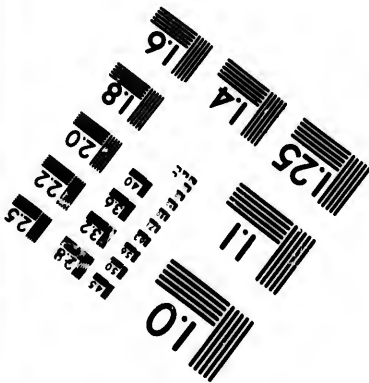
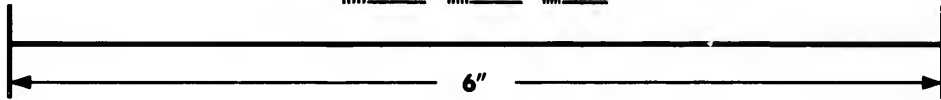
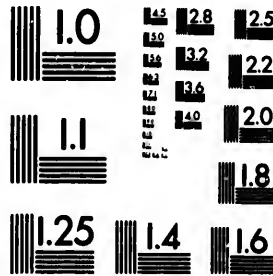


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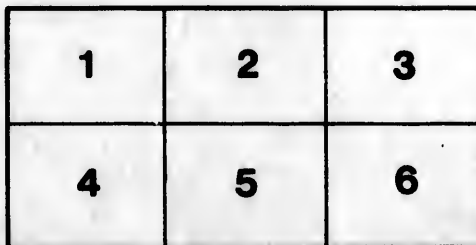
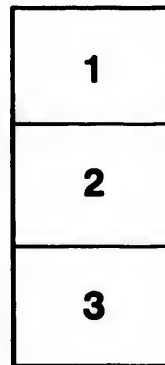
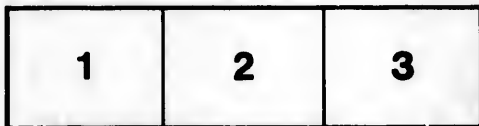
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THE ANNUAL
LECTURES ON PREACHING

DELIVERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
THEOLOGICAL UNION OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY,

COBOURG, MARCH, 1886.

BY
EDWARD B. RYCKMAN, D.D.

TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 KING STREET EAST.

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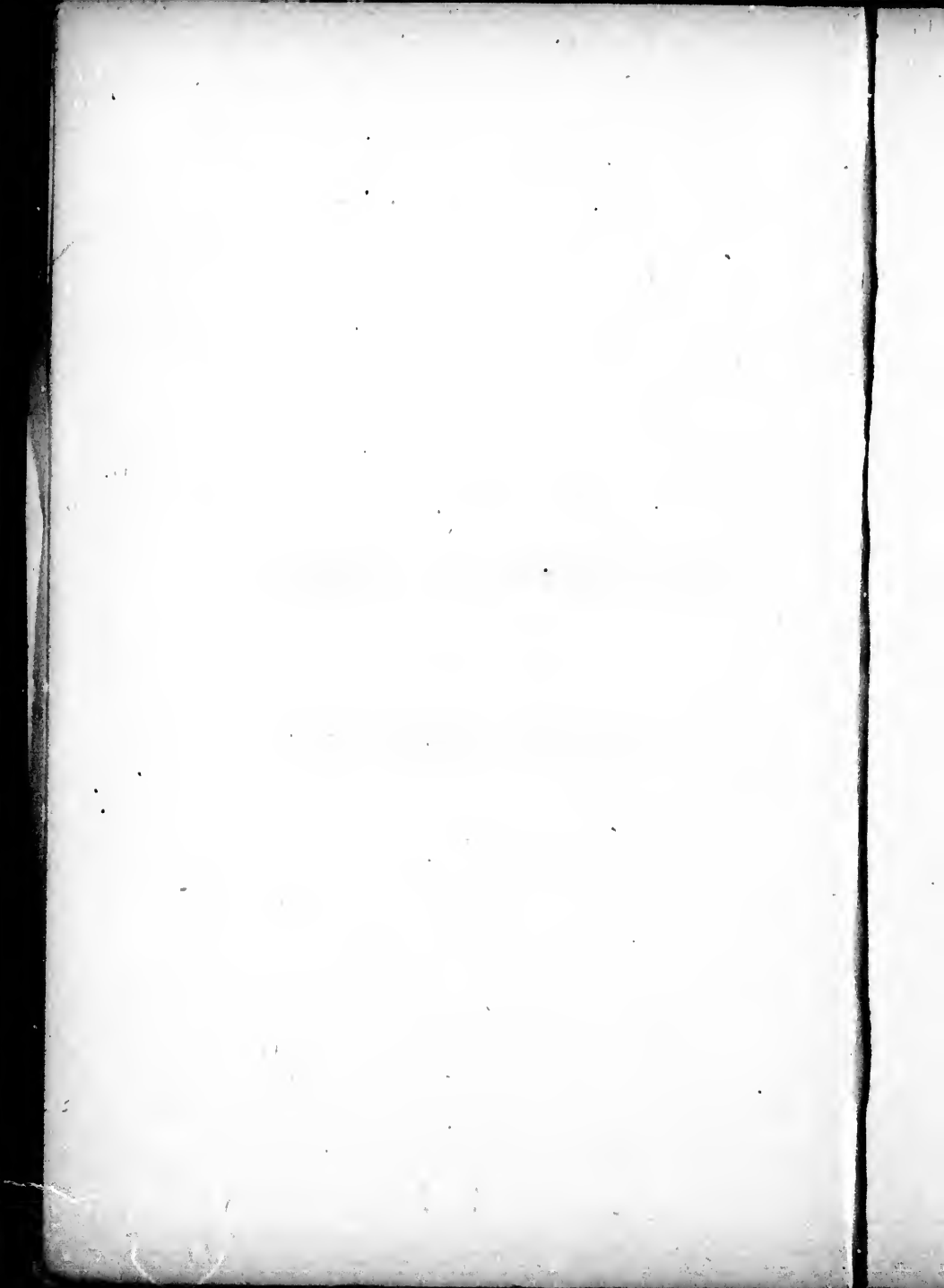
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The Ambassador for Christ.

LECTURE I.—THE MAN.

God, the offended God Most High,
Ambassadors to rebels sends ;
His messengers His place supply,
And Jesus begs us to be friends.—*Wesley.*

Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded ; in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works ; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned.—*Paul.*

I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.—*Cowper.*

If I understand *manliness* aright, it is the one thing needful. Nature asks no more than this, man can attempt no more than this, God requires no more than this, that we should be, in the true sense of the word, manly.—*Hugh Stowell Brown.*

His life was gentle ; and the elements
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world,—This is a man !—*Shakespeare.*

I am not aware of any promise given to genius or learning in the matter of expounding the Divine Word, but exceeding great and precious promises are given to modesty, humility, trust, childlike love, transparent, ingenuous simplicity.—*Joseph Parker.*

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The Ambassador for Christ.

LECTURE I.—THE MAN.

MY YOUNG BRETHREN:—I find myself to-day in the midst of circumstances that tax my courage and strength to the utmost. I am here to deliver to you the annual "Lectures on Preaching." I cannot but feel that a grave responsibility rests upon me. You, young brethren, have been called to a vocation of transcendent significance and importance. You are strenuously employing all available means for the purpose of qualifying yourselves, in the highest degree possible to you, for the duties which befit your sublime calling. This Lectureship on Preaching has been established with a view to your better preparation for your work. I would wish to suggest some hints that may be of service to guide you in these too brief, but pricelessly precious days of studenthood, and to aid you in attaining the goal of a godly aspiration—the honorable position of useful ministers of Christ.

But what can I furnish towards the desirable ends that you seek? The learning which I can bring within these walls would pale into twilight in presence of the effulgence of sacred lore which shines on you every day. My style cannot be preferred, as a model, to that of most others. My delivery is not so specially attractive or impressive as to be, *par excellence*, a pattern for learners. My achievements in the work have not been above the average in success. I never learned, myself, to preach. I never had the assistance of a series of lectures, even such as the present, on this great work. Yet there are some reasons why I may venture to address you on this great theme. *Experientia docet*—and a painstaking and faithful, if not very successful, teacher she has been to me. Experience has been likened to the stern lights of a ship which cast their rays on the path that has been passed over. If the experience of those who have gone this way before *you* could be appropriated by you it would not be too dearly bought even at a great price:

I have the melancholy advantage of being considerably older than any of you. I am now completing my thirtieth year in the Methodist itinerancy. Yet I am not out of sympathy with those who are only now beginning their career. If I were younger, I could not bring such results of observation and experience to my task. If I were older, I might be less capable of entering into the feelings and wishes of those to whom I speak. I seem to myself to stand upon that mid-way eminence in life's high road from which the terminus

appears not very far off, and the heart of the traveller gathers most solemn and stirring incentives to exertion so as to complete the journey well, while it throbs with exultant hope of the future rest; and yet from which he can distinctly see, as he looks back, the path by which he has come—the Slough of Despond, into which most fall at the outset; the Hill Difficulty, which all must climb; the Sleeping Arbor, in which some sit down to rest soon after they are ordained, fall asleep and never wake; the Enchanted Ground of popularity in some conspicuous city station; and moreover, the Evangelist and the Interpreter, without whose aid and instruction he never could have reached his present position; an eminence, I say, from which he can take in best both the retrospect and the prospect, so as to afford best advice to the less advanced travellers along the eventful way. When persons are beginning to be advanced in years, thought and conversation about the past are apt to be very pleasant, while that which is pleasing to the young is thought and conversation about the future. The pathway that lies backward and past to me is forward and future to you. I hope we may both be delighted and profited by our few days' intercourse.

I wish that more leisure had been mine in the preparation of my lectures. They have been thought out and written while head and heart and hands were as full as they could well be of other cares and duties, so that they are far from being as finished either in thought or expression as I wished them to be, and in other circumstances could have made them.

In these lectures I desire to restrict my own thought, and yours also, to a single leading idea of the ministry, namely, **AMBASSADORSHIP FOR CHRIST**. There is no higher view of the ministerial calling than this. Among all the noble appellatives which the Apostles appropriated to themselves, there is no other—Teacher, Preacher, Pastor, Steward, Guide, Witness, Overseer—that rivals this. It means more than either Old Testament Priest or Prophet, or both combined. The Ambassador not only stands between God and men, to receive from God and convey to men, to represent God to men and men to God; but he stands in his office clothed with the dignity, responsibility and authority of an accredited messenger of the King of kings, commissioned to negotiate concerning affairs of transcendent importance. He is sent to do what the Son of God Himself would do if He were personally on earth. St. Paul, in magnifying his office, never used words of weightier import than these, “Now then we are **AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST**, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v. 20.)

Adhering to this central idea of Ambassadorship, my plan is to speak, first of all, of the Man; secondly, of his Message; thirdly, of its Delivery; and lastly, of the Results. The subject is immense. Though I were a professor of the art of condensation, it would be impossible for me, I fear, to develop, with any proper credit to myself or advantage to you, these four branches of it in so many brief lectures.

To-day I speak of the man himself, and of what, in his representative position, his manhood should be. I begin with this as a matter of fundamental importance, for the *man* goes before the *Minister*. Such was the order in St. Paul's mind, for in writing those epistles to Timothy and Titus, which may be regarded as the Christian minister's manual, he summed up all that young ministers should be and do in those expressive words, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16).

There are two essential things required in order that any mortal man may become an Ambassador for Christ—things so essential that I cannot avoid mentioning them, and yet, whose essentiality is so clear, so well and universally understood, that I need do no more than merely mention them.

In the first place, a man must be *converted* in order to be fit for this office. An enemy of the King could not be a trustworthy Ambassador. In order to influence rebels to a reconciliation to sovereign authority, he must needs be loyal to it himself. The Ambassador for Christ, in order that he may lead others to the Cross, must first go thither himself. In order to instruct others in the knowledge of eternal life, he himself must first know, experimentally, what that life is. In order to be a leader of God's hosts, he himself must understand the tactics. He must possess the good seed in order to sow it. Besides, how absurd it would be to suppose such a thing as that the Omniscient One

would select a sinner, with a carnal and unrenewed heart, to show ignorant and lost men the way of holiness and truth! Though he "might speak with the tongues of men and of angels," and though he might "have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge," yet without a new heart he would be "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

In the second place, a man cannot be an Ambassador for Christ unless he be *called* especially by the Holy Spirit of Christ to that office. An unsent Ambassador is a contradiction in terms. There must be a Divine call to the ministry of the gospel as real as the Master's "Follow Me" to St. Matthew, as he sat at the receipt of custom. He who assumes the office without that will not be held blameless. He tramples sacred things under unhallowed feet, and commits sacrilege in the presence of the Eternal One. There can be few mistakes—I should say sins, rather—more grievous than this, and yet it is to be feared that it is one which, sometimes for one reason, sometimes for another, is frequently committed. Parents send their children to the ministry as they send them to the bar, desk, or work-shop, to earn a bit of bread, without considering, in the least degree, the Divine will in the matter. Or, what is more likely to take place in the Methodist Church, young men seek the position of a minister of the gospel for the personal influence it gives, its social status, its literary leisure, or other worldly advantage.

Having thus merely stated the necessity of these two considerations, without which an Ambassador for

Christ is impossible, I proceed to consider what other elements of ministerial character are eminently desirable, if not absolutely indispensable.

The Ambassador for Christ should be the *noblest* of men. His work—the work of opening men's eyes, of turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God—is the grandest work in which any human being can be engaged. He ought to be the grandest of men. It is not necessary to a mechanic's skill that he be of noble nature, or have an unsullied moral character. He may be notoriously a bad man, and yet be a good workman and successful. A lawyer may be eminent as an immoral man, and yet a learned and safe counsellor in mere legal affairs, and an eloquent pleader. Even the poet may be foul-hearted to an appalling degree, and yet may touch the loftiest thought, and be in many high respects a teacher of mankind. But the Ambassador for Christ *must* be morally sound and complete, in every sense of the word a good man.

I would not, by comparison, disparage any needful work. The humblest may serve God, in sweeping the streets, ploughing the fields, wielding the sledge, plying the needle, making the children's garments or bread—all are about the Master's business. But think of the sphere of this Heavenly Messenger. He is to help God save men, make men good, lift them above the curse and foulness of sin, and bring them home to God. He is to be himself like God, and then make men like himself. He is to go, in the name of God, to

his fellow-men in the time of trouble of mind, body, or estate, and supply substantial comfort. He is to heal the broken-hearted, and hold up before the eyes of the dying, in that most solemn hour of life, the cross that can drive away their fear and smooth their passage to the grave. How sublime is such a vocation—a personal ministry on behalf of others! Surely the results of it will not perish with time. Each word of sympathy is recorded for eternity; each willing footstep in caring for suffering humanity makes its mark to be fully revealed in the hereafter. In such a noble calling there is scarcely room for self-denials. The privilege of working together with God, for ends so sublime, should make it a joy to yield our best treasures in such a service.

“For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this.”

There is a wide-spread impression that the Christian ministry is a toilsome and thankless lot. This is often a theme of conversation in religious families and among Christian young people. It is but natural that young men should sympathize with this prejudice, especially when the higher and spiritual aspects of the ministry are not presented to them. They are sometimes taught that anything is preferable to such a calling. They are led to regard it with inward contempt, as the sure highway to discomfort and poverty. It would be easy to show to an intelligent Christian how erroneous is this view of the gospel ministry. The parent may

deem himself honored, indeed, who has a son in such a work. His mind is continually engaged upon the most delightful themes. His heart expands amid improving and congenial studies. Even those official engagements, that are sometimes displeasing to the flesh, originate a sweet consciousness of Divine approval, when performed for the Saviour and the good of immortal souls. He has no sense of meanness in toiling for mere transitory pleasure. When he dies, there are no bitter reflections from having engaged in a work of doubtful character. He can say in truth, "I have fought a good fight, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of rejoicing." How strange that we, who are so soon, with all our households, to disappear from this active scene, should depreciate such an allotment! How pernicious is this low view of the ministerial office! It is to be feared that many a young man has been diverted from his true life-work by these prevalent misconceptions.

I am told that the Rev. Phillips Brooks, of Boston, in his Yale Lectures on Preaching (which I have not seen), lays immense stress on "the man behind the sermon," as if, this being secured, all would be secured, as the bayonet depends for its effectiveness on the pith of the arm that wields it. Then, assuming that a man is a converted man, and has been sent of God as His ambassador, and admitting God's sovereign right to call into His service whom He pleases, what are the elements that go to make up a complete man?

Beginning at the bottom, I shall say, first of all, he

should be complete on the *physical side* of his nature, as free from blemish as the Hebrew priest who ministered before God in the temple, or as the stainless and perfect sacrifice laid upon the altar there. I admit that it is impossible to raise up an ideal ministry. We have to be content with such as come—average men; but an ideal ministry would consist of picked men, the strongest, and fairest, and ablest physically, the best of each new generation in the Church. Soldiers for the Queen's service are picked men. A man of diminutive height or physical blemish would be rejected. Why, for a nobler service, should we not have chosen men, up to the level of a higher standard still? Depend upon it, there is a sufficient *raison d'être* for the question in the Methodist Discipline, "Has he good health and a sound constitution?" The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ contemplates the redemption of body and soul from sin. Sin has attacked our physical nature as really as our moral. Disease, decrepitude, and blemishes of a thousand forms, are the direct effects of sin. The body is more or less the index of the character. The soul is constantly seeking to express itself through the body which it inhabits. A good man ought to look like a good man, and a bad man ought to look like a bad man. That is the tendency, and in course of time the tendency will surely show itself. The soul will appear in, and stamp itself upon, every feature of the face and every member of the body. It flashes from the eye, and shows itself in the foot and on the hand. Napoleon was decided in the

selection of his generals by the shape of the nose. The London detective will see the pickpocket in the shape of his finger. The character of the minister of the gospel should give some outward and bodily sign. The true conception of the ministry is that it seeks as its end a blameless manhood, and to build up such excellence in the kingdom of God; and where that is the end, should we not have in those who seek it and work for it, men as near to the ideal of human completeness as it is possible to be? A fine, commanding personal presence is, in itself, a power, in the pulpit as well as on the battle-field. Admitting that no one by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature; admitting God's sovereign right to call to this ambassadorship, if He pleases, the man whose "bodily presence is weak," because there is in him a towering intellect or glowing zeal; admitting that the best intellect and the most fervent piety are often found within the diminutive physical frame; yet it remains a fact that imposing physical manhood, employed in the service of God, is an element of great power. We cannot, of course, demand that our candidates for the ministry shall all be six feet four, but we should not have many four feet six. We cannot require that they all shall be noticeably good-looking at the beginning, but they will grow better-looking in process of time, for, depend upon it, that temperance, purity, piety and intellectual industry will clothe the Ambassador for Christ with an attractiveness of person that will be a perpetual advantage to him in his ministry. The man

who vegetates rather than lives cannot have a manly appearance. He who never worked, thought, or suffered, cannot be fine-looking. You must have the mind chiselling away at the features if you want handsome middle-aged men. A handsome man, to begin with, who does nothing but eat and drink, grows flabby, but the hard thinker has an admirable sculptor at work keeping his fine lines in repair and constantly going over his face to improve the original design. Gross and florid, to a proverb, is the appearance of a certain denomination of priests as they advance in years: in their youth they were evidently chosen, in part at least, on the ground of personal comeliness.

But besides the advantage in this respect of a good physique, there is at least another. The minister requires sound health for his *work's sake*, and for his own comfort and success in his work. What a pity it is that so many of us are less or more broken and unstrung! In one sense it is no marvel, for nothing tries health like severe study. No other work makes larger drafts on nervous force, on all the vital forces, than the kind of work a true minister must daily do. The physical strain undergone by many ministers in preparing and preaching sermons is amazing. Men who know what literary work is, have often said that one sermon a week is all that can be reasonably expected. He who thoroughly prepares two sermons a week, and then on Sunday preaches those sermons and performs the other services that are connected with public worship, does all that the strongest constitution

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can long endure. When it is undertaken to add to this work universal pastoral visitation, attendance at the sick-bed side and at funerals of persons in many instances outside his own congregation, participating in, and speaking at, all sorts of meetings during the week, besides the care of personal and family affairs, a case of cruelty is established a great many times worse than any that engages the sympathies and demands the interference of the humane. A man of feeble constitution, whose lamp of life is flickering to extinction, presents evidence, in that fact, of not being called to the ministry. The man who begins his ministry with good health is bound by numerous and most solemn considerations to care for his body even as for his soul.

