

monplace. Musical composers understand this to be true of their art. The thrilling strain soon drops into the sweet; the classic harmony gives place to the simple rhythmic melody; and so we are content to listen by the hour. The painter also observes this principle. Bierstadt makes his Rocky Mountain peaks rise from a foreground of meadowland. Some great orators carry this rule of variety to such an extent as to approach almost the verge of mirth, when they intend to produce, a little later, the deepest feeling of solemnity.

In the ordinary sermon there should be about as many changes of sentiment as there are distinct headings of thought, if the purpose is to move the feelings. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. Some subjects, in their very announcement, awaken a feeling which must not be interrupted. It were sacrilege to introduce any but solemn sentiments if preaching upon the Death of Christ, the Last Judgment, or delivering a funeral discourse. Yet even the most effective eulogies over the coffin need not be of the nature of a wail. The most impressive funeral address I ever heard was from Mr. Beecher. I knew that his heart was sad, for the deceased was an intimate friend of the preacher. He seemed to be talking for the sake of cheering his own grief. His thoughts were genial, reflecting sunny memories of the past, and catching bright hopes of the future. There was something very natural and healthful in the smile that rippled from the speaker's face round the room as we recalled the life of our neighbor, which had been so pleasant to us all.

We would not introduce anything like levity into pulpit discourse. Good judgment will guide any one who can appreciate the dignity of divine themes. But within the range of strictest decorum there is field for the play of greatest versatility of thought and rhetoric. Let the preacher remember that he is not only dealing with a *subject*, which has its rights and proprieties, but also with a *crowd of people* who have their weaknesses—one of which is a predis-

position to grow weary with almost anything that holds the mind too continuously intent.

The Old Sermon.

It is too good to throw away. You have put at least half a week of hard work into it. It is a great deal better than you could now write at the fag-end of a busy week, and with the fagged-out energies of your brain. Use it again. If it is well written, repeat it bodily. Your style has been changing during the three or four years since you wrote it; and the probability is that, while no one will recognize it as old, somebody will be impressed with its novelty. But if you are naturally studious and thoughtful, you will hardly be able to repeat it just as it is. New and better turns of expression will suggest themselves as you read it over. A new illustration will come in here and there. You will readily apply the principles you enunciate to recent events, or to the present experience of some of your parishioners.

The best way to use an old sermon is to re-master its contents; get a good grasp on its theme and outline; study its language just enough to feel yourself in present sympathy with it; then throw it away, and go to your pulpit with the single purpose of impressing its prominent thoughts upon the people. You will, probably, extemporize better with such a start than if you worried many hours over a new outline.

Genuine Politeness in the Minister.

We question whether this quality is properly appreciated and exemplified in those who exercise the Christian ministry. Politeness is a social virtue of no mean order. There is a charm, a fascination, a power in it that none can resist—the savage and the civilized, the rude and the cultured, instinctively respond to it. Young, in "Night Thoughts," does not exaggerate the point when he says:

"A Christian is the highest style of man."
No one can read the life of our Lord as