

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### THE PLANTING OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

#### I. THE BEGINNINGS OF UNIVERSITY LIFE IN AMERICA.

THE course of study pursued in American colleges, the goal of which is an education described distinctively as humane or liberal, is easily traced to the seven liberal arts which passed over from the schools of Greece and Rome to the Christian nations of western Europe. The great North African father, St. Augustine, who more than any other western writer determined the theology of the Latin Church, in constructing his system of doctrine gave character also to the system of education which that church accepted and promoted. In his essay on the Christian doctrine, he places a high value on the knowledge to be derived and on the discipline to be secured from the books of the heathen, as introductory to the study of the Divine Revelation. And the Divine Revelation, as thus newly apprehended, becomes, in his view, both the test of truth and the measure of intellectual values. In his tract, *De Ordine*, an essay on the right method of developing the powers of the mind, he recognizes seven as the complete number of the liberal arts; though it is not easy in his list to find the *trivium*, the circle of the formal arts, and the *quadrivium*, the circle of the material arts, which afterwards were clearly distinguished.

From North Africa and Italy this curriculum was carried into Britain. There it was given a home, largely under the influence of Wilfrid, who, at the Council of Whitby, in 664, led the Latin or Benedictine party and overbore the Celtic influence which threatened to command the English Church and to give character to its worship and its life. The victory of Wilfrid at Whitby resulted

## VII.

### EFFICIENT PREACHING.

**T**HIS paper has in view the greatest efficiency in preaching. Every minister should make the most of his vocation. Very much will depend on his conception of the work to be done, and on his qualifications for it. His standard of excellence should be high, and his endeavor to reach it earnest and persistent. It is not my primary purpose to set forth the value of a thoroughly disciplined mind, of a chaste rhetoric, of a cultured oratory, of a wide range of knowledge, of physical health which supports thought and action in the pulpit, and that most indispensable quality, sanctified common sense, an intuitive perception of the fitness of things. All of these have their places. But it is my chief design to emphasize, if possible, some suggestions which are equally familiar, and which, because of their paramount importance, should be often repeated. Let us then consider the preacher's theme, the preparation for the pulpit, and the essential features of pulpit success.

#### I. THE PREACHER'S THEME.

We are commissioned to preach the Word. The great facts concerning sin and salvation and all their correlatives are to be unfolded, illustrated and enforced. All the attributes of God and our relations to them, claim attention; the work of Christ, the office of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of regeneration, repentance, faith and holiness, the certainty of a final judgment, eternal retribution and the like, should have special prominence in our pulpit ministrations.

The Word is to be preached in its most comprehensive sense, in a judicious distribution of subjects as it applies to this life as well as to that which is to come; to the private, domestic and social life; to common and higher education, the race problem and municipal and national government; to the socialism of the age, the relations of capital and labor, and imperial monopolies which control elections and legislation. But in respect to great social and governmental questions, the pulpit should deal with principles rather than with men, and find its chief corrective of evil and

support of right in the Golden Rule enunciated by our Lord : " Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets."

The proportions of truth are to be studiously regarded. Doctrine is to be preached, yet not to the neglect of its application to the daily life. Essential doctrines take the precedence of the less essential, but the latter are not to be omitted. Soteriology claims more attention than Eschatology, the first coming of Christ more than the second, revelation than theories of inspiration, saving truth than questions about the inerrancy of the original autographs, sermons on the new birth than attacks on specific sins. The chief instruction of the pulpit has reference to Christ, in His person, offices and work, as associated with the other persons of the Godhead, and as related to a fallen and now salvable race. Christ is the truth, the centre of all prophecy, the sum of all excellence, the source of all blessing, the light of this world and the glory of the next. He is the incarnation of the invisible. He vocalizes the divine thought and interprets the divine will. In Him the abstract becomes concrete and the absolute personal. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached Jesus and the resurrection. When Paul went to Corinth he determined to know nothing among the people save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It was so wherever the apostles went : " Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The theme is comprehensive, inexhaustible, adapted to every spiritual need, to all classes, to every age.

We preach a personal Christ. Herein lies much of the power of the Gospel. The soul craves, seeks, and is satisfied with this only. Mere philosophy is an abstraction ; cold, pulseless and dead. Even Athens and Attica were not content with it. They sought a divine-human helper in the marble, and clung to the Zeus which the great Phidias enshrined in ivory and gold. Christ is a person. He comes near. We see, we hear, we handle the Word of God. The world gropes after Him. Conscious need, turning its face towards the pulpit, is ever saying, with certain Greeks, " Sir, we would see Jesus." The true preacher continually exalts this incarnate Christ. He does not preach philosophy, science, poetry or art, but Christ. In the name of Christ he reproveth, rebuketh, exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine. He views sin in the light of Christ's cross, and interprets all duty in the radiance of Christ's example. He encourages the conscientiously guilty to lay all their sins at Christ's feet, the tempted to hide in His presence, the weak to lean on His strength, the weary

to rest in His bosom, the dying to trust in Him who is the resurrection and the life.

