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UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THIS PRESENT AGE.

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*On the Occasion of His Inauguration as President of Union
Theological Seminary in Virginia, May 11, 1927.*

It has been a year now since I was called to become President of this Seminary. I wondered why you called one with such little acquaintance with theological education or the problems which confront a modern seminary. I had hoped to have the counsel and advice of Dr. Moore at least for a time, but within a little over a month after my election, and before I had an opportunity even to consult him once, he had passed from us. My study of the problems of theological education has been broken and fragmentary and I cannot hope to bring you much that is either fresh or original. Some things, however, have impressed themselves upon me with great force and I wish to share with you my thoughts on this subject: "Union Theological Seminary in this Present Age."

I. Development of Professional Schools.

We are fond of emphasizing the fact that the first college in America, Harvard, was founded for the purpose of educating ministers. The gates of Harvard carry the following quaint inscription:

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and wee had bilded our houses, provided necessaries for our livli-hood,

THE IMAGINATION IN PREACHING.

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A wise teacher of homiletics asked the seniors the other day to bring in sermons based on the first psalm, giving as his reason, "You must learn to use the imagination in preaching; your sermons are too abstract". "But what has the imagination to do with orthodox preaching? Is not the imagination that faculty which invents rather than discovers, and which substitutes fiction for fact?" No! As the term is here employed, the imagination differs widely from the fancy. The imagination is most reverent, whereas the fancy is largely irresponsible. The one deals with the spiritual realities which it discovers outside itself, chiefly in the Bible; whereas the other plays with "the baseless fabric of the dreams" which it has evolved. Needless to say, there is in the modern pulpit altogether too little use of the reverent imagination, and altogether too much use of the irresponsible fancy.

But is there not danger in the use of the imagination in preaching? Yes! So is there danger in the use—or rather in the abuse—of every other God-given power. One man's preaching is too severely intellectual; another man's too exclusively emotional; a third man's, too much filled with pathos. And yet a wise man of God knows how to employ in his sermons all of these varied powers with telling effect. Liddon's preaching was strongly intellectual, but he did not appear pedantic; Luther appealed to the emotions, but he never seemed weak; Guthrie employed a good deal of pathos, but he seldom became sentimental. In like manner, practically every preacher who has attracted ordinary people has freely employed the imagination in the pulpit without appearing fanciful. Especially were the greatest preachers in Bible days notable for their use of this God-given power.

The Inspired Imagination.

The mightiest preachers in olden days were the prophets and the apostles, who remain to this hour the admiration and the despair of ordinary mortals who preach. Their sermons as recorded in the Bible indicate how they were guided by the Spirit of God in communicating to others their visions of divine truth and of human duty. These sermons are worthy of study from other points of view, but just now they interest us most because of their use of the inspired imagination, a quality in which the Bible stands supreme.

In the Old Testament, for example, the books most deeply beloved, are the Psalms, Isaiah and Genesis. These books were written by holy men of God whose hearts the Spirit had touched with heavenly fire. David wrote his moving songs after he had learned to trace amid the green pastures and beside the still waters the footprints of the Good Shepherd as He watched over His sheep. Isaiah became the prophet to the heedless nation after he had beheld in the Temple the vision of the holiness of God. Moses began to share with the Hebrews his lofty vision of truth and duty after he had seen at the Burning Bush the vision of the Eternal God. Those men spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and while inspiration means much else, surely it means that God first quickened and then used gloriously the imagination which He had given to His appointed seers.

Among the Psalms many of us love most the twenty-third, the one hundred third and the one hundred twenty-first, largely because of their inspired pictures of the Good Shepherd, of the Forgiving Father and of the hills of home. Those hills may have been far away from the eyes of the saints who sang about them, but loving hearts know nothing of distance when they are singing about the hills where they first found the Living God. Others among us prefer the first psalm, the eighth and the ninetieth, largely because of their inspired pictures of the fruitful tree, of the heavens at night and of the mountains

as a symbol of the God Who stands unmoved in the midst of a swiftly changing world.

