

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXXI.

OCTOBER, 1919.

No. 1.

MY FIRST SERMON.

BY THE REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D., LL.D.,

Pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, New York City.

"Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work on me." Mark 14:6.

One Sunday morning in 1869, a young theologian sat in his room at Number 9 University Place in this city contemplating a sermon on the foregoing text, which he regarded as a masterpiece of clever composition. It was his first sermon, his "trial sermon," and not unnaturally he was eager to deliver it. The church bells had ceased ringing. There came a knocking at his door and, as if in immediate answer to his wish, a messenger announced that Dr. Joseph P. Thompson of the Broadway Tabernacle had been suddenly taken ill and somebody was needed to supply his pulpit. Would the young man preach? *Would he?* How true it is that fools rush in where angels fear to tread! The youth mounted the pulpit steps of the Broadway Tabernacle that morning with a degree of self-confidence that he has never been able to command even to this day. At the close of the service he was assured by some of the ladies present that his sermon was "simply beautiful"; he knew, without telling, that it was profound. His only misgiving was lest he had preached over the heads of his congregation. He realizes now that half a century has passed—for this is the fiftieth anniversary of that notable debut—that the sermon in question was "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

A CLINIC IN HOMILETICS.

BY ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, D. D.

First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.

The present article is intended chiefly to encourage and help young ministers who are somewhat familiar with the theory of homiletics, but who have not yet had time to perfect their technique. These young pastors are more needy today than when enrolled in the seminary, under the tuition of saintly scholars, and with access to the world's best books. They must not grow weary, however, for in due season they shall master their art.

The newer homiletics is tending toward greater simplicity. The sermon is made for the message and not the message for the sermon. Dr. Breed, for example, classifies sermons as follows, according to their purpose: narrative, expository, evangelistic, doctrinal, and special. This is all, save the illustrated sermon, and sermons in courses. Each of his terms is clear, unless it be the special sermon, which he can best define for himself. (Read page 417, "Preparing to Preach," Hodder & Stoughton, \$2.00.)

A SERIES OF SERMONS.

Why not prepare a series of sermons? One great essential in such an undertaking is time. The young preacher who expects to receive much benefit from these columns should plan to spend a good deal of time each day with his Bible open before him and with his pen in his hand.

Suppose that you begin now to plan a series of sermons to be based on the first portion of the Fourth Gospel, and to be delivered on the Sabbath mornings of the quarter beginning with the new year. You will not find this course so easy as a similar one in Luke or in Mark, but you can do it well.

You will begin by saturating yourself in the spirit of the book as a whole, reading it again and again, with a prayer in

your heart and a pen in your hand. For at least an hour a day you will live and move and have your being in this one revelation of the Son of God. Some such method of book study has for years been the daily habit of Dr. Jowett and of Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

After you have gleaned from this book practically all the truth which you can hope to glean at present, you will begin to search out ways and means of feeding your congregation on the fruits of your worthy labor, but before you take up with them any one selected passage, you will show them in the simplest and most attractive style what the book as a whole now means to your own heart and life, and what you hope it will mean to them.

For such a bird's-eye view we may select any one of several lookout peaks. We must determine upon a single point of view, sufficiently high, and at any cost we must remain there throughout the sermon, or the resulting impression will quickly become blurred. Perhaps we shall choose to point out in this book the rapidly crystallizing opposition to Christ, because of the increasingly clear unfolding of his Deity.

"A NARROWING CIRCLE OF FRIENDS."

Introd.—Modern teachers emphasize the popularity of Jesus, but the Fourth Gospel shows his increasing unpopularity, culminating in His death.

- I. Jesus Winning Friends (Chap. 1-4).
 - II. Making Enemies (5-12).
 - III. Alone With the Inner Circle (13-18).
 - IV. Alone With God (19-21).
- Concl.**—A brief personal application, suggested by 20:31.

Much more profitable would be a sermon devoted to this keynote verse, 20:31, which shows the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, the same purpose which is foreshadowed in the Prologue. Here we have our theme and our introduction. The main portion of the sermon will fall naturally into the two parts: the one showing the Lord of Glory, or what we should believe about Him; the other, the Giver of Life, or what we

should receive in His name. In conclusion we may point out that the two halves of the text are bound together not only by the theme, but by our faith: "that ye may believe . . . and that believing ye may have life." The verb is active. Believe!

In quest of material for the development of such a sermon we need not go beyond the book itself. In fact, we shall quickly become embarrassed by the wealth of truth which the book thrusts before us. What do we understand by the title, Son of God; by the phrase, to have life; or by that other phrase, in His name? For answer we turn to this Gospel, which quickly tells us all that we need to know, and vastly more. By the skillful use of such details we are to advance steadily toward the chosen goal, and all the while we must preserve our unity by keeping in view the majestic theme of the book.

PLOTTING THE COURSE.

After we have completed our survey of the book as a whole we are ready to take it up in detail, preferably following the course of the inspired apostle, and perhaps basing each sermon on a paragraph as found in the American Revision or in Dr. Moffatt's new translation (H. & S., \$1.00). Instead of striving to teach the entire truth of each paragraph, we may choose from it the verse in which our message is crystallized.

According to this plan the first four chapters would keep us busy for more than one quarter, but we are under no compulsion to treat every paragraph. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," and we must remain masters of our plan. We ought, however, to go over the ground with care so as to indicate the various places at which we expect to stop while we survey the surrounding country.

We must fix a goal for the entire series, else we may wander hither and thither with no visible progress. What sort of a series shall we plan: doctrinal, or evangelistic, or expository, or a wise combination of them all? Preferably the last, for the nature of our material is to determine the form of each sermon, and in these chapters the material is varied. Here is

narrative, there is evangelism, yonder is doctrine. What folly to strive to force such variety of material into a form determined arbitrarily in advance! Why not let each sermon grow according to the spirit of the life in its seed?

The form must be determined largely by the needs of the persons to whom we are making Jesus Christ better known. Our preaching, then, must be personal. While we must never descend into personalities, still we must be human, and in our zeal for the truth we must never lose sight of the persons in these moving chapters, else we shall illustrate once more the remark of Mr. Woodrow Wilson, that he hears many a sermon which is true enough, but which has nothing to do with his own heart and life.

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE PERSONALITY.

The Prologue affords many alluring texts, among which we may choose verse 14. After a brief introduction pointing out the large place of personality in modern life and thought, in the body of the sermon, we may show how Jesus Christ is here revealed as God's ideal, with grace for the Puritan, and truth for the Cavalier; and in conclusion, from verse 16, how we ourselves may receive from Him a more attractive personality. The best modern books on personality are by Illingworth, Palmer and Ladd, but better by far is John's Prologue.

At the first turn we come face to face with John the Baptist, who is never too polite to tell the truth. How will Jesus Christ impress this spiritual kinsman of the Puritans? "A man sent from God." Instead of merely recounting bald facts already known to our hearers, but scarcely understood, let us search out the character, the mission and the spirit of this man of strength, showing how he gladly submits to Jesus Christ, and how even the strongest men of today must bow before Him.

The next two paragraphs show how the Master appeals to young men of various temperaments. He himself is young in heart and in years, and He selects young men to carry on His

work. They begin at once and in the most vital way,—not by preaching, for which they are not ready, but by personal work, each with the one nearest his heart. “He findeth first his own brother.” They begin with enthusiasm and yet with tact. “We have found the Messiah!” “Come and See!” And the others come. They see. They believe. What a basis for an appeal to our own young folk!

The transformation of Peter (John 1:42) is the theme of an unusually suggestive sermon by Dr. J. H. Boyd, sometime pastor of the Second Church in Charlotte and now professor of homiletics in McCormick. At great inconvenience, Dr. Boyd has prepared this abstract.

The aim of Jesus was to begin a movement so radical and so transforming that the present order of sin would give place to a veritable Kingdom of God.—Successful beginning dependent not on Jesus alone, but on men whom He chose to be associated with Him.—His choice surprises. Little promise in the men selected. Not fitted to accomplish the task to which they were called.—Jesus a seer who sees beyond the actual. He sees potential ability. He deals with the possibilities of human nature.—Three fundamental possibilities:

1. Deterioration. Illustrate by Judas. Failed to respond, and instead of developing into a fine manhood, became corrupt.

2. Mediocrity, dead-levelism. Accomplishing nothing in presence of opportunity. Illustrated by James the Less. When the Son of God was his daily associate, and God was launching the marvels of redemption, James was so negative that he never uttered one word or did one deed worthy of record.

3. Exceptional development. Illustrated by Simon the Son of John. Note his unfolding in three respects.

1. In *Character*. When he first met Jesus he was of unworthy life. Notice his outcry, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” His profanity an echo of his life in Galilee. What he became is indicated in his letters. Analyze letters; show that they are autobiographical revealing a noble man, with a passion for holiness.

II. In *Catholicity*. Simon a small man when Jesus first met him. A bigoted Jew, in a little world of Judaism. A fisherman, with routine, petty concerns of narrow, lowly life. Jesus took the little Jew, the little fisherman, and put into him broad, generous thoughts and sympathies.

Note His process. Jesus shows him how Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter could be blessed. Takes him to top of Mt. Hermon with its

great horizons and there he sees a transfigured Lord, not to be shut within any country or age or people. Has him receive Cornelius into the Church after he has seen the vision. Simon goes out to Antioch beyond the confines of Judaism, eats with Gentiles, and at last, as I believe, comes to Rome, with ideas of a world church and gathering all humanity within his thought and loving concern.

III. In *Courage*. Simon not built for heroism. Too impulsive; not calm, steady; but spasmodic, impulsive, always breaking out unexpectedly. What a miserable figure he makes in the court-yard when a little waiting maid accused him of being a friend of Jesus.

Forty days afterward all Jerusalem is moved. The masses gather round a speaker. He binds them by eloquence. He accuses and exhorts with no fear. The vacillating, trembling Simon has become a stone.

Conclusion.—This is the meaning of the Religion of Jesus. He asks men to let Him deal with the possibilities of their nature. He takes the commonplace, weak, uncompromising Simon and changes him into Peter, the Man of Rock.

PROVINCIALISM.

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Nathanael is a good man, as the Master quickly tells him, but he is narrow. His narrowness is a misfortune rather than a sin, for at the coming of the Master the secrets of his heart are revealed and the horizon of his life is vastly broadened. Is there no need for such a message now? Such a line of thought might quickly lead us far from the truth as written here, but it might also lead us into an examination of our scruples about missions, etc. Where is our own Nazareth? Wherever it is, perhaps that is where we shall find our Lord. Read once more Charles Lamb’s “Imperfect Sympathies,” in his *Essays of Elia*.

The narrative about the wedding in Cana of Galilee is one of the most winsome in the Book, and it invites many sermons. The outline here given doubtless owes something of its spirit, though not of its form to Dr. T. R. Glover’s illuminating work, “The Jesus of History” (H. & S., \$1.25).

“THE GLORY OF JESUS” (Jno. 2:11b).

Int.—We think of glory as remote from common things, but Jesus manifested His glory among life’s homely joys.

I. The Glory of His Social Nature.

- A. He was invited to this marriage—why?
- B. He accepted the invitation—why?
- C. He heightened the joy—why?

II. The Glory of His Human Interests.

- A. He was interested in this Home (show him).
- B. He was interested in this Marriage.
- C. He was interested in this Domestic Problem.

III. The Glory of His Divine Power.

- A. He changed the good into the better (modern parallels).
- B. He changed failure into success (parallels).
- C. He changed sorrow into joy (parallels).

Concl.—“And His disciples believed on Him.” Believe!

Passing with the slightest mention the paragraph on “Zeal for God’s House,” with its call for reverence, and on “His Knowledge of Men,” with its sermon perhaps to business men, who pride themselves on such insight, we come to the Master at night, for he seems never to rest, and with Nicodemus we learn a large portion of what we know about “The New Birth.” We must beware, however, lest we fall into the error of this Jewish scholar, who is most concerned about abstract truth, whereas Jesus is interested primarily in the man before him.

As we listen to this cautious gentleman let us not pity him, for while he came to Jesus by night, still he came, and while he looked at the new and startling truth from every angle known to such a versatile thinker, still he seems at last to have accepted the Saviour. If such a gentleman needed to come to Jesus, and to be born anew, which of us dare hold back? Come now!

THE GOLDEN TEXT OF THE BIBLE.

Shall we pass on the other side of this text, lest we justify Dr. Dale’s fear that there will be too painful disparity between the heavenly text and the earthly sermon? No! in our journey we have come to this deepest well, with the coolest, sweetest water in all the world, and we must not shrink. “With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.” But, alas,

the well is deep and we have nothing to draw with, unless perchance we borrow, and that might be a sin. No; not if we tell our friends what we are doing. Then we may borrow the outline of Dr. Clow in his rich volume, "The Cross and Christian Experience," (H. & S., \$0.60), where he interprets John 3:16 in the light of Ephesians 3:18.

"LOVE IN FOUR DIMENSIONS."

Int.—The apparent impossibility of measuring God's love. Possible **only in Christ.**

I. The Breadth—"God so loved the world."

II. The Length—"He gave His only begotten Son."

III.—The Depth—"That whosoever believeth . . . not perish."

IV. The Height—"But has everlasting life."

Concl.—Believe! "It is not love, but trust, that makes a Christian."

This entire paragraph (3: 16-21) centers largely about the figure of light, and will yield a helpful sermon based directly on the last two verses,—*"Under the Search Light."* The chapter as a whole centers about the fact of life, and reaches a climax in verse 36,—*"Eternal Life Here and Now."* For a satisfactory interpretation of light and life as employed by John, we have no better guide than Dr. Robert Law in his commentary on the First Epistle, *"Tests of Life"* (T. & T. Clark, \$3.50).

It would be folly to hope to present in half an hour all that we learn with Jesus and the woman at the well. We may tarry here as long as we will, for the well is deep. Perhaps we should first present the scene as a whole, with Jesus as the central figure, and then in a few sermons take up some of the outstanding lessons, after the manner of Dr. Broadus.

"Jesus is Tired." What a masterly beginning for a sermon on worship and what a sermon for a dedicatory occasion (John 4:24). Except for one unfortunate paragraph Dr. Broadus moves steadily on through a sane and brief discussion of how we should worship, and why, to his concluding appeal for a stronger emphasis upon public worship. His second sermon, "Some Laws of Spiritual Work," is equally simple and helpful.

"The disciples must have been very much astonished at the change which they observed in the Master's appearance." He ceased to seem weary as soon as he could work. And so Dr. Broadus leads us quietly into the development of four observations, the last of which is the conclusion of his sermon.

"Spiritual work is refreshing to soul and body"; "there are seasons in the spiritual life"; "spiritual work links workers into unity"; "spiritual work has rich rewards." Study the passage (4:32-38) in the light of these observations, and then you will purchase the book, with the lasting regret that it is the only such literary monument of this master preacher. "Sermons and Addresses," Dr. J. A. Broadus (H. & S., \$.60).

