wise are as goads and as nails fastened by the *master of assemblies*, which are given from one shepherd.”

The preacher of authority will not propound truths in a hypothetical form. He will not say: "Does the soul die with the body?" He will use the affirmative form: "The soul does not die with the body; the soul lives forever." The people respect a strong, self-reliant and fearless affirmation, declared boldly and in the name of God, which admits of no "ifs" or "buts," which descends from on high, claiming the assent of all without distinction.

Another aid to authority is *consecration*. How many, in our day, have a secular air that speaks nothing of inward or outward sanctity! They affect a smart, airish, up-to-date, hale-fellow manner. They awaken little respect and less reverence as being ambassadors of the high court of heaven. In the pulpit they deal with sublime things in a low way, and with eternal things in a style that combines the wit of the comedian with the logic of the campaign orator. There is a lack of poise in the effort to be life-like, and of dignity in the aim to be entertaining; a manner quite foreign from Dryden's portrait of the minister:

"Nothing reserved or sullen was to see,  
But sweet regards and pleasing sanctity;  
Mild was his accent and his action free."

Self-consciousness, the obtrusiveness of the ego, is antagonistic to authority. It is impossible to be seriously influenced by a vain preacher. "The more pains," says the Archbishop of Cambray, "an haranguer takes to dazzle me by the artifices of his discourse the more I despise his vanity. I love a serious preacher who seeks my salvation, not his own vain-

glory." Vincent de Paul wrote, with reference to the humble dignity and sobriety of certain clergymen in his day, finding expression in their outward form and manner: "What the eye sees goes more straightly to the heart than what the ear hears, and we believe more unquestionably therein. There is a somewhat indescribable in the exterior of God's own servants—a something lowly, recollected, devout, which springs from their inward grace, and which reacts upon the souls of those who are brought in contact with them. There are men among us so full of God that it is impossible to look at them without being touched by a mysterious power."

The basal source of authority is divine truth.

The men of this twentieth century do not bow to the sanctions conferred by hoary antiquity or ecclesiastical ordination; office, and function, and reverend titles do not carry the weight they once did. When men ask of us, "By what authority do you claim our ears?" we must produce something more than a sheepskin written over with Latin credentials and bearing the impressive seal of a university. Among Protestants, even the "Councils of the Church" is no longer a phrase to conjure with; we cannot summon venerable tradition, nor ecclesiastical law, nor the power and penalty of excommunication to enforce authority. The spirit of mental and spiritual independence is rampant and everywhere abroad. Our audiences are jewels, rather than disciples. Besides, where the element of fear enters, there freedom of choice disappears.

Therefore, the dynamic force of authority resides simply in the TRUTH itself and the Divine source from which it springs. To speak with authority a man must apprehend clearly, believe heartily and feel deeply that the thing he utters is the unadulterated truth of God. The Word as a divine revelation, a divine message, a divine law, a divine gift, must have taken full possession of the preacher's intelligence and heart; his whole being must bow before it with implicit faith and adoring reverence. He must himself have obeyed it; he must rest upon its granite foundations for his own soul's salvation. Then he is in a position and spirit to utter it with an authority that springs from evidence and with the force of conviction that springs from experience. "I believed; therefore have I spoken." "We speak the things we do know, and testify of that which we have seen."

In listening to some men you feel repelled by an impression that in their heart of hearts they do not realize or believe a word of what they are saying; that they have never experienced aught of the thing of which they are speaking. In listening to others, you know at once that they are on fire within with faith and conviction of the truth, and that in earnestness of purpose their lives correspond to their speech. And these are the only men that reach you. It is simply impossible not to listen to them. In the name of God they lay hold on your understanding and conscience, and you cannot escape them. When you come near to them you feel the heat of the hidden fire, and you know that this divine fire has been kindled by Almighty love.



“ If God sent Francis de Sales to teach men, Père de Condren seemed fit to teach angels,” says one of his biographers. And another says: “ There was all the difference between Père de Condren and most other men that there is between one who relates to you things he has seen with his own eyes and one who only repeats what he has been told.” Naturally, this deep personal insight into spiritual truth gives a man a great spiritual perception, not merely of ordinary character, but of the spiritual condition and needs of his audience, so that he seems to them to speak with supernatural authority, to read their very thoughts, to take a diagnosis of their souls and furnish the antidote to their sins and sorrows; and they surrender to him, as to a learned specialist, for their moral maladies.

Again, he will speak with authority who is conscious of the *tremendous weight and consequences of his message*. Realizing the need of an authoritative utterance on matters profoundly vital to the soul in such critical conditions, he will base his message on nothing less than the throne of God itself. The importance of this supreme appeal, even the incarnate Word Himself reveals in such repeated assertions as, “ The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent me,” “ My doctrine is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” If He whose word could wake the dead and cast out devils felt the pressing need of freighting his message with the august authority of His Father, how much more we who, in conscious insufficiency, echo that word !

And again, he will speak with authority who

“dwells in God and God in him.” Christ said: “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me; He doeth the works.” And every one who takes up His message and repeats it to the world must, in an humbler but as real a way, speak as the Spirit which is in him giveth utterance. It was said of one that “he habitually preached as if Jesus Christ was standing by his side,” and nearly every one can recall some herald of the Cross whose face almost shone like that of Moses, and whose whole presence and expression awed the hearer as of one who spoke as an oracle of God.

Personal authority, emanating from weight and worth of character, is another dynamic factor. There are men, to be sure, whose mere self-assertion, whose air of superiority, whose owl-like assumption of wisdom or ponderous voice, carries with it an impression of importance; but only to the ignorant or the indiscriminating. The discerning will not fail to discover beneath the lion's skin the elongated ears, and in the affected roar the ridiculous bray of the less noble beast. The man of authority in our day must possess mental and moral volume and value. His depth, and height, and largeness of soul must be manifest, as well as his freedom from hobbies and eccentricities, from pomp and pedantry. Simplicity and unaffected condescension toward the unlearned, serenity and patience with the disputant, lucidity and precision in statement, will all add to the psychic effect of authority.

Authority brings down high looks, disarms skepticism, awakens confidence, silences cavil, sobers levity,

produces mental repose and makes a supreme demand upon the will—a demand which is supported on the one side by reason and on the other by conscience. It changes the preacher's attitude from one of defense to one of attack. The Great Preacher never took the defensive. The Great Apostle to the Gentiles did not instruct Timothy to preach apologetics, but to "preach the word." The command of the Master as to preaching always implies an authoritative proclamation, and primitive preaching was always of this character. By manifestation of the truth they commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Psychic force goes with positive, unmitigated, unflinching, uncompromising affirmation of the truth, an affirmation as calm as it is fearless, in which boldness and humility, dignity and gentleness, are nobly blended. There is no strength in a human soul that can ultimately withstand a persistent and reiterated "Thus saith the Lord." The man on bended knees will kiss it as an extended sceptre, or as a descending rod of iron it will dash him in pieces like a potter's vessel.

*And of love.*

This tone of authority must, however, be modulated and sweetened by love, that mystic force that pervades the kingdom of heaven, and which saturated the spirit of Him who "spake as never man spake."

Science tells us that the heat and light of the sun must needs shine through the earth's environment of atmosphere, or it would scorch and blind those it now warms, and to whom its "light is sweet." Equally true it is that naked authority to a perverted and

rebellious soul would only oppress, or harden, or shut it up to impotent desperation. Clothed in an atmosphere of love, recognized as the pathetic imperative of love, the soul opens to it as frozen nature to the genial pressure of the resistless springtime. Icebergs of defiant unbelief, scorning the tempests, melt down and surrender when caught in the warm gulf-stream of a Christly tenderness in the preacher. A nature that hardens at dictation becomes pliant and malleable in the fires of sympathy.