And when we turn to the prophets we think first of Isaiah, largely because of his inspired imagination. In the first chapter, "The Grand Arraignment", Jehovah summons heaven and earth to stand as witnesses in His controversy with His rebellious children. Here the prophet develops his case on behalf of the Most High by the use of concrete images: the ox and his crib, the headache and the weakness of heart, the wounds and the bruises and the unhealed sores, the charred remnants of cities and the desolate country-side, and, above all, the scarlet sins of the people over against the white snow from God. Only by the reverent use of the imagination can one today understand or explain such a striking call for repentance.

This same quality shines out everywhere in the messages of the Royal Prophet. For instance, look at the fifth chapter of Isaiah, with its exquisite parable of the vineyard and its wild grapes; the thirty-second, with its portrayal of a man, doubtless the Man Jesus, as a refuge from the storms of the desert; and best of all, those chapters which point most clearly to the coming Redeemer. Instead of describing the Messiah in dull, lifeless, abstract terms, as we often do, the inspired artist paints for us a series of beautiful pictures: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light"; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder"; "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit"; "He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground"; "As a lamb before its shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." What a gallery!

In the Book of Genesis, likewise, the reverent reader must employ his imagination. This inspired book of beginnings was written primarily to reveal Jehovah as the Covenant God of the chosen family, out from which was to come the promised Redeemer. But instead of presenting the facts baldly, as we often do, this book presents a series of pictures, pictures of

fact and not of fancy; pictures as real as the apostle's pictures of heaven, and almost as precious. Genesis shows how God made the world, all beautiful and fair, for man and women in their home; how He watched over them tenderly in the days when the world was young; how He blessed them and their seed after they had sinned; how He led Abraham out into the wilderness, not knowing whither he went, but simply trusting God; and how He made those men and women of old rich in the title-deeds of heaven. Thank God for those inspired pictures in Genesis!

The late James Denney, profound interpreter of the ways of God, used to say, "The man who can not hear God speak to him in the story of creation and the fall will never hear God's voice anywhere" ("Studies in Theology", p. 219). And yet a young college student told me recently that he found in Genesis nothing save "a lot of silly old wives' tales"! He had spent three months in the study of that book, and he fancied that he could tell in three minutes who had written any particular part of it. As a matter of fact, he had never become acquainted with the Book of Genesis at all, and he might as well have spent those three months in deciphering the inscriptions on the tombstones in the cemetery. The difference between the learned professor and the callow student, as readers of the Bible, was due in large measure to the fact that the one read the Scriptures with the reverent imagination, and that the other did not. Before a man opens the Bible, therefore, he ought to pray, "Lord, open mine eyes that I may see".

The Glory of the Inspired Imagination.

The inspired imagination enters into the fulness of its power and beauty in the record of the life and teachings of our Lord. "Never man spake like this man." In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, the Master talks about the Kingdom in terms of the salt, the light, the city set on a hill, the gift left at the altar, the unclean look, the right eye plucked out, the second mile, and the turning of the other cheek. He

tells us not to worry about things to eat and to wear, but to trust the One Who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies. He talks about the heavenly treasure, the narrow gate, and the house on the rock. Where in all literature can one find in brief compass such a variety of word-pictures as in this "Teaching on the Hill"?

In the practical interpretation of these words, how far can one proceed without using the reverent imagination? For example, how can one of us pluck out the right eye? How can one travel the second mile? How can one follow the Golden Rule? It means to put one's self in the other person's place; that is, to employ the sanctified imagination. Or how can one forgive, as one hopes to be forgiven? In measuring that little word "as", one needs, not a yard-stick and an arithmetic table, but a sympathetic heart and a nimble imagination. "I forgive as Almighty God forgives!" Doubtless King Arthur meant so to forgive Queen Guinevere, but somehow he fell far short. Hosea, on the other hand, really forgave Gomer because first of all he had learned how God forgives. Such sympathy means putting yourself in the other person's place, looking at his world through his eyes, and feeling, not as he feels, but as he ought to feel. (This account of sympathy is suggested by Gore, "The Incarnation of the Son of God", p. 121.)