Among living masters of homiletics perhaps no one excels Dr. W. L. Watkinson. Many of his messages do not appeal to some of us, but he can teach all of us a great deal about handling our tools. Not only is he master of the art of illustration, but in planning his sermons he has untold skill and almost limitless variety. In the volume at hand, "Studies in Life and Experience" (Revell), he gives an unobtrusive sermon on John 4:13, 14, "A Gift of God."

After an unusually brief and arresting introduction, he bids us mark the *spirituality* of the gift of Christ—"Man can never be satisfied by any stream of which cattle drink"; the *sufficiency*, and the *durability*. He closes with the question, "Is not this the fountain that we need?" All this may sound obvious enough until we have studied the passage and seen how naturally the form of this sermon grows out of the passage on which it is based.

Before leaving this scene we may well look back over it from the standpoint of verse 42, and ask our friends, "Why Do You Believe?" Is your belief a thing that is second-hand? It is well enough for our children to sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so," but should not the faith of adults be the fruit of personal experience? From this point of view, which is almost the highest, these sermons on the Fourth Gospel could be grouped under the one heading, "The Christ of Christian Experience,"—the experience of

John the Baptist and his disciples, of Nicodemus and the woman at the well, of the Christian Church, and of our own hearts and lives.

Passing over the second and clearer intimation of coming unpopularity (4:44; cf 2:24), we must pause to study the centurion's faith. Let us call him the captain, and after a brief allusion to the three captains of the New Testament, with their friendly attitude toward the Christian religion, let us trace the development of this captain's faith. After such a sermon the thoughtful man will say to his friend as they walk down the street, "That minister knows psychology," and it is to be hoped that you do, else you can scarcely interpret all these varieties of Christian experience; but vastly more important is it to send your hearers out feeling that they have been with Jesus and they can not rest until they believe in Him.

This is the impression made by Dr. Theron H. Rice when he preaches such a sermon as the one which he has kindly furnished in outline. It must be a benediction to study under him.

"THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE."

"A cluster of texts (Matt. 17:2; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3: 18). The stem on which this cluster grows is the word variously translated in our English versions, but the same word in the Greek, and best translated by our English word, transfigured. This specific word occurs in the New Testament in only these three places (and their parallel passages), so that we have here the three aspects of the transfigured life.

I. "As an *Ideal* (Matt. 17:2). The dull and profitless lives which many of us are leading sorely need the transfiguring touch. Clad in the drab garments of our pilgrim day we lift heavy faces to the radiant countenance and lustrous raiment standing before us on the Mount. "Lord, it is good for us to be here." All transfiguration begins with an ideal, and here is ours: manhood, perfect in body and in spirit. If we are Christ's we shall one day have it all. Read 1 Jno. 3:1-3 and Phil. 3:20, 21.

II. "As an *Obligation*.—Rom. 12:2. Note three things:

(1) "The transfigured life is founded on the Gospel. Though many moralists dream of a perfect manhood attained apart from the Cross, Paul knows nothing of it. See Gal. 2:20 and Rom. 5:1, 2. To com-

mend the transfigured life to a sinner out of Christ, would be to mock him with a tantalizing vision. Hence Paul is careful first to make plain in Rom. 1-8, God's plan of salvation by grace through faith. Then he can add (Rom. 12), "Therefore (because God has thus made it possible for you) be ye transfigured."

(2) "The transfigured life must begin with regeneration. "Be ye transfigured by the renewing of your minds." See also Jno. 3:3, 5, 6.

(3) "The transfigured life functions in the commonplace. Note the simple things into which the transfigured life is analyzed by Rom. 12-15. Faithful teaching, liberal giving, diligence in our work, patience under trial, prayerfulness, hospitality, paying our taxes, obeying the laws of our country, such are some of the everyday things by which we are to bring ourselves to perfection. Splendid as it is, this transfigured life is very practical. The real glory of the redeemed and regenerated nature reveals itself in the way in which it does the commonest and homeliest duties.

III. "As an *Attainment* (Cor. 3:18). Not an ideal shining before us on inaccessible heights; not an obligation beyond the powers provided for its discharge, but blessed be God, attainable and in process of being attained by humble believers every day! "We are transfigured." True, in its absolute degree the transfigured life will not be realized till we stand in our Lord's glorious presence. "We shall be like Him" when "we shall see him as he is." But we approximate it here. And note with what the third sentence of our text connects our transfiguration: reading the Scriptures with the veil removed, seeing Christ there in all His revealed glory, we are assimilated to the glory on which we gaze. Or, if we adopt the marginal rendering of the R. V., it is as we daily reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord that we are transfigured into the glory which we reflect. In either case we attain the same image, from glory unto glory.

"Are you wistful for the transfigured life? You may have it. There stands your Ideal, transfigured before you. Set your hope upon Him. Come to the Saviour for pardon and cleansing. Pray, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' In the power of this new life born of God, take up your daily round, doing each task as unto the Lord, and not unto men. Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God, gazing meanwhile steadfastly on the image of your Lord, as revealed in the mirror of Scripture, until you shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. Then that which is perfect shall have come."

Three Analyses of John 3:16.

By Professor J. Richie Smith, D. D., Professor of Homiletics,
Princeton Theological Seminary.

I.

With Salvation as the theme:

1. Ground of Salvation—love of God.
2. Subject of salvation—the world.
3. Means of salvation—gift of the Son.
4. Condition of salvation—faith.

II.

With the Love of God as the theme:

1. The object of love—the world.
2. The gift of love—the Son.
3. The demand of love—faith.
4. The purpose of love—life eternal.

III.

The part of God and of man in salvation:

1. God loves and gives.
2. Man believes and lives.

TO THE YOUNG PASTOR.

The chief aim of this article is to encourage you, not by adding to your store of knowledge, or by providing you with a number of sermonettes ready for wear, but by suggesting a practical method of preparing a series of sermons. If you will glance back over this article you will find more or less extended references to almost a dozen actual sermons, including the fuller outlines furnished by three professors of homiletics. "Usefulness is the measure of success," says Dr. Breed. Of what use is such an article as this? The answer rests with you. It will prove useful only in so far as it encourages you to continue your mastery of the preacher's art, in the lofty

endeavor to give each sermon a form somewhat worthy of its matchless theme.

If you wish to discuss with an interested friend any troublesome question about homiletics (but not pastoral theology) or if you wish to send in a completed outline, or a list of topics for a course of sermons, please feel free to write to me, especially if you practice brevity and enclose postage. But do not send completed manuscripts, for they might tempt me to forego pastoral delights! Whether you write to me or not, keep up your study of homiletics!—A. W. B.

HOMILETICAL MAXIMS.

1. It is not so important for the preacher to find texts as to put himself in the way of texts finding him.
2. A text can not be well worked out until it has been well worked in.
3. The preacher's chief duty by his text is to find and preach its one meaning.
4. Having announced his text the preacher should attack it at once by answering the inquiry of his audience.
5. The thought of the sermon must be organized. A sermon is not a structure but a growth.
6. When the preacher ceases to interest he ceases to profit.
7. The finest literary art is to simplify the profound.
8. The sermon that has no present day value has no value at all.
9. Instruction is the first requisite in sermonizing.
10. Preach Christ; do not merely preach about Him.
11. The sermon that does not lead to Christ and get to Christ is not a Christian sermon.
12. Sermonizing becomes preaching in the use of that material which the Holy Spirit has engaged to employ and bless.

These maxims are selected from Prof. D. R. Breed's text-book, "Preparing to Preach" (Hodder and Stoughton, \$2.00), a book which came to me soon after I left the seminary, helping me more than anything of the sort that I have read. Why should not every young preacher buy and master one such book a year?

Dr. Breed is professor of homiletics in the Western Seminary at Pittsburgh. He is the author of our most helpful and interesting book on hymnology, "The History of Hymns and Hymn Tunes," (H. S., \$1.75). Dr. Louis F. Benson's larger work, "The English Hymn," is more recent and more ambitious. It can be secured from the publishers, the Westminster Press, Philadelphia, for \$1.75, or half the original price, and doubtless from our own Committee in Richmond, who will gladly supply any of the books mentioned in the article above.—A. W. B.

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXXI.

APRIL, 1920.

No. 3.

THE MILLENNIUM.

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF REVELATION, CHAPTER 20, IN THE
LIGHT OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

By EUGENE C. CALDWELL,

*Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Union Theological
Seminary, Richmond, Va.*

The twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation contains four visions, as follows: the binding of Satan (vs. 1-3); the souls of martyrs and confessors enthroned with Christ (vs. 4-6); the final battle between Satan and the saints (vs. 7-10); and the general resurrection and final judgment (vs. 11-15). The first three visions are closely connected, being tied together by the six times repeated expression, "a thousand years." Indeed, the first two visions—the binding of Satan and the enthronement of the martyrs—describe events that are synchronous. They are to be followed by the final onset between Satan and the saints, and this, in turn, will usher in the general resurrection and final judgment.

It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear conception of the nature of a vision. For not only is this twentieth chapter made up of visions, the whole book of Revelation is a stupendous and magnificent vision, or rather series of visions. The author describes his book for us in 1:19: "Write therefore the things which thou didst see—both the things which are and those which are destined to occur hereafter."

A CLINIC IN HOMILETICS.

ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, D. D.,

*First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.*II. *The Doctrinal Sermon.*

"No preaching ever had any strong power that was not the preaching of doctrine. The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity, can seize and hold the conscience. Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine that you know, and learn forever more and more; but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that men may be saved by believing it." (P. Brooks, "Yale Lectures on Preaching," the best book on the subject.)

Doctrinal preaching is more difficult today than at any time since the Reformation, and it is more necessary. Churchgoers used to know more about religion than about almost anything else; now they know more about almost anything else than about religion. In preaching doctrine today it is easy to lead our friends up into the mists or out into the mire, and it is even possible to put them to sleep. As a young brother said with a sigh, "Professor Blank was a rare teacher of theology, but somehow I cannot preach the sort of thing that he taught me, and so I have quit trying to prepare doctrinal sermons." A young mother might also as well cease trying to use food in rearing her bairns. That floundering young parson needs encouragement, and such is the practical aim of the present article.

It is still possible to preach sound doctrine. In fact, there is more of it than we sometimes suppose. After the fashion of Moliere's gentleman, who talked prose all his life without knowing it, many a faithful pastor has but two sorts of sermons, the one in which he is chiefly concerned with truth, the other with duty, and he preaches two of the former to one of the latter.

His preaching of truth is all the more helpful because he is not striving to imitate some of his learned professors, and so he dares to be himself. He is feeding his congregation on the strong meat of the Word, carefully prepared and served warm, and he would be amazed to learn that he is an unusually helpful preacher of doctrine.

There is also a good deal of conscious doctrinal preaching. One of the most popular preachers in the land is Dr. C. E. Jefferson, of New York, and his most popular sermons are serious discussions of the fundamentals, each sermon an hour in length and requiring the undivided attention of every hearer. Dr. Jefferson is an evangelical liberal, who is not ashamed to tell his friends in the pew what he believes, and why. We who are a bit more conservative may learn from him a good deal about the art of teaching from the pulpit.

In Dr. Jefferson's Yale lectures, "The Building of the Church," he names a score of mighty doctrines, on each of which the Christian minister should preach every year. The first doctrine on his list, as well as on the shorter list of Phillips Brooks, is the Sovereignty of God. These two men are not Presbyterians, or even Calvinists, and yet they put to shame many of us whose Church makes a specialty of this doctrine. The present writer waited until the other day, eleven years after his ordination, before he first attempted to preach on the Sovereignty. The text was Dan. 4:34, 35, in which the experience of Nebuchadnezzar suggests that of the Kaiser. This sermon attempted merely to answer two questions: what do we understand by the Sovereignty of God; and what do we learn from this truth? The Kingdom of God is still an absolute monarchy. "America needs an Emperor, and His name is Jesus Christ."

Perhaps it would be better to take the text from the Book of Isaiah, in which the Sovereignty is the keynote. While the war was in progress, we should have preached again and again from the first 39 chapters, somewhat in the manner of Dr. H. E. Kirk, "The Consuming Fire" (McMillan, \$1.50). Now that the war has closed, and we are striving to build a more Chris-

tian world, we should go to the last 27 chapters, with a still loftier message on the Sovereignty. For example, study Isa. 45:9, with its context about Cyrus, and your sermon will quickly begin to grow. A book on this theme, "Behold Your God," yet remains to be written.

Dr. J. D. Jones is an expert in handling such mighty themes. In his sermon, "The Gospel of the Sovereignty," which gives the title to his strong book (H. & S., \$1.50), he bases his discussion on twin texts from the Royal Psalms, the theme of which is the Divine Sovereignty. After a long eulogy of the Puritans as men of iron, an introduction which must have dispelled from the original hearers every latent prejudice against his high teaching, Dr. Jones discusses the two aspects of his truth. His sermon is all the more impressive because it has no formal conclusion.

I. *The Sovereignty and Godly Awe* (The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble. Ps. 99:1). The fundamental truth in the Puritan religion.

- A. Our mistaken ideas of Fatherhood.
- B. Our loss of the fear of God.
- C. Our "soft church" needs this teaching. "Holiness on the throne."

II. *The Sovereignty and Godly Confidence* (The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice. Ps. 97:1). Our only assurance of the coming of the kingdom.

- A. The supremacy of righteousness.
- B. The triumph of the Church.
- C. The security of the believer.

Consciously or unconsciously every pastor should preach doctrine. Why not plan to do so? Of course you will begin with the fundamentals, and in preaching duties, you will build upon no other foundation. You will jot down more worthy themes than you can hope to use in one series. My own list of doctrines for the present year ran to about forty, which I placed in the three groups known to me as Theology, Evangelism, and the Christian Life, but all doctrinal. The subjects in the second and third groups may be inferred. In the first

group they are as follows: Inspiration, the Supernatural, the Spirituality of God, the Sovereignty of God, the Incarnation, the Death of Christ, the Resurrection, the Second Coming, the Death of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and Living by Your Creed. These subjects are too vast for the pulpit, but they indicate the field in which each sermon will grow.

Such a series could be used on successive Sabbaths, either morning or evening, so as to cover an entire quarter, but it would be better to make the intervals longer, so as to preach on the fundamentals about once a month throughout the year. This latter method has obvious advantages, both for the young pastor and for his friends in the pew. He need not tell them in advance what he has in store, for he might cause them to doubt his wisdom. He will do well to begin with a series on the more subjective doctrines, such as the Forgiveness of Sins and Fellowship with Christ, because such themes are easier to develop, and are in themselves more interesting.

THE THREE ESSENTIALS.

The first essential in preparing a doctrinal sermon is experience. This fact is too vast for discussion here. Christian experience as the fountain head of reality in the pulpit is the keynote of Dr. John Kelman's Yale lectures. "The War and Preaching" (Yale Univ. Press, \$1.25), a book which has helped me more than any of that great series since Brooks and Dale (Nine Lectures, H. & S., 60c.), and Stalker ("A Preacher and His Models").

