

FROM THE MISSION ROOMS,
TORONTO.

Letter from Rev. H. M. Manning, Missionary at Edmonton, Saskatchewan, dated Nov. 1st, 1877.

I referred in my list to the long and frequent journeys of the first Methodist Missionaries sent to this place, and to the changes that have occurred in the physical features of our work, the extent of this field at present, and the opportunities for usefulness which it affords; and I was careful to add that the monotony of our life had been broken by various travels. It will be presumed that these were neither long nor frequent, which is true, and not to be regretted, seeing that funds are low, and providing also that the work has not been neglected. But few and short as they have been comparatively, they have not lacked the romance and novelty, peril and hardships of former days. The mode of travel has undergone little change. We carry our board, and take up our lodgings where we please, or where we can, for our progress is often impeded by accidents, which no prudence of ours can foresee, and we find ourselves benighted far from our desired camping ground, which to a traveller, wearied and still in haste, as missionaries usually are, is one of the saddest of disappointments. If we have an attendant, which is not always the case, we can rest in our camp when the day's journey is over, otherwise we are busy for a considerable time watering and hobbling the horses, that they may not leave us during the night, pitching the tent, getting wood and water, working, &c. These et ceteras at the end of a forty miles jaunt, enable one to sleep on a bed of mole hills without any narcotics, unless, indeed, the night be spent in maintaining one's right to rest against the lawless claims of innumerable mosquitoes to a night of feasting. At the dawn of day, and often before it, the traveller must be up and preparing for his journey. The one thing of importance is to find his horses. This may take him half an hour or half a day; and whether a longer or shorter time, he is almost certain to return to his camp as wet as if he had been wading in water to the knees. A hasty breakfast is next taken. We have now, of course, all the luxuries to be desired, albeit we are sometimes reduced to the simple fare of our predecessors, pemican and wild fowl. Then follows the morning sacrifice of praise and prayer. The quiet, the repose of these moments is impressive and sweet. No sooner have we risen from prayer than all are busy again. The tent must be taken down and folded, the cooking utensils collected, and all carefully packed in the conveyance and securely tied. This done, and the horses hitched, we are ready for another day's journey. Such is summer travel in the Saskatchewan, and after this manner we travelled a thousand miles during the summer of the last ecclesiastical year.

In winter we use a cariole and horse, or dogs, usually the former, travel from ten to fifty miles a day, according to circumstances, carry hay and grain for the horse, for personal use such edibles as will thaw most readily by the campfire, or such as can be eaten when frozen, and a good supply of blankets and robes. When the weather is mild, as it frequently is, and the snow soft, we travel by night; and this, if you have company of a congenial class, may be boasted of as one of the rarest of drives. It has been my fortune to be thus circumstanced several times.

But you have heard of the hardships of winter travel in the mission fields.

They are matters of course of which every missionary, so far as I know, has an experience sooner or later. Perhaps, as things familiar to us are of interest to the people at home, my egotism may be pardoned, if I insert some account of a trip made in the month of April to a lumber shanty, fifty miles west of Edmonton.

It was a clear mild morning when I left the mission house. My hope was to overtake a party before night that started with loads the day before. But the road was much worse than I expected, and my progress slow. About noon I came to a lake where two ways met, and, having been there a few weeks before, resolved to take the more direct route, and strike the better beaten track a few miles farther on.