The parables of Jesus are equally notable for their use of the imagination. "If the miracles are acted parables, then the parables are spoken miracles." The parables are as marvelous in form as in substance. But no one will question the large place of the imagination here; so let us pass into disputed territory, the Fourth Gospel, where we are sometimes supposed to be moving amid abstract speculations. Nothing could be further from the facts, for the beloved disciple was a seer, and his gospel, especially the first half of it, is the most personal of the four; it presents the Lord Jesus in vital touch with all sorts of men and women, one by one, meeting their spiritual needs because He knew what was in their hearts.

The Gospel of John has preserved for us the seven "I AM"

sayings of our Lord, in each of which He reveals His deity, somewhat as a cameo reveals the likeness of the person whose image it bears. Here, too, is the Golden Text of the Bible, which is introduced by a reference to the Brazen Serpent, and is followed by our Master's words about the light and the darkness. Here are the allegories about the Good Shepherd and about the Vine and its Branches. And here, in the most beloved chapter in the Bible, is the Lord's picture of heaven in terms of home, a picture all the more precious because this Gospel assures us that for the children of God the life everlasting has already begun.

In like manner we might look at the Epistle to the Hebrews and at the Revelation, each of which is filled with symbols almost meaningless to our unimaginative American minds. But let us rather turn to the writings of Paul. "Surely," one hears, "Paul is an exception to your general statement, for he is an abstract theologian!" If that were true, it would be difficult to establish the thesis which runs throughout the present discussion, for the life and the writings of Paul have had more influence over our Protestant preaching than the writings of the prophets have had, or perhaps even the sayings of our Lord as they are written in the Gospels. Was Paul, then, merely a dry-as-dust theologian? No! Mighty as he was in power of thought he was even more worthy of note for his greatness of heart, and he never preached or wrote without using largely his inspired imagination. Paul was a seer!

From this somewhat novel point of view read again Paul's sermons as recorded in the Acts, and likewise his epistles, noting how he makes his impressions. In First Corinthians, for example, see that picture of the Church as the temple of God, and that other of the body as the temple; that exquisite portrait of the Christian gentleman whose heart overflows with love; and those marvelous descriptions of the resurrection glory. In Second Corinthians, which is the apostle's spiritual autobiography, visualize the epistles written on his heart; the magic mirror reflecting the glory of the Lord; the earthen vessel with the heavenly treasure; and the thorn in the flesh,

with the resulting message of all-sufficient grace. In Romans look at the soul struggle in the seventh chapter, which suggested to R. L. Stevenson the motif of his "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde".

"No use of the imagination in the writings of Paul!" Rather is there no gift of imagination on the part of any person who can cherish such a notion! His writings, it is true, are not always easy to understand, for at one time he is delving into the deep things of God, and at another he is scaling "the steep ascent of heaven". But when once you have become accustomed to breathing that rare spiritual atmosphere in the mountains of God you enjoy being "swept with him from peak to peak, from vision to vision. You have tried to keep pace with his moods and his subjects, indicated in the amazing vocabulary, the striking metaphors, the compressed word-pictures; you have revelled with him in all the colors of God; and all the while you have been growing to love more and more the greatest human being that ever followed Jesus Christ." (T. R. Glover, "Paul of Tarsus", p. 197.)

Preaching from the Bible.