The second essential is knowledge. Dr. Jones impresses us at once with the breadth and the solidity of his knowledge. He has evidently been a student of the Bible and of church history, as well as of the hearts of men; hence he can speak with assurance. Dr. H. S. Coffin told the Yale students that a good deal of our preaching is like the conversation of Dicken's Mr. Plornish, "a trifle obscure but conscientiously emphatic." We do not understand what we are trying to explain. We are too lazy to think hard and long. How then can we preach?

In the seminary we merely get well started on our quest of truth, and we go out into the first parish with little save an introduction to the Bible, and to such masters of theology as Ullman, Liddon, Gore, Fairbairn, Forsyth, Dale and Denney. If we have learned how to think, we may hope to master enough doctrine to enable us to preach with self-respect. Know the truth! The following outline submitted by Dr. T. C. Johnson, professor of theology in Union Seminary, shows how a strong scholar uses in the pulpit the results of deep research.

"And the Word became Flesh." (John 1:14.)

About whom is this predication made; and what is predicated of Him? Why are we to believe it? What should we do in view of it?

- I. *The predication is about One who was pre-temporal*—was in personal communion with God—and was of divine substance. (Develop from context). It is predicated of Him, not that He ceased to be God (see 3:13; 10:30), but that He became flesh (while remaining God). In predicating that He became flesh, the text asserts:
 - A. Not that He assumed the mere appearance of man, as the Gnostics affirm (see John 1:1-3).
 - B. Not that He took to Himself a human body and its physical life, as the Apollinarians say (see John 11:33; 13:21; 19:30; 12:27).
 - C. Not that He came to be of a third sort of nature—an alloy of divine and human natures—an impossible thing, and contrary to the Bible portrayal.
 - D. Not that He came into a merely moral union with Jesus of Nazareth. He has, according to all the evangelists, uni-personality.
 - E. Not that He became personal only through the Incarnation (see 1:1).
 - F. But that He, a Person of the Deity, became possessed of a full human nature. In short, it is predicated here that the Eternal Son of God became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person.
- II. *Why are we to believe it?*
 - A. We have the personal witness to the fact by the disciples (1:14d).
 - B. We have this witness confirmed by the inspiring Spirit.

C. We have the whole life,—words and works—explicable only on the supposition that He was God and man, in two distinct natures and one person.

III. *Believe, live, serve!*

The average preacher cannot hope to become such a systematic theologian, but he should gain a broad and thorough knowledge of his subject as a whole, and then he should acquire a special mastery of every truth which he attempts to explain. He is a general practitioner and not a specialist, but like many a thoughtful physician, he can make a long, careful study of every baffling case which he treats, and so in time he can make a special study of every portion of the field in which he practices. He can learn a good deal more than he needs to know to hold his friends, but not one whit more than he needs to know to help them.

In Columbia we often ask the secret of the power of the three mighties, Thornwell, Palmer and Girardeau. In reply we learn that each of them was a doctrinal preacher, and that he was the master of his field. For example, in the biography of Dr. Palmer, by Prof. T. C. Johnson, a book which all of us ought to study, we read on page 90 a hundred of Dr. Palmer's sermon topics, and we note that nearly all are doctrinal. If we study the sermons themselves we quickly conclude that this man adorned his doctor's degree. "Gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche." If he were preaching to-day, he would doubtless employ a somewhat different style, for the fashion in words keeps changing, and in such non-essentials Dr. Palmer was a man of his age, but he would preach on the same sort of lofty themes.

The third essential in a doctrinal sermon is structure. This fact invites a good deal of comment, but we must pass on.

A HOMILETIC EXPOSITION.

The doctrinal sermon, as the term is here employed, is a homiletic exposition of Christian truth for spiritual ends. It is an exposition rather than an argument, but as Dr. Kelman

might say, it is an exposition which often takes the form of testimony, and almost invariably results in appeal or inspiration. Such an exposition is homiletic rather than scholastic. "Just as an expository sermon is not an exposition of exegesis, so also a doctrinal sermon is not the presentation of systematic theology." (Breed.) The doctrinal sermon is primarily an exposition of truth, rather than of duty, and of truth positive, rather than an exposé of error. Above all else, it is an exposition for spiritual ends. Note the spiritual ends set before us by Pres. Joseph Kyle, professor of theology in the U. P. Seminary at Xenia, in his outline of a "subject-sermon" on that difficult text, Col. 2:10.

"Ye Are in Him Complete."

Introd.—The rise of an incipient Gnosticism may, in part, have occasioned the writing of this epistle, but we may leave critical scholars to mark the bearing of the apostle's argument against evil systems of the past, while we employ it to overthrow present error and to establish present truth. It is as effective against the Gnosticism of the twentieth century as against the Gnosticism of the early Christian Church. The principle here is that Jesus Christ is to the believer all in all. Note—

I. *The Elements that Enter into this Completeness.* (1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 1:7; Phil. 4:13, 19).

II. *The Ground upon which this Completeness Rests. Oneness with Jesus Christ,* in every sense in which union with Him is conceivable.

In His life of Obedience (Psalm 40:6, 7; Gal. 4:4, 5).

In His suffering as Sin-Bearer for the world (Isa. 53:5, 6; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In His Eternal Intercession (Heb. 7:25; Romans 8:1).

III. *The Blessedness that is Assured in such Completeness.* Attainment of noblest ideals (Ps. 138:8; Phil. 1:6; Ps. 8:4-9; cf. Heb. 2:5-9).

Applic.—"Is life worth living?" "Who will show us any good?"

Answer—Ps. 17:15; 1 John 3:1, 2.

A homiletic exposition of Christian truth for spiritual ends! The key word exposition, as here employed, refers to the nature of the doctrinal sermon, and not to its form. In form it

may be expository, or it may not, but in essence it must always be the unfolding of Bible truth. If you are to preach with authority, and especially while you are young, you must take your message directly from the Book, which was inspired partly for this very purpose. "Thus saith the Lord!" You dare not depend much upon the authority of your teachers and your books, for they are unknown to many of your hearers, but you can boldly proclaim the teachings of the Bible. "What say the Scriptures?"

What then is the biblical teaching about the Incarnation? In answering this question the young pastor may attempt to give a bird's-eye view of the entire truth, or simply to explain such a text as John 1:14. In the hands of such a master of theology as Dr. Johnson or Dr. Kyle, the extensive exposition may become an instrument of power, bringing to the solution of this question the results of the broadest survey of the Bible and church history, but in the hands of the novice who has not yet amassed such stores of learning, and who has not yet acquired such organizing ability, such a sermon is likely to fail.

When the novice attempts to prepare an extensive exposition, he may take up a volume of Dabney or Hodge, Shedd or Strong, and a good concordance, by means of which his nimble mind can construct a succession of more or less relevant assertions, interspersed with another man's proof texts, and lightened by sentimental reflections. Such a complicated compilation is somewhat helpful, for the entrance of God's Word giveth light, no matter how strangely it comes into the heart, but why label such an effort a sermon? Only the opening of the Word giveth light which is clear and strong. "A sermon may be full of Scripture and yet convey no (adequate) message. It may be wholly in the language of today and give the very heart of the Gospel." (Hoyt.)

The intensive exposition is more simple and direct. Before attempting to preach on John 1:14, you should know all that you can learn about these inspired words, and as much as possible about their immediate neighbors. In fact, you must know the Fourth Gospel. Then you must determine what these par-

ticular words mean. The result will be a sermon in which you unfold the truth that the Holy Spirit wrapped up in these wonderful words. You may not have time to explain the relation of this doctrine to any other, or to contrast John's teaching with that of Paul, for if you go down beneath the outer form of this one verse you will find positive truth enough wrapped up in it to keep you busy in the pulpit for half an hour. Simple, is it not, this work of popular exposition? Yes; it is simple, because it is great!

The intensive method enables a man to return from year to year to the same vast themes, usually from a different text, so as to approach the old truth from a new angle. In teaching the quarterly temperance lesson, which might now give way to a quarterly lesson on missions, some of us used to tell every three months all that we knew about this great theme, and as a result we dreaded these lessons almost as much as our pupils dreaded them, but now we content ourselves with unfolding the truth in the chosen passage, which sometimes has little to do with temperance, and so we may hope to obtain the result intended by the Holy Spirit. (See Dan. 12:3, A. R. V., margin.) Perhaps our less successful teachers in the Sabbath school are merely imitating our extensive expositions in the pulpit!

Exposition, Not Argument.

A good deal of our difficulty in doctrinal preaching may arise from our attempting the wrong thing. Who are we that we should rush out to the defense of the Bible, or of any one biblical teaching? Does the Bible really need our championship? Somewhat egotistic, aren't we? Why should you and I try to prove the truth of the Trinity, or any other revealed truth? It is Milton rather than Paul who endeavors to justify the ways of God to man, and even Milton fails, though his failure is sublime. His masterpiece is read today, not for its theology, as he must have hoped, but for its poetry. Where Milton failed, you and I could scarcely hope to succeed. Luther and Liddon, Dabney and Purves, were called to battle for the

truth, and there are times when no one of us can shirk this task, but as a rule it is our privilege to serve as witnesses. "Truthe will deliver; hit is no drede." Dr. Jowett and Dr. Campbell Morgan practically never engage in doctrinal controversy.

We who are Scotch-Irish greatly love to argue, but in the pulpit we must beware. The British preachers, notably Dr. Stalker, tell us that we are more argumentative in the pulpit than our brethren across the seas, and while they are too courteous to criticize our pulpit pugnacity, they leave us to infer that there is a more excellent way. When we take up almost any doctrinal theme, we know that nine out of ten of the persons before us already accept this truth, so far as they understand it, or at least they have an open mind, and so why should we let the occasional cantankerous objector draw us into a perfervid argument?

The vast majority of our hearers are longing for a bit more of the light, which having already seen, they love. Even our more hostile hearers will never give us a favorable verdict unless they first give us their good-will. If Dr. Jones had begun that sermon before the National Free Church Congress with an assault against their doubts about the Sovereignty of God, he might easily have aroused their antagonism and lost his case. Hence, he devoted almost one-third of his time to the necessary work of preparing every heart for the reception of this truth.

"Take the sermon as essentially a conversation with your hearers, and converse with them, instead of either bellowing at them or walling to them. Above all, be good-natured in manner and in tone. There is a 'curate contra mundum' way of preaching which gives the impression of a young man standing up alone on behalf of eternal truth, and at the risk of his life defying every member of the congregation to his or her face, even when he is uttering sentiments which it is inconceivable that any sensible person would dispute. It is wiser and more effective to hold your welcome for granted, to take your congregation into your confidence, and speak to them as to people with whom you are on friendly terms." (Kelman.)

Instead of trying to establish the fact of the Trinity, let us rather show our friends how this truth is progressively unfolded in the Bible, somewhat as Wm. A. Butler shows how it is unfolded in the Gospel of John. After an introduction, explaining in popular fashion the fact of progressive revelation, we might show how the Old Testament reveals primarily Jehovah God; the Gospels, the Heavenly Father as made known in the Son; the Epistles, the Father and Son as made known in the Spirit. We might better start out from the teaching implicit in the apostolic benediction, of the baptismal formula, and so explain what Phillips Brooks terms the "manifold helpfulness" of the Triune God, as revealed to the men and women of the Bible, to the saints and martyrs of the church, and to the authors of our noblest hymns. The following account is condensed from Dr. Kelman.

The Spiritual Doctrine of God.

The doctrine of the Trinity "sprang up in experience and not in speculation." It was because men found the one God manifesting Himself in three ways that they tried to conceive and state their thoughts of Him accordingly. This doctrine arose out of the deepest hours of communion between God and the souls of men.

When we ask what God is, in Himself, we cannot tell, but when we ask what He is to us, the answer of experience is, that we know Him as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. This is the order in which the revelation has been historically made. In the experience of the individual the same thing is true, and in the experience of the Church as reflected in her creeds.

Every Christian soul has actually discovered the Divine Trinity in his own experience. There have been times when in loneliness and helplessness of spirit he sought and found the Highest in the sense of Fatherhood. At other times, driven by passion, shamed by remorse, or crushed by disaster, the only form in which the Highest seemed real to him was the cross of Calvary. And again, he found inspiration, enthusiasm, and consecration of ordinary human life only in the sense of that mysterious indwelling and assisting presence—the Holy Spirit.

PREPARING THE DOCTRINAL SERMON.

A text well chosen simplifies the preacher's task. "Select a text which sets forth truth rather than duty" (Breed). In 1 Cor. 6:20 Paul is speaking about the Death of Christ as a motive for holy living, and a sermon on this text should be primarily ethical rather than doctrinal. It is easier to explain truth which clusters round a biblical character, but often it is well to choose the classic passage. The classic passage on the Atonement, according to Denney, is 2 Cor. 5, and in our first sermon on this vast theme we can make no mistake in singling out verse 19, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

Many a promising sermon has been handicapped by an unfortunate choice of a text. Even such a scholar as Dr. Shedd bases his sermon, *The Fatherhood of God*, on a text which does not mention or suggest God, and which has in it only a modicum of truth about fatherhood—"Son remember" (Luke 16:25). This is a great text, and Dr. Shedd preaches a good sermon, but not the sermon which the Spirit wrote into this text. The classic text on the Fatherhood is the proface to the Lord's Prayer. Dr. Purves turns to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where he shows that the main figure is not the son, but the father, and that the main purpose of the parable is to teach us a portion of what we are to believe concerning God.

The nature of the chosen text will largely determine the form of the sermon. For example, the classic text on Inspiration is 2 Timothy 3:16, and the resulting sermon falls into three parts, each of which might better grow into a separate discourse. First, Inspiration, its nature and limits; second, the practical value of the Inspired Word; third, the result in our own life and work. The Greek conjunction here, with its purpose clause, suggests a sermon on a neglected answer to the old question about Inspiration.

Another way to approach this truth is to find out why the Book was written, and then to judge it by its success in doing what it professes to do. The Bible was written chiefly to give Jesus Christ

to the world, and the Christ of the Bible is Himself the crowning proof of Inspiration. In developing this line of thought from Hebrews 1:1, or by implication from John 20:21, we may show how the historical books of the Old Testament reveal the need for the Messiah; the poetical books, the longing; and the prophetic books, the expectation. In the New Testament the Gospels present the facts about the Christ who has come; the Epistles explain these facts; and the Revelation portrays the outcome. Thus each hemisphere of the Bible falls into the three grand divisions, which may be remembered in popular fashion under the three great headings, Faith, Love, Hope.

After we have shown why the Bible was written, we can show how to test its claims. Fortunately, we may assume that our friends already believe in Jesus, at least vaguely, for Dr. Forsyth says that there never has been an age in which the popular estimate of the Master has been so high. Hence, we need merely to show that the Jesus whom modern men revere is the Christ of the Bible, and that they should believe in the Book because they believe in its Christ, even as they believe in the sun because they believe in the light. In closing such a sermon we may hold forth the open book, and invite our friends to live with it until they find their mother's Saviour. When they find eternal life in His name, they will know the truth about their mother's Bible.

Simplicity of Style.