If we analyze the psychic power of this love, we shall see in it the element of surprise. Men are so used to seeing every one intent on his own interests, gains and pleasures, doing everything because it pays, that they at first suppose the preacher is actuated by some selfish motive to increase his church for mere love of fame or power. When they discover unselfish love as his motive, they are as much surprised as if they came suddenly on a blooming garden and crystal spring in a dreary desert. They are disarmed, attracted, hidden chords in their hearts are touched, they surrender to the soothing or stimulating magic.

This psychic result is as natural as the product of any other law of human nature. The heart is longing for love; while men may treat it lightly as a sentiment, they blindly yearn for it as a necessity, and timidly or impulsively turn toward it as plants in a room turn toward the sunny window. This instinct is the "lost chord" which we must feel after with a hand that has been nailed to the cross of Christ. It is a wandering and timid child who must be wooed by lips that have kissed the bleeding feet on Calvary.

To say that the preacher is completely swayed by a passion so pure and perfect would place him quite above the infirmities of human nature ; if he live near the Lord whom he serves, he will often be mortified by the discovery of the contrast with that ideal. A flash-light of introspection will reveal depths in which pride and love of praise are lurking. The illumined minister will sometimes hate and despair of himself on this account.

It is related of Lacordaire that when he returned from the pulpit of Notre Dame he would sometimes prevail on one of his associates to scourge him with the knotted rope of the penitent, to subdue the pride which the applause of his sermon awakened; and many a mighty preacher, like Whitefield, has fasted and wept, on his face, before God, to exercise the false love of fame and power which would usurp the sacrificial love of souls. Doubtless the secret of much wasted intellectual power and the alienating of some men from our congregations is due to the absence of the winning energy of love.

The preacher who humbly seeks an increase of this all-important charm, this divine fascination, will find it in continual study of the pathos of human life and of the heart of his Master. Have we not discovered that the human channel through which the love of God is to find access to men must be in accord and vital touch with the power that flows through him? Electricity loses its force in so far as it is encased in a non-conducting sheath, and you cannot make a flame pass through ice. Alas for the non-conducting pride,

the icy intellectuality of our pulpits ! There is such a wide difference between the reasonableness of truth on which we are apt to depend and the "sweet reasonableness of Jesus Christ." Insignificant is the number who are impelled to faith and action by the force of logic in comparison with those who are drawn by their affections. And mere reasoning can control the affections about as easily as a flame can be bound and led by a rope. To have authority with men, they must be loved much. Love is the only positive and creative force that works among men. Its effect is always life-begetting, organizing and energizing. If a man has love, let him have it more abundantly ; if it be lukewarm or diluted with self, let him get it purged and heightened by the Spirit's fire into a Christ-like fervor. If he has not love, let him not think to preach. Let him turn to speculation, or politics, or romancing for fame and gold—but let him not trifle with souls for whom Christ died.

## THE PSYCHIC POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT





## CHAPTER X

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### THE PSYCHIC POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**O**N the day of Pentecost a band of peasant evangelists faced the world with a new religion. They were furnished with neither prestige nor earthly power; they had neither a priesthood, nor temple, nor learning, nor formulated creed, nor even organization or visible leadership. They had only a Gospel and the testimony of personal experience. But their word was with *power*. With that weapon of fire they attacked the iron fortresses of Antiquity, Superstition, Philosophy, Skepticism, Luxury, Pride and Political Despotism, and everywhere prevailed. They confounded the wise, convinced the infidel, converted the depraved and reared the fabric of Christianity on the ruins of every false faith.

And through all the ages since, wherever Christianity has made substantial progress; it has been by a Spirit-quickened Word in the lips of Spirit-endued men. Christianity is the child of the Divine Spirit through the seed of the Divine Word; its sustenance and development are from the same eternally fresh and affluent source, and its power of victory over the world is "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Speculators in opinions talk glibly of "the religion of the future," which they say is to supersede the Gos-

pel; but the religion of the future must always answer the deep question, "Hath God spoken?" That question is triumphantly answered when the old Gospel is preached with the fresh power of the Pentecostal Spirit.

When He who was the Incarnate Word was about to enter on His mission the Spirit visibly rested on Him; and it was then the Father said, "Hear ye Him." When He returned from the wilderness of fasting, temptation and triumph, "He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee and taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." When He preached in Nazareth He began by quoting and applying to Himself Isaiah's Messianic prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel." When He was preparing His disciples to take up His work, He gave them a three-fold injunction and promise. He commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be "endued with power from on high," and added the promise, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" and, again, "ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses."

In all these utterances the power of the Divine Spirit is represented as the *essential condition* of the effective ministration of the Word. In obedience to His command they tarried in Jerusalem, watching, praying and waiting till Pentecost, when the promise of the Father and the Son received a mighty and marvelous fulfilment; "they were all filled with the

Holy Spirit;" the symbolic cloven tongues of fire sat upon each of them, and "they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

At this all Jerusalem was moved, and the multitudes came running together to hear, repent, believe, and thousands in a day were made the willing subjects of the Nazarene, whom they had but lately rejected and driven out of the world. Thus was inaugurated the work of the Gospel ministry and the campaign of Christianity for the conquest of the world. It is clear that the *anointing of the Holy Spirit* was, then, *the essential and supreme condition of fitness in the preacher*. Every man who is called to preach the Gospel is under the same injunction and is heir to the same promise.

That which was an essential preparation for Apostolic preaching is equally essential to every true successor of the Apostles, and its possession is his highest credential. Without this power, preaching is but "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;" with it, the Gospel becomes the "power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Judith, presenting herself before Holofernes, clothed herself in her richest attire—her bracelets, her earrings, her fillets of purple, her pins of gold. In addition to this, "God gave her splendor." Thus the preacher may clothe himself with truth, with logic, with rhetoric, imagery, illustration and art, but these are not enough for his high purpose. Except he be transformed and transfigured by the Spirit of God, and "clothed with salvation as a garment," he never can be the agent of Divine transformations.

A moral diagnosis of the material upon which the Gospel wrought on the day of Pentecost, and still operates on the occasion of every Pentecostal sermon, reveals human nature destitute of the life of God, a chronic alienation from the truth and a ruling passion, armed to resist its argument and appeal at all points. But what a drastic and revolutionary effect that first sermon had! As the word sounded in men's outward ear it resounded to the abyss of their souls. It was sharper than a two-edged sword; and, as it pierced, they were conscious that it was wielded by an invisible but resistless hand; convictions flash into their hearts as the lightning cleaves the night; their sin against Christ looms like a spectre of judgment; they tremble in the grasp of their surging emotions. And as they smite their breasts they cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Thus we see fallen, perverted and prejudiced human nature, in the very beginning of the Gospel's mission, absolutely conquered and transformed by spiritual power. Human nature is still fallen, and ruled by the same passions; the preacher's commission is the same—to herald the Gospel; and the Gospel is Jesus Christ's own message. The Word as touched by the senses has passed into the heavens; yet the moment before he ascended, and as the supreme incitement to his followers in their preaching he said, "Lo, I am with you always, with you to the end of the age." Therefore our model and rule to the end of time is the same message, to the same world, by the same Spirit, with the same unction and sanction as that which He possessed.