He preaches a divine Christ who dwelt with the Father before the worlds were made, for He made them; before our time, for it was born of His eternity; the divine-human Christ, not Arianism, not Unitarianism, not an Apotheosis, not a Thaumaturgy, not the evolution of naturalism, but a Scriptural Kenosis, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star, to whose fullness we may bring our emptiness, and in whose glory we may lose and forget our shame.

But an evangelical preacher cannot exalt a Scriptural cross without preaching sin. Christ's proper name, which is Jesus, finds its interpretation in the fall of man and the recovery from it. The scenes of Calvary may probe the conscience, reveal the awful guilt and fathomless pollution of sin, and across these darker features of truth project the immeasurable love of God. But there is another and more direct way. The *law* maintains its office. It addresses the moral being. It does not encourage legality, but forbids it. It smites down self-righteousness, self-reliance, all expectations of heaven through purely ethical means, and then, passing from the frowning cliffs of Sinai, sets forth the Gospel in its adaptation to unfulfilled law, and urges that conformity thereto which is the essence of godliness and a condition of life. We need in this age more preaching like Baxter's, Whitefield's and Nettleton's, without which we fear the millennium will never come; such faithful oratory as that of the Olympian Pericles, which went to the roots of things and made the disobedient tremble. This style of address is not popular. The carnal mind dislikes it. It would soon leave but a remnant in any church which ministers to pride, magnifies natural goodness, distorts the divine love, and opens a royal road to heaven which reveals no prints of the pierced feet. But, accompanied by divine power, it will awake the conscience to consciousness, and shut souls up to Christ. It will make strong characters, deeply rooted, broad of base, and, in every attribute of holy manliness, conspicuously high. Such converts will stop the mouths of scoffers, commend the religion that is evangelically ethical, and create a churchward tide that will fill the Christian sanctuary with honest inquirers and stalwart saints whose power shall be felt throughout the world.

Contrast it with the preaching which sings a syren song of heaven; that puts aside all signals of distress and every beacon light along the shore; that describes in flowing numbers scenes of beauty, gardens of delight and endless pleasure, a heaven not wholly unlike the paradise of the Moslem or the Elysium of the

Pagan, the gates of which are opened for all by the All-Father whose name is love. Or, contrast it with the preaching which is characterized by rhetorical excellence, oratorical power, bold eccentricities and flights of imagination; which dwells on the poetry of the Bible, its long reach of unique history, and the biographies of heroes who outrank the creations of Homer's genius or the martyrs of Marathon; but never tells men in earnest, impressive speech that they are sinners and without Christ forever lost.

## II. PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

In order that the preacher may present the truth in its proper proportions and relations, he must be a diligent student of the Word of God, honoring the Scriptures above all the writings of men. General literature may furnish side-lights by which to aid an understanding of Bible truth, but it must ever hold a very inferior place. We do not undervalue the learning of the schools or the results of prolonged study in any department of knowledge. It is well if the minister is familiar with natural sciences, with systems of philosophy, with profane history, with the mighty ebb and flow of human thought along the ages; if he is at home in metaphysics, a master of logic, and versed in *belles lettres*. But after all, the great thing is to be acquainted with God's thoughts as they are written in the Word. These must claim our first attention and life-long study. The preacher must consent to be ignorant concerning many things, that he may know more of one thing which is needful. Devotional writings, such as those of Baxter, Bunyan and Thomas À Kempis, which have their uses, are only reflections of the true light; and if we give them more of our hours than we give to Christ's words, we suffer loss. Well did Walter Scott, the sage of Abbotsford, the volumes of whose library were counted by scores of thousands, say to Lockhart, "There is only one Book." The preacher who would win souls must have the Bible in his heart, and its fragrance on his lips. The sermon should show his familiarity with it, his best illustrations should be drawn from it, and every statement of truth should be enforced by a "Thus saith the Lord." The Bible stimulates thought. It will do for the preacher what Homer did for Bouchardon, enlarge his being and shrink the world to atoms. Divine words, unlike human, bring a new inspiration with each repetition, and are exhaustless as the waters of Jacob's well. Bossuet was accustomed to read the "Seraphic Prophet" before entering on the preparation of his sermon. Rutherford breathed the atmosphere of heaven whilst Christ's valedictory fell in tender cadences on his listening ears. Sir Matthew Hale read Isaiah

and Paul for professional improvement. The early Welsh ministry excelled in pulpit eloquence. They were men of one book. They had no access to the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge. They drew their intellectual stimulus from the Bible, formed their style after the divine model, discovered rich veins of truth in God's unfathomable thoughts, and, burning with a holy zeal begotten in communion with Him who spake as never man spake, set their little principality on fire.