As a second qualification, it is desirable that the Ambassador for Christ be *intellectually strong*. No sovereign would select for ambassador to the court of a contemporary ruler, or to the inhabitants of a revolted province, a man who was weak in intellect. Ministers of the gospel are not chosen from among the weak-minded. *Ex ligno Mercurius non fit*. True, many of them are not superior to the majority of men in this respect. If only the talented and the great could be employed as heralds of the Cross most of us might despair of being of any service. But it is not always by the mighty or the noble that God works. It is one encouraging feature in the Divine economy that some of the greatest lights in the Church were kindled at the torches of very obscure individuals.

Saul was led to salvation by Ananias, who never would have been known to our age had he not been chosen to open Saul's eyes. The great Thomas Chalmers was taught in the crisis hour of his history by a minister who was scarcely known beyond his parish. Spurgeon found the way of salvation in a humble chapel of the Primitive Methodists, through the word of an unknown man. Did you ever hear of Thomas Barber? Probably not. His name is written in pale ink on the world's scroll, yet he was the means of the conversion of Dr. Adam Clarke. Did you ever hear of Robert Burnard? Probably not; yet he laid hold of a drunken mason's son, a deaf pauper, in an English work-house, and helped and encouraged him till he stood before the world as Dr. John Kitto. These men may not have been talented men in the common acceptance of the phrase, but they must have been wise men—wise to win souls. Earthly sovereigns select their envoys oftentimes, not on the ground of brilliant abilities so much as because of a certain indefinable aptness of judgment which is known as common sense, and which discovers itself in honorable and successful diplomacy. Many an otherwise able and acceptable minister has been marred by deficiency of common sense. This greatest, and perhaps rarest, of the talents is indispensable. A venerable Professor of Theology was accustomed to say to the young aspirant to the ministry, "If it is learning you want, I will do my best to supply it; if it is the grace of God you want, He will give that; but if it is common sense you

want, you may go home ; you can never acquire that ; you will never make a minister."

In the ministry there is demand, and scope also, for the most commanding talents. There are here the hardest problems for the reason in grappling with the great verities of our religion ; the broadest fields for the employment of the imagination, in illustrating and elucidating Divine truth ; a demand for the quickest and most accurate perceptions in dealing with so many specimens, wonderful in the variety of their idiosyncracies, of the *genus homo* ; and the best sphere for the exercise of the Divine gift of speech in addressing, on such important topics, so many assemblies of fellow-men. No young man needs go into any other profession in order to find a fitting sphere for the exercise of his gifts. A secular paper of high standing and influence has recently said, " Good preaching ability and good level-headed men, who understand what is needed by our congregations of to-day, are so highly estimated by the public, that the clergyman who answers the description is more certain of making his mark in the ministerial profession than in any other." Now, after some reflection, and comparison with the opportunities afforded by other professions, I believe that remark to be very near the truth. The same amount of talent, of good sense, of special qualification, of industry, of self-denial (aye, there's the rub), necessary to success in law, medicine, or commerce, will give greater relative success in the ministry than in any other line of life.

Again, it is most important that the Ambassador for

Christ, converted, called and naturally gifted though he may be, should also be possessed of the highest general and special *culture* the day can afford. The message which he is sent to deliver will largely explain and speak for itself, yet, to all persons in some things, and to some persons in all things, it will require to be explained and enforced. If the herald of mercy be a truly converted man, living a Christian life characterized by a lively growth, he will have an experience of divine things which will enable him to describe effectively the nature of the work of God in the soul, and how it manifests itself in the heart of a man ; and with a glowing experience, without systematic education, theological or other, he may be very useful and lead many souls out of darkness into light. Indeed, any ministry, however learned, must be vitally defective and miserably inefficient that does not throw upon the problems of Christian life the light emanating directly from the minister's own experience. But, be it remembered, the minister's message is not a relation of experience merely. It is not a testimony on one point only, but many. The Christian minister who is able to stand up before congregations of sinful, perishing men and declare unequivocally only this :—"The Lord has converted *my* soul, and he is able and willing to convert yours," makes a most momentous announcement ; but he ought to be able to say more than that. To say only that, the Holy Spirit must needs impart to the youthful prophet a something which man cannot impart—a new nature, an experimental knowledge of un-

seen verities, a hearing ear, a spiritual vision, a certain divine faculty; but the divine gift, like the talents in parable, can be increased. It can be brought into contact with, and co-ordinated unto, the fullest knowledge, the clearest insight, the richest, ripest culture within our reach to-day. And so I think it should be. Some men have a great dread of graceless learning and graceless intellect in ministers. They are supposed to foster pride and all earthly-mindedness. A deputation from the Quarterly Meeting of a city station, only a few years ago, waited upon me as Chairman of the District to confer with regard to the next appointment. Among other *disiderata* they placed this—that the next minister should *not* be a graduate of a University! I also have a dread of unsanctified learning in the ministry, but I have an equal dread, to say the least, of unsanctified ignorance. I had a sufficient acquaintance with that deputation to know that a little more intelligence on their part, even without any additional sanctification, would have been an advantage to them, as well as to the church they represented. I do not know any possible gain to minister or member in being ignorant. I would be utterly at a loss as to where to draw the line beyond which education might be regarded as a detriment to a minister. Those official members just mentioned would have drawn it very near the alphabet. But ignorance is not a power, nor does God's especial blessing rest upon it for the conversion of sinners or the edification of saints. It is no security against pride and vain glory, but the

foster-mother of these and many other evils. It is no help to spirituality of mind either in minister or member. The spirituality that will not stand the daylight of culture is not a kind to be coveted.

But the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ includes not only a wonderful *catena* of internal experiences, but another, equally wonderful, of external facts. In each of these facts there is a meaning; something of the mind of God is embodied in each, and it is the duty of the Christian minister to unfold the Divine ideas couched in these facts. The life of Christ, for instance, was not a mere living. The death of Christ was not a mere dying. They were, when combined, an atonement, a propitiation for sins, a ransom for souls. God is now propitiated towards sinful men, and they may be rescued from the punishment and practice of their sins. 'Tis a wonder upon a wonder, wonders on wonders, a whole pyramid of wonders. It needs line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, to explain it. But the Christian minister is not left either to his own experience or to his unassisted speculations in his task of explaining the wondrous facts of Christ's life and death. We have a book called the Bible—a book about Christ. It gives many wondrous explanations of the significant facts of the history of Christ. But the explanations are in Greek and Hebrew, and therefore, to people whose mother tongue is neither Greek nor Hebrew, they are explanations that need exposition—careful, critical, cautious, competent exposition. And "who is

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sufficient for these things ?” None, perhaps, altogether. But assuredly not those who are altogether ignorant of Greek and Hebrew. It is, therefore, his business to make himself a student of the Word of God, as God gave it, in its divers languages, and to search the original Scriptures, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, so that Christianity as a doctrine may be transfused and transformed into Christianity as a life, through being “rightly divided,” correctly expounded, and clearly commended to every man’s intelligence and conscience.

But the doctrine of Christianity has been often, and still is often, assailed by unbelieving men, and sometimes most cunningly and ingeniously assailed. It has been assailed on grounds of mental, and on grounds of material, philosophy. What then ? It must needs be defended. God has laid the task of its defence, as an obligation, on His Ambassador. In order that he may be, in an honorable though humble sense, a “defender of the faith,” it is well that he be not only a sincere herald of the gospel facts, and a sound expositor of the law and the testimony, but also a well-practiced scholar and thinker, armed from head to foot with as much of the defensive armor of knowledge as possible. The whole range of science, literature, and art can be made to contribute more or less to the defence of the gospel. Infidelity has sometimes sought to entrench itself in a refuge of philosophic lies. It may be met and vanquished on fields of its own choosing. Over and above all theological attain-

ments, a minister's acquisitions in science, history, and all general literature should be limited, not by narrow and unworthy conceptions of their uselessness to him, but only by his opportunities and abilities to acquire. The notion that the ministerial office is an exceptional one, to which cultivation, instead of being indispensable, is a decided disadvantage, should be exploded to the stars. The minister of the gospel is a *Pastor*, or *Shepherd*; but if he has not qualified himself to distinguish between noxious herbage and wholesome pasture, between sweet waters and bitter, how can he lead and "feed the flock with knowledge and understanding?" He is a *Teacher*; but how can he instruct others in a system of truths which he has never regularly studied, or drawn from their source in the sacred languages, by the aid of, at least, intelligent exegesis? He is a *Steward* of the manifold mysteries of the oracles of God; but how can he be faithful, as a steward is expected and required to be, if, from unacquaintance with the original tongues, he be unable to penetrate the mere envelopment in which these mysteries are enfolded? He is a public *Guide*, to distinguish between things that differ, settle cases of conscience, reclaim the wanderer from devious paths, and keep him straight on the way; but if he has not subjected himself to thorough training on these, the largest and loftiest themes that can engage the intellect of man, what can be expected of the blind leading the blind, but that both should stumble on the dark mountains, or sink in the mire together? He is a *Witness*

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to the truth, and the pulpit is analogous to the witness-
 box, where people are sworn in a court of justice to
 speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 the truth;" but how can he meet this solemn obligation,
 if, by pertinacious ignorance, he has incapacitated
 himself for discriminating with critical accuracy be-
 tween truth and error? He is a *Soldier* of Jesus
 Christ, and as such is bound to equip himself in the
 whole armor of God, and do battle for the faith as
 "one who is set for the defence of the gospel;" but
 what figure is the ultroneous, self-taught champion
 likely to cut in an encounter with the learned and
 scientific infidelity of the day, when not a few of the
 most learned men of the most learned nations, of this
 the most learned age, are subjecting everything to the
 ordeal of the most sifting scrutiny, and striking at the
 foundations of all religion, natural and revealed?

I will not be misunderstood as pleading for a minist-
 try of bookish men—mere scholars. All attainments
 must be secondary and helpful to ambassadorship.
 Whatever else a minister may be, or may not be, he
must be a good expositor of *the Book*. The battle is
 lost or won according to the use he is able to make of
 it. One lesson taught by the history of the Church is
 that the want or deficiency of faithful exposition is
 almost as disastrous as would be a mutilated Bible.

With regard to Biblical studies proper, the first
 thing, of course, is *Interpretation*. Put even an Eng-
 lish Bible into a plain man's hands, and if he is a man
 of God, however unlettered and undisciplined other-

wise, he wields an instrument of incalculable power, and no one can tell what spiritual conquests he may achieve therewith. The man's own resources may be narrow, but the Book in his hands is the biggest, the grandest, the mightiest, the most human, and at the same time the most Divine, in the whole world. If there is but little in the man there is plenty in the Book, and if he will only let it speak for itself, no one need wonder at anything that may follow; more especially if he not only has the Book in his hands as a book to use, but if, also, it has moulded and fashioned and new-made himself as a man. The Christian ministry of to-day, as truly as that of St. Paul, is designed to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. For such a ministry mere scholars, armed with grammar and lexicon, will not do; nor mere declaimers, who do not know the difference between boisterousness and earnestness; nor phrase-mongers and orators, who have been taught a little elocution and a little rhetoric, and a few tricks of phrase and gesture, and know how to delight an audience; nor imitation priests, who trust in white neckties and faultless black; nor spiritualizers, who put their own fancies into the Bible and see what is not there—none of these will do. The men required are men of God—men with brain and heart and conscience, to whom nothing human is alien, who can deal with questions of the soul in the light of personal experience, to whom the Gospel has already proved itself divine; men who

belong consciously to God, who know His love, are ruled by His will, who did not enter into the sacred office for a bit of bread, or as a profession in which they might distinguish themselves, or for any other selfish purpose, but purely because the Lord called them and sent them as Ambassadors for Himself to treat with rebel men for their salvation and God's glory.

So let me urge you to seek and secure the best education within your reach. Do not be in a hurry to end your preparatory studies. Every year given to these will enrich all the years that follow, and make your ministry more potent and fruitful. It is one of the great questions for the Church of the present time to consider, how she can secure for her ministers the widest and most thorough preparation. She spends wisely and to profit if she is generous in this, and she withholds unwisely if she is niggardly, for most truly here, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. xi. 24.) A generous Church will provide a generous culture and in that way secure an efficiency for its ministry which will reward it a thousand-fold.

But recurring to the phrase "the man behind the sermon," I am reminded of other things that must not be overlooked in the enumeration of the elements of manly ministerial character. Manhood, whether among ministers or others, means a good many things, and, not less important than any, it means to be *true*—

genuinely, thoroughly, always true. But it may be asked in surprise, "Is not that secured in a genuine conversion? If a man has been converted and called of God to the ministry, may we expect to find him anything else than true?" I do not hesitate to reply that a man may be a Christian by a true conversion, and a minister by the call of God, and yet may have many things about him that are exceedingly disagreeable, and depressing to the whole tone of his manliness, sad blemishes on his character, and great hindrances to his success. The ranks of prophets and priests in Old Testament times, of apostles and bishops in New Testament times, and of ministers and preachers in modern times, furnish too many illustrations of what I say. The grace of God, like some of our most beautiful and delicious fruits, grows on trees that are full of thorns and spines. I have known ministers to be more or less conceited, selfish, hot-tempered, impatient, arbitrary, tyrannical, frivolous, covetous, vulgar, indolent. This chapter of enumerations might be greatly extended. I do not mean to intimate that I have known any one character in the ministry exhibiting all these unsightly and damaging protuberances, but can we ignore facts that very painfully, and far too frequently, present themselves to our observation? And is there not sufficient reason for speaking of these things in the fact that, while they thrust themselves upon the observation of others, they are the very things that escape the notice of the unfortunate subject of them?

So then I am right in emphasizing the demand that the minister be true—not truthful merely; for if the grace of God has not saved a man from lies, it has not done much for him. But I mean not only *verax*, but *verus*—not truthful only, but true. The age in which we live, as I read it, is intensely practical, impatient of formalism, intolerant of shams and shows, very desirous of finding reality and truth. The merely official and conventional is passing away, and rich, spiritual, powerful manhood is becoming the one test of ministerial efficiency and sufficiency. Our ministry must, more than ever, stand upon our manhood, and our manhood be the exemplification and enforcement of our ministry. It must be less and less professional merely. The pulpit would be a great gainer in moral power if it were less hedged about by this and that sacred fashion. Let it be so sacred, of course, that there, if anywhere on earth, the people who look to it may find transparent sincerity and absolute personal truthfulness. The world looks to ministers outside the pulpit to know what they mean inside. And we know which, in the end, has the more power—practice, or precept. Suppose I preach about sacrifice, and yet am self-indulgent; about humility and brotherliness, and yet am proud and selfish; against worldliness and greed, and yet am grasping after wealth; against resentment and revenge, and yet am hard and bitter and unforgiving; where is the power, or the good, of my preaching? Chaucer says of his good pastor:—

“The love of Christ, and His Apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he followed it himselfe.”

And Dryden says of Bishop Ken, who had the fame of being the best prelate of his time:—

“His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
A living servant of the truth he taught.”

Even Voltaire, when he came to England last century, and heard Fletcher of Madeley, said, “This is the true likeness of the life and character of Jesus Christ.” The best power of the pulpit is not eloquence, but goodness. He who would be a true and powerful minister must therefore be a true man. What he wants others to be he must first of all be himself. His ministry must be built up on truth—truth that has its full embodiment and fair illustration in himself.

“Thou must thyself be true,
If thou the truth would teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul would'st reach;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.”

The truth of which I now speak includes many separate, though related, qualities—sincerity, honor, fairness, candor, independence, and many others.

The true man is *sincere*—always thoroughly himself; every one knows it, and feels it. He never dramatizes. He never acts a part. He puts on no airs. He is not wise in his own conceit. He has, at the foundation of his character, a transparent and truth-loving nature. He has virtues, but he is not evidently solicitous to exhibit them. He has not the merchant's

policy and skill in arranging all the newest, most fashionable, most attractive goods in the shop windows and about the doors, where they can be easily seen, and the unseasonable, shop-worn, damaged goods out of sight, or in the half-lights at the back part of the shop. If he makes mistakes he can admit it; he does not try to exalt them, when made, into virtues. He *can* confess weakness and error. Always his inner self, with its struggles and failures, comes to the surface. All who see him and hear him know that they have no failures and struggles that are not matched by similar experiences in the breast of their pastor and teacher; and in that knowledge they have an unshakable basis for confidence in him, and for increased devotion to the ideals towards which he so supremely strives. He makes, everywhere, the distinct impression that he believes all that he preaches, that he loves the souls of others, that he is ready to sacrifice his own ease and profit for their salvation, that he never studies mere effect, without considerations of Christian principle. It is not necessary to a minister's spiritual power that his audience themselves believe all that is spoken, but that they perceive that he does. The poet Burns was once asked why he turned his back on the Established Church, and went to hear a Seceder. His answer was, "I go to hear Mr. Inglis because what he believes he preaches, and what he preaches he practises." The worldly and unbelieving poet could feel the intense reality of the man in speaking and living, so mightily, the truth which he proclaimed. It is agreed that the

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great strength of Thomas Chalmers lay in his reality and earnestness. How significant was the testimony of the simple Scotch woman to the power of McCheyne's preaching, "He preaches as if all were as real as life and death, and as if he himself were dying a'most to have you converted." Let the minister of to-day have the same sincerity, and his words will not lack power with his people. They will be more accessible to the truth, and will receive it with additional respect, coming through such a channel, as light passes most readily, and with the least loss, through a perfectly transparent medium. They will be disposed to forgive what they think to be his errors, and will readily condone, or will fail to notice, his blunders. Mental or moral posturing, on the other hand, hath never forgiveness, and is utterly destructive of spiritual power. First, last, and all the time, the love of truth must be visible, and loyalty to it must be seen to be spontaneous. Whenever one proposes, or professes, as the minister does, to live, not for himself but to devote himself exclusively to the welfare of others, a purpose so unselfish will be doubted by a selfish world, and his conduct will be closely scrutinized and tested at that point. But let him stand the test, and justify his profession, and he will be found to have acquired almost unlimited power over those who come within the range of his influence.

Another element in the character of a true man is *honor*. The Ambassador for Christ must be an honest and honorable man. *Rectus* is first cousin to *verus*.

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The minister of the gospel should be a straight man—straight up, straight down, straight out. He must be a single-hearted man, not a double-dealer in any sense; not one thing to-day in this relation and in this company, and another thing to-morrow in another relation and another company. He must reach the point at which he is aiming, not by side steps, or zigzags, or a series of indirections, but by going straight forward to his object. A true man has no crookedness about him; no shifts nor subterfuges, no policies nor contrivances. *Finesse* may succeed for a time, or may seem to do so, but eventually it breaks down. The man who builds with such material, builds wood, hay, stubble, and the day shall declare it. The man himself may be saved, but his work must be burned. It is a pitiful thing when a minister of the gospel becomes known as "adroit," "a wire-puller," "always electioneering," and whenever he proposes any measure, however good, is liable to the suspicion, begotten by past events, of having in view some ulterior object, to be revealed in due time. His influence is hopelessly gone. A ship that has been carried by tempestuous waves far up upon the beach and left there, and lies high and dry where no tide can ever come to lift her off—seams gaping, sails rotting, masts falling—is not half as pitiable an object as a minister of the gospel who, by the practice of artifices and policies, has lost the confidence of his brethren, and lies all awreck on the shore of good men's opinions.