The preacher is to think Christ's thoughts, to feel Christ's emotions and to do Christ's works; nay, "greater works," He said, "than these ye see me do shall ye do, because I go to the Father." The promise has been literally fulfilled wherever a spiritual ministry has held forth the living word; the deaf are made to hear the joyful sound, the blind to behold the Lamb of God; palsied souls spring into holy action, and the dead in sin awake to righteousness and live for Christ. This is the perennial fact of the Gospel—a living word spoken by living men, producing holy and eternal life.

The operation of the Divine Spirit may be occult, but the fruits are in beautiful, convincing evidence. Christianity is unique in these respects, and quite out of the field of all human religions. The latter peep, mutter, stammer; Christianity speaks as light and as thunder speak. It utters a "Thus saith the Lord!" Other religions dream, speculate, philosophize; Christianity affirms, proclaims, revolutionizes and shows radical and eternal results.

*The Holy Spirit is the supreme force in the preacher.* What life is to the body, that is the Holy Spirit to the minister's work. What the sun is to the planet, that the Holy Spirit is to the mind and heart of the minister, imparting a divine and developing warmth to his affections and illuminating his intellectual processes. It is the fertilizing and reproductive power in his soul.

The energy of the Spirit begins with the casting down and out of self. It is as when the Angel of God's presence wrestled with Jacob, humbling his native pride, breaking his native strength, while in that very

hour Jacob received the supreme blessing—"power with God and with men." The preacher is tempted to prepare and preach his sermons from some form of selfish motive; it may be gratification of intellectual pride, or a lurking, unacknowledged and even undiscerned love of applause; it may be desire for a crowded house, or solicitude to maintain his position or climb to a higher one; it may be the natural but still selfish desire for conspicuous success. It may be—alas! what may it not be, in the endless variety of motives and aims—divorced from the simple glory of God and good of souls?

Now, in as far as these motives sway him, they weaken the force of his message as a Divine communication. But nothing will free him from them but the baptism of fire; the pervading, searching, saturating flame of the Holy Spirit, seizing upon him and bringing all into subjection to the law of Christ, who said, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

There are preachers whose pulpit work yields apparently insignificant results, for all their elaborate preparation. Their discourses are logical in structure, clear in exegesis, rich in illustration, beautiful in style and graceful in delivery, but they fall with the weight of an iridescent icicle on an admiring but unmoved congregation; no souls come to them in penitence, no finny shoals fill their net, no spiritual children rise to call them blessed, and demons laugh at their attempts to exorcise them. The secret cause of their failure is the *absence of spiritual power*. They need not a new

Gospel, nor a new field (though they are apt to seek one or the other), but a Pentecost in their study, a fiery baptism in their souls.

Rev. Wm. Arthur has well said: "A piece of iron is dark and cold; imbued with a certain degree of heat, it becomes almost burning without any change of appearance; imbued with a still greater degree, its very appearance changes to solid fire, and it sets fire to whatever it touches. A piece of water without heat is solid and brittle; gently warmed, it flows; further heated, it mounts to the sky. An organ filled with the ordinary degree of air which exists everywhere is dumb; the touch of the player can elicit but the clicking of the keys. Throw in, not another air, but an unsteady current of the same air, and sweet but imperfect and uncertain notes respond to the touch; increase the current to a full supply, and every pipe swells with music. Such is the soul without the Holy Spirit; such the changes that pass upon it when it receives the Holy Spirit, and such its action when it is endued with the *power of the Holy Spirit.*"

This power is demonstrated in various ways in the preparation and delivery of the sermon;—to begin with:

*In the preparation.*

I. *In the discovery and interpretation of the truth itself.* It is of highest concern to remember that the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. How can we claim to speak in the name of God and utter "the word of the Lord" except we have had interpreted to us that word by the Spirit of God, whose

function it is to take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us?

The preacher is a prophet. The priestly office ended with Christ, the prophetic is continued in the preacher: "To another is given prophecy." This function is not, indeed, for the predicting of future events not before revealed; but he is nevertheless to speak "as the oracles of God." He is to stand between the living and the dead till the plague be stayed; to hold forth the world of life.

He is not responsible for the way in which men treat the message, but he is responsible that he deliver it with all faithfulness. And how is he to do this if he has not received it from the throne? What the prophet tells forth he must first be told. In the Acts we read that "Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren and confirmed them;" and when Paul urges us to covet the "spiritual gift" of prophecy, it is because "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort."

The ancient prophet, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, was made to see, as his most exalted vision, "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," though he himself comprehended little of the full significance of the vision; and the preacher of to-day enjoys highest communication from above and utters his grandest message to the world, when "Christ and him crucified" fills the horizon of his awed and delighted contemplation, and He "whom not having seen he loves" becomes a vivid and moving



*reality*, whose glory he proclaims and whose claims he urges as if the invisible were standing by his side; as if his eyes beheld and his ears heard, and his lips simply voiced what Christ was speaking to him.

“The same Spirit that summoned out of the remote future the Messiah to appear before Isaiah as a ‘Lamb led to the slaughter’ summons the same Saviour out of the remote past as a Lamb dying on Calvary.” The difference between presenting a *dead* Christ on the cross as a historic event long past and presenting a *dying* Christ as revealed by the Spirit to the preacher’s soul is all the difference between a tame and formal deliverance, which neither awakens the conscience nor kindles emotion, and that forceful and penetrating preaching which thrills and quickens to penitence and love.

Intellectual processes, critical discriminations, comparison of exegetical authorities, all will not suffice to rightly interpret the word of God, except that in all and above all, the student has the specific anointing of the eyes by the Holy Spirit. It is this holy fire that will cause the pure gold to flow from the ore, the pure savor to ascend from the censer which makes it a “sweet savor unto God and a savor of life unto men.”

The *manner* in which the Spirit operates may be inexplicable, but the *fact* is sufficiently transparent and comprehensible.

All the natural powers are raised above their normal condition; the insight of the mind becomes more penetrating and exact; the inductive processes

and imagination are purged and quickened and the power of the truth on his own soul is increased. His motives, aims and affections in handling the word are freed from deceit and pride; an intense *reality* invests the whole process; he is practically, though scarcely consciously, thinking God's thoughts, and his soul is expanding with emotions akin to the Divine. The love of the Spirit for men pours its warm, genial tides through his heart, and he finds himself pleading with men as a man pleads for his own life. He enters into Paul's experience when he cried "as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead."

Herein lies his power with men. The pulpit loses its hold on the life and thought of the people when it loses its spiritual eyesight. If the preacher has but the eye to see and the tongue to express the glories of the kingdom of God, men will hear him gladly.

When William Blake, the poet-painter, was asked if he saw the rising sun, he answered, "No! No! I see a heavenly host, and I hear them chanting, 'Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory!'" He saw with the spiritual eye and heard with the spiritual ear of the poet; and he who cannot thus see and hear, to him has not been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

A lens may be made of ice through which sunbeams passing will set on fire materials placed in their focus; but not so with the light of truth passing through a cold heart. The glowing temperature which the fiery baptism gives is essential in the medium of transmis-

sion. If the preacher's soul be as a candle lighted by the Lord, if his lips are touched by the live coal from God's altar, if his lamp is continually filled by the oil flowing from the living olive tree and tended by Him who walketh amid the golden candlesticks, there will be rays of truth streaming from that soul into others, along which the Spirit's secret influence moves.