Then, as a rule, a preacher must do one thing if he would excel — preach. He cannot edit a newspaper, write often for the *Quarterlies*, or be an author of many books. To divide his energies will be to fail in everything. Let him give all his strength to the work which might well have engaged all of Gabriel's powers. John Witherspoon said, "It is my opinion that it is no honor to a minister to be famous in any work which is wholly unconnected with theology." Very impressive are the words of Doddridge: "I would not for ten thousand worlds be that man who, when God shall ask him at last how he has employed most of his time while he continued a minister in His Church and had the care of souls, should be obliged to reply: 'Lord, I have restored many corrupted passages in the ancient classics, and illustrated many that were before obscure; I have cleared many intricacies in chronology and geography; I have solved many perplexing cases in algebra; I have refined on astronomical calculations; I left behind me many sheets on these curious and difficult subjects, where the figures and characters are ranged with the greatest exactness and truth; and these are the employments in which my life has been worn out, while preparations for the pulpit or ministrations in it did not demand my immediate attendance.' Oh, sirs, as for the waters which are drawn from these springs, how sweetly soever they taste to a curious mind that thirsts for them, or to an ambitious mind that thirsts for the applause they sometimes procure, I fear there is often reason to pour them out before the Lord with rivers of penitential tears as the blood of souls which have been forgotten while these trifles have been remembered and pursued."

Then, of course, the preacher must be eminently devotional. There is a holy unction that is found only in the secret place of the stairs. There is a power with men that comes only through the power of God, given in answer to prayer and joined to the words we speak as was Philip to the eunuch's chariot. There never lived a preacher eminent for piety and usefulness who was not distinguished for prolonged devotions. Luther's habits in this regard are familiar to all. The fragrance of his communings with God seem still to linger in the Erfurt cell, at Wittenberg and in

the Wartburg Castle. McCheyne spent hours on his knees, rose with the dawn to pray, and the stars found him gazing heavenward. Payson began, continued and ended the preparation of his sermons with prayer, and no wonder that in the pulpit his face often shone as an angel's. "Of all men on earth," said James Alexander, "ministers most need the constant impressions derived from closet piety." Sometimes when we are pressed with our preparations for the Sabbath we abridge our private devotions, and thereby lose time, efficiency and comfort in our work. The necessity for prayer is admitted by all. It should not be an incident, but a habit. It should not be determined by impulse, but maintained by principle. It carries its spirit into the pulpit, begets a tender manner, imparts spiritual strength, and breathes in every utterance. The lack of pulpit power is largely the result of neglected communion with God. Many of us preach about prayer, insist on prayer, magnify its office, and fail in the duty we urge upon others. It may be said that a minister may pray too much; that he is not to be an ascetic or turn monk; that prayer without works is mockery. It may be insisted that the body needs exercise and the mind recreation; that it may often be better for a preacher to go a-fishing than to go a-praying; to dream with Tolstoï or to laugh with Pickwick than to cry over his sins. There is some truth in all this. Only cant denies it wholly. But the charge of excessive prayer would be made in an empty court.

It may be alleged that importunity in prayer is a misconception of the office of prayer and displeasing to the infinite and bountiful Giver, and that we are to present our wants in calm, concise, trustful petitions, and then go our way. Oftentimes this is true. Nevertheless, prayer has a reflex influence which should be earnestly sought. When we muse, the fire burns. When we protract our gaze heavenward we receive our deepest impressions of heavenly things. When we stay long at the fountain our jars are filled. But when our devotions are short and hurried, entered upon without reflection and left behind us without remembrance; when "they are parentheses in the day which read not into the context of the life but are entered and left by a sensible transition," then we remain ignorant of the great things of God and rise but little above the world's low level.

Nothing is more important than that the preacher should seek depth and fullness of Christian experience. Without this he can accomplish but little. His measure may become that of the people, and result in their present and future loss. He should study well his own heart, if he would help others cultivate humility and a conscious reliance on Him who saves from sin. There is great

power in *experimental preaching* as related to evil, and the means by which it can be destroyed. The pastor should also carefully observe the devices of Satan and the manner of his approach, in order that he may guard his inexperienced hearers from the perils of an unguarded hour and stimulate resistance to every attempt to enter the life and defile it. Then, too, it is desirable that he should be able to help Christians distinguish, as far as it is possible, the suggestions of Satan from those of their own hearts. Many believers do not know their own voices. Some refer to Satan temptations that originate with themselves, for which they alone are responsible and against which they should earnestly and intelligently struggle. Again, the very opposite may be true, and many have long walked in darkness which might have been escaped. It would have been a great relief to such, when sorely buffeted by the adversary, to have known the source of their temptations, and not to have lost nearly every inspiration of hope under the impression that they were reprobates. The same remark applies to the relations of the physical to the spiritual life, disease often beclouding the soul and inducing despair when a wise spiritual physician, following his prompt diagnosis with the balm of the Gospel, might have greatly abated the pain or have entirely healed the spirit that was broken.