So many, and so delicate often, are the relations of

a minister to his own people and to society at large, that it is necessary that he have a fine sense of honor in order to sustain those relations aright, and maintain the cordial respect of men generally. With this quality he will not cringe to, or fawn upon, the rich, nor despise or patronize the poor; he will not descend to those disgraceful barterings and bargainings for salary which have sometimes been known; he will lay a hand of manly control on that hasty temper which in the official meeting or in the Conference may be subjected to severe provocation; he will be tender of the reputation of his brethren; he will not make his pulpit the rostrum of the scold; he certainly will never write an anonymous letter with a sting in it; and just as certainly he will never relate an anecdote, or utter an expression, containing a dash of the vulgar or indelicate. It may be added, in this connection, that a sense of honor, not necessarily superfine, would prevent a minister, who had departed from the doctrinal standards of his Church, from demanding or expecting that the Church nevertheless lend him a pulpit, give him a standing, and pay him a salary, while he is engaged in assailing doctrines which the Church yet holds dear. A minister may change his theological opinions without loss of honor, but in that case there is but one honorable course to pursue, namely, to avow openly the change, and retire straightway from the ministry of a Church whose doctrines he is no longer able conscientiously to proclaim.

But again, regnant truth in the minister's mind will

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make him the soul of *fairness* in all his deliverances before the public. A minister should have the courage of his convictions, but he should also respect the convictions of others, and their feelings as well. Not infrequently he assumes an attitude in the pulpit that he does not assume out of it. His bearing is loftier there, his voice firmer, and he says things there that he will not say in the house or on the street, and the world accuses him of using the pulpit as a barricade. He is visibly bolder and stronger behind its protection than he is in the opener and freer encounters of daily life. It is precisely at this point that he meets some of his strongest temptations to unmanliness. It is always perilous to make great power absolute even for an hour. There is great danger to frankness and fairness in the monopoly of address which the pulpit secures to its occupant. He may, indeed sometimes does, abuse his power. Not only has he the intrenchment of his creed and a sympathetic audience inviting him to boldness—to autocracy even—but he is secure against challenge. If his opinion is to be challenged, it will be in another place, and when further and deliberate opportunity will be given for reply. A political speaker, or lawyer, must needs see a question at every angle, and cultivate fairness in debate, for he is liable to instant challenge. The minister suffers the disadvantage (as I regard it) of freedom from such challenge, and of the sacredness with which his proclamation is invested—the triple sacredness of day, place and subject-matter. Since, therefore, circumstances expose

the minister to the suspicion, at least, of unmanliness here, how jealous should he be of his manhood, how severely should he be his own guard and judge, and how vigilant should he be of his honor, his frankness, his fairness, and every attribute of manly public address. Candor in the pulpit is the pet virtue of some ministers. They pride themselves on their courage in declaring their opinions, and especially in denouncing the sins of the day; but one thing is certain, namely, that whenever they undertake to be candid, the feelings of some other person or persons are going to be wounded. Such ministers do not so much need exhortation to courage in their speech, as to qualities of fairness and honor.

It may be urged that the cause of truth sometimes demands of us severity of speech. Such occasions seldom occur—never, I believe, where the precepts of Jesus in regard to love must be set aside. The realm of unholiness will never be successfully invaded by carnal weapons. Brave words must be spoken against sin, but behind them must be the spirit of blessing those who curse, of doing good to those who hate, and of interceding for such as persecute. What a beautiful and masterly calmness does our Lord exhibit as an example to His Ambassador! He is to keep his own temper undisturbed. While his enemy is raging with insane fury, he is calmly to study by what skilful appliances of touching kindness he can transform the lion into a lamb. By doing so he obtains a victory, but that is the smallest part of the matter. He has transformed an enemy into a friend, and what is better

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an either, he has, perhaps, converted a sinner from
 the error of his ways and saved a soul from death.
 In our intercourse with men the opportunity is daily
 given to exemplify the Christian virtues of *patience*
 and *long-suffering*. There are men who, because they
 belong to the Church, seem to think that the Church
 belongs to them. There are those who, not having
 belings themselves, act as if others had none. Having
 do with such persons is sometimes exceedingly try-
 g. In such cases a hasty temper will never win.
 without patience, as a conspicuous qualification, no
 can properly fill the pastoral office. In their esti-
 mate of ministerial excellence and usefulness the
 churches seldom take into account the tasks, burdens
 and hardships that have to be endured and carried by
 pastors, whose patience must "put up with" all things
 which the ignorance, selfishness and waywardness of
 man nature may cast upon it. There may, indeed,
 times when, in the judgment of a man of God,
 ience shall cease to be a virtue, but these must be
 e indeed if he is to retain his poise of character
 show forth the spirit of his Master. He, of all
 a, can least afford to let the petty excitements of
 soul impair, even for a moment, either the clear-
 of his vision or the rectitude of his judgment.
 ough he be tried every hour, still, as a Christian
 eleman representing the gospel of grace, he will
 d to possess his soul, all the while, in patience and
 eace—if for no other reason, that he may handle
 with a skilful perception of the particular phases

of each special case. Sometimes this rare estimate of the exact "situation" may be stigmatized as shrewdness; and so it is, if the word means in this connection that "mother wit" which is more than "high philosophy" can teach.

Yet, while the minister should be patient and forbearing, as becometh the Ambassador of One who illustrated with so much magnanimity these noble qualities, he ought to have other qualities also, which must be mentioned in this connection, namely, dignity, courage, independence, and reliance upon his Lord, and in a proper way, upon himself, or upon his office.

It is not uncommon to hear it stated, sometimes in a light and flippant way, and at other times more seriously, that the minister is the *servant* of the church to which he ministers. He has, as some understand it, a position similar to that occupied by the man-of-all-work in relation to his master, or the maid-servant in the presence of her mistress. The practical outcome of this misconception is the restiveness of some spirits under such provisions of the Methodist Discipline, for instance, as that the chair of all legal meetings must be occupied by the minister; that leaders, stewards, trustees and other officers of the church shall be nominated by him; and other regulations of a like nature. They regard it as a tyranny over the church that such power should reside in his hands. All such conceptions degrade the Christian ministry, and wherever they are entertained weaken the pastor's influence and counterwork his labors. Relations which Christ

The estimate of his order must not be reversed. The Divine order must not be inverted. Christ taught his ambitious disciples, it is true, that their true greatness and glory lay in the office of ministration. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (Matt. xx. 27, 28.) But the Lord that ministered was, all the while, none the less their Lord. St. Paul understood the relation when he echoed "Our-selves your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. iv. 5.) "The servant of Jesus Christ" was the designation on which he continually insisted. Therefore, a minister is not a servant of the Church to do the will of men, but a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a servant to the Church under the authority of its Head. He has been called to the work, not to be at the bidding of any man or body of men, but to be the Church's human head and guide. He is not one of the weakest of the fold, to be treated as seemeth good in the eyes of those who think they are somewhat; but he is the under-shepherd of the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer. So much and more is implied in the names by which this class of men are designated in the Holy Scriptures. The term Ambassador includes all this. Besides this, elders, overseers, angels, master-builders, are the terms employed. Their duty is to teach, feed, edify, rule and lead. Their position is to preside over the Church, to rule over it in holy things, to minister to it in the Lord—in a word, to exercise the authority granted, and

to discharge the duties imposed by Him, in relation to those called by His name. The position of an Ambassador is, consequently, one of dignity and honor and of grave and exhaustless responsibility.

To fill such a position aright, the occupant of the pulpit must be unhampered. There must be *independence* of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. The true idea is revealed in the Word of God, as well as the true spirit. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter iv. 11.) "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." (Titus ii. 1.) "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. iv. 2.) By independence, therefore, I do not mean negation of the Divine Word. The Ambassador for Christ must not insist on reading his own happy conceptions into the meaning of the sacred message with which he is entrusted—notions so dear to the mind that conceived them, chiefly because they differ from those commonly received, and are invested with the charm, deceitful in this case, of superior wisdom and originality. Nor do I mean by independence rashness or harshness—the becoming so exceedingly angular that persons of keen sensibility will be repelled by the utterances of the preacher. His manner and spirit should, doubtless, be inviting. Neither do I mean that he should "dare to be independent," in the sense of constantly harping upon some politico-moral question of the age, and thereby becoming disgustingly hobby-horsical. Such preaching is alike injurious to these questions of the age, and to our com-

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 the pulpit may say, or may not say, as to the spirit of the
 pulpit. When it is continually asserting its independ-
 ence, we may rest assured that it lacks the thing
 itself; it is merely an effort to galvanize a dead pulpit
 to apparent life, as a substitute for the inspiration of
 true Christian independence. While a pulpit, pos-
 sessed of this spirit, will not submit to the dictation of
 the audience as to what it shall, or shall not, utter, it
 will also avoid repeating its pretensions of independ-
 ence on every occasion. The pews should never get
 above the pulpit, and institute a reign of terror in the
 house of God, making the pulpit the mere slave of a
 worldly and wicked audience; neither should the pul-
 pit trample, with iron heel, upon the pews; it becomes
 then a monster in the house of God, and the sooner it
 is sunk beneath the foundation and out of sight, the
 better. Some pulpits boast of their independence be-
 cause they spend their time and strength on certain
 absorbing questions of the day; discuss the relations
 of capital and labor, or preach "great sermons" on the
 death of great men. A few great sermons on the death
 of Jesus Christ would indicate quite as much independ-
 ence, and would do the Church and the world vastly
 more good! An Ambassador for Christ may evince
 his manliness by the manner in which he says the
 thing which, in the circumstances, he thinks ought to
 be said, and does that which he thinks ought to be
 done; and yet shows himself solicitous, to the last de-
 gree, to avoid wounding the feelings even of a child, or

placing a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in a weak brother's way.

Again, the Ambassador for Christ should be *aspiring*—constantly “reaching forth unto those things which are before.” I do not say ambitious. The principle that works out in ambition is the corrupt form of what we call aspiration. George Macdonald says, “Ambition is the evil shadow of aspiration.” The desire to be something higher and better than we are is one of the noblest of our desires. Any man who is content to be what he is lacks manliness. Ministers that ever aspire, not only to a deeper piety and a more ardent love for souls, but also to a wider knowledge, a stronger grasp of thought, loftier conceptions of theology and evangelistic truths, a more impressive style of address, in short, everything that goes to make up the ideal of a Christian minister, stand on a far higher level than those who are too stupid to see, or too indolent to pursue, such privileges and prizes of their high calling. They should covet earnestly all good gifts and the best gifts most earnestly. No minister appreciates aright his privilege and duty who does not, in every way possible to him, seek to excel, with unceasing painstaking, to the last day of his life, in order that by the power of all-varied excellence he may serve his Lord with a constantly increasing efficiency and success.

With this in view, and this only, he should aspire to be a superior *preacher*, second to no other, “rightly dividing the word of truth;” enriching his sermons

tion to fall, in a with well-chosen illustrations from science, history,
 ould be *aspir* art, poetry; correcting his errors, from mis-statements
 o those things of doctrine and mis-interpretations of Scripture, down
 ous. The prin to awkwardnesses of manner and mis-pronunciations of
 corrupt form of words; until he has made himself eligible to the
 acdonald says highest pulpit in the Church;—a superior *pastor*, second
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 y man who is s far as a Christian may; wielding a powerful social
 erness. Minister influence through a real dignity, urbanity, and good-
 ety and a more ness; until he is recognized as worthy of the care of
 er knowledge, the most cultured congregation in the land;—a superior
 eptions of theo *counsellor*, second to no other, in the grave and diffi-
 mpressive style cult matters that occupy the attention of the confer-
 oes to make up nces and courts of the Church; mastering a know-
 on a far higher edge of the internal needs of the Church, and its exter-
 see, or too indo nal relations to other branches of Zion and to the
 es of their high world; until his brethren cannot help accounting him
 all good gifts worthy of the highest honors and responsibilities in
 minister appre their power to bestow.

But Christian ministers, in general, are in danger of
 having their aspirations degenerate into mere *ambi-*
 tions. The love of approbation, the innate desire of
 esteem, may be allowed to exercise an undue influence
 over their minds. As public men they are much
 spoken of, by a larger or smaller circle of friends, and
 it gratifies them to hear that they are *well* spoken of.
 The breath of applause is laden with delicious fra-
 grance, and it is possible for them to do things that
 are scarcely worthy of them to stir it. Conscious that

they cannot exert any very great influence for good over those to whom they minister in holy things, unless they have their esteem, they are in danger of raising *that* out of the subordinate place it ought to occupy, to the height which should be occupied by the true object of the Christian minister's aspirations. They are all in danger, more or less, of making too much of the honor that cometh from men, and too little of the honor that cometh from God only. May I say that the danger is peculiarly prominent in the Methodist Church? One cause is the Itinerancy, and another is the custom of Quarterly Meeting invitations. The itinerant is *ways* changing. In two or three years he must have another station. Why not a better? That will depend on the esteem in which he is held by his brethren, especially the lay brethren of the official meetings. Their invitations are very highly valued. There is no other item of church intelligence that finds its way so quickly into the public prints. No other news circulates so swiftly through ministerial circles. The man who has no invitation is under a cloud. No one can expect even a third-class station without an invitation. Young men observe all this, and are influenced by it. Amidst these circumstances there is an honorable, manly, Christian course which a true and faithful minister may pursue. There is also a sphere for the trickster and self-seeker.

In the Methodist Church, more than in any other, a man's *reputation* enters as a factor into his comfort and that of his family, his position, and his success.

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To be well-reported" is of the greatest importance to
 an itinerant ministry. None pass under a more fre-
 quent or more rigid review than they. Along the
 whole line, front and rear, march official inspectors,
 clerical and lay. "What is he?" is the question for
 them to determine. Every qualification and disquali-
 fication is subjected to scrutiny, and the answer to the
 question will decide every three years, or more fre-
 quently, his position among his brethren and the
 people. Sometimes the question takes another form—
 Whence is he?—for the reputation of an itinerant
 depends largely upon the place he hails from. Should
 the people of Samaria learn that it is proposed to send
 to them the preacher from Nazareth, they might revive
 the old question, "Can any good thing come out of
 Nazareth?" Place-reputation clings to a man and
 elevates or depresses him. But the church at Samaria
 has had reason, on more than one occasion, to bless
 God for the ministry of Him who came *up* from
 Nazareth. He brought *up* the reputation of the
 church at Samaria. Yet on the next occasion of
 change, they never thought of looking to Nazareth for
 another of its graduates, but, like the Jews, in the
 olden time, they prayed "looking towards Jerusalem,"
 while they asked God to send them the right man.
 When their prayers are ended and their petitions
 answered, they receive the tidings with joy, seeing
 clearly the hand of the Lord in it. On the other
 hand, their new pastor feels the disappointment of an
 aspiring mind when invited to a lower seat. He, too,

had prayed, but his face was as though he would have gone to another city. So they of Jerusalem had not thought of the good Samaritan as coming in answer to their prayers, but their new preacher thought that surely the hand of the Lord was in his lifting up. Thus, reputation sends one to a place where plenty, prosperity, and honor are his efficient helpers, where he can joyfully sing—

“ How happy is the pilgrim’s lot,
How free from every anxious thought,”

and another to a hard field, drained of all its recuperative power, where, with grace enough, he is comforted while singing—

“ I lodge awhile in tents below,
And gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.”

It is not, then, to be wondered at for a moment, seeing that mere reputation plays so important a part in a minister’s lot, that he should be subjected to the temptation to watch too anxiously the tide of popular favor, and, by flattering words well-placed, by newspaper puffs inspired by himself, by delicate detractions from the reputation of others, and similiar expedients, endeavor to place himself in the front rank in popular estimation. That such expedients are unworthy of any minister of Christ it is not necessary to say: that they have not been resorted to, with temporary success in some instances, no one, unfortunately, is able to say. Let the man of God aspire to the highest reputa-

tion ; by proper, manly means strive to reach it ; and by the help of God walk faithfully that narrow line between undue anxiety about public opinion on the one side, and unscriptural indifference to it on the other.

But if he should aspire to a good reputation, how much more to a good *character*. Here facts, rather than opinions, preponderate, gravitate to a higher centre, and reach nobler ends. While reputation goes by general estimate, character goes by weight. Character is to a minister what the base of supplies, conveniently nigh, is to an army. It is a daily support and strength, and in all needs and exigencies it is possible to fall back on that. Between this base of supplies and the field of action there should be no cast-off weapons of warfare, no wasted rations, no bottles of brandy, wine or beer, no boxes of cigars, tobacco or snuff, unless to snuff the battle coming on! The whole ground should be cleared, like the deck of a man-of-war, for action. That is to say, between the minister's life and the character behind it there should be no circumstances to excite a suspicion, or raise a question, in respect of loyalty to the cause, of courage in maintaining it, or of personal purity in one chosen to be a leader in the host of the Lord.

Safety to his character and sacred cause demands this. His loyalty must not be compromised by his appearing in society wearing any part of the enemy's uniform, or badge in which he glories. Touch not, taste not, smoke not, chew not, the accursed thing.

The influence of an Ambassador for Christ must be injured by habits that he would not recommend to others. God's ministers cannot recommend by *precept* that the young in their congregations form the habit of using stimulants and narcotics. Here is another instance in which precept and example might be, very safely and wisely, made to accord. Most good men regret the habit and wish they were free from it. No young minister in these days can take up the habit without losing the respect and sympathy of the largest proportion of all our congregations, or accepting the alternative of practising it secretly. It is utterly inconsistent with ministerial manliness to adopt any practice that he must follow "on the sly." Ministerial reputation *may* stand high, in the estimation of a few, though perfumed by these unclean things; but in the opinion of *all*, ministerial *character* goes forth fragrant with the incense of the Holy of holies.

Let it be remembered that character is fundamental. All other proper objects of desire rest naturally on that. If you are ambitious for the best stations, possibly influential personal friends among lay officials or ministerial brethren may secure you that object; if you want a large salary, a skilful manipulation of your wealthy hearers *may* result in that; if you want to be ecclesiastically influential, due attention to mere church politics may accomplish that; if you want a name as a popular preacher, certain gifts, or shifts, may suffice for that. It does not require much to make a man merely popular. A certain exterior affability and

good-heartedness ; a kind of leniency towards other people's faults ; the knack of making men happy by mirthfulness or fluent compliances ; the art of stroking men's self-love softly and in the right direction—these are quite sufficient to secure popularity with vast masses of men ; but there is no means by which you are nearly so certain of good stations, good salaries, wide-reaching influence, and the esteem of fellow-men, as by securing and maintaining, in reality and in truth, a transparently irreproachable character as ministers of Christ.

St. Paul has given us the best hint as to how this may be done. He says, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." (2 Cor. v. 9.) But what an inadequate translation ! The phrase "we labor" is far from being the equivalent of φιλοτιμεομαι. Φιλος and τιμη—the love of honor was what impelled the Apostle to his strenuous and self-denying labors. But it was that he might be "accepted," well-pleasing, rather, to his Master, who had given him his ambassage to fulfil. Take the revised version of it : "Wherefore, also, we are ambitious, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him." Such an aim carries us entirely out of the region of ordinary human ambition. That seeks some earthly good, riches, honor, power, glory. For one or other of these do ambitious men plot and scheme, strive and labor, with all the energy of their nature, and oftentimes with astonishing ingenuity and marvellous success. The minister has, or should have, a higher

aim and a better motive. Let him study efficiency for the honor of God and the salvation of souls, and he need not be anxious as to the direction of the currents of public favor. Some of them will be sure to set towards himself. The best and surest way to rise out of a humble position is to be conspicuously faithful and useful in it.