If he receive and hold the divine magnetism as the Leyden jar holds electricity, he then only needs the divinely appointed wire to conduct it to his audience. But that connecting medium is not of earthly material, it is that *Word* which Christ meant when He said: "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Its form may be infinitely varied, its essence must be the same. *It is the passion of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ.*

The Holy Spirit will clarify and intensify the preacher's *faith in the Word*. It is a part of the baptism of the Spirit to plunge the belief of the brain into the very blood of the heart, so that when the man preaches his hearers will catch the contagion of his vital faith. It was thus with the worldly man who heard Charles Kingsley. "I went," he said, "as you told me—you were right. That man *believes*, and he sent me to my Bible to read and pray." The tone and accent of *conviction* is a powerful factor in preaching—an element utterly wanting in the professional, perfunctory and parrot-like essays of men whose doctrine is merely hereditary or churchly.

The Spirit of God will give *freedom* to the preacher's soul and tongue. Doubtless there is a "bondage

of the pulpit ; ” it is a bondage of doubt, and sometimes of fear, and sometimes of the manuscript ; sometimes of self-consciousness, sometimes of the audience as a company of spies and critics ; but “ where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. ” It is wonderful what independence of circumstances, of men’s judgments, of nervous solicitude, it confers ! As the flame leaps to heaven in bold, free, victorious energy, regardless of opposition, subduing everything to itself — so a spirit-inflamed minister is as free as were those Hebrews in the furnace, their bonds consumed, themselves walking harmless with one like unto the Son of God.

“ At such times the soul walks on high places ; it walks automatically and with sovereign force, without constraint or urgency of volition. The man himself is amazed at the rush with which both thought and utterance come. The reserved forces break into play. Things are at hand which had seemed inaccessible. Previous knowledge is as if transfigured. The whole spirit is full of energy, full of light. It rejoices to reveal itself in action and in speech ; and its words are instinct with brightness and power. ” — *Dr. R. S. Storrs, Lect. p. 107.*

What limit is there to the force of that man in whom rolls and surges the deep, shoreless sea of divine inspiration ; who is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows ; who is mightily conscious of the ever blessed God, as a concrete and personal inhabitant, a living sympathetic quickener of thought and emotion ? He is upborne by a power invisible, but as real as is the sea to the swimmer who floats on its

emerald bosom, or as the ambient air to the sailing eagle. His utterance will be a blending of serenity and energy ; he will be free from the nervous tension and unnatural strain of voice and manner which exhaust both himself and his audience.

It is indeed impossible to express or overestimate the force represented in the fullness of the Spirit. It might be compared to the incalculable force of Niagara, whose placid bosom and mighty plunge carry a power competent to generate electric power and light for a hundred great cities.

Lacordaire, speaking of his call to preach unexpectedly at Notre-Dame, says : " Moreover, it is with the orator as with Mount Horeb: before God strikes him he is but barren rock, but as soon as the Divine hand has touched him, as it were, with a finger, there burst forth streams which water the desert."

Again, the Holy Spirit bestows the energy of a *divine insatiable yearning for the souls of the people* ; He imparts that thrilling, vitalizing power with which, in the beginning, the Spirit of the Lord brooded over the face of the waters, till out of darkness and chaos there emerged a world of order, beauty and fruitfulness. One will have the experience of which Paul speaks in Galatians, iv. : " My little children of whom I *am again in travail* till Christ be formed in you ;" and in I. Corinthians, iv., 15 : " For in Christ Jesus I have *begotten you through the Gospel.*"

What is this but that secret, vital movement of the Divine Spirit in his most sacred and pathetic energy involved in the birth of souls, in which exquisite pain

and exquisite desire mingle in one soul, ready to die that others may be born into the kingdom of heaven? This is not a natural stress and agony of desire, but the Divine Spirit mightily quickening in the preacher's soul infinite yearnings to reproduce, in the image of Christ, the life that swells and pulsates in his own breast.

*In the pulpit.*

But not only must the preparation of the sermon itself, from the choice of theme to the peroration or application, be under the guidance of the Spirit; not only must interpretation, argument, illustration and all the product of meditation in the study be influenced by the illumination and impregnation of the preacher's mind and heart, but he must have the endowment of spiritual power in *the act and process of delivery.*

As one cannot carry fragrant ointment shut up in the palm of his hand and unnoticed: the perfume will reveal itself—so the man of God in whose soul and sermon a spiritual essence dwells, will betray, unconsciously, to the congregation his secret. Even in his ordinary life,

“ When one who holds communion with the skies  
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,  
And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
It seems as if an angel shook his wings—  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
That tells us whence his treasure was supplied.”

Much more will this appear when the Ambassador, direct from the Throne, receiving his message,

as it were, face to face with the Eternal, confronts the expectant people. He will be recognized by them as clothed with something more than secular or scholarly, or oratorical interest. If his face does "not shine like that of Moses coming down from the mount, with dazzling glory, yet there will be something in his mien, his bearing, his action and utterance that will impress the beholder with the thought, 'This man has been with Jesus and learned of Him.'"

In the act of preaching the power of the Holy Spirit operates along the nerves of the preacher's whole being, producing results as real in the psychical realm as in the physical realm does electricity or gravitation. Both are mysterious and inexplicable; both are consciously felt as an experience, and both are visible in their results. Effects are produced upon the preacher's native faculties and upon those of the congregation, which are supernatural and cannot be accounted for by any known laws of the human constitution.

Will any one doubt that the disciples, as they preached at Pentecost, were conscious of a new energy working through them, giving them new interpretations of the words of Christ, new understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, new boldness of faith, new love and zeal for the salvation of men? In every way they were in a condition of mental and moral inspiration and exaltation, and they boldly and promptly answered those who wondered and those who scoffed, by quoting the prophetic promises of the pouring out of the Spirit and declaring this to be the fulfilment

thereof. And the effects justified their claim. The men whom not even the words of Christ had moved, whom the awful pathos of Calvary had not touched, were cut to the heart, in deep humility confessing these despised disciples to be "men and brethren," and anxiously seeking of them help in the cry, "What must we do?"

Now, as men are so constituted by their Creator as to respond to Him when the right chords in their nature are struck by a cunning hand, the psychic touch of the Spirit and the psychic answer will be coincident. An experiment in physics, familiar to the modern student, may illustrate this. Such is the relation between the waves of sound and waves of flame, that when a certain note is struck upon a musical instrument held near a column of gas flame the latter is thrown into lively agitation, while to every other note it is impassive. In the same way, there is a tone and quality in the spiritual character and expression of the preacher by which the hearts of men will be stirred to faith, repentance and love, while they would remain senseless and unresponsive to the man who spoke, however eloquently, on the lower plain of mere worldly wisdom or æsthetic inspiration. The only explanation we can give is in the language of Scripture—"There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

The dynamic force of the Spirit-informed and Spirit-impelled preaching is due, then, to its being pertinent to the purpose of God and the susceptibilities of the hearer. The Spirit, on the day of Pentecost,



through Apostolic lips, spoke a universal language. Every man heard, or thought he heard, those men speaking in the tongue in which he was born. Even so to-day, through the lips of the minister, the Spirit speaks the native dialect of souls. Each hearer thinks himself addressed. The preacher seems to read his very thoughts and to be acquainted with his life ; nay, he often interprets him to himself. He understands now the blind groping and dumb pleading of inarticulate yearnings and fears ; he sees depths and heights in his nature hitherto suspected but unexplored, and, spell-bound, he gazes wistfully at the preacher and wonders "whence hath this man this knowledge, having never learned my private history nor looked into my heart?"