Since the Bible consists largely of the outpourings of the inspired imagination, it is obvious that the sermon which is true to the spirit of the Bible must be illuminated by this same God-given quality. In his study the preacher sees for himself what the inspired author saw, and then in the pulpit the preacher helps his friends in the pew to behold the heavenly vision, with its light upon the tasks of the morrow. Otherwise expository preaching quickly becomes lifeless and dull, and that sort of preaching is a misrepresentation of truth and duty as they are revealed in the Book. An unimaginative discussion of a vital passage from the Bible is like the dissection of lifeless literature, rather than the communication of spiritual power from the Living Christ.

When Paul was writing his letter to the Philippians, he was in prison, and far from his friends; he was almost pouni-

less, and he was daily growing more frail, but his heart was singing, because he was thinking about the Lord Jesus and about the loved ones in Philippi.

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.”

And when those saints in Philippi received that letter glowing with light from heaven, their hearts must have been kindled with a new love for God and men. “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Before any minister attempts to preach from these beautiful words, he ought to enter sympathetically into the spiritual experience of Paul and his unseen friends.

The preacher must employ his imagination, therefore, to comprehend the Scriptures, and to see in them the materials for the making of his sermon, somewhat as Michael Angelo could see in the block of marble the form of the angel that he was about to carve. Throughout all of his preparations, likewise, the minister must keep before the eyes of his heart the spiritual purpose of his approaching sermon; for as Phillips Brooks would say, he is preaching truth, not merely that men may believe it, but they may be saved by believing it; and duty, not merely that they may understand it, but that they may do it, as it is done in heaven. All Scripture is inspired “in order that” it may be profitable, and all worthy preaching must conform to the same lofty ideal.

As an illustration, think of the spoken sermons, rather than the writings, of Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. In 1913 in the First Church of Pittsburgh he spoke at noon every day for a week before vast throngs of business and professional men, opening up the treasures of the Book. One day he led them through the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, pointing out the central verse, the seventh, as the dividing ridge; the first six verses being dark with the shadows of sin; the last six verses, bright with the beauty of God. Such a change of outlook bursts suddenly upon the view of the traveller in the Northwest, as he crosses the dividing ridge of the Rockies and starts

down the Pacific slope. But many of us who had journeyed for years through the mountain country in Isaiah had never seen in the fifty-fifth chapter such a picture of the changes wrought when people get right with God. And so we think of that sermon as the most inspiring that we ever have heard.

In Pittsburgh in that same year Dr. J. A. Francis gave a far different object lesson of mastery in this fine art. In his quiet fashion he spoke to ministers every day for a week, pointing out unseen treasures in the most familiar passages of John's Gospel. One day he led us through the fourth chapter, enabling us to see the woman by the well, somewhat as the Master saw her in her need, and to hear the voice of the Master revealing Himself as the living water. Thus the interpreter showed us that the Gospel of John is the most human of the four because it is the most divine, and that it is the most beloved because it enables God's children to see the glories of the invisible world.

How to Prepare the Sermon.

It is easier to praise such a sermon than to explain the secret of its sway over our hearts. But it is obvious that the preacher himself sees his sermon as a whole, as well as in its various parts, and that he uses his God-given faculties in helping his friends in the pew to see the heavenly vision and the light that it sheds upon the path of duty. The preacher's work differs from that of the engineer, but each of them has the power to visualize the unseen, and to translate his vision into an attractive, visible form. In planning a bridge the engineer studies the bed of the river and likewise its banks; he determines the other factors which enter into the making of a bridge which will meet all the requirements, and then he plans the bridge so as to meet the needs of that local situation. As a result no two of his bridges are alike.

So in planning a sermon the minister studies his people as they are, and then he prepares to lead them to a definite place in Christian experience. After he has found in the Bible and

elsewhere the materials for his sermon, and has planned where he will put them, he begins to think about his introduction and his conclusion; for the sermon, like the bridge, needs its "approaches". Years ago the Point Street Bridge in Pittsburgh stood unused because it had no approaches on either side of the river. But at last the engineers carried out their plans so successfully that the vast volume of traffic flowed easily over the bridge and into the heart of the city. Would that all of our sermon "approaches" were equally successful!