Above all, the preacher should know the blessedness of fellowship with Christ, the fullness of his sympathy and power, and habitually live under the influence of that mysterious, real other world to which he is going, so that he may help his people toward it. He should live on the heights, beholding the sun of righteousness when for others the world may have intercepted its rays, and reflecting them to lower grounds. As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual world; the most of light is conveyed by reflection. Unspeakably great is the responsibility of Christians and especially of those who occupy the ministerial office. Holy men have ever been mighty. Piety has outranked genius and outlived it. McCheyne still shines, fair as the moon, and Rutherford is a galaxy of stars, in the light of which tempest-tossed souls find their desired haven.

Before leaving this part of our theme, permit a suggestion as to the mental endowments requisite to success in the ministry. Great talent is usually considered desirable, but it is not essential. Five talents give promise of more usefulness than two, but the Holy Ghost often chooses those who are possessed of the latter, and even one talent diligently improved has accomplished results an angel might covet. More depends on the improvement of what we have than on the measure of our natural endowments.

Genius is one of God's great gifts. It sees afar off. It scintillates, dazzles and soars. It unveils mysteries. It introduces great eras in human history and recovers what has been lost. The world's glory is its distinguished few. And yet genius may be as uncertain as it is sporadic, and its trail of light sweeping across the heavens may itself go out in darkness. Genius without talent is of little value. Talent without genius is above all price. It touches life on its lower levels and leads it upward. It never startles the world by its novelties and yet it is the lever by which the world is lifted to higher orbits. Let talent, then, summoned by the Master to the Gospel ministry, address itself to the work with a holy purpose and a resolute will, clinging to Him who is mighty, and it will accumulate power, extend its influence and leave a perpetual benediction behind it. To him that hath, it shall be given.

### III. ELEMENTS OF PULPIT POWER.

We now pass to some of the characteristics of an effective sermon, by which is meant, not the sermon that attracts a crowd, but that which accomplishes the true end of preaching.

1. Simplicity of style. It is the simplicity of culture, the lucidity begotten of profound thoughtfulness and thorough acquaintance with the subject treated, that is here intended, not the perspicuity of platitudes and commonplace. The greatest thoughts should be clothed in simple words. The great Teacher should be our model. Junius' *Letters*, the *Pilgrim's Progress* and above all the Bible, are notable examples of plainness of language. The popularity of Dean Swift's writings is largely owing to their simplicity of diction, for he never used a derived or foreign word when an anglicized Saxon word would serve his purpose. Lord Jeffrey said, "Simplicity is the last attainment of progressive literature; and men are very long afraid of being natural from the dread of being taken for ordinary."

Simplicity should characterize every feature of the sermon. Some people ask for preaching which will gratify the intellect and please the fancy. They would have the sermon abound in classical allusions, in philosophical speculations, in lofty flights of imagination, in brilliant epigrams and startling antitheses. Such preaching is supposed to be a compliment to their intelligence, and they would rather be flattered than fed. For a while they will praise the preacher, and from their low level look up with admiration at the man who has so far outstripped the limits of their narrow understanding. But there is a more excellent way. Archibald Alexander achieved the feat of making the most abstruse and

sublime truths palpable to the meanest mind, and, although some ignorant people despised the man who stooped to their feeble comprehension, the more thoughtful and the truly intelligent sat at his feet and heard him gladly. It has often been remarked that there is a simplicity which comports with a true dignity; there is a language intelligible to all and offensive to none; there is a gathering together even of flowers and gems and so distributing them that they shall but serve to adorn and impress the truth, instead of concealing it with dazzle and glitter, or militating in the least against the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

Lamartine said, "To be admired you must rise; to be useful, you must descend." Of these alternatives, we ought surely to choose the latter. We should not seek to send our hearers away, saying, "How grand the sermon, how beautiful the composition, how perfect the oratory;" but, "What a wicked thing it is to trample on the Son of God; we will seek the Lord to-day." Faithful biography reports of such preachers as Baxter, Whitefield, Wesley and Summerfield, and a host of others, that they "were willing to forego whatever of admiration they might have secured at the time for a brilliant intellectual display, in order that they might gain a far nobler end, even the salvation of souls."