The man who preaches in the power of the Spirit produces impressions which no mere eloquence can effect. Before that divine light which radiates from his word the veil of darkness is rent from the mind ; opposition to the truth surrenders, the frozen affections melt, the reluctant will awakes to action, conscience declares, "I ought!" desire cries, "I would!" and the whole man responds, "I will!"

The Holy Spirit, like the gentle flow of the river of God's pleasures through the soul, will impart both to thought and utterance a freshness, liveliness and naturalness that make it seem quite new and original, like the day dawn and the stars. In point of fact, there are few original men in any age. Goethe says pointedly :

"In the world there are many echoes, but not

many voices." But even an echo may be thrilling as a celestial note if it be that of the Alpine horn among the Swiss heights. The straining after originality is often a pitiful exhibition of vanity. Nature is always sufficiently original, and especially when washed in fresh showers, or rent by lightning, or shaken by storms, or bursting into springtime. And when the preacher's soul, enriched with truth and awakened by meditation, is further wrought upon by the heavenly powers, shot through by the electric flashes, and shaken by the supernatural energies of the Spirit, he will speak a mightier message and a newer gospel than that of the scribes and pharisees, whose pompous platitudes are moldy beneath their purple.

*How to obtain spiritual power.*

To obtain this power the first step is to *render honor to the Holy Spirit.*

We must recognize His personality and true Deity. We must honor, trust and adore Him as possessed of all divine attributes; omniscient, to know all our needs; omnipresent, so that we do not need to search for Him or wait for Him; omnipotent, so that nothing is beyond His power to bestow on us or work in us or for us, or in those to whom we preach, so that what is impossible with men is easy with Him. We must think of Him as the full and exact representative of all that Christ was as the Way, the Truth and the Life, His specific function being to render vital the word and effective the work of Jesus Christ: the very soul of Christ, the living fulfillment of his promise: "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It is right for us, therefore, to address our prayers to the Holy Spirit as to the Father and the Son. We should remind ourselves that all the divine operations in our hearts, from the moment of the New Birth till the entrance into Heaven as holy and victorious beings, are through His power and wisdom and love.

We must remind ourselves continually that while it is the "word of God" we use as the instrument of faith, and the Cross of Christ as the radiant point of salvation, the Holy Spirit alone can make the former a *living* word and the latter the "power of God unto salvation." We must never forget that this is the age of the Spirit's administration, and that while He glorifies Christ we must glorify *Him*. We must so honor Him as to accept every impulsion given by Him as God's own action on us, respond to His every prompting, reverently surrender our whole being to His possession and dominion, and so believe and obey Him that His unhindered power may work through all our powers—the faculties of a sanctified body, soul and spirit.

Zoroaster required his followers, the Persians, to quench their fires from time to time, and rekindle them from burning coals in the temple of the Sun, thereby reminding them that fire was Heaven's sacred gift. And so the preacher must daily renew at God's altar the celestial flame, reminding himself of his dependence on the heavenly fire to kindle in other hearts religious emotion and aspiration.

To fulfil his mission to men in the way most

effective, he should cultivate, also, a profound sense of responsibility. He knows that faithfulness to his calling means nothing less than the use of talent raised to its highest efficiency and of opportunity to its fullest extent. He knows that his native powers, however cultivated, are utterly inadequate; that God expects him to avail himself of supernatural "power from on high;" has commanded him to seek for it till he obtain it.

Let him get imbued with Paul's conception of preaching, for it is the divine ideal for all time. How the Apostle emphasizes the necessity of spiritual power! he regards it as *the very essence and soul of preaching*. When Christ from the heavens commissioned him, it was to perform a transcendent and supernatural work, viz., to "open the eyes of men and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." (Acts, xxvi., 18.)

He had no confidence in his mental grasp, his learning or his zeal. He coveted spiritual power, and called men to witness that his preaching was "not in word only but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." "My speech and my preaching," says he, "were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." And, again, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of men."

And such power is to be felt rather than de-

scribed or analyzed. It resides in, it permeates a man's whole being and the entire circle of his activities; it cannot be localized, it cannot be identified exclusively with any one of them. It is felt in the solemn statements of doctrine and also in the informal utterances of casual intercourse; it is felt in action no less than in language, in trivial acts no less than in heroic ventures; it is seen in the very expression of the countenance: an unearthly beauty, whose native home is in a higher world yet which tarries among men from age to age.

It is nothing less than His spiritual presence irradiating upon His servants; they live in Him, they lose something of their proper personality; they are absorbed into, they are transfigured by a life altogether higher than their own. His voice blends with theirs, His hand gives gentleness and decision to their acts.

*Importance of the subject.*

The state of Christendom in this twentieth century reveals, in an impressive way, the vital and paramount importance of the subject we have been discussing. The line of cleavage in the visible church of this new era is already manifesting itself to be, not the line that divides Calvinism from Arminianism, nor Baptism from Pedobaptism, nor Congregational Independency from Churchly Conformity, nor even Protestantism from Romanism, but the line which *divides a spiritual from a secular church and ministry.*

In one direction, men, both of the pulpit and the pew, and of all evangelical creeds, are drawing together

in conference, study and prayer for the development of the spiritual life on Pentecostal lines. In another direction the secular spirit has assailed the very chairs of Theology and Biblical Interpretation in our schools; depth and earnestness of conviction concerning the mission and life-force of the Church are retreating from the pulpits and pews of many of our popular churches, to find a refuge and a sphere in Keswick Conferences, and Salvation Army barracks, and Oriental Missions and Alliances, and Orchard Beach Assemblies and Christian Endeavor movements and others of kindred aims.

Meantime, the assaults of skepticism are not directed, as formerly, against any particular doctrine of the Bible, nor against the Bible as a whole, simply, but against the very existence of the Supernatural.

In the beginning of the last half century, Cardinal Wiseman, in the course of a theological lecture, said: "Fifty years hence the professors of this place will be endeavoring to prove, not transubstantiation, but the existence of God." He foresaw that the battle of the giants would be not over the Thirty-nine Articles, but over the primary question whether there be a spiritual world or a personal Divine Spirit. This seemed like a pessimistic view at the time, but a broad survey of the literature of to-day presents some ominous signs of its truth.

In what direction are we to look for an antidote to the materialistic spirit and trend of popular thought?

I am profoundly convinced that the only sufficient vindication and defense of vital Christianity and the only effectual weapon of its advancing conquest is a ministry endued with the power of the Holy Ghost. Is it too much to say that the preacher of the Gospel is the trustee of human faith? The place he holds as a social factor has been secured, not from admiration of his learning or eloquence, nor from his official appointment, but because, first of all, he stands in every community as a witness to that divine instinct which recognizes in the operations of nature and in the human soul and in history the immanence and sovereignty of a personal God. He appeals to the sense of a higher and diviner reality in human life, and offers for man's satisfaction spiritual and eternal verities. He appeals to the latent instinct and yearning for immortal happiness.

"Man," says Jacoby, "is a yonder-sided animal." "Man," says Dr. Hedge, "is a yonder-minded being, an embodied hereafter." But these are ideal conceptions. Largely these instincts are overborne by the preponderance of things utterly secular; the powers of the world to come have, in social and business life, been dethroned.

The pulpit champions man's spiritual nature and eternal possibilities. In the midst of the turbulent demands and glittering deceptions of the passing world it insists upon the claims of the soul and of the eternal future. The preacher points to "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" as the heritage and privilege of men. He stands for God as though God did

speak through him; and it is his business to justify that claim. The stupendous claims of the preacher to a commission from the eternal Throne and to a right of aid from a supernatural force make it imperative that he should prove his credentials as the organ of Divine influences by spiritual victories and trophies.