In developing such a theme it is difficult to attain simplicity. Dr. Stalker told the Yale students that a good deal of this modern cry for simplicity springs from sheer laziness, meaning that many a congregation and many a pastor are too lazy to think. Dr. Stalker is speaking about the simplicity of shallow thought, for he would be the last man to speak against simplicity of style. He himself is a master of the art of explaining the deep things of God in the simplest way, or he could never have written such books as "The Ethic of Jesus," and "The Trial and Death of Jesus," which Dr. H. Tucker Graham considers the most helpful volumes in his library. Where can you find greater fidelity to the truth, and greater simplicity of expression?

Some day you will dare to speak on the Supernatural, but under another name. "The idea of God is the ground plan of

religion." If you begin to think on this vast subject during the first years of your ministry, perhaps you will preach on it ten years hence, and your success or failure will depend largely upon the simplicity with which you illustrate what you have learned after long brooding upon this truth which underlies every other. This once you may tell your people that you are unworthy to preach upon such a theme, and that you wish them to pray while you are speaking, so that your words may be somewhat worthy.

"In the beginning God." These four simple words are the keynote of the Bible. The first few words of many a well written book give the substance of the book as a whole; and the Bible is well written. It is a book about God, and the God of the Bible is the Supernatural God. The Christ of the Bible is the Supernatural Christ. The religion of the Bible is the Supernatural Religion. The kingdom of the Bible is the Supernatural Kingdom. If you can explain what you mean by such statements as these, and illustrate them in a living way, you will have attained to something of Dr. Stalker's "significant simplicity."

Simplicity comes to the man who is willing to leave many truths unspoken. The aim of the class room should often be to develop and enforce as nearly as possible the entire truth about the chosen doctrine, but the aim of the pulpit must ordinarily be more simple. It is better to hold something in reserve, and to leave a great deal to the spiritual insight of our hearers. It is not well for them to go out from the church falsely feeling that they understand all mysteries, but it greatly matters whether they have caught their guide's point of view, and have been encouraged to start upon a new adventure in quest of the abundant life.

In preaching doctrine the temptation is to retain more material than one can well use in thirty minutes, and the result is often a disappointing sermon. Why not divide it into two parts, and develop the first part twice as completely? If one were never to return to the truth about the Holy Spirit, one might feel tempted to tell all that one knows about His Person and Work. The result would be kaleidoscopic mystification.

As a rule it is better to present some one aspect of His Work, for it is easier to preach about His Work than about His Person. Even His Work is essentially a mystery, but as Dr. Kelman suggests, it consists practically in making the things of God clear to man. Let us study Acts 2:6b from this point of view, and then we may teach our friends at least one clear, helpful fact about the Holy Spirit.

TO THE YOUNG PASTOR.

The value of your doctrinal sermon will depend more upon your spirit than upon your theme. If you are the right sort of a man you will extract a blessing from almost any subject, and if you are the wrong sort, you will cast a blight over the most sacred truth. First of all, you must be humble, not with the devilish humility of Uriah Heep, but with the Christian meekness of the man who knows how little he knows, and how unworthy he is to preach.

Only a fool would dare to dream that he understood the Incarnation, or to suggest that he could explain it, but any man who knows his Bible, especially if he has mastered Gore's Bampton Lectures, can reasonably expect to explain any one aspect of the biblical teaching on this high theme. There is a world of difference between trying to explain a fact, and trying to explain what the Bible teaches about that fact. The former is usually unnecessary and impossible; the latter is hard enough, but it is possible, and it is worth all the labor that it involves. Jesus told Nicodemus that he could not hope to understand the New Birth, but that as a teacher he ought to be familiar with the fact. A preacher is concerned, not with unravelling hidden mysteries (Deut. 29:29), but with explaining revealed facts.

The humble pastor must speak with authority. "Thus saith the Lord." He must cultivate a "holy boldness." He must know what he believes, and he must believe what he knows, keeping silent about his uncertainties. "Congregations desire their preachers to take high ground, and to speak with authority.

There is no more fatal habit than the not uncommon one of punctuating one's message with the modest word 'perhaps.' It is not incumbent on us to soften down the Word of God to suit the taste of a refined audience. We used to be warned by wise teachers of the older Scottish school not to pray, 'Thou chargest thine angels with comparative folly,' nor to preach, 'He who, so speak, believeth not, shall, as it were, be damned.'" (Kelman.)

"It is authority that the world chiefly needs, and the preaching of the age lacks—an authoritative Gospel in a humble personality. The pulpit has an authority. If it have not, it is but a chair and not a pulpit. It may discourse, but it cannot preach. The preacher, of all men, is most dependent upon his message. The Cross is the message that makes the preacher. It is not our experience we preach, but the Christ who comes in our experience. The preacher has to be sure of a knowledge that creates experience, and does not rise out of it. Power really lies not in the preacher but in his Gospel, in his theology. The preacher who is but feeling his way to a theology is but preparing to preach, however eloquent he may become." (Excerpts, P. T. Forsyth, "Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind," H. & S., 60c.)

The preacher of doctrine must speak from the heart. Knowledge of itself is cold, but when it passes through the heart of a devout believer, knowledge begins to glow. Herein lies more than a little of the power and charm of Dr. Jowett. As a matter of course he has long since become a competent master of his subject, and he is still learning, but he does not pose as a mere explainer of religious mathematics. He has lived with Paul and with Paul's Lord, and from them he has learned how to make our hearts burn within us as he talks with us by the way. In his Yale Lectures he gives a list of sermon topics illustrating the majestic sweep of the Christian pulpit (*The Preacher: His Life and Work*, H. & S., \$1.25). Dr. Jowett is a doctrinal preacher, not in the sense that he is always defining and defending his faith, but in the higher sense that he is proclaiming truth so as to win disciples to his Lord.

"Speak to the heart!" This message came to the prophet who was about to make known the loftiest truth of the Old

Testament. Note the first personal pronouns in Isaiah 53, and learn how to speak to the heart. By the grace of God you must present the truth about the Death of Christ so as to melt the hearts of sinners, and move the hearts of saints. If you could speak of the Atonement in calm, judicial tones, as though it were only a mechanical transaction which took place long ago and far away, you should not preach at all about the Death of Christ, but simply ask your friends to sing that hymn written to interpret the Death of Christ to little children, "There is a Green Hill Far Away," and that other, which Dr. Breed considers the best of all our hymns, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (Hamburg). Pres. Thornton Whaling, professor of theology in Columbia Seminary, kindly submits an outline, which shows how this loftiest truth ministers to ethical needs. This outline also illustrates in part what I have written about the intensive exposition.

Christ's Atonement Our Model (Eph. 5:1, 2).

Introd.—The most profound doctrine of our religion furnishes us the Christian ideal.

Proposition—

(a) God is revealed through the Atonement of Jesus.

(b) And we are to imitate God as thus revealed.

I. Christ's Sacrifice was *offered to God*. We must live to God, or we do not live the life which is "life indeed."

II. Christ offered *Himself*. We must offer ourselves, or all other offerings are vain.

III. Christ offered Himself *for us*, as well as in our stead. We must offer ourselves for others, while we cannot offer ourselves in their stead.

IV. Christ offered Himself *in love*. Love is our only distinctive Christian motive.

Concl.—Doctrine and duty. Theology and ethics married in our religion. We must be like God in Christ, and like Jesus Christ in the supreme expression of His character, viz.: His death for others.

If you glance back over this article you will note references to sermons enough to occupy the first Sabbath morning of each month for a year. Now please do not try to adapt these par-

ticular suggestions to your own needs, else you will begin to wrestle with some of the most difficult subjects. By living close to the Book and to your friends you will find exactly the truths which they need to learn through you. And if your first doctrinal sermon grows into an evangelistic appeal, or into a challenge to Christian duty, thank God. You were not called to "preach for the salvation of your sermon."

The conclusion of the whole matter is simple. Keep on preaching doctrine. If you have not yet begun largely to preach doctrine, begin now. "Preach all the doctrine you know," and know all the doctrine you preach. The Holy Spirit will guide you into the truth. "Make no mistake—God is not to be mocked . . . a man will reap just what he sows . . . Let us never grow tired of doing what is right, for if we do not faint, we shall reap our harvest at the opportune season" (Moffett, New Translation, H. & S., \$1.00).

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXXI.

JULY, 1920.

No. 4.

THE CHARLOTTE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1920.

BY REV. RUSSELL CECIL, D. D.,
Pastor Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va.

The Charlotte General Assembly will be classed as one of the greatest of all the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. It was fortunate in the place of meeting. Charlotte, North Carolina, is a beautiful and thriving city of about fifty thousand inhabitants, situated in the heart of one of our most prosperous Southern States. It is the center of a vigorous and aggressive Presbyterianism. The First Presbyterian Church, where the Assembly gathered, is located in a beautiful grove, and has ample facilities in its auditorium and in the adjoining Sunday-school building to accommodate a much larger body than the Assembly with all of its committees. The conveniences for the transaction of business could not have been surpassed. The able and attractive young pastor, Rev. Albert Sidney Johnson, D. D., together with his good people, did not spare themselves in their effort to entertain the members of the Assembly, and it could hardly have been better done. Those who were fortunate enough to have been in attendance will not soon forget their distinguished and abounding hospitality. The Assembly itself was composed of carefully selected men, both ministers and elders, who had come as commissioners from various parts of the Church, intent upon giving earnest attention to the weighty matters which it was known beforehand would have to be considered by this

THE BIOGRAPHICAL SERMON.

A CLINIC IN HOMILETICS, THIRD ARTICLE, PREPARED
ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PASTORS.

BY THE REV. ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, D. D.,
Pastor First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.

Sermons for the midsummer are difficult to plan. The work of the pulpit in the hot months demands that one be at the best, and often one is not. If during the fall and winter and spring one has labored faithfully in teaching the fundamental truths and the pressing duties, during the summer one may well turn to a sort of sermon which will lay a lighter tax both upon the preacher and the hearers.

The biographical sermon, as the phrase is here employed, is a homiletic exposition, for a spiritual end, of Christian truth and duty as revealed in a Bible character or event. This attempted definition is loose and inaccurate, for it includes the narrative sermon as well as the biographical, but since the two sorts of sermons are so much alike, we may forget about our technicalities, at least for the summer. In both narrative and biography, as found in the Bible, there is a world of human interest as well as divine power, and so the resulting sermon is intensely personal, for personality is both human and divine.

In appealing to human interest by sermons on the characters and events of the Bible, no man who comes to Montreat excels Dr. C. R. Erdman, of Princeton. In Miller Chapel in 1906 he preached on Philip the evangelist, the only sermon which I ever heard him preach, and he so impressed us that it is still difficult to talk about Philip without echoing Dr. Erdman, and showing how Philip was caught away from the successful evangelistic campaign in the city, so that he could engage in individual work for an individual, and how he then

dropped almost completely from view, perhaps to render his best service far from the limelight. Dr. Erdman is no less happy in dealing with narrative, as in the sermon, "Triumphant Faith," which he has kindly submitted in extended outline for this number of THE REVIEW.

Many Uses.

The biographical sermon lends itself to many uses, and perhaps for this reason it calls for no separate discussion in many of our text books on homiletics. Sometimes this sort of sermon is doctrinal, so that the chosen truth appears in the life and work of a Bible hero, "drawn out in living characters." "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Instead of presenting the Atonement in scholastic terms, many of the older preachers explained it in terms of Barabbas, "The Barabbas theory." Dr. Robert Law, of Toronto, one of the strongest preachers of the day, sets forth the truth about the Reconciliation by holding up before us Cain, who killed his brother because he was righteous, and Christ, who died for his enemies because they were vile. "Look on this picture and on that." (The Grand Adventure," H. & S.)

Dr. W. R. Dobyns, of our First Church, St. Joseph, submits an outline which I have pruned too sharply, but which still illustrates the apologetic value of this sort of sermon in the hands of one of our most popular expositors. If the other brethren of our denomination were as ready to respond to requests for such tastes of their pulpit quality, this article would be more of a clinic and less of a monologue!

Challenged, But Convincing. (Matt. 11:2-6.)

Introd.—The context, and also John's work and imprisonment; his desire to know whether his prophecy would be fulfilled or not.

- I. Christ's works arouse interest, and they prompt investigation.
- II. He is properly challenged as to his identity.
- III. He promptly appeals to His words and works as His credentials.
- IV. The supernatural character of His works.

V. The peril in expecting such credentials.

Concl.—The world still looks to Christ's people, and expects us by our words and works to demonstrate our oneness with Him. We belong to the apostolic succession.

This sort of sermon lends itself with equal fitness to the preacher of biblical ethics, teaching "what duty God requires of man." Think of Naboth's vineyard, and of the resulting sermon on Covetousness, the outstanding sin of our day; of Robertson's sermon on Balaam, the victim of avarice, "who would not play false, yet would wrongly win"; of Brooks's sermon on King Saul, who gave way to selfishness and wilfulness; or if you wish to do something equally hard, set King Saul over against Saul of Tarsus, showing how the most promising youth in all the realm, a man's man, became in time a thing of scorn, because he was a strong man without religion, a vessel of gold without its inner light, whereas the other, with all the odds against him, as his world must have said, slowly worked his way up high among the immortals, because he was God's man, an earthen vessel but filled with the heavenly light. "I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me."

Delicate Themes.

The biographical sermon enables one to take up without apology the most difficult and delicate themes, which one might otherwise hesitate to broach in a conservative pulpit. For example, from time to time one ought to preach on courtship and marriage, a theme which concerns the foundations of the Christian homes and still one must not be sensational. Why not explain the narrative about the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, and especially just now when our Episcopalian brethren are thinking of eliminating this reference from their marriage service. Needless to say, such a sermon is not to be preached by a very young minister, especially if he is unmarried, and not by any man in a spirit of levity or worldliness. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

A Marriage Made in Heaven. (Gen. 24:27, 67.)

This marriage was made, or planned, in heaven. God made these two for each other (contrasting temperaments); He prepared them for each other (same race, relative station in life, general outlook); He brought them together at the proper time; He blessed them in their home; and He made them a blessing to the world ("In thy seed," that is, in the Hebrew nation, and supremely in Jesus Christ).

But this marriage was also made, that is, the plans were carried out, on earth, by human beings far from perfect and surrounded by limitations. On the whole, with many shortcomings, they wrought out the heavenly plan, because they were partners: partners in work (for their home and for the kingdom); partners doubtless in play, enjoying life together and letting its joys center round their home and their bairns; partners in love (cf Robert Browning and wife); and partners in worship (same beliefs and hopes). (Read here, "What Men Live By," R. C. Cabot, M. D., Houghton & Mifflin).

Such a home is possible only by the blessing of God upon the faith of His children.

Special Days.

Here is likewise an unfailing refuge for special days, which are getting to be almost as common as the undesignated days, when one is free to preach the Gospel as the Spirit may lead. For example, you may begin now to prepare for Children's Day, and study Samuel from this point of view, "A Good Man in the Making." He was good in character, good in reputation (this needs to be stressed), and good in influence, a virile saint. He began to be good when he was a boy, sowing pure wheat. Trace the influence of his home, of his schooling under Eli, and of his Church. Show the result in his early habits of prompt obedience, of work, and of perseverance. For illustration, turn to the childhood of John G. Paton, or better still, to the early life of our Lord. Back of all these other influences was God. Samuel thought it was Eli who was calling, but it was God.