2. We should preach affectionately. Solemn things must be said. The terrors of the Lord must be presented. By the law is the knowledge of sin. He preaches not the Gospel who does not preach its threatenings. But we must take evangelists and apostles for our models as respects the manner of preaching, rather than prophets. The latter lived in the dim light of the Gospel day. No eye had looked on the cross, or read the love of Christ in the tragic scenes of Golgotha. Our appeal is to be made to the affections of our hearers rather than to their fears, though most certainly to both. You may lead by the cords of love whom you could not drive with bayonets or drag with chains. I doubt not that when Jesus asked the startling question, "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" He did it tenderly; and that when He told of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched, He did it in a subdued manner which told of a great burden on His heart and an affectionate solicitude for souls.

The minister's affection for his people will be increased by habitual prayer for them. Prayer will throw lines of sympathy from his closet into every home of his widely distributed flock, and his hearers will require no argument to prove their pastor's love for them. Very tenderly did Rutherford say to his flock at Anwoth, "My day thoughts and my night thoughts are of you." The meadows and the hills witnessed his tears for them, and when

it went well with the flock he joined the incense of his psalms with the harmonies of the woods. No wonder that his public messages were clothed with magnetic power and won even the most obdurate hearts. The priest has left the altar, but the preacher should be often in the holy place interceding for the souls committed to his charge; then love will kindle in every expression of his face and vibrate in every tone of his voice and speak in every grasp of his hand.

3. Again, in preaching Christ we should cultivate a natural manner. Each of us should be himself, not some other man. Every one has his own habits of thought and expression. There are no two minds alike, as there are no two faces alike. All cannot preach in the same way. It is not desirable that they should. There are diversities of gifts. The Lord has so appointed. Paul was very unlike Peter, and Luther bore little resemblance to Melancthon. Each had his niche to fill, and each filled it well. The most unhappy failures as preachers are the men who imitate such pulpit celebrities as Parker and Talmage. Some one has said: "Personal taste should be refined, then become personal law. How would Milton's old Gothic architectural style suit the simple-hearted Cowper? How would Charles Lamb look in Coleridge's Germanic idioms? How would Robert Hall appear in Hervey's gaudy robes?"

Dignified conversational tones are more effective than pompous declamation. A subdued manner will melt the heart that would be repelled by vociferation. It is the lightning that rends the oak, not the thunder. Yet the preacher should be natural. If a man is born a Boanerges he cannot be changed into a Barnabas. Newman Hall has done much for Christ, though very unlike his predecessor in old Surrey Chapel. But above all, we should eschew the theatrical, artificial breathings, extravagant gestures and grotesque attitudes which disgust thoughtful people, and greatly impair the usefulness of any minister. The pulpit is the last place on earth where a man should play the fool.

"I loathe all affectation, in man or woman,  
But far most in man, and most of all  
In man that ministers and serves at the altar."

This suggests that the written style ought also to be conversational. The preacher should write as if he were talking. An eminent divine, as quoted by Dr. Hastings, has said: "I am convinced that one of the things which makes my ordinary sermons tell is this very thing, that I write precisely as I talk; and that my sermons are thus as nearly as possible extemporaneous compositions." Charles Spurgeon's habit differed only in this respect that he

never wrote his pulpit discourses, but thought them out as if he were addressing his people from his study chair. John Knox did the same. Prof. Parke emphasizes the use of interrogation in preaching, not to the exclusion of the dogmatic statement but in combination with it, and insists on the frequent employment of those personal pronouns which favor direct address and a sympathetic recognition of the audience. And what is this but a conversational mode? Is it not better fitted to arrest the attention of a popular assembly and to produce impressions than a rhetorical or an essay style? Beyond all question. As preachers we should remember we are not to make contributions to polite literature, but to speak face to face with dying men who shall outlive any future Renaissance and survive the worlds.

4. Self-abnegation is an element of pulpit power. Adolphe Monod, one of the first orators in France, addressing students, said: "You will speak better the more you sink yourselves, and the highest point of art, especially in the case of the preacher, is to cause himself to be forgotten." If the preacher carries self-consciousness into the pulpit and detains it there; if he seems to have more regard for the praise of men than for the salvation of their souls; if his main object is evidently to call attention to himself and to his gifts—to his oratory, rhetoric, originality or wit—even worldly people who may have applauded him at the first will condemn him at the last. Their instincts reject him. Their conscious need cries out against him. They want a view of Christ, and know they will perish without it. Hence the minister who plants himself on the foreground and shuts Christ out of sight defeats the true end of preaching, and the bones of dead souls will pave his worldly ascent.