All went well for a time, till the snowshoe track I had been following became indistinct. This made me suspicious that I had gone astray, which proved too true; for, after hours of trudging through snow from two to four feet deep, I found the remains of an Indian camp, and here my road ended. Relieved by the certainty that I had made a mistake, I set off in good spirits to find the track, in which I succeeded. Late at night I found shelter by the side of a poplar grove, having travelled about thirty-five miles; and here, without camp or fire or tea, I lay down in my cariole to sleep. Such comforts would have cost me too much toil. Two days later, on my return, after hours of plunging over miles of crusted snow (for I had to take a new road on leaving the mill to avoid the water on the river) I was met by a driving snow storm. A long plain now lay before me, in many places the track was scarcely discernible, and night gained so fast upon me that I had not a moment to lose. But the weary flesh must be nourished, and the horse too must be fed, or, as we say here, he will "give out;" so pulling on my great-coat and buckling it tight about me, (we doff our great coats when in a hurry, for we have to run instead of ride.) I turned my back to the storm and sat down to luncheon of frozen biscuits and cold water, while the faithful horse ground his measure of barley with all haste. The shades of night were gathering round, and the shelter I sought was still miles ahead. O! how wistfully I looked towards the west in hope that the gleams of light that lingered upon the sky would not desert me too soon. Hope and fear alternately held the mastery; for I was all alone, and not a man within thirty miles knew of my being out that night. I thought of the fate of our late chairman, but trusted in God and went on. The track was too crooked, narrow and indistinct for the wearied horse to keep it long, and soon after dark we were plunging again through the deep snow. But now the tops of the tall pines were in view, like a dark cloud upon the sky, and I rejoiced as the lost mariner at the sight of the light house lamp, thanked God and took courage. Though apparently within a gunshot they were miles distant, and we were destined to come upon the track again before reaching them. At last the friendly woods were gained. I had spent a night here before with R. Hardisty, Esq. and party. On that occasion we lost our way, took shelter at this place, and returned home next day. We then had a comfortable camp; but I now found it all destroyed, and the place covered with snow. Too weary to chop wood and build a fire, I shook the snow off a few branches that lay upon the ground, and, spreading them under a sheltering pine, lay down to sleep, and the sun had already chased the gloom of night away when I awoke. "For He giveth His beloved sleep." And therefore the Psalmist said, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

But this is only part of the fatigue of a single trip. Of the five hundred miles travelled during the last winter, two hundred and fifty were travelled alone and of the nine nights spent in the woods, four were spent alone, and six out of the nine were almost or altogether sleepless, through a sheer discomfort from cold and other unavoidable circumstances. It is no wonder therefore, that the missionary returns to his home weather beaten and weary.

Some account of the places visited, and the work of God, in my next.

HOW TO PREPARE A SERMON.

BY H. A. M. HENDERSON, D. D.

(Nashville Advocate.)

First. Select a text that fairly contains a subject. Ascertain, definitely, what the subject is. As in the text, "Therefore, being justified by faith," etc., the subject expressed, in its simplest form, is "justification by faith." Perhaps the text is textually divided, as in, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," etc. This might be treated as naturally divided, or the subject might be expressed as follows: "Jesus the way to the Father," and treated as follows: The exordium might be on the world's search for a way of ap-

proach to God, and by easy steps reach the following division: 1. Jesus the true way. 2. Jesus the living way. Of course the application would be to press the truth that there is no other way. Sometimes it is well to select some subject, and find a text for it afterward. If you can find no text that includes the whole subject as you propose to present it, get one that will lead you naturally into it, and after having served the purpose of a finger-board to your path of discussion, dismiss it by stating a clear proposition. Particularly, in texts containing a metaphor, do not try to make that metaphor serve all the purposes of your thought, but exhaust it fairly and dismiss it, else your effort to use it will make your sermon puerile.

Secondly. Inquire what you know upon the subject, and write it down memorably, or with "catch-words," that will serve at a glance to recall the whole thought. Read all you can find upon the subject, taking notes in your own language of the facts and thoughts that you think will be serviceable to you. Do not servilely follow an author, but enquire, "Is this true?" "What does it suggest to me?" "How can I supplement this with original matter?" Try to be original. Remember that a man will love a club-footed child of his own more than he will a perfect one of his neighbor. If you cannot originate new, serviceable thought, impress that of an author with your own mental individuality. A man is original in the degree in which he adds value to a thing, or gives it greater currency. Make it, by assimilation, so thoroughly your own, that when men ask, "Whose image and superscription is this?" you will be able to answer, "It is mine." The nugget may not be yours, but the assaying and mintage may be. There are few nuggets now to be dug in the realm of positive theology, but we need "a resumption act" that will bring us back from the green and gaudy currency to a solid gold basis.

Thirdly. Having collated your matter, determine under what head, previously arranged, it most naturally can be marshaled. You may find it necessary to make a new "plan," or to dispense with a "skeleton." In this latter case you are to determine the order of the procession of thought, and you can align your matter by the use of simple numerals—1, 2, 3, etc. In my own sermonizing I seldom have arbitrary divisions. A sermon that flows on like a river, receiving tributaries, and widening and deepening as it glides onward, unobstructed by locks and dams (divisions), is always more effective. Even when a preacher has these mechanical divisions and subdivisions he should so construct his sermon as to conceal them from his hearers, having each part dovetailed into the other so as to constitute one piece of mental mechanism.