Why not begin also to prepare for that baccalaureate sermon next spring? You may study one of the giants of the Bible from a single point of view, or you may present such a humble worker as Andrew, the patron saint of the Scots, showing how he developed unsuspected powers after he began to follow the

Master. Study the three scenes in which he appears, arrange them in homiletic order, and then employ something of Dr. John McNeill's sanctified imagination in clothing your two talent man with flesh and blood.

Or if you wish to preach to college girls, as you will some day, turn to the three scenes in which Jesus meets with Mary and Martha, showing how each of them reveals herself in joy, in sorrow and in service, or sacrifice. "The Daughters of Mary and Martha." This theme, suggested by Kipling's lines, affords a rare opportunity to show how Jesus calls forth the best that is in each type: in the woman who is practical, unemotional, loyal to duty in every guise; and also in her sister, the lover of beauty, contemplative, impassioned, finding joy in music, in birds and in kindred spirits. Such a sermon might prove a bit ethereal for your own flock, but on a fitting occasion it should suggest more than a little of the variety of the riches of love in Christ Jesus.

THE ADVANTAGES.

The master preachers, from Spurgeon and Liddon to Watkinson and Morrison, have made large use of the biographical sermon. Why? First of all, doubtless because it is interesting. Nothing is so interesting to persons as a person. Some congregations enjoy doctrine in the pulpits; others, alas, do not. Some enjoy ethics; others do not. Some enjoy evangelism, others not. In each case the negative is unfortunate, but still one must begin with the saints as one finds them, and one may safely assume that almost any congregation will enjoy a biographical sermon worthy of the name. This is only another way of saying that this sort of preaching is in line with the best modern psychology, the best modern philosophy and the best modern pedagogy, not to speak of the best modern homiletics, which is based largely on the principles of psychology and of English composition.

Make a simple test. Before you entered the pastorate you heard many sermons and since you have begun to delve into the mysteries of homiletics you have heard more than a few, thinking oftentimes how much better you could do it yourself. Take a piece of paper and jot down the topic or the text or some other

outstanding feature of every sermon which you remember with satisfaction after the lapse of more than a year. You may wonder that the list is so short, but you may add thereto, until at length your list is fairly complete. Then classify them roughly and note how many are either biographical or narrative. "Yes," you reply, "the sermons which have interested me have been based on the Bible, and the Bible is composed largely of biography and narrative. I wonder if my own sermons would not be more interesting if I preached more about the persons and events of the Bible."

Instructive.

The pastor is not simply a religious entertainer. He is the official teacher of religion, and his text book is the Bible. His school assembles three or four times a week, and unless he is merely a rider of pet hobby horses, he will usually devote at least one of these hours to a biographical sermon. For example, he is moved to enforce the duty of forgiveness of wrongs, and for his object lesson he turns to Christ on the Cross, or to Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren. (See F. W. Robertson's sermon, Fourth Series.) After becoming intimately familiar with the entire passage, he chooses some one text as his point of vantage, thus simplifying his task of preserving unity, and making it easier for his hearers to catch and retain his message.

Effective.

It is good to interest your hearers and even better to instruct them, but you must do more than this if you are really to preach. You must move upon heart and conscience and will so as to persuade your hearers to believe the truth and to perform the resulting duty. For illustrations of such moving power, look at the evangelists, notably Dr. McNeill and Mr. Sunday, and see how often they employ the biographical sermon, which affords them abundant opportunity for direct discourse, for personification, for use of the second personal pronoun, for

strictures against the sins of today, and for appeal to the will, demanding decision and demanding it now, in the name of God. "Thou art the man." And the king cries out, "I have sinned against the Lord."

In the hands of a preacher who is strong and fearless, the biographical sermon becomes a weapon mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, and for the building up of the kingdom. Did you ever hear Dr. McNeill's sermon, "Blind Bartimaeus," or Mr. Sunday's, "The Three Groups"? The three groups are in Gethsemane, where there are great searchings of heart, as there are wherever this sermon is preached. In like manner one might dare even to study the groups round the cross, for one need not be a professional evangelist in order to find here a sharp, two-edged sword. Or one might study Daniel.

The Courage of a Saint. (Dan. 6:10.)

The heroes of the Bible all had their failings, but no one of them was a coward, and perhaps the bravest was Daniel. He had rare courage of every sort—physical, social, moral, spiritual—and he showed his courage where we least expect.

He began to be brave when he was a lad in school—a real boy, lonesome and sensitive, but daring to be good (cf. little Arthur in Tom Brown's School Days).

He was even braver as a man in public life, daring to tell the truth to kings (John Knox, Bourdaloue); daring to be unpopular (the late Mayor Mitchell); daring to sacrifice his career rather than his conscience. President Wilson has said that it is even harder to do your duty when men are sneering at you than when they are shooting at you.

Daniel was bravest of all in his religion, where many a "strong man" is weak as water. His religion was his chief distinction (v. 5). He dared to confess his faith before an unbelieving court; to pray in public when it was not expedient to pray at all; and to hazard his life for the faith of his fathers.

The secret of such courage is faith.

DISADVANTAGES.

If all that is written above is true, and not a mere funeral eulogy, why is the biographical sermon not more frequently

heard, and when heard, why is it not more effective? Perhaps because it is often as shallow as the Susquehanna River. The preacher contents himself with trying to tell the story, which he tells all too badly, and with drawing out a few thin "lessons," either commonplace or impossible; and then he wonders why he has a blue Monday. If he is of a different temperament, he indulges in a succession of what he would style word paintings, but what his hearers insist on characterizing as wind puddings. Unless a man has the literary gifts of Dr. W. W. Moore or Dr. J. I. Vance, not to speak of Farrar and Guthrie, he may well forego many descriptive flights. "No two human beings ever talked about a landscape for three consecutive minutes," says Robert Louis Stevenson, that master of style; and preaching at its best is only "heightened conversation."

How then, can the average man prepare a biographical sermon interesting and clear, but not shallow? Let him determine, first of all, what he hopes to accomplish by this particular sermon, and then work towards his chosen end. The Susquehanna would be deep enough to bear an ocean liner were it not trying to cover so much space, so many rocks. To take a difficult character, here are certain facts about Balaam. What do these facts teach you? Or do you understand these facts for yourself? Personally I do not, and so I have never yet preached on this tempting theme, but I have read more than a few strong sermons here.

Balaam.

Each of my master preachers studied these puzzling facts until he saw shining through them a spiritual principle, which he shared with his friends in the pew, thrilling them with a heavenly vision new and strange. Each man choose a different text, unfolded a different principle, and as a matter of course, developed his material in a different way. These preachers were alike, however, in this: they knew what was in man, that is, in Balaam, and in their hearers; how else could they preach?

Robertson has two successive sermons on Balaam, the one on the earlier portion of the narrative, showing the perversion of his great gifts and of his conscience, caused by his insincerity, and the other on the latter portion of his career, exposing his selfishness. A smaller preacher would have tried to combine the two into one, but Robertson at his best could unfold but one vast truth or duty in a single sermon.

Spurgeon chose a more obvious route, "The Double-Minded Man." Newman, "Obedience Without Love" (Num. 22:38). Brooks, "Whole Views of Life" (23:13). Munger, "The Defeat of Life" (23:10 and 2 Pet. 2:15—"longing to die the death of the righteous, yet loving the wages of unrighteousness"). Dr. Hugh Black, "Permission Without Sanction." Marcus Dods, "Compromise" (22:5). I have not seen Bishop Butler's discourse, showing "the self deception which persuades him in every case that the sin which he commits may be brought within the rules of conscience and revelation"; or Thomas Arnold's, "the combination of the purest form of religious belief with a standard of action immeasurably below it." (Dean Stanley.) It should be obvious ere now that this sort of sermon need not be shallow.

Too Worldly.

Many a biographical sermon, strong and gripping, has in it only a modicum of religion, and that scarcely Christian. As a godly mother said to me after her children were grown, "I used to pride myself on the way in which my bairns hung upon my words about David and Goliath, but when it was almost too late I discovered that I had been telling the tale as though it had been a prize fight." Perhaps she had learned the art from her pastor! But even this sort of worldliness is better than some of the sentimental moralizing which masquerades under the name of religious teaching, for as Dr. Van Dyke has said, "Let me never tag a moral to a story, or tell a story without a meaning."

If such worldliness is the bane of much modern preaching, what is the antidote? Spirituality! Before beginning actively to prepare any given sermon, let one ask and answer this question, "What spiritual result do I expect from this sermon, by the grace of God?" Milton so painted Satan himself as to make him poetically the hero of *Paradise Lost*, and many a smaller

man has so pictured Esau as to make him the hero of young fellows who love a sportsman. Dr. W. T. Thompson avoids this danger in the sermon which he has kindly submitted in outline, and which I have unkindly condensed. (For a different use of Esau consult a volume of sermons which read even better the second time, G. A. Smith, "Forgiveness of Sins," H. & S., 60 cents.)

Esau. (Heb. 12:16; read Gen. 26:27-34; 32:24-32.)

- I. Esau was controlled by the *physical*.
 - II. He was controlled by the *present*. "The present and the future are rivals."
 - III. He *left God out*. He preferred pottage to priesthood. Profane; that is, before the temple—the ground unfenced, trodden by the feet of all. A man whose heart held no shrine.
- Concl.*—Contrast Esau with Jacob, typical of the two great classes today.

Too Far-Fetched.

The preacher today is more tempted to be worldly than to be allegorical, but there is still danger in trying to whitewash the great sinners of the Bible, as in using Samson for the basis of a sermon on consecration, or dedication. Spurgeon could do that sort of thing, for among his many other gifts he had a rare homiletic instinct, but the average man would do well to skate on thicker ice.

Dr. McNeill is perhaps the greatest living preacher of biographical sermons, and not least because he too has a rare homiletic insight. In Columbia he preached almost a score of sermons, all powerful and more than a few masterly, and in each sermon but one he drew his theme directly from his chosen passage. The one exception was in certain respects among the most effective of all his sermons, and certainly it was the most striking. It was on the axhead floating, and on the young men taking Elisha down with them to their day's work. From this passage with its two related truths he preached

on fellowship with Christ, and on union with Christ. Even such a homiletic genius as Dr. McNeill labored a bit in trying to weld these two messages into one, and in treating the union between an ax handle and its head as an illustration of our union with Christ.

Many a man in Columbia remembers this sermon more clearly than any other, but not one in ten could tell what truth the ax-head was used to illustrate. But when you mention almost any other of Dr. McNeill's sermons, such as the one on the timid woman, almost every man remembers the spiritual message, "Stand forth in the midst." So it seems that even Homer nods, but even when he nods still he is great.

Fortunately one need not be a Scottish Spurgeon before one can preach a biographical sermon, both interesting and helpful. Instead of beginning with Balaam and Hosea, why not turn to the more simple characters? In an age when Church and State are increasingly dominated by business men, your hearers old and young will be interested in the business men of the Bible. Instead of speaking of our business friends as hard-headed, let us rather think of them as large-hearted, and appeal to the best that is in them. There is room for a whole series on the business principles assumed in the parables of Jesus, but these same principles shine out more clearly in the life of Joseph.

A Godly Business Man. (Gen. 41:33 and 38.)

Joseph was a model business man: a man of the highest character, with both the domestic and the business virtues (no "ethical bimetallicism"); of the highest efficiency, with that rare gift for planning stupendous enterprises and for carrying them out to minute perfection; working all the while with other men, high and low; a man of the highest usefulness, establishing a happy home, saving his father's household and a large portion of his world (cf. Mr. Hoover).

What made him a model business man? God! (v. 38.) God gave him rare opportunities to develop and to employ business gifts. (Rom. 8:28.) But under God Joseph's business made him. Before he began to prosper, while he was serving his apprenticeship at the foot of the ladder, hard knocks and temptations and the ingratitude of men

were God's instruments in making him strong as an oak. When at last he began to make money and to wield power, money and power were God's instruments in perfecting the broadest man of his time.

And Joseph made himself, under God, as every man must do. Think of his success, not despite his handicaps, but because of them. By his industry, his friendliness and his loyalty, he made himself into a man according to the will of his God.

The secret of such a business man's power with God and men is faith.

SUGGESTIONS.

If this article is a success every young pastor who has read it thus far is beginning to wonder why he should not do this sort of thing more frequently, and do it better. The way to learn to preach biographical sermons is to preach them. When one begins to think that one has mastered the art, it is well to take up a volume of W. M. Taylor or J. C. Ryle, or to name two that help me but little, Joseph Parker or F. B. Meyer. Doubtless there is danger in much study of other men's sermons, but at least it encourages humility.

After preaching a biographical sermon now and then, until one has partially mastered the technique, one dares to plan a series. It may consist of a number of sermons on one of the great men of the Bible, such as Peter, about whom the late Dr. Purves projected a series which would have made the world his debtor, but owing to his untimely death this field is still open. The easier plan is to take up in chronological order certain of the giants of old, not attempting to tell all that one can learn about each man, but striving to impress upon every hearer one vast truth or duty as bodied forth in the chosen saint or sinner.

In preparing such a series one finds brief suggestions, not homiletic "helps," in Prof. G. L. Robinson's text-book, "Leaders of Israel" (Association Press, 60 cents) and in Strachan's "Hebrew Ideals" (Genesis), as well as in the standard books known to every thoughtful pastor. But each man must follow his own bent, for one may excel in whittling out dainty bits of ivory, another in handling a vast body of facts, but in any

case the sermon which is to be remembered must be a unit, and it must be a man's own. "A poor thing, Sir, but mine own, Sir!" Instead of preaching, "Dare to be a Daniel," live and preach the vastly more difficult duty, "Dare to be Yourself." (1 Sam. 17:39.)

One other practical word: be unusually careful about the introduction. A good introduction to a biographical sermon is almost never a miniature biography. If possible, as when preaching your way through Genesis, induce your people to read and study the various passages before you take them up in the pulpit. In any case, assume that your hearers possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of the Bible, such as children acquire in the Primary Department, and that they have listened with at least one open ear while you have read the Scripture lesson, which you have selected after prayer.

When you announce your text, begin at once to preach. "Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage was crude and lurid enough in the matter and rhetoric of his sermons, but he had a genius for introductions. He nearly always struck his subject in the first sentence, and that sentence was a graphic, epigrammatic statement. Long introductions wear the hearers out while the preacher is getting ready to begin. Of course the context must sometimes be explained, but this should be done briefly and graphically, and often it can wisely be left alone." (Snowden, *Psychology of Religion*, Revell, \$2.00.)

Dr. Thompson's outline on Esau contains no hint of an introduction. Instead of telling this old, old story in all its details, which have already been told to perfection in the reading of the Scriptures, Dr. Thompson preaches to civilians as he preached to soldiers. He enters at once upon the statement and the development of his theme, skilfully using the concrete details throughout his sermon, and even in the conclusion, to maintain human interest and to heighten the spiritual effect.