The most effective authors, whose works will live until the end of time, have been those who forgot themselves in the truth they sought to enforce. Their portraits are not the frontispieces of their books, nor do they look out from every page that follows. Homer never stalks across the stage of the Iliad, nor sits at the windows of his Odyssey. His forgetfulness of himself made him so cosmopolitan that every city of the orient enshrines his cradle. Shakespear never interrupts his *dramatis personæ*. His works owe their immortality in no small measure to his self-abnegation, and the wool-comber holds a throne from which no Bacon can ever displace him. This condition of success obtains in the pulpit. The preacher who points to the Lamb of God, as did the wilderness prophet, himself withdrawn from view, self-forgetful as was the Star of the East when it had led the magi to the manger cradle, is sure to win souls to Christ. He lives in the message he

utters, and in the fruit it bears. He is immortal in his influence because he has hidden himself in the folds of Christ's eternity. The worms ate Herod ; but Paul can never die. Oh, to be nothing, that Christ may be all and in all. Then only shall we behold and share His glory, the souls saved through our instrumentality our joy and crown forever.

5. Another element of power is the preaching of essential truths. These, of course, are familiar. But the knowledge of them is superficial. What the people need to hear most about is that about which they already know something. It is depth that is to be attained rather than expansion. To secure this will tax the intellect of the strongest, and the preacher who leads the way will need to be a profound student of the Word, pursuing his search along straight lines. He cannot exhaust any primal truth. An Alexandrian library might be written on justification by faith, and there would still be other books to write. Its mysteries will be continually unfolding along the endless line of eternity itself.

The preacher who resolves to eschew old truths and bring something original with every sermon, will soon come to naught. His novelties will prove to be errors. In his attempt to go beyond the visual line of revelation he will enter moral jungles. The urgent wants of the people will be unmet, their understandings unenlightened and their souls unsaved. The pulpit must be willing to surrender a mere intellectual ambition and reputation for genius, for the magnifying of Christ and His cross. Essential truths, though wrapped up in the first promise, old as our fallen race, must be presented to human need. Manner may vary. Phraseology may be kaleidoscopic. The individuality of the preacher may be stamped on every utterance. His illustrations may be new. His metaphors may be original and far more translucent than cathedral glass. But the truth itself is old as gravitation and changeless as the tides. Guthrie filled St. John's Free Church in Edinburgh on every Lord's day and led multitudes into the kingdom by his unique way of telling the old story ; and whether the Bethlehem plain, or the Jericho road, or Nazareth among the hills, or the cross crowning Calvary, or the cloud chariot cleaving the sky, or the trumpet blast and the returning Christ, or inspiring visions of the land afar off, engaged the attention of his hearers, there came more of Christ into their hearts and more of heaven into their lives ; and the man who loved and pursued the old paths had scarce a peer in pulpit power in all the realms on which the sun never sets. Sydney Smith expressed an important truth when he said the duty of the preacher was " constantly to remind mankind of what mankind is constantly forget-

ting; not to supply the defects of human intelligence, but to fortify the feebleness of human resolutions; to recall mankind from by-paths where they turn into the path of salvation, which all know but few tread." In consonance with this statement is the remark of John Howe that the great and important design of preaching is "the impressing of known things, but too little considered, upon the hearts of hearers. The digesting our food is what God now eminently calls for." Revelation was progressive until the apostles laid down their pens and had no successors. No new Gospel has since been given. The Star of Bethlehem is still our guide, and the Prophet of Galilee will ever be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

6. Concentration is another element of pulpit power. This statement requires qualification. Textual preaching, which is analytical, has many advantages over the topical. It ordinarily more fully honors the Word, secures greater freshness of thought, presents truth in its more instructive relations, and favors a longer pastorate because of the wider field of truth it compasses. Yet even here concentration, with energy of thought, is required. The text may be individualized. A brief exegesis may serve as an introduction to the chief and distinctive thought, and that one truth should urge its way to the soul's centre. Then the impression is definite, vivid and abiding.

Then, too, strictly topical preaching holds an important place. This favors centripetal force. The subject may be the necessity of repentance, earnestly and affectionately presented. The hearer goes away with the solemn mandate ringing through every chamber of his being—*Repent!* On the street it rises above all the roll of wheels and noise of traffic—*Repent!* In his home he hears it by day, and in the waking hours of night. In his dreams the lightnings flash it, the thunders roll it, the earth repeats it—*Repent! Repent!* There is no escape from the voice of God calling him from sin to holiness, from self to Christ, from hell to heaven. Ordinarily no such result could have been attained by a sermon crowded with diversified thought, which, by reason of its fullness, left no distinct and helpful impression. It were unwise to embrace in a single discourse the nature, necessity, instrument and evidences of regeneration. Any one of these subdivisions of the general subject is sufficient, and only by emphasizing one can the highest result be attained. To this concentration of energy, attended by the power of the Holy Ghost, Chalmers referred his success as a preacher. In attempting too much we accomplish little. Content with little, we may do great things.