I will take time to mention one point more. The Ambassador for Christ should be a *humble* man and modest. Notwithstanding his godly ambitions, and all his exertions to realize them, the strong probability is that he will reach a position of only average eminence and usefulness. "Many are called, but few are chosen." Many are elected by the great Head of the Church to this Ambassadorship, but very few, comparatively, are chosen to occupy distinguished positions or achieve extraordinary successes. I am well aware that the young minister enters upon his career with high hopes, and with a persuasion, also, that he shall distinguish himself. His purpose certainly is to be fully consecrated to God, devoted to study, laborious in his ministry—hence a godly, well-furnished man, hence successful, hence popular, hence distinguished. I should have much more hope of the realization of all this, if there were not quite so much visible assurance of it in the aspirant himself, to begin with. Said a very observing and intelligent member of the Church to me some time since, "Can you tell me why our young ministers are all so conceited?" I knew that Christian lady well enough to know that it was not an unsympathiz-

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ing or uncharitable disposition that prompted that question. She had observed with pain what, as a matter of fact, is too frequently seen—a young man entering the pulpit and beginning a service with a certain flippancy of manner, assuming at once the voice and bearing of an orator, straining after the eloquent, managing to say—extemporaneously, of course—some very smart things all thought out beforehand, and smacking somewhat of slang; and then moving in society, especially the society of young people, evidently with very satisfactory impressions concerning his own merits, airing on occasions his own wisdom, delighted with any complimentary reference to himself, nay, even resorting to certain little devices to bring round the conversation to himself, and similar things which tempt some people to try to "take him down" in the presence of others, with a view to cure his conceit, or worse than that, to sneer at him and expose his weaknesses in his absence. A modest, unpretentious bearing—no affectation, but the legitimate offspring of a genuine humility—will do more to gain the respect, sympathy, confidence and affection of the people, than any possible amount of flashy smartness and juvenile oratory.

If I could persuade myself to offer to any young man a word of advice on this point, I would say, cultivate self-forgetfulness and unfeigned modesty. Think as little as possible about any good in yourself; turn your eyes resolutely from any view of *your* acquirements, your influence, your successes—above

all, speak as little as possible about yourself. The inordinateness of our self-love makes speech about ourselves like the putting of a lighted match to the dry wood that has been laid in order for burning. Nothing but duty should open our lips on this dangerous theme, except it be in humble confession of our faults before God and men. Be especially on the watch against those little tricks by which the vain man seeks to bring round the conversation to himself, and gain the praise or notice which his thirsty ears drink in so greedily. Even if praise comes unsought, it is well while men are uttering it to guard yourself by thinking unto what these pleasant accents would be changed if all that is known to God, and even to yourself, stood revealed to men. Place yourself often beneath the cross of Calvary, and ask yourself, as you gaze fixedly on that, whether one whose only hope is in that cross of absolute self-sacrifice and self-abasement, can dare to cherish in himself one self-complacent emotion.

The great majority of ministers, however faithful, will spend their lives in positions but slightly removed from mediocrity. But, for my own part, there is no class of men for whom I have so much respect and affection as for average ministers of the gospel. They are not sustained in their labors by popular applause and newspaper puffs, but by love for Christ and the souls of men. They are patient, persevering, self-denying. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. They do not estimate themselves at so many

thousands a year, but are willing to work, even though poorly paid and not highly esteemed of men, knowing that their reward is in heaven. They lay foundations for others to build upon. It is the average ministers who have extended the Church over this broad continent, and established missionary stations around the world. Let us honor them as God does; and if we ourselves are but average ministers in the estimation of the world, let us rejoice that God has counted us worthy of a place anywhere in this ministry; for to be His Ambassador, even in some frontier settlement, is nobler than to wear the crown of an emperor.

Then, young brethren, let your ministry be one of complete consecration, taking the best you can be, and the noblest you can do, and laying all a sacrifice and offering at the feet of your Lord. Whether in some obscure place among a rude population, or in some great city among its magnificent churches and cultured congregations, you proclaim the words of life, the labors and responsibilities, the motives and the recompense, are the same. Be faithful over the few things committed to you, and the reward promised is to be ruler over many things. All the inequalities of earthly circumstances will be adjusted by the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant, . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 22.)

"Then let us scorn the praise of men,
And love to lose with God;
For Jesus won the world through shame,
And beckons us His road.

“ For right is right since God is God,
And right the day must win ;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.”

Now, my young brethren, I shall pursue this branch of the subject no farther. There are other elements of noble manhood to which I might refer ; but some of them have been already treated of by those brethren who have occupied this platform before me ; and besides, I have said enough, perhaps, to accomplish the end I had in view, namely, to induce you to consider very seriously, each one of you on his own behalf, how you may make *men* of yourselves—what can be done to produce and develop, more and more, that style of manly completeness which God can employ most effectually for the promotion of His gracious purposes among the children of men.

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The Ambassador for Christ.

LECTURE II.—HIS MESSAGE.

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Christ in you the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.—*Paul*.

Well might the angels court eclipse
Of all heaven's brightness for a space,
In barter for those witness-lips
Which burn with news of gospel-grace !

—*Punshon*.

I *could* write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. B—; but I dare not. What is the praise of man to me, that am stepping into the land whence I shall not return. I dare no more write in a fine style that wear a fine coat. I purposely decline, what many admire, a highly ornamented style.—*Wesley*.

Such language as his I may never recall,
But his theme was salvation, salvation for all :
And the souls of a thousand in ecstasy hung
On the manna-like sweetness that fell from his tongue.
Not alone on the ear his wild eloquence stole,
Enforced by each gesture it sank to the soul,
Till it seemed that an angel had brightened the sod
And brought to each bosom a Message from God.

—*Mrs. Welby*

LECTURE II.—HIS MESSAGE.

An Ambassador implies a Message. Furthermore, I think that no one can read the Scriptures—the New Testament Scriptures especially—without perceiving that to make known the Message of God *viva voce* is the primary duty of ministers of the gospel. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” saith the Master. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,” saith the Apostle. The mission of the Ambassador, in the case we are considering, and the nature of his Message are clearly set forth in St. Paul’s words, “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” It is a Message of reconciliation. In its wholeness it has a length and breadth which many lectures could not compass. In one I can touch only the fringe of its greatness.

The very first thought that presents itself as we touch the threshold of the subject is, that men are rebels. That announcement is the first note of the Message. “What shall I preach about?” was the question proposed by a young minister to an aged friend. “‘All men are sinners’—start there,” was the reply. The minister stands before a guilty world in

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the stead of Christ, to expound and enforce the need of salvation, and the terms on which it is offered. The fact of sin, and its effective cure, are the two elemental truths of this Message. Man is lost, yet is redeemed. These truths need not always be stated in the same form; circumstances may demand the discussion of collateral themes; but never is any subject to be treated in the pulpit so as to depreciate scriptural teachings concerning sin and salvation. They are as necessary now as in any former age, even the rudest and most ignorant.

Discoursing on religion has been an incident of all schools of belief besides Christianity, either by some appointment or as an instinct of religion itself. All those other systems of religion have had their propagandists. Such propagandism represented simply the force of the individual convictions of some great teacher, and of those whom he could array under his banner, respecting the truth of some propositions and the falsity of others. It had no higher impulse than that. One result of this was that, generally, teachers of religion were a clique, were confined to one class of persons, and became a sort of caste, exclusive, proud, sometimes tyrannical and cruel, and oftentimes in bitter antagonism to other classes. The learned left the illiterate uninstructed. By reason of these circumstances all merely human systems of religion were disabled for rapid progress by dissemination. No one of them had the elements of a universal religion by an adaptation of teachers suited to all classes. This de-

fect has halted all heathen beliefs, confining them chiefly to the regions where they were first developed, and has been the indirect cause of the multitudinous religions of the world, breaking up or subdividing the forces of error instead of allowing them to consolidate, and so to become influential and formidable. The imposture of Mohammedanism, for instance, was subject to this condition of a restricted instrumentality, and, but for the substitution of force, would have been completely circumscribed by its limitations. The instrumentality substituted, however, has proved its own defeat. The forces of Mohammedanism now stand powerless before the armies of Christendom, and the crescent has long been a waning, and not a waxing, moon. Unlike all merely human systems of religion, Christianity has not only universal truth, in relation to the needs of mankind, but an instrumentality for the dissemination of that truth, baptized with the spirit of universal love and sympathy, and, being selected from all ranks and classes, is thus adapted to meet the varied conditions, tastes, and even weaknesses of mankind. Such an instrumentality is the preaching of the gospel.

This provision, so necessary to a religion designed to universalize itself, is not the mere outgrowth of the system itself, but is a Divine appointment by which the good news is to be preached to every creature. The first duty of the Ambassador for Christ is to preach—not to celebrate masses, nor to administer sacraments, nor even to offer prayers, but to preach.

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.) The progress of Christianity has always been in proportion to the faithfulness with which the commission to go and preach has been fulfilled. There is a Divine philosophy in this method of saving men. Any method that minifies the sermon, or thrusts it into a corner, and exalts above it any other instrumentality of the Church, however excellent and useful in its place, must be a mistake, and its fruits must be after its kind.

Yet there are some in these days who say that the age of preaching is past, and that the time of education, literature, and the press has come. It was all very well, they affirm, to preach in the days when books were few and dear, and printing unknown or comparatively unused; but now, when the agencies for the promotion of science, literature, and religion are multiplied, the pulpit has lost its power, and preaching its place. Do not for one single moment give ear to such unphilosophical and unsupported statements. Jesus Christ understood this age, and all ages, when he commanded His disciples to go and preach the words of eternal life "to the end of the world." He knew the race, and the wants and conditions of every individual soul. His wisdom is displayed in adopting the very means which can never become obsolete, or lose their power, so long as sin, sorrow, and death remain in the world.

From some quarters no cry has been more frequent than that "the pulpit has lost its power;" and in books,

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magazines, and newspapers, ministers are urged to consider their position, and do a multiplicity of things to "bring the pulpit into harmony," as the phrase is, with "the spirit of the age." No one will contend that the pulpit is all it ought to be. Yet it may be worth while to ask, whence comes this continual complaint against the pulpit? Who are those who would inform us, through the channels specified, what the pulpit should be, and how the ideal is to be realized? The judgment which, in no uncharitableness but in sad truth, must be passed on many of the complaints against the pulpit is, "The wish is father to the thought." The real trouble to many who rail at the weaknesses of the pulpit is that it has too much power. They wish it were effete, as they say it is; and desire for the greater influence of the pulpit is, in many instances, simulated by those who are the sworn foes of the religion of Christ, that they may more effectually hurt the friends of truth, and help to destroy the restraints which religion imposes on social and public life. We may learn lessons of wisdom from a foe, should he speak wisely, but it would be a blunder of the hugest kind were ministers, and others, to pay indiscriminate regard to men who, could their wishes be realized, would either sweep the pulpit from the land, or, partly from ignorance and partly from hostility, would rob it of its real power, and denude it of its true glory.

But what is it that the foes and mistaken friends of the pulpit would have it to be? In the familiar story the farmers agreed to a unit in condemning the

weather they had, but utterly disagreed as to what sort of weather their pastor should pray for. So preachers of the Gospel might readily agree to do their utmost to bring the pulpit into harmony with the age, so soon as their critics were agreed as to the changes to be made. To try to please all would be to please none, and, at the same time, to lose from the pulpit all that is worth having in it. If objectors agree in anything it is that there should be a little less religion in the pulpit, and a little more of something else, but opinions as to what that something else should be would be as diverse as the men that uttered them. One thing is certain—the men of our day have not outgrown the need of hearing of their sinfulness and of God's atoning sacrifice for sin. These must be the staple of all pulpit discourses. The Ambassador is not at liberty to alter his Message. He is the minister of Christ, and so long as he is so, Christ, and not philosophy, science, or politics, must be the burden of his preaching.

But, more particularly, what is the subject of the Message of the Ambassador for Christ? What must he preach? I take it that, in proportion as we follow the Apostolic example in stating and applying truth, our preaching will be what it ought to be in substance, and will be adapted to this day and all other days of human sin and want. Take the preaching of St. Paul, for instance. What did he preach? Paul himself answers the question: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him

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crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) He preached "the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. iii. 8.) "Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel." (1 Cor. i. 17.) Here is definiteness of conviction, at least. The man knows his business, and his mind is set upon it without doubtfulness or distraction. He does not preach *about* the Gospel. He does not show how skilfully he can abstain from touching it even when it seems impossible for him to escape doing so. Contrariwise, he preached the gospel itself with fulness of statement, and with an extreme desire to make it understood and felt. To Paul, Jesus Christ was Himself the gospel. The man was the doctrine and the doctrine was the man. His preaching was quickened by those elements which set the personality of Christ at the head of all life, and make that personality the complement of all being. The substance of Paul's preaching was a living, dying, triumphing, almighty and unchangeable Saviour. Just such a Lord and Saviour is needed in this day, when men are mad in wickedness, and the world, the flesh, and even the devil, seem to be the objects of their worship.

But what is meant by preaching CHRIST CRUCIFIED? Is that a hackneyed expression conveying no definite meaning? Why preach Christ crucified? Because, first, for ruined man the *dying* Christ is the Redeemer—the *only* Redeemer. The worst of mankind and the best of womankind, alike, would be, by reason of sin, utterly without hope of salvation but for the atoning interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why preach

Christ crucified? Because, secondly, the *obedient, undefiled* Christ has given us the only example of perfect, or normal, human life. The most sincere in heart and determined in purpose would be completely in the dark as to how to live for God, but for the bright pattern the Christ has afforded. Why preach Christ crucified? Because, thirdly, *the living, pleading* Christ is the only channel through which grace to help in time of need can flow down into the soul of man. Why preach Christ crucified? Because, fourthly, He is *God manifest* in the flesh. What rebel man needs to know is, how the offended God stands related to him and feels toward him. The precise truth on these points is revealed in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the comprehensible form of God. He is God translated out of conditions in which we cannot understand Him, into conditions in which we can understand Him. A sentiment expressed in an unknown language conveys no thought to the mind; translated into a familiar tongue it instantly lights up the soul with a meaning. God, in the vastness and brightness of a pure spiritual being, is quite beyond our ken. We have no mental fingers with which to grasp Him. But "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John i. 18.) We can understand God only by understanding Jesus. We can explain and vindicate the ways of God to men only by preaching Jesus. I believe that inadequate views of Jesus lie at the root of all heresies and heterodoxies in the Church, and of

all short-comings and failures in our personal ministry. We can get closest to men, and take them closest to God, and teach them best about God, when we speak to them about Christ. It is God in Christ that we all understand best. The greatest and most useful servants of God have found the same thing. There never was an abler minister than St. Paul. His determination to know nothing among men but Christ crucified I have already quoted. It was only when Luther found Jesus in the old Bible that he found life for himself and his people there. We are told that each of his letters at the top bore the great name "Jesus." So did his sermons. Christ was at the head and in the heart of them all. We all know the confession of Dr. Chalmers, that for twelve years he diligently preached morality, and that these were fruitless years; and how, in the end, he found that to preach Christ was the only effective way of preaching morality.

My young brethren, this should be the *beau ideal* of your own preaching. For this, bend yourselves to study; for this, in due time, assume the solemn vows of ordination; for this, submitting to any troubles, making any sacrifices, be instant in season and out of season, to the end of your life. So soon as you lose interest in that theme, and determine that something else shall be the burden of your preaching, you cease to be ministers of Christ. Ministers of science, of philosophy, of politics, of a church, or of a denomination, you may be, but not ministers of Christ. Hence,

to His service dedicate yourselves, and let your continual resolve be to preach Christ, none but Christ—

Till your poor lisping, stammering tongues
Lie silent in the grave.

But would not this involve *sameness* in preaching? Yes; sameness of theme, but certainly not sameness of treatment. Though the theme be one, the possibilities of treatment are infinitely varied. The preacher need not, therefore, be "monotonous" or "stale" in preaching. The saving truth of God touches human life on every side and the individual in every single relation, and is adapted to all the needs of all men. If he will apply the truth as it is in Jesus to the endless variety of character coming under his notice, and to the ever-changing conditions of his congregations, the preacher cannot be monotonous. In illustrating that truth, he may roam through earth and heaven, question the rocks and interpret the music of the seas, flit from star to star and from planet to planet, ransack the archives of history and wander through all the chambers of imagery. Things visible and invisible may be laid under tribute to Jesus, that His glory may be fitly expressed. History and philosophy, criticism and science, poetry and rhetoric, may all be largely employed so long as they be made tributary to the preaching of the Cross. If the first place be accorded to them, the preacher is guilty of disloyalty to his Sovereign Lord, and of degrading his office. Christ must be first, and especially Christ as crucified for the

sins of men. Save, however, that Christ shall be first, there is no limit imposed on the preacher that would prevent variety and freshness. Sameness of preaching proceeds either from incompetency in the preacher, or from a misconception of his duty, or from both combined. Every way the fault is in himself and not in his theme. And the preacher guilty of sameness might, with advantage to himself and his people, study the opulence and depth of thought, the variety of illustration, and the methods of applying the truth to the manifold relations and circumstances of men, which are found in those discourses which have been prescribed for us in the Book Divine.

Beware, my young brethren, of being influenced, in any degree, by the demand put forth by some in these days when they hear the gospel preached: "Tell us something new." There are persons now, like the Athenians of old, who have itching ears, and but little desire for the truth either new or old. One of the most unwise things a preacher of the gospel can do, is to seek to meet a demand of this kind. Novelties in the pulpit are generally a mark for ridicule. Observe those preachers, for there are such to be seen now and then, who aim at supplying their congregations with a repast of new things. Like the shallow brook, they make a noise to make up for their lack of depth, and deal with the new to make people believe that they have outgrown, and risen above, the old. It has been truly said by a wise man that there is nothing new under the sun, and the most glorious things in ex-

istence are the oldest things. The gospel is now old, and yet it is new. It must be reiterated again and again—the same precious old theme—but with ever-varying beauty and riches of illustration, drawn from a daily deepening Christian experience, an increasingly intimate knowledge of human nature and life, and an ever-widening acquaintance with the Book of truth.

Another thought must be presented in this connection. It will show still more clearly, perhaps, how little danger there is of sameness, so called, in preaching, if the Ambassador for Christ is only true to his Message. To preach Christ crucified is not to limit the preacher to discourses on the sufferings and death only of the Lord Jesus. The ethics of Christ, the severe and grand morality of the Sermon on the Mount, just as much as the story of the Cross, are included in this broad and weighty Message. Here, then, is opened to the preacher at once the whole inexhaustible subject of human duties—duties to God, duties to one's self and duties to fellow-men—a thousand particulars in each of these departments. The question is not what would be most delightful for the preacher to dwell upon, or for the people to hear, but what is most needful for the development in God's people of a scripturally holy life and character. Sometimes the people are not in a condition to hear the whole truth. They may be backslidden and worldly; they may be ignorant of the real relation of practical godliness to Christian experience and the hope of heaven; they may be seeking to make up in

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prayers what they lack in honesty, in hymns what they lack in generosity, in inward luxury of religion what they lack in conformity to the law of God; and the love of God for sinners, as revealed in the sufferings of Christ, is the only preaching that they can listen to with comfort. It breathes such unmeasured loving-kindness that they can cherish a hope of heaven even while indulging selfish and worldly dispositions and practices. What they need to hear in such a case is such preaching about righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come as made Felix tremble. It may be hard for the preacher to stand up and deliver the awakening and unwelcome message, for he knows what *good* people sometimes say about what they call "scoldings" from the pulpit; but he must be true and faithful to the Message and to the Master; and, therefore, he often says things in the pulpit which he certainly would not say if he could leave them unsaid, shut the Book, and go down out of the pulpit without a guilty feeling that he had not done his duty. This Message, like the wisdom that is from above, is "first pure, then peaceable." To say of a minister, "he has trouble in his church," is generally thought to be against him; but it may be in his favor. Some men have neither manhood, piety, nor regard for the church, sufficient to make trouble. They will let immorality break in, and vice creep in, and smile benignly all the while, taking the gifts and flatteries of the people with unctuous delight. Such men have "no trouble," but the love of many waxes cold and iniquity abounds

wherever they go. Whoever succeeds one of them, if honest, is sure to have trouble. What kind of trouble does the minister have? Is he inconsistent, neglectful, passionate, capricious, immoral? If so, he is a curse to the church. But does he preach the truth, honestly try to enforce the Discipline, and raise the standard of right living, and does this make trouble among the backslidden and the ungodly? If so, the trouble is a testimony to his good works. There are churches that will go rapidly to ruin unless some one is sent there to make trouble. It was once said, by a good man and wise observer, that there had been a great revival in a certain town. He was asked, "How many conversions?" "Not one, yet," said he, "but the members of the Church have stopped dancing, theatre-going and card-playing, and have begun to attend the class-meeting, and the incorrigible are feeling bitter towards the preacher." The Rev. I. B. Howard, a good man lately deceased, was once preaching in an Ontario town on "Honesty." A member of the congregation, who, whatever the fact may have been, did not enjoy a very high reputation for that virtue, got an impression that the preacher was personal. He listened until he could endure no more, then seized his hat and rushed for the door. When on the threshold he turned about, and, stamping his foot with towering indignation, vociferated towards the pulpit, "Preach the *gospel*, sir!" There are too many who want a gospel preached that will not disturb their dominant sin, and yet will, in some deceitful way, soothe their sorrows

and drive away their fears, without healing their wounds.