If it seem strange to be writing about the introduction when I might be expected to be getting up steam for my peroration, perhaps it is because many of us leave to the last the drafting of the introduction, in the hope that we may dispense with it

altogether, as the real preachers often do, and likewise with the formal conclusion. How it would amaze your friend in the pew, and bless him, if you spent thirty minutes next Sabbath eve showing him how to apply the balm, or the lash, and then silently handed it over to him so that he could apply it himself. Once in a while, after you have preached on a "great, bad man," such as Haman, quietly pronounce the most appropriate benediction, and send every hearer out into the night, alone with his God. God's Word shall not return unto Him void.

Note.—If you wish a strong, sane book on homiletics and pastoral theology, order this one—"The Christian Minister and His Duties," J. Oswald Dykes, T. & T. Clark, \$2.50. Our Committee in Richmond will gladly fill an order for any book now in print, or you can pick up the standard works in the second-hand shops.

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

Vol. XXXII.

NOVEMBER, 1920.

No. 1.

*THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

THE EXERCISE OF THE VOCATION.

BY G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D. D.

The day when a man stands girded at the threshold of his actual work in the ministry of the Word, is a day full of mystic wonder. He is conscious of strange lights and shadows, of joy and of fear, of hope and almost of despair. The opportunities of service are seen to be at once so vast, and so full of solemnity, that he is seized with a sense of inability and of unworthiness. He feels in his own soul what the Apostle undoubtedly felt as he inquired: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Nevertheless he is conscious anew of the fact that his call was from God, and that Divine resources are ever at the disposal of those called to Divine service; and so a sense of dependence is also a sense of confidence. These apparently conflicting emotions fill the soul with a great and reverent awe.

Perhaps the most common disaster in ministerial life is the loss of this very sense of awe. The glory passes; the light becomes dim; the wonder ceases; and work become routine, and preaching a drudgery. How is this to be obviated, and the first glory maintained undimmed? This is really a great question, demanding serious consideration. I propose to deal with it so far as I am able strictly from the positive side. There are four matters which seem to me to be of paramount importance in the exercise of the vocation of the ministry of the Word. They are: first, the prayerful culture of the spiritual life; secondly, the persistent study

*This article is one of the lectures given by Dr. Campbell Morgan at Union Theological Seminary on the Sprunt Foundation, and is printed here by permission of Dr. Morgan and the Fleming H. Revell Company.

of the Word; thirdly, the practice of purposeful preaching; and finally, the patient shepherding of the flock.

Whenever a man gives himself with all his heart and mind and will to these things, the glad surprise and mystic glory of his work will never cease. Dark days, and weary days, he will certainly know; but so also did his Lord. Nevertheless, the light for Him never failed, and all the tiresome ways led onward to the glorious goal. So also will it be with those whom He calls, sends, accompanies, if they are true to Him and to His service. Of these things then let us think.

The matter of first importance is that of the culture of the spiritual life, or to put it in another way, the maintenance of life in the Spirit. The minister of the Word must ever remember that his one business is to deal with spiritual things. This by no means suggests that he is to separate spiritual truth and being from things mental and material, as though they were in some sense abstractions, having no living relation with these matters. But it is of absolute urgency in order to the exercise of his true function, that he should remember that he is not called and equipped by the heavenly gift for dealing with the mental and the material, apart from the spiritual. His one business in the realms of thought is to bring to bear upon it the light of the eternal Wisdom; and his one responsibility in the realm of action is to seek to inquire it with spiritual principle and passion. The work of the Christian preacher is that of bringing to bear upon human words, opinions, teachings, the correcting and guiding light of the Word of the living God. The work of the Christian preacher is that of relating all human action, in whatever realm, to the Divine purpose and enterprise, in order that it may be true, and strong, and lasting.

It follows that a man called to be the instrument of such service must himself live in the spiritual atmosphere. This means that he must practice the presence of God. This is much more than accepting the theory of the Divine immanence. It is the persistent and perpetual relating of all personal thought and action to that Presence. This demands, first of all, the exercise of the spiritual faculties. Inquiry must be made of God, as to what the way and the will of God may be, with regard to everything, the great and the small, the small as earnestly as the great. Not only must there be inquiry, the spirit must be trained to wait and to

listen. The haste that cannot wait on the Lord must be denied. If there is not time to seek the Lord, there is not time to do anything. The doing that begins without the discovery of the Divine will is indeed deadly. All this in turn calls for response to the demands which are made as the result of such inquiry and such waiting. There must be the yielding of the judgment, that is the renewing of the mind; the consent of the heart, that is the dedication of the affection; and implicit obedience, that is the yielding of the will. This life, actively in the spiritual world, must be resolute and continuance. No man can fulfil his ministry in spiritual things, save as he himself is living in right relation with spiritual things. When the Word ceases to be a light, a fire, a joy to a man in his own life, searching, energizing, heartening him; his preaching of it becomes a weariness, a drudgery to his own soul, and utterly ineffective in the lives of others.

Of true spiritual life for the minister of the Word, as for all others, there is a two-fold condition, and test, in the realm of the material. No divorce between the body and the spirit is possible in this life. The body is the instrument of the spirit. No separation between ordinary human affairs, and the things of the spirit, is possible in this world. The things of every-day life are the opportunity ties of spiritual realization and expression. The condition for true personal spirituality is bodily fitness. The test of spirituality is the use a man makes of his body. Not by its destruction does he demonstrate his spiritual attainment, but by its possession and use. The opportunities for spiritual service are the commonplaces of every-day life. The test of spirituality is the use a man makes of these opportunities. Not by escape from them does he demonstrate his spirituality, but by their sanctification and beautifying. To minister the Word so as to produce these results in the lives of others must be to live by the Word in this very sense. No minister of the Word can neglect the habits of the spiritual life without disaster to his own soul, and to his work therefore.

The second matter of importance is that of the persistent study of the Word on the part of the minister. This seems so obvious as to need no argument, and yet I fear that it is at this point that very many have sadly failed. In the years of preparation much has been done, in the very necessity of the case; and all that has been

done is of the greatest value. Indeed the real value of the technical work of these years will only now begin to be known. Nevertheless, all this has been preparatory. By that I do not mean preparatory preaching merely, though that of course is true. I mean preparatory to that particular study of the Word which must be undertaken, as the definite work of the ministry is taken up. The minister will now turn to the Word in the company of his work, as he goes to his work in the company of the Word. That is to say, he will not now go to his Bible in order to discover its teaching in the abstract merely. He will turn to it, burdened with the needs, the problems, yes, and the agonies of men; in order to seek its light upon these things, so that his ministry may be a service of direction, of healing, of help. To sit down in happy seclusion, separated from all men and matters, in order to know the Scriptures, is one thing, and a great and joyful thing. It is quite another matter to go into seclusion, carrying in with you the sins and sorrows of human souls in order to find the Divine salvation and comfort. Happy indeed is the man who has had a thorough training in the former method. That will be of inestimable value now. But he cannot wholly depend on it. He must go back to a yet more diligent devotion to study. Using our great phrase, "The Word of God," as referring to the Sacred Writings, I declare that its deepest tones are never heard, its most wonderful revelation is never known, until great human need appeals to it. The minister of the Word must make that appeal vicariously, for those to whom he is called upon to minister.

Who that has been long in the work has not known the travail and the triumph of this experience? It is an awful and a glorious thing to be made the bearer of the sin, the shame, the suffering of human souls; to carry these things into the light of the Divine revelation; to hear its message of power, of hope, of comfort; and then to minister to those in need. The man who does not so continue to be a student of the Word will fail in the exercise of his ministry, however talented he may be in other ways.

Here then is a peril which confronts a man as he leaves his college and commences his work. We are apt to think that in the days of preparation we have done our work, and that we know our Bibles. We are tempted to turn to human opinions, even to be enamoured of that illusory, ephemeral, anaemic thing called

“current thought.” Let us guard against the temptation from the very beginning, and continuously. In the comparatively small compass of our Bibles we shall find all that the human soul needs. While we may have much help from other literature in illustration and interpretation, let us never forget that of all other writings in comparison with the Bible it may be said,

“These are but broken lights of Thee.”

Therefore let us be diligent students of the Word.

It is not the purpose of these lectures to give anything like technical details, but I may at least give a general suggestion as to a minister's method. First, let his library be carefully chosen, and let it be good, rather than large. To any man beginning the work of library building I should say, let these words guide you, *Exegesis, Exposition, Everything*. Keep that order. Never make the worst blunder of all, that of getting everything first. Neither make perhaps the more common mistake of putting *exposition* in the place of *exegesis*. The former is at best very often no more than the opinions of others. The latter will, in the proportion in which it is really scholarly, help you to know what the Word really says.

Then I would urge every minister as he commences his actual work to get a new Bible, and begin all over again, giving special attention to two matters. First, let him turn to the books he thinks he knows best, in order to find how much there is that he had not discovered. Then let him resolutely turn to the parts least known, most neglected, determined to face and to know them. As I have said before, for my illustration I apologize, but not for my contention. No man can be a successful minister of the Word—and I use the word successful in its best sense—who ceases to be a student of the Word. Let us add that no man need fear that he will exhaust its treasures.

The third matter of importance is that of purposeful preaching. All preaching, whether apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, or pastoral, has but one aim; that namely, of the capture of the central citadel of Mansoul, the will. The intellect and the emotions are highways of approach, and both should be employed. The one thing of which we need to be constantly reminding ourselves, is that we have never accomplished the real end of preaching until

we have reached the will, and constrained it towards the choices which are in harmony with the Truth which we declare. I say "*constrained it*" towards these choices, rather than "*compelled it*" to them, for this latter we can never do. The former we may and it is our one business to do so. To instruct the intelligence is necessary, but it is a means to an end, rather than an end. The last word of the preacher along these lines is "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is in order to the doing of the will of God that His will is to be made known. To touch and move the emotions is perfectly proper, but it also is a means to an end, rather than an end. The last word of the preacher along these lines must ever be that of the Lord, "If ye love Me ye will keep My commandments." That man is indeed happy, who, himself instructed in the things of God, and inspired by the love of God, can storm the citadel of human will, along the avenues of intelligence and emotion, capturing it for his Lord, and constraining it to obedience to His Word.

The minister of the Word has two questions which he must always ask himself concerning his preaching; first, what is the need I am to address? Secondly, what is the message I am to deliver? The answer to the first is known fundamentally and essentially. He always speaks to the deepest things in human life, the things of the spirit, the things that are of abiding importance, and which touch and influence finally all the secondary things. But these things have an almost infinite variety of incidental expression; and the man who would preach the Word prevailingly to his fellow men must live among them; he must know the human spirit as well as the Word of God. His business must be to know the need he addresses.

Knowing this need he must then seek his message. Here again inclusively he is never at a loss. That by which man lives, in the deepest of his life, is the Word of God. But the incidental application must be as varied as is the incidental expression; and he who would preach the Word prevailingly must live with the Word; he must know the Word of God as well as the human spirit. His business must be to know the remedy for the need he addresses.

Besides these two, no other question is really important. The preacher is not to ask whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; although the passion of his soul must be to persuade them

to obey. He will never halt in the delivery of his message to inquire as to whether it is likely to be pleasant or disturbing. Neither of these is necessarily authoritative, and this the preacher should remember. To some temperaments there is always the temptation to think that the unpleasant is the true and the powerful. Others are tempted to imagine that the restful is the only valuable note. Both ideas are equally false. The Word of God will sometimes shake the very foundations, and disturb the spirit to its depths; while at others it will come as peace and quietness, calming all the storm into rest. The passing effects of the Word are nothing. The ultimate victory in the sanctification of men and women to the will of God is everything.

The preacher therefore has always two supreme duties in preaching, beyond the proclamation of his message. They are those of application and appeal. The Word declared must be applied to the need as it is known. This must be done with knowledge and discretion; but it must be done, or the preaching may fail to realize its highest intention and purpose. Moreover he must appeal to the will, calling it to surrender in the name of the Lord. This appeal must be made with conviction as well as with passion. Passion characterized by unreality is of no avail; it is worse than conviction without passion. Painted fire never burns. But conviction without passion often fails to reach its goal. Unlit fuel never burns.

Let ministers of the Word preach the things of which they themselves know the power, and preach them with the passionate earnestness of which such things are worthy, and the ministry will be a constant triumph and a perpetual joy; even if it be also a constant travail, and perpetual fellowship with the sufferings of the Lord.

The final matter in the exercise of vocation is that of the patient shepherding of those who are gathered into the flock as the result of preaching. The word shepherding has application principally to the distinctly pastoral office, but the principles involved apply in each case. In apostolic ministry there is need for such detailed interpretation as may be necessary to meet the need of individual cases. In prophetic ministry, administration as well as application will constantly be called for. In evangelistic ministry, personal direction will inevitably be necessary. In each case

much more than surface knowledge is demanded, both of the message and of the men to be instructed, guided, directed.

I propose to confine myself to the more strictly pastoral phase. Here there must first be the perpetual feeding of the flock by the systematic teaching of the Lord. The work of the Pastor in this regard is not completely done by preaching from isolated texts. It goes without saying that it is not done at all by preaching about topics, save as they are dealt with in the light of the Word. It is the business of the pastor and teacher to lead the people under his care in careful and intelligent study of the Sacred Writings. Every Church should be a Bible school, a Bible college, and its minister should take oversight of all Biblical teaching, from the Primary Department of his Sunday School, through every grade, and up to the oldest members of the Church. Much of the detail work he must delegate to others, but nothing of it should be outside his knowledge and direction. His charge is to feed the lambs, and the sheep.

I refrain from discussion of methods in detail, contenting myself with this statement of a broad principle, which I hold to be of great importance.

Beyond this, however, the pastor has a double duty. He must take oversight of the flock, and he must guide it. What John Ruskin said of the Bishops in *Sesame and Lilies* is true of all shepherds of the flock. If they do not know their people and their needs they are no bishops. Here is the true place of pastoral visitation. This, however, is a whole subject, and in some senses a separate one. I refer to it because it ought to have the closest relation to the ministry of the Word. It is by this method that the true pastor discovers the needs of his people, and so knows how to bring forth things new and old out of his treasury. It goes without saying, that pastoral visitation is much more than calling at houses, drinking tea, and indulging in profitless conversation.

His guidance of his flock is a sacred duty, also. Sometimes it is his duty to indicate a worthy line of conduct, even when his advice is not sought. This is not always easy; it is at times found to be unwelcome, even resented; but if he is faithful to his duty it must be done, and it is wonderful how responsive the human soul is to such guidance. Such guidance is constantly sought, and the

methods of private personal interviews and correspondence are of great value in shepherding the sheep.

There is yet another thing the pastor may have to do. He may have to fight. There are still evil, wolfish interests, and human beings who prowl around the flock to destroy, and with such the shepherd is always at war.

In view of all these responsibilities, which are privileges also, because they are shared with the Good, the Great, the Chief Shepherd, how important it ever is that the pastor should define his spiritual relationship with his people clearly. He should see to it that he establish no relation with them, either political or social, which would prevent his fulfilment in their lives of his high spiritual function.