The actual condition of at least some sections of the Church and its ministry might be represented in the reply of those Ephesians to Paul: "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was *given*."

Rev. E. B. Pusey in his *Historical Enquiry into the Theology of Germany* puts the case in a parable on this wise:

"I have heard how, once upon a time, the Christian faith heard of the threatening and formidable incursions of her foes, so she determined to muster her preachers and teachers to review their weapons, and she found, beyond all her expectations, everything prepared. There was, namely, a vast host of armed men; strong, threatening forms, weapons which they exercised admirably, brightly flashing from afar. But as she came near, she sunk almost into a swoon; what she thought iron and steel were toys; the swords were made of the mere lead of words, the breastplate of the soft linen of pleasure; the helmet of the wax of plumed vanity; the shields, of papyrus scrolled over with opinions; the spears, thin reeds of weak conjecture; the cannon, Indian reed; the powder, poppy seeds; the balls, of glass! Through the indolent neglect of their leaders, they had sold her true weapons, and had introduced these; nay, they even



made her former warriors, whose armor of faithfulness and strength were proved, contemptible. Bitterly did religion weep; but the whole assembly bid her be of good cheer; they would show their faith to the last breath. 'What avails me,' she cried, 'your faith, since your *actions* are worthless? Of old, when I led naked, unarmed combatants to the field, one martyr, one warrior faithful to death, was worth more to me than a hundred of you in your gilded and silvered panoplies!''

The parable interprets itself; and while we hope and believe better things of the Church, so far as some portions of the host of preachers and teachers are concerned, it is a picture full of serious suggestion. No words can picture the grandeur and solemnity of the position of the "Ministry of Reconciliation." Oh, wonderful work! To be the organ of communication between a holy and happy God and unholy and unhappy men! To be an active and inspired instrument in that mysterious transformation by which the sons of Adam become the children of God; by which a new character is communicated to men, crowned with infinite and eternal blessings!

Such a work might lure an archangel from his seat. Let us not fail to grasp this incomparable honor with equal humility and avidity; and, with intelligent enthusiasm, seek by every means to become "vessels unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. xi., 21.)

With what jealousy should we seek to be purged

from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit ! How should we humble ourselves to be the least of all men in our poverty of spirit, simply ambitious to love and to labor for them. Fervently, patiently and persistently let us press toward the Cross till, winding our arms about it and clinging there, bathed in its glory and thrilled by its life, we shall carry into our work a perennial and pentecostal power.

## UNREALIZED IDEALS



## CHAPTER XI

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### UNREALIZED IDEALS

THE ideal and the real in the preacher's work are apparently separated by a great gulf; but they should never be regarded as contrasted. Strictly the ideal is the conceived and vital, yet unborn or undeveloped real. It is the real not yet incarnated into the actual—hovering as a beckoning angel in the horizon.

The ministry of the Gospel, beyond any other calling, suggests to each aspirant a sublimated life and work. The minister who possesses the apostolic call, impulse and aim; whose devout soul is seized upon by the lambent flame of religious enthusiasm, evolves some infinitely fair creation, and hope points to its full realization, at least in the distant years.

What true preacher at middle life does not recall the fair portraiture of the man, the ambassador from heaven, the shepherd of Christ's flock, which adorned in earlier years the picture gallery of his imagination? What a noble picture it was! How pure from earthly stain! how full of seraphic fervor! how brave and unselfish in service, wedded to noble poverty! how happy in simplicity of motive and zeal in action! how dignified in humble bearing! how salutary and loving in conversation with men! how intimate and constant in communion with God! With mind spiritually illumined,

soul rapt into eloquent utterance by the sublimities of your theme, with voice modulated to the thunders of rebuke, the pathos of entreaty and the clarion tones of triumphant faith, you saw yourself standing before eager and silent throngs, an apostle of God confessed! Such was the ideal. Alas! how far distant, as yet, we are from its full-rounded realization! In truth, to most men, for all their early dreaming, middle life reveals a rather commonplace reality; and inspiration, with broken wing, limps painfully along, with growing sense of dissatisfaction, through failure to apprehend that for which we were apprehended of Christ as his ministers.

*Why have we not attained our ideal?*

If we can answer that question, there is hope of some higher character and work still left for us. Doubtless the causes of disappointment are many, and do not all exist in any one case. The idealist in any form of merely *earthly* aim is doomed to disappointment; for life, if divorced from the spiritual and eternal, is essentially illusive. In so far as its pivotal point is self and its horizon earth, life is a vain show, a dance of shadows, an eager chase of mocking and receding beauties. Could we personify the noblest ideal of the merely "natural man," we should need to include in the picture a viper sleeping in his bosom, destined to waken one time or other, and a cypress wreath upon his brow, be that brow lifted never so proudly. Let a true genius conceive a sublime ideal, let him seek to reproduce it, you will hear him mourn over his failures. His efforts will, perhaps, produce something admirable; they will

satisfy everybody but himself. He will be like the greatest poet of Rome commanding that his immortal work be burned at his death; like St. Cecilia breaking her musical instrument when she hears in the distance the chorus of angels.

But the ideal of the man whose life is hid with Christ in God, and who has become a partaker of the divine nature, cannot be too lofty or radiant in moral features—nor has it any inherent element of decay or ultimate disappointment, for “He shall perfect that which concerneth us.” Truly the function and aim of the minister of Christ is essentially and immeasurably grand :

“It well might fill an angel’s heart,  
It filled the Saviour’s hands.”

It has in it all the features of immortal worth and beauty. In it there is scope for unlimited development in every affection and faculty. Its object overtops all others, its motives blend the human and divine, its force combines the finest elements of native eloquence with the unction of the Holy Spirit.

So long as it transcends not the pattern outlined for us in the Scriptures, there is nothing in the ideal of Christly or Apostolic character and service, as painted by the most fervid fancy, that can outreach a reasonable and practical attainment. It can be transferred to the sphere of actual experience without dimming its luster or shrinking its symmetrical proportions. Concrete illustrations of such actualized ideals are seen in a Paul, a Chrysostom, a St. Francis, a Chalmers, a Wesley, a Baxter, a Martyn, a Judson, a

Gordon, and others well known to history, together with many a man beyond his parish unknown save to the recording angel. Luminous witnesses these, shining sentinel characters all along the Church's history, telling that the real ministry may closely approximate the ideal.

Why, then, do most of us fall strangely short of it?

*Perhaps our portraiture has not been drawn from a divine model, nor from any true standard, but is simply the outgrowth of egotism and worldly ambition.*

Consider that disappointed and misanthropic genius Doré, whose illustrations have won for him a wide, if not an exalted reputation. Starting with a sensitive organization and tender affections, he became the victim of ambition for praise as a painter in oil. It was characteristic of him to ignore model and law, and to develop his powers according to his own capricious fancy, exclaiming, "My mind is my model for everything!" His egotism led him to think no laudation could exceed his merit. He sought to startle the world by the number and variety of his original conceptions and the rapidity of his execution. He aimed to cause a sensation and secure a medal from the French Academy. He caused a sensation, he failed to gain the medal, and he died of a broken heart. Might not his ambition and his failure find many a parallel in the ranks of the ministry? Each of us knows some man now living and scarcely gray-headed whose once tender and aspiring soul has been embittered, whose passion for greatness, or at least popularity, has scorched the freshness out of his affections,



who is growing prematurely old and fretful. He has abandoned hope, because success eluded him; and has it not been because his ideal was a brilliant vanity?