The Message committed to the Ambassador is to be found set forth in full in the Bible, God's revelation to the world. What that teaches concerning man's ruin and God's mercy is what is to be heralded in the ears of men. "Preach the word" (2 Tim. iv. 2) is St. Paul's ringing exhortation to his beloved son Timothy. The word to be preached is the word of God, and not of man. God's Word is a mine. Ministers are miners. God's thoughts are gold, and ought to be coined and put in circulation; not locked up in a ministerial bank-safe, as private capital, while a wretched paper currency is pushed out and used for the purpose instead of the gold. Preachers are to hear, learn, and receive before they speak; and what they hear with the ear of the soul, they are to herald abroad, whether men will receive their message or reject it. The facts of Christianity are not to be created; they are to be understood and explained. The doctrines of the gospel are not to be elaborated out of the human consciousness by a process of ratiocination, but are made known in the sure word of inspiration. The message of mercy is not *from* man nor *by* man, the result of human thought or philosophy, but by revelation of God in His Son, and recorded in the Scriptures. What the Lord has said the preacher is to proclaim, and what He has revealed he is to declare, illustrate, and enforce. This duty is not discharged if he stands before the people to let them know what *he* thinks, or the

conclusions that he has reached by successive steps of argumentation. His utterances in such a case will be the expression of a mere private opinion, and can have no authority over the conscience. One person has as good a right as another to have his opinion concerning moral maxims, political questions, social problems, theological speculations, and other matters of human thought. One person has as much right to dogmatize as another, but no one needs feel himself bound by another's dogma. On the other hand, a "thus saith the Lord" goes straight to the heart and conscience, carrying along with it its own authority, as did the command, "Come forth," from Jesus to Lazarus. Before it souls are made to bow as the trees of the forest before a mighty wind. It falls on the hard heart like a hammer, and pierces into the innermost recesses of the spiritual nature like a sharp, two-edged sword.

A timely illustration is furnished by the evangelist Moody. He is remarkable for his devotion to the Word of God and his confidence in its power. His addresses are invariably, and to a large extent, recitations of Scripture, and paraphrases of the Word of God. He proclaims the very words of inspiration with tremendous power. Is there not a danger that the gospel, or rather, preaching, should lose its power by having in it too much of man, and too little of God? Should we not preach the Bible more than we do? Not *from* it, nor *out* of it, but the Bible itself. I mean, first, that we should make great use of the *words* of the Bible. I am sure we have often seen their

power. You may labor with argument upon argument to remove a difficulty or a doubt, and, in the end, find that a simple text from God's Book does at once, and easily, what reasoning could not do. And then we should have much *exposition* of the Bible. There is an excess of sermonizing in these days. The taste in many quarters is for brief, sketchy, exciting sermons, which tend to sensation rather than to edification, to excitement rather than to strength. I do not plead for anything labored, lengthened, heavy; but I have the conviction that free, fresh, clear, solid exposition would minister breadth and strength both to ourselves and them that hear us.

The faithful minister will be at pains to understand the Bible first and other books next. He will not take all his interpretation of the Bible from books of interpretation. No wise man will despise such books, but the best use is made of them when the Bible is placed first and they second. All great and able ministers have done this. What a hearty love Luther had for the Bible! He used to say, "There are few trees in that garden that I have not shaken for fruit." You know how ardently Wesley aspired to be *homo unius libri*. The sermons of the best preachers hold the Bible in solution.

As biblical *instruction* is one of the chief functions of the Christian pulpit, there must be much expository preaching of the right kind. By exposition I do not mean much that goes for it now-a-days. There are vagaries of exposition, catching and fanciful, but

quite superficial. The "Bible-readings," so called, that are so popular in these times, are often little more than tinsel and veneering; and yet they are made showy and attractive, and are made the means of passing off upon the community the crudities of the merest sciolists. When I speak of exposition, I mean the result of resolute, patient, prolonged study, of ripest thought and of fullest culture; the presentation of the latest and most thorough Bible criticism, which lays hold of the principles and foundation truths of the Bible, and of the subtle and far-reaching harmonies of revelation in its different parts; and the skilful, forceful application of all this to the needs of men. The want of this is the weakness of much otherwise good, and even eloquent, preaching. Eloquence is good, but the Ambassador for Christ must be more than a pulpit orator. The best preacher is a gifted, effective, eloquent Bible teacher.

Above all things, this will build up intelligent, robust Christian life among the people. Thus to teach and preach is to "feed the flock of God" (1 Peter v. 2), as the presbyters of the Church are commanded to do. Believers require to be fed and nourished. Their nourishment is not to be chaff, but the finest of the wheat, the true bread of life. Human souls can live and grow only when they receive the true manna, the living Word of the living and life-giving God. Some shepherds give them this without stint. They are made to eat and drink abundantly. Out of the treasure-house of the inspiring Spirit are brought

things new and old, that their table may be abundantly furnished in the presence of their enemies. Flocks not thus tended become fewer, weaker, and less healthy; within them the spiritual life decays and the power for work departs. On the other hand, churches fed on the Divine Word are powerful in the Lord, and glory in their strength.

Now, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," he must make the Book of God the man of his counsel, the one book which he must know, reverence, and make his own. The volume of the Book must be understood through and through, in its letter, in its spirit, in its beginning, middle, and end. It must be studied, pondered, and prayed over till its light fills the soul and purifies the heart. The history, biography, prophecy, psalms, proverbs, gospels, and epistles of the grand old volume should become as familiar as household words. Nothing can ever make up for the lack of this in an Ambassador for Christ. What is he if he does not understand the Message which he is to deliver? He may understand the ancient and modern classics, be acquainted with philosophy, and be an adept at science. He may speak with the tongue of an angel, and be more than abreast of the literature and thought of the age, and yet, as a minister of the gospel, he will be a failure if he does not know his Bible. I cannot too earnestly press upon you, young men, this all-important thought. And do not, I pray you, take up with any unworthy notion of the magnitude of the task be-

fore you. The Bible is not a large book. You may carry it in a side pocket. But when your heads have grown gray with age, you will begin to see that a lifetime of devoted study will do no more than open up a little way the treasures of knowledge and wisdom which God has stored up in that book for the enlightenment of men. This scriptural knowledge can be acquired only by determination, and systematic and prayerful thought. Let it be yours, young gentlemen, to excel in this department of ministerial attainment. If you do so, a prosperous and ever increasingly bright future will be yours. You will turn many to righteousness, and shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Now, regarding what I have already said respecting the substance of this Message, respecting preaching Christ, the atonement of Christ, and the ethics of Christ, and also respecting preaching the Word of God, as being of chief importance, we come to another branch of our subject to-day, which, although not so vital in importance, is nevertheless of great practical value, namely, the *composition of a sermon*, or how to formulate those matters which the Word of God teaches us are included in our Message, for presentation to the people. It is a remarkable fact, that for the work of teaching and preaching, the inspired writers have given no outward direction whatever. To St. Paul, the greatest and most successful of all Christian teachers and preachers, we might look, if to any one, for some hints concerning this matter, but he never mentions it. He says not a word as to how ser-

mons should be made or preached; not a word as to style—picturesque, illustrative, argumentative, or any other kind of style; not a word as to the composition of sermons, whether they should be written and read, or repeated from memory, or spoken from the prepared mind. He is just as silent on homiletics as he is on liturgies, ritual, or ecclesiastical apparel. I am of opinion that his silence is to be accounted for, partly, on the ground of the secondary importance of these things, but chiefly, on the ground that every man must be a law unto himself in sermon making, using his powers independently and to the best advantage, instead of studying and imitating any model.

Allow me to say, first of all, that I shall not attempt, in this lecture, any such elaborate treatment of the subject as may be found, any day, better done, by a reference to the treatises on homiletics and hermeneutics which, I suppose, are available to all of you. I propose to myself the easier task of giving my own experience and practice. Therefore, this part of the lecture, which will be brief, because it will not require many words to tell all that I have experienced and accomplished in this domain, shall be chiefly autobiographical, autopractical, and, it may be thought, very egotistical. Consequently, I will be understood as attempting to describe, not the *best* way of preparing a sermon, but *one* of the ways—*my* way, namely.

My method of preparing sermons I discovered myself, therefore I regard it the best for me; although other methods may be better for other preachers who

have found out those other ways. A young man who begins life with nothing has no choice of a profession, but is led by the necessity of his circumstances, in order to gain the merest foothold in the world, to employ his powers in ways that are most productive. Consequently, in the great majority of cases, he will be found pursuing a line of life for which he has some natural adaptation. But if a young man has wealth to begin with, he is not compelled to employ his powers in ways by which he can make the most of them, nor is he likely to enquire what he may be fitted for, but rather what family pride and position demand that he should become. As a consequence, the world to-day is full of imbeciles who are vainly endeavoring to sustain themselves in professions for which they have no natural qualifications. So there are many preachers who are failures, and, in some cases, the failure may be traced to the fact that they have adopted methods by which other men have succeeded, but which are unsuitable to them. Schools of oratory, of which I speak with great respect, on account of the great names connected with them, and their great usefulness in many things, inevitably spoil some of their subjects. They cannot set as many different models before their students as their different natures and talents require, consequently some natures, that might have grown to magnificent proportions if they had followed freely their own bent, have been disbranched and dwarfed by being clipped into conformity to some model. All this applies to the preparation of sermons.

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Every preacher must find out the method that is best for *him*, or he will never reach the utmost of which he is capable.

I received my first appointment in the Methodist ministry two years after I was converted, and one year after I was licensed as a local preacher, and went to my Circuit—Yonge Street—with a stock of four sermons. On the first Sabbath I preached three of them. The next week a camp-meeting was held within the bounds of the Circuit, and there I preached my only remaining sermon. On Friday evening the camp-meeting closed, and my superintendent announced that special services would be commenced in a neighboring church on the following Sunday evening, and that I would preach. My heart sank within me at the announcement, seeing that the emergency that I had anticipated and dreaded had come upon me far sooner than I had expected. The sermons I had, had been prepared with much labor. For a year after my graduation—not in Theology but in Arts—I remained with my *Alma Mater* as tutor in classics and mathematics; and requiring only four sermons during the year, I was able to expend upon each weeks of time. I wrote them out pretty carefully and committed them mostly to memory. I shuddered at the difficulties which I saw before me when I should have but one week to prepare a whole sermon. I agonized in advance over the failures I should perpetrate when I should have to preach without having had time to write out and commit to memory. But the task of

preaching on Sunday evening with but one intervening day for preparation terrified me. The prospect of being required to preach three times on the Lord's Day, and two or three times on week nights besides, was appalling. What should I preach *about*? How should I ever find *texts* for so much preaching? The texts of my stock on hand had cost me hours and hours in their selection. What *should* I do? I did not know. How *could* I know what nothing could teach me but the exigencies of the work itself?

I spent the Saturday above referred to in my room; not in writing a sermon, but in endeavoring to digest a simple but important passage of Scripture, and to get into my head and heart something to say in Christ's name to sinful men. I went to the appointed pulpit on Sunday evening, having preached elsewhere that day, both morning and afternoon, and preached a better sermon—I declare it now, not judging by the excitement of the occasion, but looking back upon it after the lapse of thirty years in the ministry—a better sermon than any of the four that I had delivered already.

I mention these items of my personal experience, uninteresting, perhaps, to others, for the purpose of calling attention to three things:

First, the value of mere *mental discipline*. I had at that time no theological education other than I had obtained in a Christian family, in Sunday-school, and in regular attendance at the house of God. But I had had the advantage of a university course in arts; and

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I believe that the mental efficiency imparted by such discipline is just as valuable and available in the work of preparing sermons as in practising a profession, or in transacting business. During that anxious Saturday I could think, could concentrate my thoughts and think intensely, according to the measure of my might. I could think consecutively and logically in a degree, and had a memory trained to retain an order of thought and appeal that I had laid down. So it is no matter of wonder, when we understand it, that the mere beginner in preaching who could bring practised instruments into play, could prepare in one day a sermon that might properly be regarded as fair and creditable for a beginner. If we had understood and obeyed the laws of our intellectual nature, most of us, perhaps, could now make better sermons than we do. There is an indirect and unconscious preparation of the preacher for making sermons which involves his whole previous life. The books which he has read and which have formed his literary taste; the languages that he has learned and that have supplied his vocabulary; the mathematics he has studied and which have trained his intellect to consecutive and logical thought; as well as the Christian experience which he has developed in his new life, and the pitying love for lost men which all true Christians feel and which rises to a passion in the true minister's heart—all these things, and many more, bear each its full share in the preparation of every sermon. Every sermon we preach has, in an important sense, been in course of preparation all the days of our life.

In my estimation, what the university, with its secular curriculum, does for the candidate for the ministry is more valuable to him at the outset than what the theological school, with its sacred subjects, can do. In accord with this opinion, when a young man has said to me, "I cannot take both four years in the university and three years in the theological school, as some of our young men do, but I can take one; which would you advise?" I have invariably said, "Take the university course, by all means." With a Christian education and a Christian experience he will have theology enough to begin with, and he will have all his life to pursue the study. Moreover, when his study of theology is carried on concurrently with the actual care of souls, his acquisitions will be more practical, more portable, more useful, and, I believe, more accurate—that is to say, more in harmony with the facts of human nature and human life, than if gathered from books and teachers alone. Nor need it be miscellaneous, or heterogeneous, for the standard works which every minister's library contains will give sufficient assistance to a cultivated mind in reducing what is acquired to system and order.

Furthermore, there is no way of acquiring the art of preaching comparable to preaching itself. It would be a preposterous thing, in the judgment of many excellent people, for a young minister to go to a charge with only four sermons. By the way, I have known more than one very successful preacher who began the great business of his life on a capital only one-

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fourth as large. Preaching, like swimming, tooth-drawing, and everything else we have to do, must be learned. Breathing and crying, I suppose to be the only exceptions. The elocution class, with its artificial exercises, is a poor place to learn real public address. An artificial way of doing a thing can never issue in a natural doing of it. But plunge a young man directly into the midst of his work; require him to stand before a real congregation for real preaching; and he will learn better to perform the duty of the pulpit than he could in any other way. How do we learn to swim? By swimming. There is no other way. How do we learn to preach? Only by preaching. *Fabricando fabri fimus*. But while preaching, like tooth-drawing, as I said, must be learned, the practical difficulty is to find the *corpore vili* on which tyros may exercise their budding gifts. In the Methodist Church the difficulty is reduced to a minimum. On country Circuits, with their numerous appointments, and intelligent and pious congregations, and under the superintendency of a judicious senior colleague, young men have the very best facilities for developing into good preachers, as well as good theologians.

The second reflection, deducible from my personal experience, is that the actual work of the preacher is the most prolific source of *material* for preaching. In the preparation of sermons the item of material is a most momentous matter. Before I had left the pulpit on the Sunday evening aforesaid, I had made up my mind as to the subject of my next sermon. The sub-

ject, text and all, were fully decided upon. And from that time forward, through a special service of several weeks' duration, every discourse was suggested by the previous one and was largely the outcome of it. How could there be a dearth of subjects? There were careless sinners to be addressed upon the folly, guilt and danger of sin, the duty of repentance, the necessity of the new birth, the evils of delay, the doom of the wicked, the reward of the righteous, and a thousand other things. There were penitents to be pointed to the Lamb of God, reminded of gospel promises, instructed in the way of faith, and a thousand other topics. There were Christians to be led upward to a higher spiritual life, to fervent prayer and greater activity for the salvation of neighbors and friends, and a thousand things beside. And from that day to the present I have never been at a loss for a subject or for a text, for either ordinary or special work, and have never, in a single instance, spent a half hour in a search.

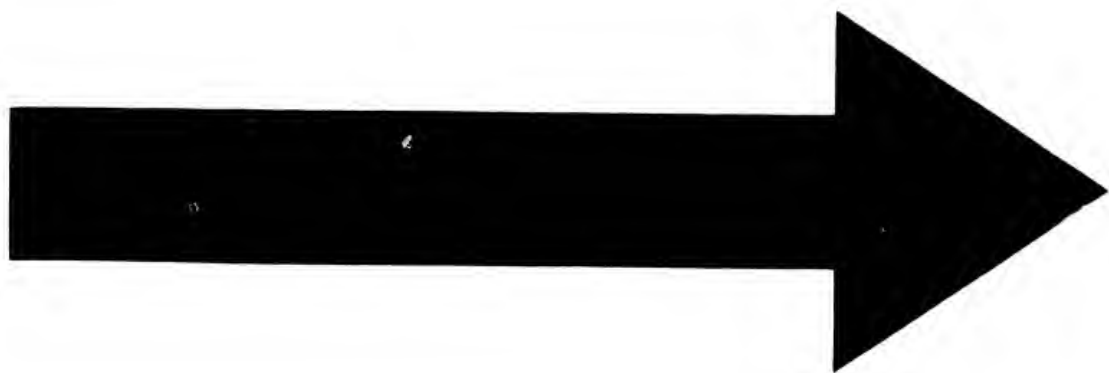
Thirdly, it is very important in the preparation of a sermon that the powers of the preacher be thoroughly *aroused*. During that epochal Saturday I was intensely anxious. I *must* preach on Sunday evening. The duty was inevitable, and, I will say, not unacceptable. I felt my insufficiency, but there must be no failure. I must have a sermon. I was greatly excited. Now in that state of activity the mind could do many times more than it could do in its ordinary temper. I have never lost the lesson of that day in this respect.

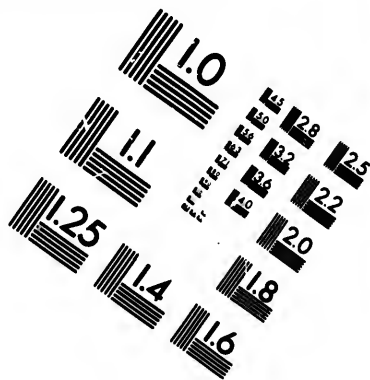
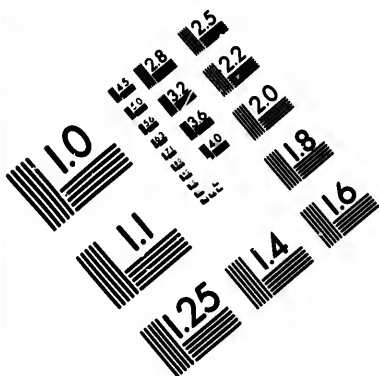
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In preparing a sermon now I gird up the loins of my mind. I abominate those expedients to which some resort, such as strong tea, tobacco, etc. ; but the mind must be brought into full activity. Sometimes the subject itself will do this. But sometimes the powers are drowsy to begin with, or may flag in the course of the work. I have been accustomed to resort to a book, not of sermons, nor of theology, but rather a volume of poems, or one on science or history—anything that will wake up the intellect. I have books in my library which I have taken up scores of times for this purpose alone. If the mind is not fully awake in the preparation of a sermon, the congregation will not be during its delivery. If no sparks fly in hammering out the sermon in the study, there will not be much illumination for the people in the church.