7. Seriousness is an essential characteristic of an effective ser-

mon. This is at a far remove from sanctimoniousness and is consistent with a cheerful and joyous utterance. It is the natural expression of a sense of the divine presence, of the solemnity of the ministerial calling, and of personal responsibility to God. There is surely no room for trifling here. The platform and a popular address admit of humor. Post-prandial speeches are fitly enlivened with harmless wit and amusing anecdote. There is no sin in laughter, and the evidence is wanting that Jesus never smiled. Yet even here the preacher should not lose sight of the dignity of his office and, by unbecoming levity in speech and behavior, lose his claim on the respect of others. In ordinary intercourse with his people he should be cheerful, and may even be playful, yet he should studiously regard the circumstances of those he meets. But in the pulpit, humor, except in rare instances, is to be eschewed. It would repel those who are sad. It is calculated to dissipate religious impressions. It is seldom if ever helpful to any one and may be harmful to many. The preacher who resorts to it for the purpose of pleasing the worldly and attracting the careless may increase his popularity with these, but he will grieve the Holy Spirit, lose the sympathy of the spiritually minded and ultimately forfeit the confidence of those he sought to conciliate. Dr. Charles F. Deems once said, in drastic terms: "A clown who is smart in his profession may achieve quite a reputation, but a minister who is a buffoon loses the high honor of the sanctuary and fails to gain even the poor applause of a circus." The preacher is engaged in an intensely solemn work. Its issues lie off in an eternal state. Let the rainbow of heaven overarch the pulpit and the light of an unsetting sun fall upon it, but let its voice, though of the earth, suggest relations to eternity and ever avoid whatever savors of the comedy.

Prophets were serious. Christ was serious. The apostles spoke and wrote with the evident impression that they were dealing with subjects of momentous importance, and they sought men by day and by night, even with tears, to repent and lay hold on eternal life. It is safe to follow the example of the Great Teacher and of men who were filled with the Holy Ghost. And although some may use the lighter emotions to aid the impression of religious truth and may be honored of God, yet they are treading on dangerous ground and are in some measure useful in spite of that for which they have no warrant in the Scriptures, or in the ministry of the apostolic Church, or in the consensus of Christian consciousness.

8. Earnestness is a primal necessity. This is eloquence. The bodily presence of the preacher may be weak, the manner ungraceful, the speech unadorned, but if his soul is on fire, his words will

be mighty with the emotion which fills them; prejudice will be disarmed and opposition conquered. When Jeannie Deans, according to Scottish story, made her appeal in behalf of her unhappy sister before Queen Caroline, bowing low in that royal presence, fearless of the corruption which environed her, pouring forth her intensest feelings in words, simple, tremulous and direct, her eyes aflame with holy wrath or melting in tears of tenderness, and every feature, gesture and attitude bespeaking an unswerving conviction of truth and right, the Queen, overcome by responsive emotion, recovering at length her suspended breath, exclaimed, "*This is eloquence.*" On one occasion in Edinburgh, Alexander Duff presented the cause of missions in the far East with such an expenditure of vital force that he fainted and was carried into the vestry. After a little, consciousness returning, he asked, "What was I talking about?" "India," was the answer. "Ah, yes, about India; carry me back and let me finish my story." His earnestness was true eloquence, and under his impassioned utterance the assembly was moved as a field of grain by the passing wind.

Earnestness is not the child of elocution, nor a trick of the actor, but the soul-life expressed in human speech. When God and eternity, the soul and its destiny, are the themes, and weal or woe may be borne on the passing hour, earnestness should find its place and reveal its power. It has no substitute. A master in elocution truthfully said concerning it, "Decorum without it becomes hollow formality; gravity, coldness; dignity, reserve; all expression loses life and power." Such players as Garrick and Kemble administer a just rebuke to many a pulpit when they say, "We utter fiction as if it were truth; you utter truth as if it were fiction."

9. Faith in results is essential to pulpit efficiency. The preacher will accomplish but little who is always questioning whether his ministry will bear any fruit and would be surprised to learn that a soul had been converted through his agency. Here the principle obtains, Faith the measure of success. If God calls me to the ministry, it must be that He intends to use me in it. Then why do I not *expect* Him to do it? Shall His word fail, or His purpose come to naught? The greatest of English preachers owed his usefulness largely to the faith which expects results. It was this faith that made Exeter Hall the birthplace of souls and the Metropolitan Tabernacle the scene of still greater spiritual triumphs. It is related of Dr. John McDowell that he never entered his pulpit without expecting at least one soul to be saved through the Word he was about to preach. Over thirteen hundred persons referred

their conversion to his ministry, and these represented only a part of the fruits of his trustful labors. No great result was ever accomplished without this kind of faith. It was faith that built the Pyramids, discovered the New World and achieved our independence. Schiller says that if there had been no undiscovered world lying far to the westward, one would have risen from the sea to reward the faith of Columbus urging his way across the untraveled deep. Why not carry this element of power into the pulpit? Our Master sits on the circle of the earth, and turns the hearts of men as the streams in the south. We should believe all things and hope all things, and on our way to the pulpit raise a hymn of praise for what is about to be accomplished through us by Him who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