Fourthly. Inquire, "How can I strengthen this subject with illustrations or quotations?" "How can I make the truth clearer to the apprehension of my hearers?" In this respect nature, science, art, mythology, history, biography and experience, are to be drawn upon.

Fifthly. "How can I embellish with figures of rhetoric, the graces of language, and quotations from the poets?" In this respect do not try to make each sentence equally beautiful. Do not employ "the high colors" upon a homely thought. Then there are truths that are grandest in their naked simplicity, and to attempt to adorn them with the red-ribbons of rhetoric would be like trying to gild the sun. As in an orchestra, strains are introduced that jar dissonantly upon the ear for the purpose of making more effective some sweet symphony or simple air; or, as in the Rembrandt pictures, the *chiaroscuro* is employed to make, by contrast, more objective the portrait on the dark background, or as the jeweler sets the diamond in ebony—so the rhetoric of a sermon should, at times, be ruggedly simple, so that greater efficiency may be given to passages in which the thought is capable of carrying a rich upholstery of language. While in extemporaneous speech an occasional grammatical inaccuracy may be pardoned on the ground of earnestness, yet that habit of introducing errors for mere rhetorical

contrasts should be avoided. Also, avoid archaisms. Whatever the language employed, do not let it obscure the thought. And remember the more rude and primitive a people, the more they delight in high-wrought or pictorial speech. The Oriental idioms—languages of the greatest antiquity—and the speech of the American Indians, are remarkable for the richness of their imagery. The purpose should be to adopt such a mode of reasoning and rhetoric as shall be on a plane to the comprehension of the greater part of a promiscuous assembly without offending the taste of any. People who may not be able to define many of your words will yet be able to see your picture as a whole if you have skillfully employed the art of the word-painter. Says Whately, "In adapting the style to the comprehension of the illiterate, a caution is to be observed against the ambiguity of the word 'plain,' which is opposed sometimes to *obscurity*, and sometimes to *ornament*. The vulgar require a perspicuous, but by no means a dry and unadorned style; on the contrary, they have a taste rather for the overflorid, tawdry and bombastic: nor are the ornaments of style by any means necessarily inconsistent with perspicuity; indeed, metaphor, which is among the principal of them, is, in many cases, the clearest mode of expression that can be adopted; it being usually much easier for uncultivated minds to comprehend a similitude or analogy than an abstract term." I have found that it is a bad plan to introduce a long poem into the body of a discourse, and particularly if it rhymes. Sometimes blank verse, in which the language and thought keep equal step, and march "like an army with banners," a quotation of some length may serve a noble purpose in *climaxing* a passage. Sometimes a rhymed poem—and especially a hymn, may be effectively employed in closing a peroration. A notable instance of this is in Bishop Pierce's funeral sermon of Bishop Capers, in the "Methodist Pulpit, South," which he concludes with those martial-music-like lines: "Servant of God, well done!" etc. My own method of sermonizing is substantially the foregoing. I select a subject on Monday morning, always taking that which is most interesting to me at the time. Thus I am enabled to pursue investigation *con amore*. Each day I write down what occurs to me. I carry the subject with me wherever I go, and about Thursday night I attempt a systematic arrangement of my matter, selecting that best suited to my purpose. Very often I get matter enough for several sermons, and I arrange them with reference to giving each the greatest possible effectiveness. I seldom write a sermon *in extenso*. I try to formulate sentences in my mind. I have found it a great aid to memory to repeat aloud these sentences. I make myself very familiar with my notes, so that a glance at them at every subdivision or "catch-word," is sufficient. I write these on one side of the paper. If I have more than two pages of notes, necessitating a turning of paper, I lay them between the leaves of the Bible, and turn the Bible-leaf carelessly. In this way the manuscript is kept out of the eye of the congregation, and the charm of extemporaneous address is preserved. Depend upon it, that it is very damaging to effect for an audience to see constantly your paper, and especially to observe servility to notes. I have seen many preachers who carried their notes carelessly in their pockets, and therefore they were so crumpled as that they would not lie smoothly upon the Bible. Others write their notes in memoranda-books, and of course cannot conceal them from public view. I have a Bristol-board card about six inches long and three inches wide. The notes can be easily filed, and do not get crumpled. On the opposite side I index references, write supplementary thoughts, the number of the hymns, and the Scripture-lessons suitable to the sermon, the places and times preached, etc. By having the cards eyeleted they can be easily tied together. I have given my method in the hopes that it may be useful to some young preacher who has not read works on homiletics. In another article I will make some suggestions on extemporaneous preaching.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. EDITOR, SIR.—A few weeks since I read in the WESLEYAN some strictures of Judge Marshall's on a letter in the Christian Messenger written in approval of Prof. Dawson's "Origin of the World," and again last week he attacks another approver of the work, "for the information of the Christian laity generally."