To realize this ideal of the exercise of the vocation of the ministry of the Word will give the minister no spare time. It will, however, demand recreative intervals, in which, escaping entirely from all the particular work of his sacred office, he finds renewal and recuperation. Such intervals should be marked off as sacred, and no pressure of work should be allowed to interfere. To say that is, to have to add, "Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

But again this conception as the goal of endeavor will preserve the minister from any sense of failing interest. It will often almost burden him that his opportunities are so vast, never that they are narrow. With every passing year, the Word to which he yields himself that he may give it to others, will grow in strength and beauty, and the joy of declaring it will be his strength as well as his duty.

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

Vol. XXXII.

NOVEMBER, 1920.

No. 1.

*THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

THE EXERCISE OF THE VOCATION.

BY G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D. D.

The day when a man stands girded at the threshold of his actual work in the ministry of the Word, is a day full of mystic wonder. He is conscious of strange lights and shadows, of joy and of fear, of hope and almost of despair. The opportunities of service are seen to be at once so vast, and so full of solemnity, that he is seized with a sense of inability and of unworthiness. He feels in his own soul what the Apostle undoubtedly felt as he inquired: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Nevertheless he is conscious anew of the fact that his call was from God, and that Divine resources are ever at the disposal of those called to Divine service; and so a sense of dependence is also a sense of confidence. These apparently conflicting emotions fill the soul with a great and reverent awe.

Perhaps the most common disaster in ministerial life is the loss of this very sense of awe. The glory passes; the light becomes dim; the wonder ceases; and work become routine, and preaching a drudgery. How is this to be obviated, and the first glory maintained undimmed? This is really a great question, demanding serious consideration. I propose to deal with it so far as I am able strictly from the positive side. There are four matters which seem to me to be of paramount importance in the exercise of the vocation of the ministry of the Word. They are: first, the prayerful culture of the spiritual life; secondly, the persistent study

*This article is one of the lectures given by Dr. Campbell Morgan at Union Theological Seminary on the Sprunt Foundation, and is printed here by permission of Dr. Morgan and the Fleming H. Revell Company.

THE ETHICAL SERMON.

A CLINIC OF HOMILETICS, FOURTH ARTICLE, PREPARED
ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PASTORS.

BY ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, D. D.
First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.

"To preach Christ is the only effective way to preach morality in all its branches." These words by Thomas Chalmers near the close of his farewell address at Kilmany strike the Keynote of the present article. After seven years of preaching truth and duty for their own sake, and without spiritual result; in 1810 Chalmers began to preach truth and duty for Christ's sake, with what astounding results the world still remembers. As a preacher of truth he is fairly well known, at least by name (see an illuminating article on Chalmers by Dr. C. E. Macartney in a recent number of the Princeton Review), and he deserves to be well known as a preacher of Christian "morality in all its branches."

After his homiletic regeneration Chalmers accepted with all his heart the truth as expressed by the holy fathers, "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man"; that is, the Bible reveals truth and duty, in this order. And so he quickly became a Scriptural preacher, that is, an expository preacher in spirit rather than in form. In showing the relation between truth and duty, as revealed in the Bible and supremely in the Saviour, Chalmers used various methods. Sometimes he adopted more or less of what is known as the method of continuous application, in which the late Dr. Payson is said to have excelled all other American divines. For example, in the very first sentences of his sermon on the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost (Mt. 12:31, 32), Chalmers sounded out an emphatic call for repentance, and throughout his discourse he repeated his demand again and again. In almost every sermon, as a matter of fact, he gained much of his power by his sledge-hammer insistence on one vast truth or one compelling duty.

In other sermons, after the manner of Paul and of the Puritans, Chalmers first explained the truth and then enforced the result-

ing duty. For example, in preaching on the doctrine of predestination (Acts 27:22, 31), he proposed two heads, the first doctrinal, covering two pages of fairly close print, and the second practical, or ethical, covering four pages. He himself called this a doctrinal sermon, but even in his severest doctrinal discussion he always moved in an ethical atmosphere, and after he had passed through the first stages of such a sermon as this, he tended to become more and more ethical in form. Otherwise he would have been no true son of the Reformation, which was ethical as well as doctrinal.

Chalmers must have found some difficulty in compressing into a single sermon both the truth and the duty, for at times he devoted an entire morning hour to the exposition of his narrative, and a week later he enforced its ethical teachings. For example, in preaching on the three-fold temptation of Jesus, he employed what is now known in law as the "case method," stating an illustrative case, that of a young man on the eve of bankruptcy, and applying to him the lessons of the passage. This sermon alone would show that he was a master in the difficult art of teaching Biblical ethics to a popular audience, composed largely of business men and their households.

For other illustrations of this giant Scot's versatility in ethical preaching, look at his sermon in Edinburgh, "On Cruelty to Animals," and at his eight discourses to business men, "On the Application of Christianity to the Concerns and Ordinary Affairs of Life." From the most casual study of his sermons as published in five volumes (Select Works, R. Carter & Bro., N. Y., 1850), you will see that this man preached doctrine ethically and ethics doctrinally, and that he preached but little else. Read his words to business men, to whom he preached quite often, as every city pastor should do.

"The Silver Shrines." (Acts 19:24).

"The lessons of theology may be dealt out . . . without one stretch of application to the familiarities of the living and the acting man, And when this work of application is attempted . . . it may be felt that he is debasing his subject by the vulgarities of tame and ordinary experience. . .

"Christianity is the religion of life . . . and in opposition to all the alleged impracticabilities which are conceived to lie in the way of her full establishment over the acts and the consciences of our species, do I aver, that if she be not practical, neither ought she to be preached."

AN EXPOSITION OF DUTY.

In the light of the great word of Chalmers as quoted in the beginning of this article, the ethical sermon is a homiletic expression of Christian duty, for spiritual ends. In this working definition the emphasis just now is upon one word, exposition. In preaching ethics as in preaching doctrine, or anything else, the young pastor must speak with authority, and so he must speak from the Book. He will speak with more assurance and with more power if he uses each portion of the Book as the Spirit wills. The devout expositor dare not be wise above that which is written. When the Spirit teaches truth, he must preach truth; when the Spirit teaches duty, he must preach duty. Otherwise he might wrest the Scripture. "No Scripture is of any private interpretation."

To be more concrete, the young preacher might ignore the doctrinal teachings of Romans Eight or of Isaiah Fifty-three and content himself with searching out the ethical implications, even as he might pass by the ethical precepts which lie everywhere on the surface in the Proverbs, or in James, and diligently delve into the underlying doctrinal strata. If this seems to be setting up men of straw, certainly the young pastor is often tempted to ignore the ethical books while he preaches from the doctrinal, or vice versa. Doubtless his preaching is helpful, but is it entirely fair? Is it expository? No! The true expositor finds in the Scriptures both truth and duty; he finds the truth where the Spirit wrote the truth and the duty where he wrote the duty. And he preaches what is written.

How then shall the inexperienced preacher determine whether any particular passage requires the doctrinal emphasis or the ethical? Ordinarily he will have but small difficulty, for many a passage, notably in John and in Paul, demands the doctrinal emphasis, and many another, especially in the narratives, permits either the doctrinal or the ethical. The best preaching insures an intimate blending of the two elements, as in Chalmers, so that neither element calls attention to itself and away from the uplifted Christ. But for our present purposes we must take the two elements apart. How then can one tell when the passage demands an ethical emphasis? Is there not some working rule which will at least turn one's face towards the light?

Here is a fact so simple that it seems to have escaped the attention of the wise men who compile our text-books, or perhaps it is so obvious that it seems unworthy of their notice. But at any rate whenever the dominant verb in your passage is an imperative, or may naturally be interpreted as an imperative, you may expect the resulting sermon to be somewhat largely ethical. "Repent!" "Believe!" "Come!" "Go!" Such an imperative takes for granted one or more of the fundamental Christian truths, and summons every hearer to the resulting duty. Should not the sermon based upon such an imperative likewise take for granted the truth, or at least keep it in the background, and boldly summon to the resulting duty?

This line of thought suggests an inquiry about the preacher's use of verbs and pronouns. When he is enforcing a Christian duty, should he confine himself to indicatives, or even to un-Scriptural subjunctives, and to the first personal pronoun? Since the Bible frequently employs direct address and the imperative mood, dare the preacher hide behind his false modesty and tone down the mighty imperatives of God? Dr. John McNeill and Mr. Sunday and the other evangelists make large use of the second personal pronoun and of the imperative mood, and gain thereby in directness and in power. Pastors likewise can speak directly to the conscience of the men in the pew. Here is a bit of wayside gleaning from the Yale Lectures of Dr. John Kelman.

"I remember an old man long ago contrasting my sermons with those in a neighboring tent. He said, 'In the tent they aye say, You; but when ye're preachin' ye say, We.' The shrewd judgment, intended for approbation, led to a change in my use of personal pronouns, for which I have often thanked the old friend of my young days."

The Ten Commandments.

As a test of our working rule about ethical imperatives, look at the dominant verbs in the Ten Commandments. "Remember!" "Honour!" Thou shalt not!" These ethical imperatives assume certain great facts, and they summon to certain great duties. Should not our sermons based on the Ten Commandments, therefore, or our series of lessons in the Men's Bible Class, be primarily ethical? Yes; but in practice are they? It is suggestive that one of our best discussions of these Ten Words is by a theologian, Charles Hodge, in the Third Volume of his *Theology*.

The most popular books here are by Dale, Dykes and H. S. Coffin, who would style themselves ethical teachers. But almost without exception, they dodge the direct exposition of the more difficult portions of the original Constitution of the Kingdom, and substitute a vast deal of inferential sermonizing. The world still waits for an adequate unfolding of these ethical imperatives, as interpreted in the Sermon on the Mount, and as applied to the problems of today.

What is the world's greatest need? To know God, and to do His will. When men and nations are playing tenpins with His Law, and the Church is feebly teaching it with reservations, how can we know the right? How can we cure Bolshevism and our other allied evils?" To the Law and to the Testimony." The Ten Commandments are:

- I. *Simple*. Written for a people called children, just out of bondage.
- II. *Comprehensive*. No eleventh on the same plane has ever been suggested.
- III. *Spiritual*. Morality for God's sake. The world needs spiritual motives.
- IV. *Practical*. Adapted to every land, and every "class." (Be concrete).

Concl.—Love is the fulfilling of the Law, the love of God in Christ. Therefore help to make your world Christian.

When a man trained in theology but not in ethics approaches one of these Ten Words, especially in the First Table, he is tempted to dodge its ethical teaching and to follow out its doctrinal bearings. Which of the books, for example, sounds forth a clear, strong call to the duty of having but one God in our World, or a trumpet blast against the sin of tolerating idolatry, whether among cannibals or Romanists? And yet these are the duties and these are the sins about which the Spirit wishes us to know when He inspired the Ten Commandments. Instead of diverting these words to other uses, or narrowing them down to a "thin layer of elementary commonplaces," why not seize this opportunity to preach missions to our large-hearted business men? Why do we persist in styling them hard-headed when they do not greatly care for sob stories, but prefer to love God with their minds?

The World's Need of One God.

This commandment is first because it is most important. "To have God is to trust Him." "Before Me," that is, in God's presence, in the entire

world. The world's supreme need is to "have" the God of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

- I. Less than half of the world to-day even professes to have our God. This half is the brighter half, and all because of obedience to the First Commandment. How much brighter this half would be if such obedience were more intelligent and complete!
- II. The other half is the darker, not because of race, climate, soil, etc., but because of violation of the First Commandment.
- III. In a single generation the darkest portion of our world can be transformed into the brightest by a sincere acceptance of this Commandment, e. g., Fred B. Smith says Honolulu is the most Christian city in the world to-day.

Concl.—Make your world Christian!

The second commandment invites similar use. Instead of twisting it into a caveat against covetousness, thus making it parallel with the tenth, deal with it fairly and show what idolatry means; how it fostered vice and stifled virtue in Old Testament times, and how it does so today, blasting the most populous portions of the Eastern world, and even infecting our so-called Christian lands. Be specific. For example, contrast Ulster with the other portions of Ireland, or Scotland with Spain, Canada with Mexico, or North America with South America, and ask for a reasonable explanation of such disparity. Then bid your friends take no rest until they have set their world free from the blight of idolatry.

The other eight commandments likewise teach what duty God requires of man—the duty of reverence, of Sabbath observance, of filial honor, of preserving human life, of revering every person, of respecting property rights, of preserving the truth, and of being content. Each of these Ten Words has its social as well as its individual application. As Colonel Henry Watterson and Mr. R. H. Edmunds and Mr. R. W. Babson, and other wise observers, have been telling us of late, the world's only hope is in the Christian God, and the Christian God is the God of the Ten Commandments as well as the Sermon on the Mount. For the Law still rests beneath the Mercy Seat.

New Testament Ethics.

We must pass by the Proverbs and the Prophets and the other portions of the Old Testament, contenting ourselves with Dr.

Jowett's remark that the Old Testament gives a large place to the "message of reform," as distinct from the New Testament "message of redemption." But we must not press such a distinction too far, for since returning to England Dr. Jowett himself has been preaching a good deal of old-fashioned Puritan ethics, and preaching it directly from the New Testament, as well as from the Old. There is a tremendous message of reform in the New Testament, even as there is a lofty message of redemption in the Old. And Dr. Jowett preaches the Christ of the whole Bible.

In the New Testament, as a matter of course, the message of redemption is ever first, but the message of reform is likewise worthy of our study. Both in spirit and in form the New Testament is intensely ethical. It opens with the account of the Birth of Jesus, truth which has helped to work a marvelous change in the world's treatment of childhood and motherhood, of poverty and labor, and of the smaller nations (here is room for a Christian sermon.) Then comes the record of the preaching of John the Baptist, with his call for repentance. He was a voice in the wilderness, ever sounding forth his one ethical imperative, "Repent!" The Master Himself began His public ministry by sounding forth this same compelling word, "Repent!"

The longer some of us preach the more do we find our texts in the Gospels, and the more do we let each sermon grow according to the life in its seed (cf. Gen. 1:11). For example in the words of Jesus, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel we find comparatively few ethical imperatives, whereas in the Synoptic Gospels we find them in almost every paragraph. Consequently we preach but little ethics from the Fourth Gospel, and a great deal from the other three. If we were not ministers of the Word, that is, if we were not expositors, we might preach for a year from the Gospel of John without unfolding the truth about the New Birth or the Trinity, even as we might conceivably dwell for a year in Luke without enforcing the duty of Forgiveness of Wrongs, or of Intercessory Prayer. But since we are primarily neither preachers of doctrine nor preachers of ethics, but preachers of Christ and Him crucified, as revealed in the Book, we dare not be wise above that which is written. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

A man's use of the Gospel of Mathew, for instance, quickly re-

veals his leanings. Is this a field for doctrinal preaching, or for ethical, or for both? That depends upon the man. We all agree quite glibly that this is the Gospel of the Kingdom, but is the Kingdom, here and elsewhere, earthly or heavenly, eschatological or ethical? It is both (see Vos, "The Kingdom," American Tract Society, \$.75; and Stalker, "The Ethic of Jesus," H. & S., \$2.00). The Gospel as preached by our Master is the Good News of the Kingdom, and the Kingdom as He explains it is the realm in which the will of God is done. Without entering here into the vast issues of eschatology, it is evident that the doing of God's will on earth is largely a matter of ethics (Mt. 6:10). So is seeking first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). Search the Gospel of Matthew for these ethical imperatives. For sake of clearness and unity the outline below calls throughout for this ethical emphasis.