10. To this is to be added spiritual power in the preacher. Urquhart makes this the main qualification for the ministry. Good Andrew Fuller said, "Our want of usefulness is much oftener to be ascribed to want of spirituality than to the want of natural ability." This power is found and nourished in secret communion with God and the contemplation of eternal things. It is associated with a holy life. A godly minister may be subject to sore temptations, yet he will not consent to sin. Infirmity may gain temporary mastery over him, yet conscious weakness will make him strong. But if we who have the care of souls cherish iniquity in our hearts, if forbidden guests lodge behind the curtained windows, if we carry any known sin and an impenitent memory to the pulpit, we shall be weaker than Samson shorn of his locks. No spasmodic excitement, or seeming fervor, or miserable cant can atone for our offending or bring fire from heaven. A holy man back of the sermon gives an impetus to it which no amount of intellectual culture can impart. He is sincere, earnest, absorbed in the endeavor to save souls. The truth becomes concrete in his life. There is a divine harmony existing between the preacher and the Word—an invariable condition of success. Who would not scorn a Robespierre denouncing the shedding of blood? The *sans-culottes* of Paris would build for him a guillotine. What would be the effect of an essay on the value of republican government by the Czar of Russia? The Nihilists would find it an argument for personal violence. When Edmund Burke exhibited and condemned the corruptions and cruelty of Warren Hastings' administration in India, men heard him with the marrow of their bones, for they believed that Burke was every inch an honest man. The world cannot demand less of the preacher. His life must be habitually and increasingly holy. The hands that bear

the vessels of the Lord must be clean. The body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost must be undefiled by cherished sin, or pulpit ministrations will be exhibitions of spiritual weakness and the hearers will be quick to discern it.

The great want of to-day is a holier ministry. We do not need more stalwart polemics, more mighty apologists, or preachers who compass a wider range of natural knowledge, important as these are ; not Chrysostoms, Mellvilles or Robertsons, but men of God like the preachers of Anworth, Kidderminster and Ayr by the sea, who bring the atmosphere of heaven with them to the pulpit and speak from the borders of another world. The pulpit of this age makes no new discoveries of truth. It cannot get beyond Paul and Peter and the Preacher of Nazareth. It is occupied with an old message, changeless as human need. The average hearer receives comparatively little intellectual light from the pulpit. But, though the sermon lack originality of thought, there may be an indefinable uplifting power in it, something which makes truth vastly more real, that brings eternity nearer, that kindles intenser longings after personal holiness, and sends the believer heavenward along a higher spiritual plane. It is the spiritual power of the preacher vitalizing the word spoken. Nothing can compensate for its absence.

11. This implies what deserves distinct mention : the preacher's dependence on the Holy Ghost. In a successful ministry, as in the person of Christ, the divine and the human are conjoined. The conversion of a soul is as distant from the effects of merely natural principles as life is from death. Religious excitement is not regeneration. An electrified corpse may simulate natural physical action, but, the exciting agency being removed, it is a more mournful spectacle of death than it was before. The sun may bathe Greenwood with light, but Greenwood is a great charnel-house still. There are dead souls in the pews. They are as destitute of every principle of grace as the natives of Central Africa, and under greater condemnation. The preacher, acting alone, cannot give them spiritual life. No amount of knowledge, no depth of concern, no measure of personal holiness, no appeal borne on the flood-tide of tearful emotion, can bring a single soul from the dead. There never lived a preacher possessed of such elements of power as Christ, and yet under His ministry, reaching through three years, the number of conversions was only a tithe of the fruitage of Peter's one sermon on the day of Pentecost. The work of the Holy Spirit had been restrained until after Christ had returned to the Father. The preacher needs the power which comes from on high. He must constantly seek it. As the carrier

pigeon ascending bathes its wings in the higher light before it sets out on its mission, so the preacher must first commune with God at the gate of heaven. Then, too, he must be careful that he grieve not the Holy One by any permitted sin. The Word of God gathers an awful solemnity about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Men may profane the name of God and of His Son Jesus Christ; the last thing they will do is to profane the Holy Ghost. It becomes the preacher to walk softly, to watch unto prayer, to keep himself pure, and in harmony with Him who is the source of all spiritual power. Then for him the wildernesses of this world shall rejoice, and his ministry shall enrich heaven with the trophies of omnipotent grace.

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