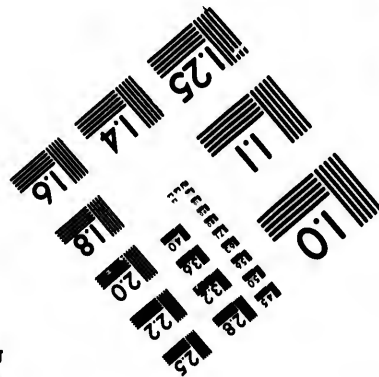
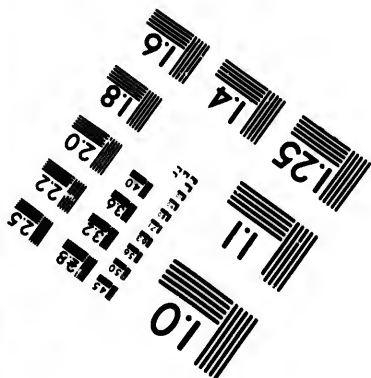
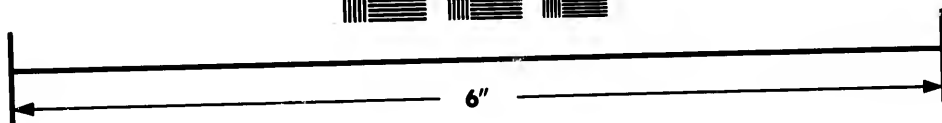
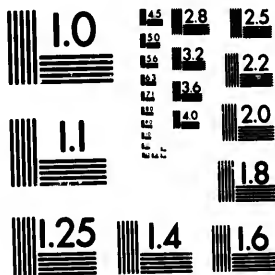
I am not forgetting the efficacy of *prayer* in fitting mind and heart for the work of the study. That Saturday was to me a day of prayer, in the sense of looking to God and leaning on Him, though not many words of prayer were uttered formally. Prayer is a prime element in the preparation of a sermon. Moreover, if God gives His Ambassador a Message to deliver, and but an hour to prepare it, He will give also such assistance, in answer to prayer, as is necessary to meet the emergency.

From what I have said, then, it will be seen that *my* method of preparing a sermon is to decide upon *my topic* first. The wants of my people appeal to me for supply. Nineteen times out of twenty my subjects





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are decided by a conception of what the congregation need. Very frequently, before one Sabbath closes, the work, or the spiritual atmosphere of the day, will suggest what the discourses of the next Sabbath shall be. These will sometimes be cognate subjects, the outgrowth of their predecessors; but more frequently topics as dissimilar as possible. The preacher should consider most attentively the needs of the people; not what topics are most agreeable to himself; not how he can be eloquent, original or popular; but, with his heart going out to his people, remembering that they come weary and broken, some with burdens, some with sorrows, some with doubts, let him supply them with what will lift them up and lighten their hearts; tell them about the love that is unwasted and endless, about the fellow-feeling of the Son of God, about the noble and true life God means for all His children. A sermon should always be occupied with something worthy and weighty in doctrine or Christian experience. Matthew Arnold's advice to a poet is, "I counsel him to choose for his subject great actions. It is a pity that power should be wasted, that the poet should be compelled to impart interest and force to his subject instead of receiving them from it." That counsel is as good for the preacher as for the poet. Let him choose great subjects. Let him apply to the pulpit Wesley's rule, "Never be triflingly employed." Attention to the wants of immortal souls is precisely what will suggest the very class of topics that are most worthy the preacher's consideration.

Having decided upon the subject, I then look for a *text*. There can be no difficulty here, because every subject on which a Christian minister ought to address his people is clearly set forth in the Word of God. And the text is taken, not as a matter of form or custom, nor merely to give the appearance of Divine sanction to words that man may wish to say; but as an essential and indispensable thing, without which the subject could never be a sermon; for it is the Word of God alone that can teach the preacher how the subject is to be presented agreeably to the mind of God. Hence, I feel myself bound most solemnly to be faithful and true to my text. I cannot use it as a mere starting point, nor as a motto, nor as a peg on which, by some ingenuity, I can hang anything that may occur to me. I must discuss that text in its real meaning, and in connection with the passage in which it occurs. That is not to say that I attempt to bring out in a single discourse all the glorious truths to be found in a chosen text; nor that I repeat the text very frequently; nor that I use it skilfully to round off with a flourish each division and sub-division of the sermon; nor that I refuse to say what seems to me important, true, and timely, simply because it does not belong strictly to that text. I believe that there is much "sticking to the text" that is very poor preaching. I endorse the saying of a great preacher, that a text is to be regarded as a garden-gate, by opening which we may pass through and appropriate all the good things within; while some preachers, without

ever going in at all, get astride of the gate, swing backwards and forwards, and call that preaching!

Sometimes, in rare instances, indeed, I begin a sermon with the text. In the course of my reading, in conversation, in hearing some one else preach, a passage may strike me as being peculiarly full of spiritual food, and I resolve to preach on it. I keep it in mind, and when the state of the congregation makes that text appropriate, I prepare a sermon on it and preach it. I have carried a text in my mind for twenty years, always intending to preach on it, and when the time came and circumstances demanded it, did so.

But the sermon must always be *on the text*, whether it begins with the text or with the topic. At the Pan-Presbyterian Council in Belfast, Dr. McCosh made some remarks on the style and matter of American preaching which displeased some persons on this side of the Atlantic. He said, "There is a New England style of preaching which consists in beginning on Monday morning, meditating two or three days, then writing a beautiful thing, and when Saturday comes, looking for a text, and having got a text, preaching it, to be admired by a great many ladies and gentlemen as rich thought beautifully expressed." I am convinced that there are but few among ourselves, and yet too many, who prepare their sermons after the fashion described. A very able preacher in one of our Conferences tells me that he once prepared very carefully a sermon on the words, "Ye knew your duty and ye did it not," and did not discover till Sunday

morning that the words were not in the Bible. Biblical sermonizers are those only who seek to unfold to their fellow-men the oracles of God. These are the most successful ministers and do the most good. The preacher's strength is found in the Bible, and his duty is to expound to those who may listen to him what the inspired Word contains. He is a herald, to make known the King's Message; a preacher, to proclaim on the house-top what he has learned of the Word of God in secret.

I never select a text that can be used only as a *motto*, and that only by taking it out of its connection. I am not condemning or censuring others who do this, I am only setting forth my own method. Another practice may be better for other men. One of the most distinguished preachers in Christendom to-day scarcely ever takes a text that admits of a particle of exposition, that contains any doctrine, that enjoins any duty, or that could, by any possibility, be used in its proper meaning. I give as specimens two or three taken almost at random:—"Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter," for a sermon on wasting winter evenings; "Men shall clap their hands at him and hiss him out of his place," for a sermon on failures; "Samson went down to Timnath;" "In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired;" and similar texts to any number. I believe that this great preacher preaches the gospel, and that many sinners are led to Christ by his labors, but he can scarcely be said to "preach the Word." The meaningless texts

that he chooses—meaningless, certainly, taken out of their proper connection, and chosen, apparently, because that under them he can say anything that can be imagined—astonish me. Such texts are, “I have somewhat to say unto thee;” and “I also will show mine opinion.” “I can say anything on that,” said a minister in my hearing, when giving the reasons why he had taken such a text. I heard a sermon not long since on Modern Scepticism on the text, “From the uttermost part of the earth we have heard songs.” I need scarcely say that there was not the remotest conceivable connection between the text and the sermon. I never took such a text in my life, nor made such use of the Word of God.

I have no partiality for *singular* texts, although I frequently take uncommon texts. Indeed, I seldom hear another preacher using one of mine. Because the interest of a congregation is likely to be chilled by the announcement of a common text, and, on the other hand, excited by an unfamiliar one, I always give the preference to the less hackneyed of two passages that contain the same truths. I have not the least objection to the most singular text if it be legitimately employed. A colored brother once preached three sermons in one day in my pulpit. The morning text was, “Upon one stone seven eyes.” His introduction, in brief, was this—“A stone is often employed in the Bible as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘tried stone,’ ‘precious corner stone,’ ‘foundation stone.’ ‘Seven’ is a scriptural symbol of perfection. ‘Eyes’

are a symbol of wisdom, insight (giving scriptural instances in each case), and the subject this morning is 'the perfection of the Redeemer's wisdom;' and having clearly announced a grand subject, proceeded to preach an admirable discourse, one of which no white man could be ashamed. His afternoon text was, "One sea and twelve oxen under it." The temple and many of its appurtenances were forepointings to the Christian dispensation and things in it. The great brazen sea was representative of the Gospel; the twelve oxen, the twelve original preachers of the gospel. First division, an Apostolic ministry (well discussed). Second division, sub-divided somewhat thus—The sea is boundless, touches every shore; the gospel is for all men, white and black. Water cleanses; the gospel purifies. Water quenches thirst; the gospel satisfies our aspirations, and such like. There were many moist eyes in the congregation that afternoon. In the evening the text was, "The throne had six steps." Both text and sermon were of the character I have been reprehending, and although clever and ingenious, were not quite satisfactory; but that of the afternoon, and more especially that of the morning, were excellent specimens of preaching, notwithstanding that the announcement of the texts was followed by smiles and amused glances in the congregation. A London preacher (London, Eng.) recently took for his text, "An hundred and fifty and three." (John xxi. 11.) It is said that he nearly succeeded in repeating his text a hundred and fifty-three times.

I would recommend him to try next time the middle portion of 2 Peter ii. 16—"Ass speaking with man's voice." If he should not succeed in saying much, perhaps the object lesson would be sufficient to impress the audience with the truth of the text.

I take the ground, and take the responsibility of saying, that the selection of queer texts should be set down alongside that other silly and mischievous practice—the *advertising* of queer titles for sermons; both of which should be utterly eschewed. If, in the course of my ministry, I intend to preach on a subject in which I think my people would feel a special interest, and the discussion of which they would not like to miss, I announce it from my own pulpit, clearly designating the subject; but I never advertised *any* subject, and certainly not "The three R's," "The girl of the period," "Some of the horses in Pharaoh's chariot (sporting men specially invited to attend);" and never will, until, at least, I see better reason than I have ever yet seen for changing my practice. Such deceitful handling of the Word of God cannot be useful. The minister who, at the time of a labor strike, advertised a sermon on "The labor and wages question," and then preached a sermon on "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life," preached a practical falsehood, and the God of truth is not likely to bless such preaching as that. Any amount of gospel that might be imported into a sermon of that kind would be effectually nullified in its effect upon the hearts of church-goers by the manifest

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pulpit legerdemain by which they had been tricked into attendance.

One of the dangers of the pulpit in these days is an affectation of *sensationalism*. A genuine sensation in the pulpit is always to be desired and welcomed. The ministry of the Church should be distinguished by individuality. Even eccentricities, when honest, genuine, and baptized with the Divine Spirit, are elements of great power. I should not be censorious of my brother's strange way. God has made more than one instrument. The trumpet is His, and the lute, and the organ, and the instrument of ten strings. In the sanctuary we may hear, now the clash of cymbals, then the throb of drums, and again the silver of sweet bells. Every man must preach in the way in which he can use his powers to the best advantage—the advantage being always the spiritual progress of the hearer, and not the mere elevation and fame of the preacher. It is possible to be "splendidly null." Faultless respectability seldom gets beyond its own parish. On the other hand a man may be uncouth, and his notions crude, yet if the Word of God be in him and his soul be the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, he will become a prince in the kingdom of the Church, and even his uncouthness in manner and language will contribute to spread his fame and heighten his popularity. But the danger is that some young man will attempt to imitate him. In that case he will begin like an ape and end like a fool. That is to say, he will repeat extravagances and eccentricities

without knowing anything of the spiritual power and genius of his model. There is no help for it. It is of no use to waste time in an attempt to reclaim such a man.

The sensational preacher of these days is almost invariably a bundle of affectations and artificialities. He is apt to think more of saying a "smart," a "telling," or a "taking" thing, than of communicating the truth. In this way he uses extravagant epithets, gives exaggerated descriptions, and magnifies or distorts features for the sake of effect. But he who consciously exaggerates, at the same time blunts the edge of his conscience. Every time he deviates from, or adds to, the real state of the case, he makes himself a worse man. Truth is the girdle of character, and he who loosens that is on the way to looseness in other departments of morality. He is on an inclined plane, and is likely to produce some day the biggest sensation of his life by a terrible *fiasco*. For the temptation is to go on. His hearers become accustomed to the dose, the appetite "grows by what it feeds on," and, in order to have the effects which were produced at first, they crave for something stronger. He seeks to meet the new demand just as he sought to meet the first, and so it increases until the flippant has become the irreverent, and the irreverent has become the profane, and the profane becomes the impure; or, until the odd has become the heretical, and the man, who began by throwing aside conventionalities, ends by parting with the central verities of the gospel. These things have

actually happened in many cases. The drift and tendency of sensationalism, so called, are in that direction ; and, in a day when some who are guilty of it are riding on the top of the wave, it is proper to warn young preachers of the peril that is incurred by entering on such a course. The first steps in it are such things as I have been specifying—saying extravagant things in the pulpit in order to be striking, airing crude notions because they are known to be contrary to commonly received opinions, taking remarkable texts on the pretense that they excite interest, and advertising remarkable subjects in order to fill a church with mere curiosity-seekers.

When the subject and the text are fixed in the mind, the next labor is the *composition* of the sermon. Some will write their sermons and read them, and do better in that way than they could in any other ; and some write and read who might do much better were they to adopt some other method. Some write, commit to memory and recite, and thus reach the highest efficiency possible to them ; while by this method others are cramped into the most miserable artificialism, and are necessarily dwarfed. Others write only a brief sketch and fill up the outline by meditation, leaving the precise form of expression to the moment of delivery. There is yet another method *possible*, but it ought to be excluded from consideration as *inadmissible*, namely, making the whole sermon an entirely extemporaneous effort.

But I must not forget my intention to detail my

own plan. Excepting a few that I have been requested to publish, all the written sermons I ever made are the four afore-mentioned, and one other which has never been preached since I wrote it. I am generally satisfied with a *short text*. I prefer such a one, chiefly, because I like to have in a sermon one leading thought and to deal thoroughly with that. Therefore, I should not use such a text as Acts iii. 19—"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"—for there are four distinct and important topics in that passage—repentance, conversion, pardon, and special spiritual influences—and it would be impossible to deal satisfactorily with all of them in one sermon. Whately's paradoxical observation, that a restricted view of a subject furnishes copiousness of matter, is undoubtedly true. You can but touch and go on many points; you can deal thoroughly with one.

I always find it necessary to arrange my sermons clearly under *heads*, leading and subordinate. Whatever the value of this plan to the hearer, it is a necessity to me. But these differ as men's heads differ. No two are alike. I am sure I have not a single sermon divided according to the formula—1st, The duty enjoined; 2nd, The motive presented; 3rd, The reward promised. I have been amused with certain preachers, who, whatever the nature of the subject chosen, habitually find in it three divisions. That habit has been a Procrustean bed to many a passage of

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Scripture, which had to be mutilated or mangled to make it of the usual form. A subject may be divided in a manner very unfortunate for the subject, as was proposed in the case of the child in dispute in Solomon's time; but most subjects will divide themselves at the joints, naturally and in a way of their own, like certain living creatures, and the individual parts will not only live but flourish and grow. Take, for instance, Acts xix. 9: "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way, He departed from them, and separated the disciples"—five distinct points, closely related, and presenting themselves in order. That is the kind of division that I like best, and it tends towards the expository style. There is another kind of division founded truly on the subject, though not on the language, as in Psalm li. 12: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." 1st, There is a joy in salvation; 2nd, How it may be lost; 3rd, How it may be regained. Another most excellent method of arranging a sermon is the following: Prov. xiii. 15, "The way of transgressors is hard." 1st, Because it is in conflict with good sense and reason; 2nd, Because vicious dispositions make the heart unhappy; 3rd, Because it is hard to be a slave; 4th, Because it is hard to contend with God; 5th, Because it is hard to die in sin; 6th, Because it is hard to go to perdition. But time and space forbid further illustration. Methods of arrangement, especially in their combinations, are innumerable.

Now, as soon as I am able, in the process of sermon-

izing, to draw upon a piece of paper, as it were the trunk of a tree, that is, the leading, all-pervading idea of the sermon, according to the object I have in view, rooted in its scriptural ground; and, at the suggestions of the text, or of the subject, dispose the various branches properly around the central strength of that firm trunk, then I take a piece of paper—half a sheet of small note paper—and, folding it, write the first word "Introduction," leaving a blank space to be filled up at some future stage of the process. Then I write 1st, 2nd, and so on, until the branches are all in position, and there stands the tree to be clothed with leaves and blossoms and fruit. Nor am I anxious about symmetry. I care not whether one branch goes ten yards beyond another one or not. My ideal of beauty is that which may be found in the forest, and not among the clipped trees of a gentleman's garden. I have a contempt for a tree that dares not thrust a leaflet one inch beyond another, lest it should be cut off; and I have the same feeling for a sermon that has been measured and written by the inch, so many to each part, and so many for the whole.

Now commences in earnest the maturing of *details*. I have something to say on that subject, perhaps much. That is the reason why I selected it. I jot down in the proper spaces what I think and feel upon it, working at the beginning, middle or end, just as I feel inclined. If I am misty, weak, or, possibly, empty, on any part of the subject, I consult commentaries—all I have; read the sermon of another man, if I

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happen to have one on the same topic, and thus fill my mind with the subject for the proper presentation of it. I do not refer to scrap-books. I have none. I have no volumes of illustrations selected by other men. I use illustrations freely, mostly those that are gleaned from every-day life. I think that one of the most vicious methods of preparing a sermon is to fill up an outline by a more or less dexterous weaving, or rather, piecing, together of nice bits gathered from all sources and all authors in poetry and prose. The pretentious sermon (so called) to which I referred above, on "Modern Scepticism," was nothing more than an agglomeration of all sorts of fine and strong things uttered or written during the past few years by the champions of orthodoxy. An intelligent layman asked me the next day after its delivery, if I could see any connection between the introduction and the rest of the sermon. I could not. There was none. Such practices are easily detected. The difference in style of the various authors laid under contribution must strike any intelligent listener. The want of homogeneity must be felt. There can be no real grasp of sacred truth, nor profitable discussion of Christian doctrine, where it is necessary to resort to such means. The preacher who makes his sermons of patch-work is little likely to produce any master-pieces. "Sermons made from quotation books are on a level with poems made with a rhyming dictionary." So says the late Dr. Whedon. A true sermon, like a true poem, flows forth in spontaneous streams from a full mind and a

warm heart. I fear that many young men in these days are injuring themselves as students and as preachers by seeking to make sermons out of mere homiletic chips.

Having filled up the blanks in my brief with single words, abbreviations and signs, to assist my meditations, I lay down my pen, not to touch it again till after I have preached the sermon, unless for the purpose of jotting down in the proper place a thought that may have struck me in my ruminations. Now, I place myself in a *thinking* attitude. Some preachers think best with pen in hand; some with pipe in mouth, so they say; some walking the floor. Schleiermacher, it is said, made his sermons leaning out of a window. Dr. Punshon used to write his sermons and lectures in his memory before committing them to paper. The lecture on John Bunyan, which is a marvel of finished diction, he prepared in that way, walking the floor of his study, tossing a penny from his thumb and catching it as it fell. I like to think in the dark. It may be thought, very naturally, that that fact does not promise much for the brightness of the sermon, but it is my way. I can study better in the night than in the day, and have often turned my lamp down and out to promote isolation. In proportion as I can exclude all external things from notice, in imagination summon my congregation before me, and get myself *en rapport* with it, I can make progress. I think in words. Everybody else must do the same. In thinking out a sermon the language becomes very largely

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fixed in the mind. In delivering the thoughts which I have linked together in the study, the words will come up again. In repeating a sermon prepared in this way, of which there was not one sentence written out, I have so closely re-produced the language that a hearer might think that the sermon was written and committed.