Having rather cursorily read the book in question before the first letter appeared, I was induced to go over it again more carefully and the result is that I the more admire it, not only for the deep and careful research displayed, but also for the author's profound admiration of the wisdom and goodness of that great Being who before all creation, had evidently the whole plan spread out before him as though it were then finished, and thus, it may be millions of years before man existed to need it, had everything in design provided for his sustenance, comfort, and enjoyment.

And is the man who by a lifetime of arduous labor and research, elaborates the knowledge thus obtained for the benefit of such as have not the opportunity, or it may be the grasp of mind, to achieve it for themselves, to be designated a skeptic and perverter of Christian truth, because he finds that our coal, iron, granite, marble, lime-stone, gypsum, gold, silver, copper, tin, and a multitude of other things, are just as St. Paul says, "not made of things which do appear," "is he to be called an infidel because having acquired this knowledge, he cannot accept the meaning attached by some to our version of the history of creation?"

Prof. Dawson does not, in the most remote sense, deny the divinity and authenticity of the Bible, but rather labour to show that, geological developments strengthen every great truth of divine revelation.

The Judge asks for proofs that these long periods in the process of creation are meant by the term days. He might as well ask me to prove the diameter of our world, the size or distance of the sun or moon, or Jupiter or Mars, &c., &c. I can only refer him to the conclusions of these very men who have spent and are spending their lives in researches for the benefit of this, the part, and generations to come. I would ask him does the Bible teach the principles of attraction or repulsion, or adhesion? Does it teach us that our world revolves diurnally on its axis, or that it travels annually round its orbit, or what are the forces employed to accomplish these revolutions?

No, the Bible was intended for another purpose, and that it fully accomplishes.

The Judge, to induce his readers to accept his dictum, says that, for many years he has prayerfully and carefully studied the Holy Scriptures. For what? To find out the meaning of the word days? To find out whether our geologists, and other learned scientists, are right or wrong. I am inclined to think that he will get no other answer from it on these subjects than that which Jupiter is said in the fable to have given to the waggoner in his trouble. St. Paul says to Timothy that, "all Scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for instruction, &c., in the way of righteousness," but not for criticism in the general departments of secular knowledge.

The Bible tells us that in the days of Joshua the sun and moon stood still for about a whole day, and that the shadow went back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz in the days of Hezekiah; now I verily believe the statement, but how these changes were accomplished, I cannot fathom, yet what has that to do with the stability of my faith or trust in God?

Again the Judge says a day must mean twenty-four hours, because it is said and God rested on the seventh day. This is rather fatal to the Judge's theory, because if he is right of course God rested just twenty-four hours, and what then? echo says and what then?

But Prof. Dawson says (in conformity with his theory) God's rest is still going on, except as our Lord Jesus Christ said, "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath days," so God is employing his Sabbath (the part at least) for our eternal benefit.

He has caused our Bible to be brought to us through ages of darkness and corruption; bringing in his wisdom and goodness the gospel of eternal salvation within the reach of all, and by the means of railroad and steam ships, the great Suez Canal, and other great enterprises (which cannot be conceived or carried out without his permission) the gospel may be further spread and find its way readily to the remotest boundaries of the habitable globe. And now fearing this may be already too long for a newspaper article, I will close, but may with your permission resume the subject at some future time.

ONE OF THE LAYTY.