When the sermon is practically complete one begins to think about illustrations, much as the engineer plans the finishing touches to his rising structure. In this matter of illustration the late W. L. Watkinson is worthy of study. For example, in preaching about love as the fulfilling of the law, he says, "Noble parents do not trouble about the civil law which obliges them to maintain their children; the blue-eyed, golden-haired heart-stealers are abundantly safe within the magic of paternal love". Simple, is it not? Yes, the highest art is always simple, because it is great.

"The blue-eyed, golden-haired heart-stealers!" Jowett himself could have phrased it no better! This is what the scholars call the verbal imagination, and it differs widely from mere word painting, which has gone out of fashion among intelligent folk. In presenting love and law, the artist uses words, not as mechanical abstractions, but as living realities in the hearts and homes of God's children. Instead of employing in the pulpit long, technical terms, ending in *-ation* and *-ology*, he expresses the same thoughts and ideals in picture words somewhat like those of the Master Himself.

"Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah" (Hos. 14:2). But let them be words which reflect the grace of God, somewhat as a tiny pool reflects the beauty of the sky. Only the best words are good enough for the worship of God. When the late Professor Henry E. Dosker led in public prayer our hearts were lifted as on eagle wings, so that we seemed to soar almost to heaven's gate, and often when he preached that same gifted imagination opened to our eyes the treasures of

the unseen world. In preaching about the God-given secret of contentment, he spoke about worry as the one that lies down with you at night and awakes with you in the morn, walking with you all the while and stealing the place in your heart where the Lord Jesus should abide. And then he pointed out the path of escape along the narrow way of prayer, so that we felt assured that we might enter into the peace of God which passeth understanding. Thank God for the preacher who enables us to behold such heavenly visions!

We Presbyterians do not always appreciate such use of the imagination in the pulpit, and so we do not appeal to the sort of men and women who heard the Master gladly. Many of us content ourselves with preaching to the few that delight in logic rather than to the many who are hungry for love. And then we wonder why we are outnumbered by certain other denominations. So far as the appeal of other denominations resides in their preaching, is it not largely because they employ the imagination? For example, look at the most gifted divine in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the late Bishop Simpson.

When my father was a young man he went with other medical students to hear this Methodist divine, and when they first saw him in the pulpit they said to each other that he was the homeliest man they ever had seen, but as they listened to his inspiring sermon they began to look upon his face as though it were that of an angel. When a celebrated teacher of oratory, Professor Kidd, was asked what he thought of Bishop Simpson's elocution, he replied—"Elocution! What does that man need with elocution? He has the Holy Ghost!"

A much more gifted preacher was the late John A. Broadus. In the pulpit as in the classroom he brought forth from his vast storehouses treasures new and old, and he spoke with the fervor of an ancient prophet. For example, the conclusion of his address at the funeral of his colleague and friend, President Basil Manly, impressed the late Professor T. M. Hawes as the most marvelous outburst of oratory which he had ever heard. President Manly had died as the result of a robber's

blow, and here is the preacher's apostrophe to the unknown culprit who had stricken him down:

"O, poor wretch, where are you today? Do you know what you have done? How could you rob the world of ten years of noble life? May you reap the result of your ignoble work; may God's justice follow you till His truth strikes your heart, and in His mercy may you find pardon! But who am I to complain of God's providence? Let us all, young and old, try to live better because of his life. God help us! May it not be in vain for anyone here that he knew and loved Basil Manly." (Life and Letters of John A. Broadus, by A. T. Robertson, p. 400.)