When I have prepared myself for preaching in that way, I am sure of two things: first, that I have a much better grasp of the subject than I possibly could have by writing in full; and, secondly, that it has not taken half the time.

After I have preached a sermon I *know more about* it than I could possibly know before. I know better where the strong parts are, and the weak parts; where I may wisely excise, and where I ought to amplify a little; and I know how long it is. Now, I take a piece of paper of the same size, and, in a more careful chirography, *re-write* my sketch, and put it away in my portfolio for future use. I do not take it into the pulpit with me. I have no manner of need of it. When I have thought enough on that subject to make that sketch, and then have thought through and through it sufficiently to mature details, I cannot but so have it in my mind as to have no further use for it, except to preserve it. I preserve these sermons for future use. Why not? When in following years I stand before another congregation needing the same instruction, I hunt up the old sermon. But observe: to preach it again I must make it almost entirely a

new one. I have but a scanty outline of it, only sufficient to enable me to identify clearly the former line of thought, and I must think it out again with much patient labor, though with not so much as in the first instance. Here, also, I find two benefits: first, in re-exploring that subject, I can bring to it all the resources I have gathered meanwhile, so making it a stronger, richer sermon than it was originally, while I have the advantage of the start given me by my previous studies. Thus every time that sermon is repeated it grows better so long as I grow better. A fully written sermon never grows, and after a time must be thrown aside as outgrown by its author. Secondly, the necessity of thorough study in re-producing an old sermon will get it again thoroughly into the mind and heart of the preacher, which is essential to efficient delivery; whereas, if the sermon be written fully it may be taken up any hour and preached again but it will be a tame affair, simply because it has not been pondered so anxiously, earnestly and prayerfully, as to be in possession of the soul of the preacher. A sermon that is to accomplish an end, and is to be worth listening to, must embody real thoughts—thoughts that have some connection with the interests and issues of life—and must be instinct with the living convictions of the preacher. To be such a sermon it must come from the preacher's mind and heart, warm with the very life-blood of his soul at the moment of its delivery. But how a preacher can stand up before an audience, and proceed to read, as a message to living

men, a sermon which he wrote thirty, twenty, or even ten years before, I cannot understand. When written, the sermon, doubtless, was a real transcript of the writer's thoughts, convictions and emotions. But in the rush of intervening years, what changes, if there has been a soul within him, have passed over his spirit! To write that sermon now would be impossible. And yet he tries to put himself into it, and in that guise presents himself to an audience of thinking people. An old coat that he wore twenty years ago might be aired, and the dust whipped out of it, and he might present himself in it with much more propriety than in that old sermon. No treatment of the sermon, if written out, can relieve it of its smell of age. Like an old bouquet of flowers, its once delicate fragrance has sunk into an odor that is sickening.

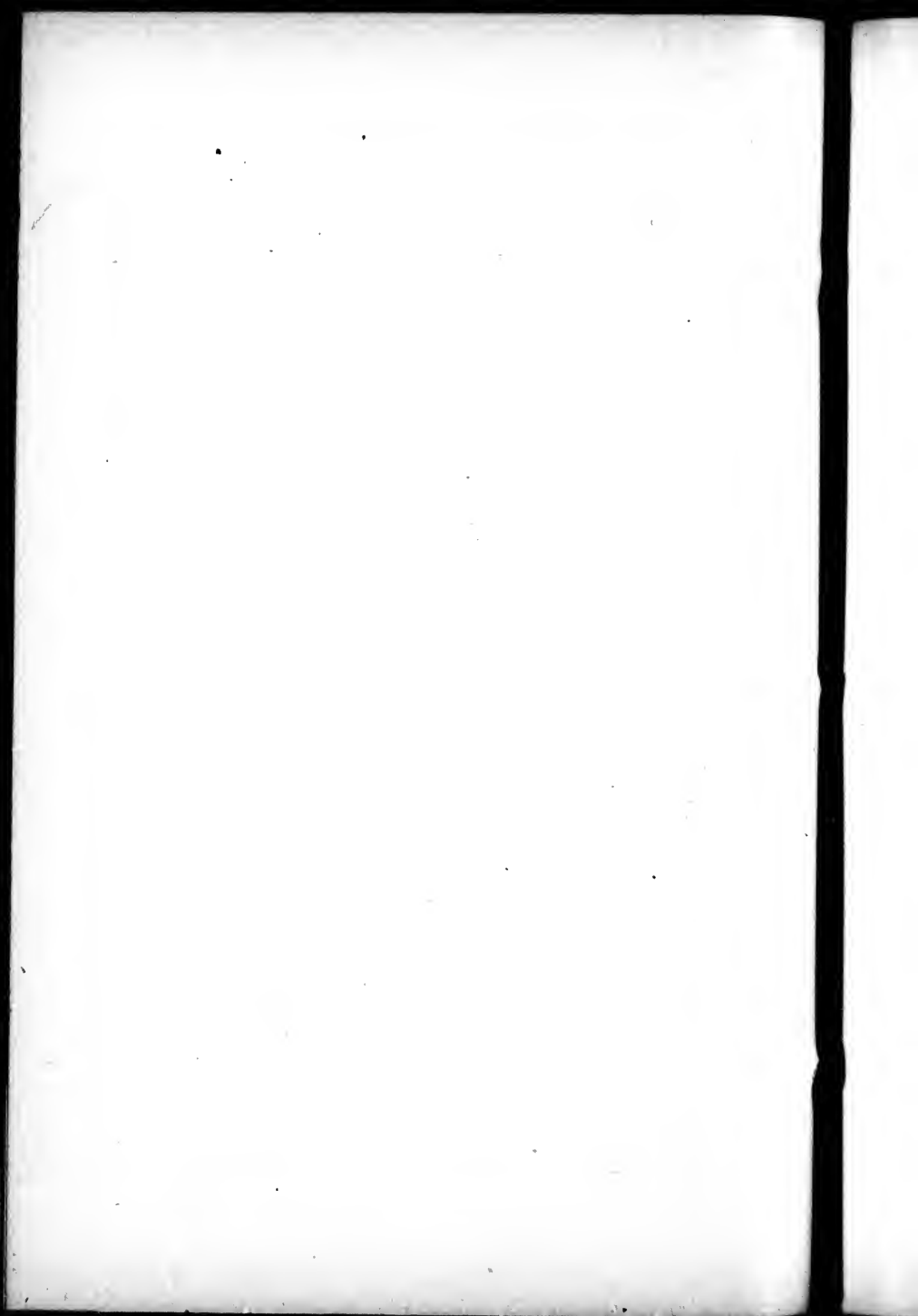
And yet, I preach my old sermons, and mean to do so. I have indicated the only way in which, in my opinion, this can be done with the least degree of profit or credit, namely, by a thorough *rejuvenation* on each successive occasion. John B. Gough repeated the same lectures, in substance, for thirty years, to admiring and applauding audiences, but at each tour these lectures had been freshened and brightened by the introduction of recent incidents, newly-coined phrases, and apt allusions to current events. The medical lecturer gives to each succeeding class the lectures delivered the year before; but always improving them, of course, by inserting the latest discoveries. The professor of law does the same thing. Why, then, may

not the minister, with the greatest propriety, repeat a discussion which has commanded his best efforts, and is on a subject that is of essential importance at the time to his congregation ?

Now, my young brethren, I have given to you in very faithful, practical detail, *one* of the methods of preparing sermons ; but in concluding my remarks on this subject, I feel that I ought to commend to you the practice of a diligent *employment of the pen* with a view to the enlargement of your vocabulary and accuracy in the use of language. I do not say that I commend making sermons by writing them. You may do much writing in making synopses of the books you read, in setting down your thoughts habitually on any important subjects that may interest your minds, in a bit of newspaper correspondence now and then, and in many other ways. An excellent method of enriching your vocabulary is that which you practise in this university, and which you should continue after you leave this place, namely, translating other languages into your own English. If you do not adopt these, or some other habits of writing, rather than neglect so useful an exercise, let one of the two or three sermons you will be required to preach each Sabbath, when you enter fully upon your work, be in good measure written, though not committed to memory, while the other, or others, are more largely extemporized. Depend upon it, in some way or other, language must be a subject of industrious study, or your resources as preachers will, in this respect, be

meagre, common-place, unsatisfactory, and uninfluential.

The deliberateness of writing will afford you opportunities, not afforded by extemporizing, of studying the words you would select for your purpose. You will oftentimes be led to trace the etymology of a word, its history, and its relation to synonyms and conjugates. Understanding the derivation and the history of the words you employ, you can impart a force and beauty to your expression otherwise quite impossible. By the use of the pen you will learn to use the very language, and no other, that will express your thoughts. By the use of the pen you will acquire the very valuable ability to express yourselves concisely as well as correctly. One of the most offensive, as well as most common, faults of preaching is verbosity. In these days the demand is increasing for pithy, sententious compositions, which give a hearer the pleasant surprise of presenting the whole meaning to his mind before he quite expects it. The advantages of a diligent use of the pen are altogether too numerous and too valuable to be lost by neglect. You cannot become good preachers without acquiring the power of extemporaneous speech, but remember that facility and accuracy in using language extemporaneously cannot be acquired except by faithful, persistent practice with the pen.



The Ambassador for Christ.

LECTURE III.—ITS DELIVERY.

So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly ; and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—*Nehemiah*.

Words learn'd by rote a parrot may rehearse.—*Cowper*.

A mere display of sublime words, solemn forms, and ministerial dignity, is, whatever the design may be, a burlesque on the solemn grandeur and dignified simplicity of gospel truth, and the natural gospel mode of proclaiming it.—*Bishop Wm. Taylor*.

There's a charm in Delivery, a magical art,
That thrills, like a kiss, from the lips to the heart.
'Tis the glance, the expression, the well-chosen word,
By whose magic the depths of the spirit are stirred ;
The smile, the mute gesture, the soul-startling pause,
The eye's sweet expression that melts while it awes ;
The lip's soft persuasion, its musical tone—
O, such is the charm of the eloquent one !

—*Mrs. Welby*.

LECTURE III.—ITS DELIVERY.

PREACHING is not an adventitious or accidental appliance of Christianity, but an essential part of it. It is not a sacrament, yet it stands, next to the Eucharist and Baptism, the third great ordinance of our religion, having as much authority and speciality as the sacraments themselves. And were the Bible in every man's hands, and every man thoroughly instructed in scriptural knowledge, still it would stand a high ordinance of God, a source of vivification and impulse to the Church to the end of the world. This is the main design of the sermon. The sermon ought to be didactic, but it ought to be more. It should be the fountain of religious sympathies, as well as of religious instruction. It was designed to keep alive in the world the *spirit*, as well as the truth of Christianity.

In all ages of the world, the oration has been employed, not so much for the purpose of convincing men, as of *inciting* them to action. It is not enough always to show men the right path. They need oftentimes to be moved forward therein. The judgment, it is true, must be satisfied, but, far more, the emotions must be stirred. There is no means whereby this can

be accomplished so effective as direct, impassioned, public address. An eloquent speaker will always have crowds to listen to his words. Crowds are always more mobile than individuals. Public address will depend, for its effectiveness with the masses, much more upon the manner of the speaker than upon what is said. The Divine appointment in relation to the gospel recognizes these facts of human nature and human life, and proceeds accordingly. The Ambassador for Christ is to gather congregations, larger or smaller, of his fellow-men, and address them on those great subjects that relate to eternal life. He will soon find that his most difficult task is to move them. They may know of their estrangement from God, and of the fearful consequences of that alienation if persisted in, and yet be unmoved. The way of reconciliation may have been clearly pointed out to them, and yet for years they may remain still unmoved. Preaching "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" has been ordained for the purpose of arousing imperilled souls to exertion. Therefore in this kind of public address, just as in any other, the manner of the preacher—his *Delivery*—is of prime importance. I have thought it of sufficient importance to make it the subject of an entire lecture.

Delivery comprehends all the *modes of expression* in public speaking. "It is," says Cicero, very admirably, "the eloquence of the body, and implies the proper management of the voice and gesture." Long ago the pulpit was reproached very sharply for a very bad

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delivery. Said a celebrated ecclesiastic to a celebrated actor of the last century, "How is it that you who deal in nothing but fiction can so affect your audiences, while we who deliver the most awful truths can scarcely produce any effect whatever?" "Here," replied the actor, "lies the secret, you deliver truths as if they were fictions; we deliver fictions as if they were truths." Has there been since then any material change for the better? Yes, unquestionably, but the improvement has been very slow, at least until very recently. In his Rhetoric, a text-book extensively used until recently by students for the ministry, Whately says, "Action in speaking generally is so little approved or designedly employed, that it is hardly any part of the orator's art." Sidney Smith asks, "Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit? Why is it a rule of oratory to handle the sublimest subjects in the driest manner? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety?" The reverend joker's question would be *apropos* in some quarters still.

According to the masters of the art of public speaking, delivery is the *chief thing* in eloquence. "What we have composed," says Quintilian, "is not of so much consequence as how it is delivered. There is no proof so strong but it will lose its force unless it is aided by an emphatic tone in the speaker; and all passions must become languid unless spirited up by the voice, and countenance, and attitudes of the body." In like manner, Cicero gives more importance to delivery than, apart from it, to what is delivered. He says,

“without it the best speaker can have no name, and with it a middling one can obtain the highest.” Demosthenes goes further. “Being asked what was the greatest excellence in oratory, he not only gave the first place to delivery, but assigned to it the second, and the third place also; whereby it appeared that he judged it to be not so much the principal, as the only excellence.” (Cicero de Oratore.) Let us not wonder at this estimation of this part of oratory. What attentive observer of public speakers has not often found a good discourse completely spoiled, and a poor one made quite a success, by the mere manner of delivering it? The preaching of Whitefield, apart from his delivery, was in no respect extraordinary; including his delivery, it has never been equalled. “Even common truths,” said John Foster, “in Whitefield’s preaching seemed to strike on men in fire and light.”

This power is not simply the result of force and wealth of thought; it is warmth, sympathy, enthusiasm—some subtle magnetic force with which some men are charged. In its highest exercise it is the result of the indwelling and *controlling* of the *Divine Spirit*. But some men seem to have it, in part, at least, by nature. Gifted with such wondrous force and fulness of manhood, they can reach, and rouse, and move, and inspire multitudes almost at will. They send out such tides of influence that they take hearts by storm. It is a marvellous spell that some men, by their presence and speech and enthusiasm, can throw, not alone on a congregation, but sometimes on a whole

nation. We are not to think of such men as exceptional, as if their splendid power were all chance and natural endowment. They are men of industry and culture, in most cases of deep spiritual experience, who have made the most of their great gifts, and the result is force, capacity to sway and move, to bend and bind men at their will. Perhaps we cannot all have the fulness of their transcendent power; it belongs to large, gifted, wealthy men. But any of us can have it in measure, and it can be increased or diminished. Some things help, and some hinder. Goodness will help; falseness in any form will hinder. The indwelling Spirit, as I shall show, is Himself the great helper. This power in me will be less if I am selfish, hard, proud, worldly; but more if I am true, pure, magnanimous. Some things impoverish and shrivel, and these I must shun as I would shun sin and resist the devil. Other things enrich, enlarge, and ennoble, and these I must diligently labor for as I would seek for hidden treasure. For it is not simply what I am; it is also the effect, through my speech, of what I am upon others.

Delivery holds the *same place* in preaching that it does in other public efforts.* The human in it is not to be neglected because it is subordinated to the Divine. The supernatural tends to, and requires perfection in, the natural. If, therefore, delivery is the chief thing in eloquence, as such, it the chief thing in preaching. No eloquence applies more completely and natu-

* For some of the thoughts in this Lecture, obligation must be acknowledged to the late Prof. Skinner, of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

rally the principles of the oratorical art than the genuine eloquence of the pulpit. There is, therefore, no justification, no apology, for any disparagement of the delivery of a sermon. The Spirit of God, imparted to give efficiency to the work of the preacher, estimates things as they are; and delivery, being first in itself, cannot but be first in the regard of the Spirit. By the Spirit, then, is imposed on the preacher the obligation to give to delivery his principal regard. If the preacher puts it last, or aught else above it, he is therein at variance with the Holy Spirit. By the inversion of order, for which he makes himself responsible, he cannot but grieve the Spirit of God, and he will be likely to gain but little by mis-applying to something else attention which is due to delivery. He will not compose as well, he will not make as good a sermon in any respect, as he would if, in making it, he concurred with the Holy Spirit in His estimation of delivery. Not having been made with reference to a good delivery it will be but little suitable to it, perhaps entirely incompatible with it. Underrating delivery, therefore, cannot but be inexpedient in the whole business of preaching. It is the bane of pulpit eloquence.

Quite as much as the composition of a sermon, the delivery of it is *spiritual*, consisting of the highest activities of spiritual life. Just delivery in preaching, quite as much as the discourse itself, is of Divine-human agency. It is impossible to the preacher unless he be moved thereto and therein by the Spirit of God. It is infinitely beyond his own ability on two accounts,

namely—in the first place, he cannot have the spiritual knowledge, light, and feeling necessary to it; and in the second place, having these, he still needs the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, in order to express them appropriately in delivery—the eloquence of the body. The preacher may have had the Divine aid in preparing his sermon; the sermon, both as to its matter and its diction, may be a spiritual one; its delivery, nevertheless, will not be spiritual if he have not the incessant operation of the Spirit within him. Spiritual knowledge cannot express itself appropriately—that is to say, in appropriate action—without being aided therein by the Holy Spirit. In elocutionary action, as well as in thinking and writing, the preacher, however qualified by self-culture, can attain to no degree of spirituality by merely natural effort. And if the delivery of the preacher—the eloquence of the body—be indeed spiritual, it is, doubtless, a higher exercise of the spiritual life than either of its other exercises in the work of preaching. It must be so if it be answerable, in all respects, to the unique and mysterious exigencies of such a work as delivering appropriately the inspired Word of God as a vehicle of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual things expressing themselves fitly in spiritual modulations of the voice, spiritual looks, spiritual attitudes—the supernatural exerting itself in and through these bodily signs of thought and feeling—of himself, “who is sufficient for these things?” Our Lord Himself was not, much less His Apostles. Our Lord’s spirituality of mind and knowledge, com-

bined with the perfectly natural use of His human powers, did not qualify Him adequately for dispensing the Word, independently of the continual co-agency of the Spirit. Even *He* delivered His discourses under the anointing and in the power of the Spirit of God. "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee . . . and He came to Nazareth . . . and went into the synagogue . . . and stood up for to read . . . and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor . . . to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 14. *et seq.*) After His resurrection, it was still "through the Holy Ghost" that He gave "commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen." (Acts i. 2.)

Those Apostles prayed and waited for, according to the commandment, and obtained, according to the promise, the Pentecostal baptism of spiritual power which affected their whole manhood—spirit, and soul, and body—and by which alone they were qualified to deliver the truths which they were commissioned to teach.

Perhaps there should be no attempt to define the metes and bounds of the *inspiration* which the minister of Christ may enjoy while delivering God's word to dying men. The pulpit certainly does not possess plenary inspiration such as was possessed by the Prophets when they foretold future events, or by the

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Apostles when they delivered the revelations of God. Neither is it just to assert that the preacher possesses no power above that of the private member who is deeply devoted to God. It would seem that a work so high and so holy as that of an Ambassador for Christ demands peculiar qualifications, and that here the Holy Ghost would manifest His highest energies, with the exceptions which I have just named. We must not arrogate to ourselves the power which belonged only to Prophets and Apostles; nor, on the other hand, be content with degrees of inspiration far below the necessities of the work. We must attend very solemnly to the utterances of the Bible on this point. "O son of man, I have set thee as a watchman unto the house of Israel." (Ezek. xxxiii. 7.) This is another scriptural declaration of what I have already affirmed, that the pulpit is, in the highest sense, an institution from heaven. God has erected it amidst the world's darkness, and set the minister of Christ as a watchman on the walls of Zion; and that He will afford him peculiar qualifications, for his work must be admitted as unquestionable. In apostolic times it was said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." (Mark xiii. 11.) But there is a class of texts that apply to the whole Christian dispensation. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) "My speech and my preach-

ing was . . . in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. ii. 4.) "Preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." (1 Peter i. 12.)