The men are not few whose ideal is intellectual ascendancy, literary culture and distinction. The spiritual and sacrificial elements are absent from their conception. But a preacher had better toil in obscurity with only mother-wit, practical sympathy, an English Bible and the teaching Spirit to show him how to work for his fellowmen than to mount to a conspicuous and æsthetic ministry in which only the cultured class shall know or care about him.

The divine, Christly ideal of the ministry brings us into service for the whole people. An ideal ministry makes talent, scholarship, refinement, superiority of every sort a debt to the world, rather than a luxury or an ornament. "Not an act of Christ's life, nor a word from his lips, gives any evidence that he would have tolerated the awful anomaly of clerical life in which a man ministers placidly in a palatial church to none but elect and gilded hearers, with all the paraphernalia of elegance around him, and with culture expressed in the very fragrance of the atmosphere, while 'Five Points' and 'Boweries' are growing up uncared for by any labor of his, within hearing of his organ and quartette." (Prof. Phelps.)

Sometimes an apostolic man revolts at the very popularity and position which his genius has brought him. Hear Robertson of Brighton, that man the most distinguished of his generation as a preacher, saying: "I wish I did not hate preaching so much; the degra-

dation of being a 'Brighton preacher' is almost intolerable. I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed; but I think there is not a hard-working artisan who in his work does not seem to be a worthier and higher being than myself. I do not depreciate spiritual work. I hold it higher than secular. But how humiliated and how degraded to the dust I have felt in perceiving myself quietly taken by God and men for the popular preacher of a fashionable watering-place; how slight the power seems to be given by it of winning souls, and how sternly I have kept my tongue from saying a syllable or a sentence in pulpit or on platform, because it would be popular!" This is from the man who has been called the Arnold of the English pulpit.

With some men, while their ideal may have been noble, failure to realize it is to be traced to mental or physical indolence, or both; to dreaminess or vagrancy of habit, or, what is worse, to moral cowardice. There may be a sentimental yearning for ideal excellence. In fond reverie the poetic temperament imagines a career and character invested with the noblest features; but the nerveless *will* does not impel to action, self-indulgence procrastinates, and the heart, enamored with its own emotions, lolls on its pillow of dreams when it should be patiently plodding toward its goal.

A pleasant nest and popularity following in the wake of talent, a comfortable income and a loving family, the luxury of desultory reading and the lounge with congenial friends, all combine to cool the fervid glow of spiritual aspiration and weaken the high reso-

lution to climb to a unique and original superiority in character and work. Sometimes an environment of sheer worldly cares, the coarse necessity of making a small salary support a large family with liberal tastes, anxieties arising from the crookedness of parishioners, or the total depravity of things that cannot be made to go right in church life, and, perhaps, physical maladies or family sorrows—all may prevail to chill our enthusiasm, and turn our Pegasus into the wingless toiler on the tow-path.

Perhaps the spirit and example of the people by whom we are surrounded, their pell-mell chase for material wealth, and luxury, and ease, for condition rather than character; the social atmosphere of the conceited, commonplace and uninspiring men, even in the ministerial office, with whom we are thrown in contact, tend to lower us to their level and generate a secret skepticism as to the reasonableness of our ideal. We learn to doubt whether its attainment is practicable for us; and if so, whether the world wants such characters or could appreciate them; and so we grow shy of the romantic, and suspicious of our guardian-angel, who may yet be beckoning us on to spiritual superiority.

Another reason is our instinctive dread of loneliness. We are too gregarious. We shrink from that solitude of life and of spirit which separates all great and lofty souls from the multitude. True, the man of large and noble and original nature knows his kind, and lives with them as the ordinary man does not and cannot. The mountain is an integral part of the

landscape, a familiar and beneficent factor of its beauty, dignity, fertility and wealth ; but its cloud-piercing peak, even when surrounded by other peaks, must always be solitary.

A great work of art has something incommunicable about it. In every high, ideal experience there is a sense of loneliness; the distance it is removed from the common standards and methods is clearly marked by the deepening consciousness of isolation, loss of companionship and sense of human sympathy from those for whom we really live and labor as well as from our comrades in the ministry. In the silent solitude where only heaven and the Divine presence environ the soul, one must be content to dwell as far as his deepest feelings are concerned.

It was there Christ dwelt. But most men tire of that solitude even for an hour. They hunger for companionship ; their eyes, instead of peering within the veil to see God's face, yearn for the familiar faces of men. They seek books, newspapers, periodicals, clubs, assemblies, society ; and like those angels of the vision who "when they stood upon the earth let down their wings," the soul loses its power of flight, treads the level of ordinary men and adapts itself to their standards.

Sometimes our ideal is not attained because *its salient features are adapted to an obsolete order of things, or a foreign environment.* The susceptible student finds in the seminary library the memoirs and works of a Chrysostom, Pascal, Savonarola, Knox, Lacordaire, Pastor Harms, McCheyne, or

Henry Martyn, and he is fascinated. From one or all he selects features which he combines in his model preacher and pastor. But his attempts to train his thought and feeling to journey along the way of their "diaries," or later on, to work upon their methods, to train his flock to the church life they diffused, or to dare enterprises to which they were impelled, all fail. His preaching in their style, dealing with phases of thought and habits of life prevalent with the people to whom they ministered, proves to be, in large part, beating the air.

He lives in a different age; new kinds of temptation, new forms of social life, have to be dealt with; the church to which he is attached has other traditions and usages; other issues have arisen, and new adaptations to the actual wants of the people must follow. In his pulpit the splendid orations of a Bossuet or Jeremy Taylor, the stately movement of a Robert Hall or Chalmers, are found as incongruous and worthless to him as was the armor of Saul to the stripling David. It is well for him that he has not attained his ideal in such a case, for if successful, it would only be to find himself out of harmony with his period, and a mystic, or a philosopher, or a controversialist in an age and among a people who require a man and preacher adapted to their real life and current thinking and suffering and struggle. There are some triumphant defeats of which victory herself might be proud.

But when our ideal is just and in harmony with our native talents and mental make-up, then we are

to *cherish and guard it from decay*; we must strenuously keep our souls alive to its pursuit, we must not lose our faith in its attainment :

“To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.”

Regarding the oft-despised “air castle,” Emerson said: “Build your castle in the air; where else should castles be built? Only see to it that you put foundations under it.” Cloud-built towers, piled up by winds and adorned by sunbeams, will fade when the sun sets, and fall into wreck when the next breeze strikes them; but ideals of character and life-work have no such airy genesis. They are children of the heart and intellect, and that, too, when the affections of the soul are healthy and normal, unwearied and unsophisticated; yes, they are oft begotten by the Spirit of God. They are essential to the best development of character and the fairest, noblest forms of service.

Mere ambition for the rewards of success will lead to unspiritual tone, narrowness of sympathy and a distortion of moral symmetry. For all that is most valuable and enduring in life, we must be carried above ourselves by some inspiring example or conception of the virtues in transfiguration; some pure, uplifting aim must be kept like a pole star constantly before us.

Let the minister not forget to read the memoirs of the great and consecrated souls that have adorned the Church, the higher *illuminati* whose biography and work, whose struggles and victories, have rescued

human nature itself from ignominy, have made the Church revered by thinking men, and constrained us thankfully to say, as we studied their portraits, "I, too, am a minister of the Gospel."