The published sermons of Broadus are all too few ("Sermons and Addresses", Doran, \$1.00), but almost every one of them shows how the reverent use of the imagination helps to make truth and duty clear and winsome. In his sermon on Worship, for instance, he commences by saying, "Jesus was tired," and then he tells how Jesus found refreshment in service. "Our artists owe us yet two companion pictures—the one of Jesus as the disciples saw Him when they turned back to look, on their way to buy food, as He sat and rested; * * * and the other of Jesus as they found Him when they came back, sitting up now with an animated look on His face, busily, eagerly talking." A study of this paragraph, and of this entire discourse will show how to bring the imagination into captivity to Jesus Christ.

Dr. Broadus preached this sermon at the dedication of the Second Baptist Church in St. Louis, and so he pictured the various scenes of joy and of sorrow which were to make that house of God dear to the hearts of His children. The preacher was not merely entertaining his hearers, or even instructing them; he was impressing upon their hearts forever the importance of spiritual worship, and the place of beauty in our religion. Dr. Broadus was a finished classical scholar, and as his language was simple, and in the proper sense of the term, it was picturesque, with many a quiet touch of elegance, but

with never a word which called attention to itself and away from his Lord.

As a practical test of the value of a vivid preaching style, ask your children and young people at home how much they remember of last Sabbath morning's sermon. If they listened to an unimaginative divine, engaged in "the unilluminating discussion of unreal problems in unintelligible language", they remember nothing. But if their pastor spoke to them as human beings, and appealed to their hearts somewhat as the Master did, talking of the Kingdom of God in terms of the common things that they see every morning, they remember the heart of it all. And since "the child is father of the man", preaching which appeals to the best in children appeals to the best in their fathers and mothers.

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die." (Wordsworth,)

How to Develop the Imagination.

The best way is to begin with one's grandparents, for some rare spirits inherit a tendency to see, and they soon acquire the ability to enable others to see. In our modern matter-of-fact educational system, however, "shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy". And so many a young minister on the threshold of his first pastorate discovers that his most laborious sermonic efforts are uninteresting and ineffective. What shall he do? Let him not despair, provided he is willing to devote as much time and attention to the development of reverent imagination as the late Theodore Roosevelt when a sickly lad devoted to the upbuilding of a serviceable body. The best way to develop any God-given faculty is to use it properly. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

Like the prophets and apostles of old, the young minister of today ought to be a seer; for as Ruskin says, "The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it sees, in plain words. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see". And Ruskin would say that the young man who wishes to learn to see must spend much time outdoors, keeping the windows of his heart open, and welcoming every breeze which blows from the hills of God. This is what Dr. John Kelman styles "the open air treatment of souls".

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

While Spurgeon was walking one day on the beach, looking out over the billowing waves, with all of the ardor of a grown-up boy, he caught that vision which he bodied forth in his well known sermon, "There Go the Ships!" If he had been ministering to an inland flock he would never have preached such a sermon, but he would have wandered through the woods and near the harvest fields until he beheld there the beauty of God, and then he would have gone into his pulpit with a message as human in its appeal as it was divine in its source.

In the world of books, likewise, the busy pastor finds refreshment for his jaded spirit, provided he chooses real books, and not merely "things in books' clothing". He welcomes books of all sorts, from E. E. Slosson's "Creative Chemistry" and R. L. Daly's "Mobile Earth" to Josiah Royce's "Philosophy of Loyalty" and William James's "Talks to Teachers"; for as President Patton used to say at Princeton, a pastor never learns anything which he can not some time employ in his preaching. The average minister finds most enjoyment in biography, for in reading about Alice Freeman Palmer and Christina Forsyth, or J. H. Jowett and Alexander Wythe, he learns to appreciate the modern world at its best. But he passes by on the other side of those muckraking books which caricature his

heroes and heroines, such as General Gordon and Florence Nightingale.

In this materialistic age, when the minds of men and women are turning often to money and to nerve-racking amusements, the wise young pastor keeps on reading the best of the older novels, such as Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter", Scott's "Heart of Midlothian" and George Eliot's "Scenes from Clerical Life". And he often renews his fellowship with the English poets, such as Tennyson and Wordsworth, or better still, Shakespeare and Browning; for those are the friends and helpers of the preacher's heart. Like Phillips Brooks the pastor may be the one man in the congregation who is most familiar with the poets, and who talks least about them, but he learns from them how to see the invisible, and how to translate it into living reality.

