

needs of your people, and how the one stands over against the other.

36. *The sermon itself.* (1) *The introduction.* Make your introduction short, for the sooner you get at your work the better. It is only the porch to a larger and grander edifice, and none are so foolish as to build a large porch to a small house. The introduction should contain only one thought or principle, neither should it anticipate discussion and forestall the body of the discourse. It should gradually lead up to, and leave us in front of the theme to be discussed.

(2) *The sermon-plan.* Seek as far as possible to have your sermon-plan simple, natural, logical in its heads; each step leading on to the next; each head when discussed leaving you in front of the following, so that the mind may not be burdened in recalling trains of thought.

(3) *The conclusion* applies the truth of the discussion, bringing it to bear on the heart and conscience for practical purposes. Let the vibration of your discussion be strong and tender, your keenest and most searching thoughts at the close, for many sermons grow vapid, spongy and weak at the close. If you have force, food, marrow anywhere, bring it on now, for much depends on the last ten minutes. Let all your arguments converge. Bring all your scattered rays to one focus till it glows with intensity, and send your people away with your strong burning words in their hearts. The formula for a conclusion is—closer and closer; heavier and heavier; hotter and hotter; till the white heat of your discourse becomes the intense conviction in the consciences of your hearers. Never say *lastly*; *finally*; *in conclusion*; *one word more*, and then begin to address this last word to parents and children; old and young; converted and unconverted. Many preachers are like Tennyson's brook, they go on for ever, whether men may come or men may go.

(4) *As to the length of the sermon*, that is not to be measured by the clock. A long sermon may be short, and a short one very long. We must learn to *condense*; this will very seldom do either ourselves or our hearers harm. When the king complimented Dr. South on a sermon, saying "I wish you had made it longer," South replied, "May it please your Majesty, I wish I had had time to make it shorter." It requires time, wisdom and experience to make a sermon compact, and know what is not to be put in it.

37. *As to modes of delivery* we have little to say. The main thing is to make sure that you can preach, whether from a *full*