- I. The Coming of the King (Mt. 1-5). Show ethical reasons for His coming.
- II. The Character of the Kingdom (Ch. 6-15). Show its ethical character.
- III. The Cost of the Kingdom (Ch. 16-27). The Cross overshadowing the Church.
- IV. The Consummation of the Kingdom (Ch. 28). The ethical power of the Risen Lord.

In such a study of the First Gospel we come quickly to the Sermon on the Mount, which is not really a sermon, but a body of ethical teachings addressed to believers, with the two keynotes, righteousness and love, each of which is ethical, and therefore distinct from the rallying cries of every other religion. Before we go further into detail, however, we must first catch a bird's-eye view of this "Teaching on the Hill," taking due advantage of the popular esteem in which these words are held, for the world has long since determined never willingly to let them die. At the same time we must make it clear that these beloved words are intensely spiritual, and that they set up standards so lofty that the best of the sons of men can begin to approach them only through Jesus our Lord (Mt. 5:48, et al).

The Sermon Topic.

In preaching one's way through the "Teaching on the Hill," the easier plan is to flit from text to text, explaining and enforcing

the respective duties, one in each sermon, under headings such as appear below, and ever taking care to set each duty over against the vast background of the Kingdom, for otherwise ethical preaching might quickly cease to be Christian. In phrasing the topic for such a sermon, or in fancy for any other, it is wholesome to remember Dr. Tweed's rule: "The subject of a sermon ought always to be stated in religious terms." It should be helpful also for the young pastor to review his sermon topics in the light of a footnote in the Yale Lectures of Dr. Kelman:

"Smartness in advertised titles of sermons is an abomination against which I would fain warn you. It is cheap to begin with, and brands a man as a vendor of cheap wares. And, besides, there are but few preachers so unfortunate as to be able to keep it up. You begin with advertising as your subject, "The Prodigal from the point of view of the Fatted Calf," or, "The Submarine Experiences of Jonah"; you end with advertising, "A Good Man," or, "A Noble Race." As if any self-respecting man would cross the street to hear you on the latter subjects, or would not flee into another city rather than hear you on the former."

The subject of an ethical sermon, then, must itself be ethical, and not an ingenuous attempt to secure an audience under false pretenses. Some of our best preachers, it is true, never announce their subjects in advance, but they could if they chose, for when they enter the pulpit they have in the mind's eye a single crystalline phrase through which they can see heavenly motives for earthly tasks. The topics given herewith are merely suggestive, and should not be adopted by another, for the topic should fit the sermon as the name of a man in the Old Testament days fitted his character.

In sermon topics, as in names, other things being equal, brevity is much to be desired. Four words in a topic, according to one authority, is as much as the eye will catch or the mind retain with ease. But probably it is better to use a few words than to be dull or muddy. The most striking sermon that I heard during my last vacation was by Dr. C. E. Macartney, of Philadelphia, on the topic of nine brief words, "What I Thought I Would Never do, but Did." (II Kings, 8:13, Authorized Version). It was in the First Church of Pittsburgh, where few men would dare to preach the ethics of the Bible in such unconventional fashion. In his own congregation, which is solving the downtown problem, this brilliant young preacher attracted large audiences last winter

to hear his series of evening sermons, "Sins that Don't Count (with Men)" One of these is Ingratitude, "The Most Popular Sin in the World" (Gen. 40:23). This is the sort of vital homiletics which Dr. Macartney is teaching in Princeton Seminary, where he assists Prof. J. Richie Smith.

But we must come back to our topics from the "Teaching on Hill," "Attractive Goodness," "Forgiveness of Wrongs," "Forgiving Without Forgetting," "The Limits of Self-Denial," "Heavenly Perfection an Earthly Duty," "Loving Your Enemies," "Pernicious Publicity in Religion," "The Insulated Soul," "Heavenly Treasures on Earth," "The Treasures of Your Heart." "Christ's Cure for Worry" (some such sermon at least every six months), "The By-Products of Godliness," "The Blessings of an Unknown Future" (Phillips Brooks styles it uncertain), "The School of Christ-Entrance Requirements," "The Authority of Jesus" (the text uses this title, not "Christ").

The last topic illustrates the difficulty of phrasing a topic which is true to the spirit of the passage and still attractive. The conventional topic here, and especially since the appearance of D. W. Forrest's book, is, "The Authority of Christ."

Such a topic ignores our modern prejudice against authority, and may even conjure up in the minds of our hearers a caricature of a military despot or of an Oriental monarch. In preaching to men who have but lately doffed the khaki, for example, could we not show that the authority of Jesus is finer than we often suppose, and yet vastly stronger?

The Shepherd's Crook (A Christmas Sermon).

The shepherd's crook is mightier than the king's scepter. The angels told the shepherds about their King, but the scholars told the king about the Shepherd (Mt. 2:6c), and this was the term which he employed in speaking about Himself, the Good Shepherd.

- I. Love is mightier than Law. (Contrast this Babe with Herod).
 - II. Service mightier than Selfishness. (Study Rehoboam, I K. 12:7).
 - III. Sacrifice than Sin (Of the Saviour and Nero, or the Kaiser?)
- The Lord is my Shepherd. This is a fact, not merely a promise.

A more exacting course in the Sermon on the Mount would lead one to present in more or less of logical order the various aspects of the Kingdom. What then is the Kingdom, and to what degree is it ethical? What does it mean in the current year and in

your own parish, as well as in your world today? Who is the King? What are the laws? What is the prevailing spirit? Who are the citizens? What are the terms of admission? What are the duties? The compensations, here and now, as well as hereafter? How judge one's own standing in the Kingdom? What are the social applications of the Kingdom idea? The national? The international? The missionary? In short, is the Kingdom a fact or a figure, a reality here and now, or a vision of the future?

These are the questions about which your people are puzzled, or should be, and about which they should receive constant light from your pulpit. These questions are hard, but "do not interpretations belong to God?" "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Such ethical teaching requires unusual wisdom, because of the difficulty in being concrete, vivid, helpful, and still keeping to the facts. One must be ethical in spirit as well as in purpose, and therefore one must not present living duties as though they were wooden burdens. "A man who cannot preach interesting sermons was never intended to preach." But before one can preach interesting sermons on ethics, one must know the subject and know it well. As Dr. Lyman Abbott has said, "It takes a pan of milk, to make a pat of butter. The congregations of today want the pat of butter and not the pan of milk."

We have tarried so long by the way that we can merely glance at the epistles, watching out for ethical imperatives. In the first twelve chapters of the Romans, for example, Paul uses many doctrinal indicatives, and in the last four chapters many ethical imperatives. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews alternates between the two moods. Peter is largely an ethical teacher, and James is most of all. After the first three chapters the Revelation is not distinctly ethical in form, but throughout it is intensely ethical in spirit, and it closes with an ethical warning. It is evident, therefore, that the man who preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament must give no small place to the preaching of ethics.

AN ETHICAL APPLICATION.

In all preaching the application is most difficult, and especially

in the preaching of ethics. But at any cost let us apply the truth written above. "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" As a plain matter of fact, how many of us preach Christian "morality in all its branches," and preach it in the proportion which it occupies in the Book? In other parts of the Church our Brethren are preaching little else save ethics, ethics oftentimes scarcely Christian, and they deserve the rebukes hurled at them by laymen hungry for the old Gospel. (See a timely article, "Espository Preaching," by Dr. W. R. Dobyns, in the *Christian Observer*, June 14, 1916. This article, based on the replies to a questionnaire sent out to many Christian laymen, suggested the present paper).

Others among us, including some of our noblest divines, seem practically never to enter the field of ethics, and they receive the eoniums of the laymen who respond to such a questionnaire. These laymen must be unfortunate in the sort of ethical preaching which they heard, for they seemed to believe that the two adjectives, expository and ethical, are mutually exclusive. The present article, notwithstanding, proceeds on the assumption that the Scriptures principally teach duty as well as truth, and that the reverent expositor must preach from the Book as he finds it, and not according to any elective system. Listen to Dr. Stalker in his Yale Lectures, "The Preacher and His Models." He is speaking about Paul as a thinker, and incidentally about Chalmers. Dr. Stalker himself is a masterly expositor, especially in the field of Gospel ethics.

"This balance between the doctrinal and the moral is difficult to maintain. Seldom has the mind of the Church been able to preserve it for any length of time. It has oscillated from one kind of one-sidedness to another, sometimes neglecting duties and at other times preaching up morality and disparaging doctrine. To which side the balance may be dipping among you (in America) I do not know; but among us, I should say, it was from doctrine towards duties. Perhaps in the last generation we had . . . too little preaching of duty."

However it be in other parts of the Church, is there not too little preaching of duty among us? Have we not largely forgotten our ethical imperatives? Do we not prefer doctrinal indicatives and even un-Scriptural subjunctives? Do we not take refuge, as I am doing now, behind interrogatives, when we ought rather

to be sounding forth God's challenges to duty? How many ethical sermons, then, have you yourself preached in the past year? Of all your hundred sermons and more, how many were expositions of Christian duty, for spiritual ends? If you have drawn up your plans for the coming year, how honorable a place have you given to the ethical sermon?

Why, then, do we so seldom preach the ethics of the Bible? Partly, as Dr. W. B. Greene told us in Princeton, because this sort of preaching is most difficult. He was hearing our Junior sermonettes, three in half an hour, and as an authority in Biblical ethics he was amazed when one of the fledgelings rushed in where wise men held back, and tried in ten minutes to explain as to a popular audience the principle wrapped in Paul's words about eating flesh which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. Here is the outline which led Professor Greene to remark that there should be vastly more preaching of ethics in evangelical pulpits. This outline has since been used as the basis for a sermon to young folk on questionable amusements (Cor. 8:13).

A Strong Man's Declaration of Dependence.

Show briefly from the context that Paul was a strong man.

- I. *A Strong Man's Meat.* To him such eating was a matter of indifference.
- II. *A Strong Man's Brother.* To him such eating would be sin.
- III. *A Strong Man's Declaration of Dependence.* Love the fulfilling of Law.

Concl.—"Be strong in the Lord!" This principle will enable you to solve many a knotty problem.

Ethical preaching is difficult, but by no means impossible, and it would be more common hereabouts if it were more acceptable to our people, for despite the supposed prejudice against doctrinal preaching, a great many of our best folk enjoy clear, interesting expositions of the Fundamentals, whereas they quickly become restless under equally clear, human expositions of the cardinal duties. One day when I was interpreting and enforcing one of the Master's words on the ethical theme which He discussed more frequently than any other save covetousness, the people listened respectfully, and afterwards one of our most spiritual elders said to me with a sad smile, and in no wise in the spirit of fault-finding, "There was no comfort in your sermon today."

Comfort is one of the needs of the hour, a need which is largely unmet by many a pulpit, but still there are other needs, equally spiritual and pressing. The comfort that day was in the hymns and the prayers, but not in the sermon, which was an exposition of searching words devoid of comfort. Another elder, equally friendly to the cloth, often protests against our modern habit of preaching about money; he insists that he prefers to hear the Gospel, but he forgets that the Gospel as preached by the Master Himself, say in the parables, has a vast deal to say about money, and that what He says is far from comforting to the saints.

These elders are frank enough to voice what the vast majority of our best people feel: that they wish to hear sermons which they, the saints, will enjoy. They speak of "preaching the Gospel" as though the Gospel were merely "linked sweetness long drawn out," or an intimate blending of "sweetness and light." Many of these dear friends, it is true, do not seriously object to pulpit shadows, provided they be shadows cast by the exposition of doctrine, rather than of duty. These are the men and the women whom the Master most deeply loves, and whose esteem he most strongly craves. Is it any wonder then that He is tempted to eschew expositions of duty? Human nature today is much as it was in the days of Ezekiel (Ch. 33:32), and we pastors are intensely human.

In my occasional ministrations elsewhere I find that good folk will accept with courteous attention a morning exposition of duty, and that those who are brave enough to return at night will listen with evident relish to the same sort of practical exposition of Christian truth, and so I have determined that then away from home I shall preach about truth rather than duty. But in the home parish should not a pastor feed the flock what they need as well as what they want? And in such a shifting and perplexed age, where is the flock which does not need to understand more clearly what duty God requires of man? (Ezek. 3:18, 19). Who of us does not need Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty"?

"Stern daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty, if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;

Thou, who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

"Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security
 Stern Lawgiver! Yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon Thy face."

There must be a deeper reason for the comparative neglect of ethics in our evangelical pulpits. The average evangelical pastor is no coward. Rather has he become so disheartened by the ethical essays of men who are determined to know all things save the Cross, that he swings to the other extreme, where he practically ignores the ethical aspects of the Cross itself, and of the Gospel which centers round the Christ of the Cross. If either of these extremes were inevitable, exposition of truth rather than duty would be vastly more profitable than exposition of duty rather than truth. But fortunately God hath wedded these two in His Word. "What, therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

If one may echo the First Epistle to the Corinthians, of which Dr. F. L. Patton has said that it contains "more important ethical teaching than any or all of the writers on ethics from Aristotle to the present time," why should one man say, or think, "I am a doctrinal preacher," and another, "I am an ethical preacher," and a third, "I am an evangelistic preacher"? Is Christ divided? No! In preaching Christ and Him crucified, let us therefore preach the whole Christ as revealed in the Book. As a result it may not be so easy to label the preacher or his sermons according to the rules of homiletics, but it should become easier to see the fruits of his labors. So it was with Chalmers, who in 1811 wrote as follows about the "Style and Subjects of the Pulpit" (Vol. One, p. 165).

"There is an unfortunate distinction kept up in the country betwixt moral

and evangelical preaching. It has the effect of instituting an approbation where no opposition should be supposed to exist; and a preference for the one is, in this way, made to carry along with it an hostility, or an indifference to the other. The mischief of this is incalculable. It has the effect of banishing Christianity altogether from the system of human life. . . .

"The happy combination of evangelical piety with the familiar, wholesome and experimental morality of human life . . . never degenerates into a mere system of prudence, or into virtue reposing on its own charms, or its own obligations; . . . in an age like the present, when piety is so prone to run into fanatical extravagance, and morality is ready to disown all that is peculiar and authoritative in the Christian revelation."

"To preach Christ is the only way to preach morality in all its branches." Is it possible to preach Christ without preaching ethics? No! Preach Christ, the Christ of the Bible, the Christ of Christian experience. Preach with love, and yet with a holy boldness. Preach with authority, the authority of the One who has appointed you to preach, and Who has given you His message. "Thus saith the Lord." Sound forth the imperatives of God. "Repent!" "Believe!" "Forgive!" "Go!" "Forgetting the things behind, press on!" "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."