"And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

But let the young pastor beware lest he become known as a "literary" rather than a Biblical preacher, for every pastor ought to become a specialist in the Christian religion, and that involves being a skilful teacher of the Bible. If any man wishes to learn how to enjoy his Bible, let him learn to read it with the imagination. When a man learns to do that, whether in the seminary or elsewhere, he can almost dispense with teachers, and he can soon take up his life work of aiding others to see what he has seen. The best way for a minister, therefore, to develop the imagination, or any other gift from above, is to read the Bible, as interpreted by love and illuminated by prayer.

Why, then, do we ministers leave to such laymen as Professor W. L. Phelps, Ex-Senator Beveridge, or even Mr. Bruce Barton, the privilege of interesting other laymen in the Bible? Is it not largely because we are afraid to appeal to the popular imagination? Professor Phelps says that he began to be in-

terested in "Human Nature in the Bible" when he was a boy; for his mother encouraged him on Sunday afternoons to illustrate with his pencil every passage which he read from the Book, except those which include the Lord Jesus. In like manner Brother Wade C. Smith as a busy layman began to draw his "Little Jetts", and now he is an ordained clergyman, but he still presents the Bible as the most attractive book in the world.

Another practical way for the pastor to develop the imagination is to keep on preaching. As Dr. Broadus used to tell his students, "Read Butler's Analogy, and preach to the negroes". Such reading gives a pastor something to say, and such preaching encourages him to say it effectively, as any one can testify after preaching to the colored friends at Montreat. The late Dr. Girardeau in his earlier years preached to the negroes in Charleston, S. C., with spiritual power which he appears never to have surpassed. Without stooping from the highest levels of thought and feeling, he set those child-like souls on fire with the heavenly flame which has kindled his own heart, and as he sent them away from the House of God, they must have said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The Fire From Above.

When the young minister listens to a spiritual message, illuminated by a gifted imagination, he exclaims, with a tinge of envy or despair, "O, if I could only preach like that!" Such a feeling ought to do a man good, for humility is one of the first lessons in practical homiletics. But let not the young minister give up hope, for while he can never learn to preach as any other man preaches, he can learn from David's refusal to wear Saul's armor, a lesson about making the most of his own God-given powers. Any man called to preach has the right to depend upon God for all of the gifts which his work demands. Here, then, is the source of that "gift which above

all others sustains preaching and secures the closest attention of every hearer". The reverent imagination!

In "the hours of greater visibility" the young minister sees that his new tasks call for powers far beyond his human nature at its best. He can gather the stones and build the altar; he can bring the wood and lay upon it the sacrifice; and then he can simply watch and pray for the fire to come down from God and consume the sacrifice. So let him dedicate himself anew to God, with all of his gifts and graces, as well as his handicaps and limitations; let him make the most of himself and his opportunities, resting assured that out from the earthen vessel dedicated to the glory of God and the service of men, will shine "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

THE COMMITTEE OF 44.

BY REV. ERNEST THOMPSON, D. D.,
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(Dr. Thompson was made chairman of the "Survey Committee" appointed by the Assembly at Pensacola, Florida, in 1926. He is also chairman of the "Committee of 44" appointed by the Assembly in session at El Dorado, Ark. He is well qualified, therefore, to write on the new plan for the work of our Church.)

Appointment of Survey Committee.

The General Assembly in session at Pensacola, Florida, in response to numerous overtures saw fit to appoint a "Survey Committee" composed of nine members, four of whom were Ministers and five ruling Elders. These men were from widely scattered parts of the Church—the Synods of Texas, Appalachia, Missouri, West Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee. Four of these men were members of some one of the Executive Committees and one of the Stewardship