To attain our ideal we must resist secular, even literary, scientific, or literary seductions. The world, even in its higher forms of socialist, political or æsthetic philosophies, is not to be led by following it. Social philosophers in this day are busy in their endeavors to build up society without God. The prophet in the pulpit must insist on Christ as the foundation stone and chief master-builder, and work by His plans and with His materials.

In his naturalistic and materialistic environments the preacher's soul is exposed to several forms of temptation to lower his standard. A dreary sense of *unreality* sometimes steals over him. He is dealing with things unseen, with powers intangible by the senses. If he is of a sensitive nature, with variable temperament, he will sometimes be startled and shocked to find himself preaching what he does not fully believe, or is not sure that he has experienced. As an ambassador, he cannot have an invariable imperative; or as a herald, a constant enthusiasm; he cannot see nor hear much of the fruits of his work.

Is it strange that he is sometimes overwhelmed with a fear of its unreality? That he reaches after something tangible, perhaps social problems? But this is not preaching. It is not enough that his teaching be true; his work is to hold forth *revealed* truth, spiritual facts and forces. And there can be no greater mis-

take than to suppose that spiritual preaching is ideal, but not practical. Preaching is most practical when it is most spiritual.

“With all the sordidness of the times,” says a great living preacher, “the preachers that have been the most powerful have been the most spiritual.” We must seek to regain the sense of reality by a clearer vision and firmer grasp of essential spiritual verities. The preacher who seeks reality by preaching secularities, however true, will not find the reality of preaching.

Your ideal, my earnest yet discouraged brother, is not yet actualized in your experiences! Well, remember there is, after all, something to be glad of even in that. Thorwaldsen, it is said, on the completion of his finest work surveyed it with a feeling of sadness from the very fact that it satisfied him. That exquisite genius, that severe critic of himself, could see nothing to be improved, and he interpreted the fact as a token that his talent had reached its culmination, and that henceforth the fires of aspiration would begin to pale. Doubtless there is a secret, providential reason for the fact that your ideal still eludes your grasp. Faith and Hope must have a *distant* goal, or fall asleep in bowers of ease and self-sufficiency.

Hence it has been said: “In our life there is always some dream yet to be fulfilled. We have not come to the point which we feel sure has yet to be reached. Thus God lures us from year to year up the steep hills and along roads flat and cheerless.



Presently, we think the dream will come true ; presently—in one moment more—to-morrow at latest ; and, as the years rise and fall, the hope abiding in the heart and singing with tender sweetness, then the end, the weary sickness, the farewell, the last breath—and the dream that was to have shaped itself on earth welcomes us, as the angel that guarded our life, into the fellowship of heaven.”\*

This, which was written of life's ideal in general, is intensely true of the minister's hope. No loftiest spirit in the Church's history of heroes ever thought he had reached his ideal ; the noblest and most unselfish mourned to the last their failure ; but each holy and prayerful effort brings us nearer to our goal.

In conclusion, the Divine-Human Ideal, for all time and for all Gospel heralds, is Jesus Christ himself. What simple pathos in that word, “ *He went through all their cities and villages preaching the Gospel!* ” How near that picture brings him to us ! His character, spirit and methods as a preacher are clearly drawn ; they are as inimitable as they are transcendent, and they may be wrought in us through the habitual, adoring contemplation of him.

In the life of St. Francis of Assisi—of whom Ernest Renan said, “ There have been but two Christians, Jesus and St. Francis ”—there is a touching illustration of this impregnation of the soul with Christ. This truly apostolic preacher, wedded to Poverty and expended in Love as a herald of the Cross, in his ungodly youth, while sadly seeking rest and purity,

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\* Dr. Joseph Parker.

once visited the church of St. Damian, among the Umbrian hills, in the midst of a cypress wood. Dilapidated and served by a poor priest who had scarcely the wherewithal for necessary food, the chapel contained naught but a stone altar and a picture of the Crucifixion. The Crucified One, bearing an expression of ineffable calm and gentleness, instead of closing the eyelids in eternal surrender to the weight of suffering, looked down in self-forgetfulness, and its pure, clear gaze seemed to say, "Come unto me."

Before this poor altar Francis prayed: "Great and glorious God, and thou, Lord Jesus, I pray ye shed abroad your light in the darkness of my mind. Be found of me, Lord, so that in all things I act only in accordance with Thy holy will."

Thus he prayed; and, behold! little by little it seemed to him that his gaze could not detach itself from that of Jesus; he felt something marvelous taking place in and around him. The sacred victim took on life, and in the outward silence he was aware of a voice speaking to him an ineffable language. Jesus accepted his oblation, and the heart of the poor solitary was already bathed in light and strength. This vision marked his triumph. His union with Christ was consummated; from that time he could exclaim, with the mystics of every age, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" From that day the love which had triumphed in the crucified One became the very centre of his religious life, and, as it were, the soul of his soul.

Thus must the vision of Christ's sacrificial *love*

for men become incorporated in the being of every one who would fully enter into the fellowship of Christ's work for souls. This direct, intimate and enduring contact with Jesus is realized when belief rises into *faith*, that living and life-imparting faith which Vinet has so well defined: "To believe is to look; it is a serious, attentive and prolonged look; a look more simple than that of observation, a look which looks and nothing more; artless, infantine, it has all the soul in it; it is a look of the soul and not of the mind—a look which does not seek to analyze its object, but receives it as a whole into the soul through the eyes.

This habitual look of the soul upon the Crucified, this mysterious but sympathetic communion with the compassionate victim, will gradually impress, if not on hands and feet and side (as in St. Francis), yet on the heart and life of the preacher, the "Stigmata" of self-renunciation and sacrifice which is the minister's ideal. The more we abide with Christ in the wilderness and mountains, and even in Gethsemane, the more will His divine manliness grow in us. We shall break away from narrow and outgrown models, become morally grand and strong, and move with freedom and world-wide sympathies; the psychic energy of which we have spoken will become the natural life of our ministry, the outflow of pathos and power from every feature and faculty, from heart and voice and eye and hand, will reveal "a prince having power with God and men."

Enter with me this humble monastery in Milan

and stand before this picture, which, after hundreds of years, still retains an infinite charm. While artists are copying and pilgrims are gazing, listen to the lesson of its origin. A great master conceived its design and prepared its outline, but under the burden of age decided to commit the work to a beloved pupil. The young artist, counting the work far beyond his talent and experience, cried: "I cannot, master; the work is too august, too high for my powers; no one but yourself could complete such a design." "I commit this work to thee, my son. Do thy best."

To all the youth's protestation the old man's reply was: "Begin, my son, and do thy best." The youth, trembling but devout, prepared his palette and took the brush, and, kneeling before the appointed work, prayed: "It is for thy sake, beloved Master. I implore God for skill, patience and courage to perform the task thou hast given me." Then with swelling heart he began the work. From day to day the master viewed the work, bestowing cheer and counsel. The pupil's hand grew steadier, delight in his theme increased, slumbering genius stirred and woke in his soul, and fear was lost in reverent enthusiasm. At length the work was finished, and the master gazed upon it. Bursting into tears and embracing his pupil, he exclaimed: "My son, I paint no more!"

Such is the tradition of "*The Last Supper*," the masterpiece of that greatest of religious painters, Leonardo da Vinci.

Oh, preacher of the Gospel! The Master has committed to thy hand the sublime and yet simple work of

reproducing His own life and mission in the world, and His own image upon the hearts of men. To all thy fears he answers, "Do thy best, my son." Humbly and faithfully toiling under the great Master-Workman's eye, thy highest aspirations shall be more than realized in the fulfilment of that promise, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

THE END.











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