These texts, with many others, indicate what I am contending for, that the Spirit *rests upon* the preacher, soul and body, in order to qualify him, in the fullest degree, for every item of the whole business of preaching. And he should seek not only for general influences of the Spirit, to enlighten his mind, to stimulate his intellect, and to enable him to apprehend and to feel the truth, but also special influences, in order that by spirit, voice, and manner, he may with due impressiveness deliver the Divine Message.

While the sincere servant of the Cross will avail himself of every auxiliary in this momentous work of winning souls to Christ, he will feel that this one qualification cannot be too highly exalted. How appropriate are these passages in the Ordination service—"Therefore ye ought, and have need, to pray earnestly for His Holy Spirit." "The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a minister in the Church of God." Surely we cannot seek too seriously and prayerfully to understand the relation of the minister of the gospel to the Holy Ghost. It is, no doubt, the privilege of Christians generally to stand in the light, and under the power, of the Spirit of God; but the preacher should stand at the focal point of the unfolding light, that he may reflect the glory of the Cross upon all around him—that he may hear alike

the thunder of Sinai and the solemn pleadings of the hour of agony; and behold alike the dark scenery of earth's wretchedness and of the world of woe, and also the flowing blood of Calvary, and the glorious visions that are ever evolved from the throne of the Eternal. Prostrating himself before God's altar, the pulpit which he is about to enter standing before his eye which will soon be dim in death, and on it written, in characters of mysterious significance, the words, Immortal Spirits—Sin—Blood of Atonement—Death—Judgment—Hell—Heaven! he may well cry out with intense longing,

“Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call;
Spirit of burning, come.”

The heavenly inspiration that rings in the tones of Isaiah's clarion voice; trembles in the solemn cadences of Jeremiah; tunes the harp of the sweet singer of Israel; makes the Epistle to the Romans “logic on fire;” that to the Hebrews the living, burning commentary on Old Testament institutions; made Peter the impersonation of Divine authority and power; sustained John amidst the appalling scenes of the crucifixion; and was the guardian angel that upheld—

“The forms that strayed
Latest 'neath Calvary's awful shade!”

should make the Ambassador for Christ even now the embodiment of Isaiah's fire, Jeremiah's tears, the sublime strains of David, the logic of Paul, the living exegete of the typical dispensation, the awful earnest-

ness of Peter, the quiet undying love of John, and the devotion of those who were—

“Last at the Cross, and earliest at the grave.”

It needs hardly be added that, in all preliminary study and practice referring to delivery, the preacher must abide in *communion* with the Holy Ghost. He is not sufficient of himself for the least of the exercises of self-culture pre-requisite to just pulpit action. The teachers of elocution, with all their diligence, cannot make him independent of the Spirit's aid in practising aright the rules of art relating to delivery, nor in studying aright the philosophy of voice and gesture. No appliances, whether simply natural or artistic, can effect anything of themselves. They may suffice for the orators of the world, but they come infinitely short of meeting the necessities of preachers. As far as preparatory practice for pulpit delivery proceeds on the contrary supposition, its failure is inevitable. Just as many of the tunes that are sung in the sanctuary do not contribute a particle, although they are good music, to devotion or worship, simply because, having been hewn out of oratorios or operas, they have in them the spirit of the oratorio or the opera and not the spirit of devotion, the spirit of music and not the spirit of worship; so elocutionary exercises which might serve well the purposes of the actor, or the secular orator, and fit him admirably to grace the stage or the platform, would fatally impair the influence of preachers, simply because such de-

livery could not be chosen by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of impressing men's minds with the solemn and sublime verities that are embraced by the Christian's faith. A stage delivery is an intolerable incongruity in the pulpit. It must be so. It is an offence, a glaring disrespect of the Spirit of God, whose aid it declines. Let not the ministers of the Word forget for a moment the sacred and intimate relations—relations never for a moment suspended—between the work of their office and the high prerogatives of the Holy Spirit in the economy of the gospel.

Having thus insisted, not too strongly, I think, on the necessity of having the Spirit's aid and guidance in the delivery of a sermon, I pass on to say that, as to the *particular points* demanding attention in cultivating delivery, there is no substantial difference between preaching and other kinds of public eloquence. Preachers cannot be too well acquainted with the principles of emphasis, the science of the passions, their inter-relations with each other, and how they naturally express themselves in the tones of the voice, the looks, the movements, and the attitudes of the body. The spirituality of pulpit action, the agency of the Holy Ghost in it, interfere in no degree with the highest culture of it. On the contrary, they favor and promote it. It is one of the proper designs of the Spirit's influence to secure attention to it as far as possible. It is one of the ends to which He lends His aid, and it is not of Him that preachers have been inclined to neglect the scientific study of elocution.

Under the heads of *voice* and *gesture* much may be said that pertains to the delivery of a sermon. The human voice and the human mind, both inscrutable marvels of the Divine handiwork, were made for each other. The voice surpasses in its capabilities any musical instrument the ingenious hand of man ever constructed. Perhaps the violin is capable of being brought nearer to the soul than any other instrument. The harp and the guitar resemble it in this particular, but the voice is superior even to "David's harp of solemn sound." The thrilling effect produced by instruments is, after all, restricted to the influence of the sound on the mind through the brain and nervous system. But the human voice can do, by mere sound, all that an instrument can do, and at the same time utter words which have the mysterious power of attacking at once the portals of the intellect. Of course, the voice reaches the mind through the brain and nervous system, but it comes both as a voice producing all the effects of the sounds of a musical instrument, and then as a word containing a positive and definite idea. What a pity it is that so many ministers of the gospel of Christ neglect the voice, yea, even terribly abuse it! Some deliver what they have to say in a loud unmeaning yell; others in a sepulchral groan; others still, in two or three different keys, changing from one to the other without any reason. In conversation in the shops, on the street, in the market-place, the voice exerts its normal power. In rage, in joy, in fear, in pleading, or in the sports of children, it is heard, and

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it is effective. If some preachers would only be a little more natural in the pulpit, use their voices more naturally, and not talk, or rather scream, in an acquired *fulsetto*, their sermons would have much better effect. It is a pity that a man should take the pains and perform the labor of preparing a good sermon, and then spoil it all in the delivery.

One of the most common faults is a strained and *continuous emphasis* on all things, great and small. In such cases the voice not only adds nothing to the idea, but actually detracts from its power. As a consequence, many preachers produce less effect by preaching their sermons, than would be produced by the perusal of them in silence if they were printed.

“The voice all modes of passion can express
That marks the proper word with proper stress ;
But none emphatic can that actor call
Who lays an equal emphasis on all.”

All of which is as true of the preacher as of the actor.

A voice that continues in *one key*, however just the emphasis and delicate the inflection, will soon tire the hearer. Many a preacher, inattentive to his delivery at this point, is painfully monotonous without knowing it. Readers of sermons are specially liable to be at fault here—striking too high a key to begin with, and their method not admitting, in the succeeding parts of the sermon, of the varied and impassioned delivery of speakers. The late Dr. Liefchild left behind him these memoriter lines, having followed them many years in his own practice :

“Begin low,
Proceed slow,
Take fire,
Rise higher,
When most impressed
Be self-possessed.”

Young preachers whose habits are not yet formed—certainly not yet confirmed—will do well to give careful attention to the management of the voice, watching against every possible source of defect. A preacher should not speak *too slowly*, or he may become intolerably tedious. The hearer should never be able to arrive first at the end of a sentence, get the whole thought and then have to wait for the speaker to come up. Nor should he speak *too rapidly*, as young preachers are likely to do, or he may fail in distinctness. “If you wish to speak distinctly, so as to be heard with ease,” says one, “articulate carefully every consonant; the vowels will then take care of themselves.” “If you would speak distinctly,” says another, “give special clearness to the vowels, and all is secured.” A better way, it seems to me, would be to combine these two most excellent suggestions, and thus construct a rule which cannot fail of success.

Intelligent study, and patient practice will accomplish wonders in giving tone, power and accuracy to the voice. Nevertheless, as some minds, however cultivated, can never rival some other minds more highly endowed by the Creator, so some preachers are naturally at a disadvantage in respect of voice, and can never acquire, by any cultivation, the variety and

richness of tone with which God has blessed some others, as Spurgeon, the late Dr. Robert Newton, and our own Dr. Douglas, for example.

But the voice, with its wonderful modulations, is immeasurably aided by *gestures*. "No man," says Sidney Smith, "expresses warm and animated feelings with his mouth alone, but with his whole body. He articulates with every limb and joint, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices." The addition of fitting gesture to vocal expression greatly emphasizes and improves it. In St. Paul's address to Agrippa, what vivid, overcoming eloquence was added to his vocal utterances by his displaying his chains!—"Except these bonds!" How did Anthony intensify the words of his oration over the dead body of Cæsar, by uncovering it before the people, and telling over its wounds one by one! What overwhelming force of eloquence was given to the peroration of Burke's speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, when, with streaming eyes and flushed countenance, he raised his hands with the documents in them, as a testimony to Heaven of the guilt of the accused! Mrs. Siddons declared that all the terror and pity she had ever seen represented on the stage sank into insignificance before the scene she had just beheld. Mrs. Sheridan fainted; and the stern Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, was observed, for once in his life, to shed a tear. What would Whitefield's apostrophe to the attendant angel have been, abstracting his stamp of the foot, his lifting up his imploring hands and his eyes suffused with

tears, compared with what it was by virtue of the accompanying gesticulation? How far violent, or very demonstrative, action may have place in preaching, without indecorum, no rule can determine. Whitefield was often exceedingly demonstrative, but, so far as we know, never undignified or ungraceful. The severest criticism, that of Hume, Chesterfield, Franklin, Garrick, gave it transcendent praise. How vehement was the delivery of Chalmers! How terrible that of Knox! How lion-like that of Luther! Each was a mighty man of God, an eminent vehicle of the power of the Holy Ghost. A celebrated preacher of the last century, Dr. Mason, began a sermon on "Bondage through fear of death" (Heb. ii. 15) by loud raps on the pulpit, personating one rapping at the door—a messenger from the world of spirits. His manner was, in the highest degree, bold and dramatic throughout, but of unexceptionable propriety. He first dramatized the death-bed scene of one who died in his sins, and then that of a triumphant believer. His manner was to the last in keeping with the surprising outset. Yet a hearer, of fine taste and culture, testified that he saw nothing amiss in that very unusual instance of pulpit elocution.

In gesticulation there is danger of falling into awkward, absurd or ludicrous *mannerisms*. It is no matter for wonder that there are such mannerisms; it is wonderful to miss them. It is wonderful to listen to, and observe, such a man as John B. Gough, a score of evenings in succession, and never see in all his extrava-

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gant gesticulation the slightest awkwardness or affectation. Nothing will account for it but his complete and sustained abandonment to the spirit of his address. Preachers are not always so successful. One brings his elbows to his sides as if pinioned, and joins the tips of his thumbs and forefingers; another uses the palm of one hand as an anvil and sledges it with the finger or palm of the other; another at certain intervals twitches his collar, or runs his fingers through his hair; another rises now and then on tip-toe, or bends his knees and brings himself up again with a jerk; another lets himself down first on this side, and then on that, as if each leg were shorter than the other; another hangs on to his coat fronts with both hands, as if it were necessary to hold himself down; another finds much worse use for his hands by thrusting them into his pockets, and not his coat or vest pockets either; and another directs his eyes to the ceiling as if he were addressing the angels, or looks about as if he were preaching to the walls, or glances down the aisles or out of the windows, but never at the people. There is one of our own preachers who preaches without notes, or, at least, used to do so, but made me believe that he had notes hidden under the Bible, by a strange fashion of lifting one side of the Bible at each pause in the discourse, and stooping down to examine the cushion. When once I had the privilege of listening to the noble eloquence of the great Dr. Duff, I could not help laughing at his ludicrous habit of chafing his left side with his stiffened arm until his coat skirt was

flapping in front, or dangling over his arm. But the mannerisms of the preachers are legion, and all detract, more or less, from the elegance and force of delivery.

But supposing that no preliminary culture has been omitted, and that nothing remains but delivery itself, what *method* should be followed in this part of preaching? The actual methods are three: reading, reciting, and extemporizing. Reserving the last for a moment, which of the first two should be preferred? Both reproduce a written discourse. Which does it in the better manner? Delivery by reading may rise to high excellence. Chalmers, certainly one of the most eloquent preachers of his age, or any age, was a reader. Melvil was a reader. Chapin, the Universalist, at one time confessedly the particular star of the New York pulpit, was a close reader. Farrar and Liddon are both readers. But the best style of delivery from manuscript is *mere reading*. The words are before the preacher's eye, but he does not think of them; he is not conscious of seeing them. The subject, with reference to its purpose, engrosses him, and he has no concern except through reading to possess his hearers of it, and compel them to yield to its force. Into his delivery, such as it is, he throws himself entirely. Let him be satisfied with that. If he attempt more his action will be defective, and his gestures, especially, awkward and ungraceful. You may see illustrative instances any Sabbath in certain churches, some of them, I am sorry to say, Methodist, where the preacher

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seems to think, and apparently is determined to demonstrate, that he can preach more effectively from manuscript than in any other way. Perhaps he can; then let him try to articulate, modulate and emphasize perfectly, at the same time keeping his hands still. Generally he is not satisfied to do that. Then see him gesticulating in one direction while he is looking in another; spreading forth his hands to the people while his eyes are on his paper. See his short, restricted, jerky motions; his hands raised above his head while he bends over the manuscript. It is all unnatural, and cannot be graceful or impressive. Melvil used no gestures. He depended entirely upon his magnificent voice and almost faultless enunciation. Precisely so was it with Chapin. He used no gestures, except now and then a slight emphasizing motion of the right hand. Chalmers' gestures were awkward, except when he could transfer his eyes wholly from his manuscript to his audience, on arriving at some committed or extemporized portion of his discourse. Punshon regarded himself as a reader, but every one who ever heard him knows that he read as if he did not, which other men cannot do. Neither Punshon nor Chalmers should be quoted in this connection. Their marvellous memories and other extraordinary abilities make them no exemplars for ninety-nine men in every hundred. Of Beecher's discourses, part is written and read, and part extemporized. Any one hearing him can easily compare good reading and good speaking. Every part of the sermon may be im-

pressive, but the most vivid impressions, beyond all comparison, are made by the unwritten parts. The eloquence of the body is something that cannot be dispensed with in a sermon without serious loss. It is a natural means of conveying glowing thoughts and feelings to the hearts of others. In private conversation it cannot be suppressed without effort, and without damage, much less in public discourse. Indeed, appeals, interrogatories, and apostrophes, and other elements of impassioned preaching, cannot be unaccompanied by gestures without spoiling their effect; nor in a sermon that is read, can appropriate gesticulation be attempted without spoiling that. To utter before an audience vehement language without vehement gestures would be quite as absurd as to lash one's self into a fury in the utterance of tame things. Moreover, if preachers would husband their resources for impressing their people, they should not deliver from manuscript on another account, namely, feelings favorable to a preacher will be produced in the minds of his auditors by their observing that he is depending upon the present play of his thoughts and help of God's Spirit for what he says, and not upon his paper.

The second method, *Reciting*, or memoriter discourse, has decided advantages over reading as far as delivery is concerned. The great disadvantage is the consumption of time (which could be better employed) in committing a sermon perfectly to memory; and, if not perfectly committed, it had better be read. For bad

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reciting is worse than even bad reading. The memoriter preacher, when not perfectly prepared, reveals to the penetrating gaze of a keen listener that blankness of facial expression which shows him engaged in the most intense introspection lest he should miss his way in his recollected sermon. This internal effort breaks the preacher's highest power over his audience. But when the sermon is so exactly and thoroughly memorized that to reproduce it the preacher has but to open his lips, his utterance being as spontaneous as his breathing, then he has all the advantage of getting into more immediate communion with his audience, looking directly into their inspiring eyes, reaping a rich harvest of reflex benefits from visible impressions made, and being at the same time entirely free and untrammelled for all appropriate gestures.

But neither in reading, nor in reciting, does the ideal of delivery reside, but in the third method, namely, *Extemporizing*. "Pleadings which are read," says Pliny, "lose all their force and warmth, and well nigh their very name, for they are things which the gestures of the speaker, his bold advances, his changes of position, and the activity of the body, in harmony with all the emotions of his mind, are wont at once to kindle and enforce. But the eyes and hands of one who reads, which are the main auxiliaries of delivery, are fettered, so that it is no wonder that the attention of the auditors flags, since it is sustained by no charm, and wakened by no excitement from without." (Lib. 2, Epist. 4.) It must never be forgotten that preach-

ing is not only for purposes of instruction, but also for persuading men to be reconciled to God. How would a lawyer succeed in persuading a jury by reading a plea? How would the politician succeed in swaying the masses at the hustings by reading a harangue? While an increasing number, perhaps, in the Methodist ministry, young men especially, who seem to lack confidence in the methods by which their fathers moved the country, are taking manuscripts into the pulpit, a rapidly increasing number of the clergymen of other denominations, who have been accustomed to read their sermons, and know the weakness of their method, are discarding the manuscript altogether. They carry into the pulpit no more than a carefully prepared plan, and leave the precise verbal expression to the time and the occasion. The advantages and disadvantages of the course are apparent at a glance. With regard to delivery the advantages are all on the one side. It is impossible to make one's *extempore* utterances as elaborate, and as correct rhetorically, as sentences which have been written and re-written with critical care; but at the same time, it is equally impossible to deliver a written sermon with the fervor and unction which belong to *extempore* discourse. When one reads from manuscript his attention is divided between his pages and his people; but when he is preaching extemporaneously, he finds his most powerful inspiration, next to that which he derives from the Spirit of God, in the faces of his hearers. The lights and shadows of his theme playing over the

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countenances of the people, the upright attitude, the fixed, earnest gaze, the trembling lip, perhaps the falling tear, will give him emotion and power in the act of preaching, additional to that supplied by the Divine Spirit, which nothing else can impart. Besides that, the varying expressions of the people's faces, if he is in a position to observe them, will furnish him with suggestions as to the most effective treatment of his theme, which no amount of study can afford. A written sermon always gets cold before Sunday. No matter how much fire we put into it during the week, the fire burns low when the time comes to deliver it. It is impossible to live over again the exact emotions that thrilled us when the ink was flowing fresh from the pen, and we become, therefore, to a greater or less extent, strangers to our own composition. On the other hand, when we speak to the faces and hearts of our people, we soon find ourselves *en rapport* with them, we feel ourselves to be in a kind of magnetic current, the message comes and goes, and by a kind of instinct we discover what train of thought, and what kind of expression, will be most effective.

Let me give the *testimony* of two very eminent and eloquent Presbyterian ministers of our own day. The Rev. Dr. Herrick Johnson, of Chicago, says, "The use of the manuscript is always a confession of weakness. The most forceful objection to it is that it cripples the preacher in pressing the truth home upon the hearers most directly and effectively." The Rev. Dr. Hoge, of Richmond, Virginia, speaking of his own practice and

experience, says, "I often wanted to break away from my manuscript during the progress of the sermon, feeling that in the heat of public address I could express my thought better, and also interject new and stronger thoughts than I had written out in the study. The minister who is tied up to a written discourse thereby prevents the fullest and freest operation of the Holy Ghost in the proclamation of the gospel. Somehow or other, I can hardly tell why, the manuscript clips the wings and prevents the highest spiritual flights. If my reputation as a preacher were to be staked on a given sermon, I would choose to think it out carefully while pacing the floor, trust to the hour for the language, and let a stenographer take it down as delivered." Such testimony from Presbyterian masters ought to have weight with all students of the art of preaching.

It may almost be asserted that in genuine extemporaneous discourse the *people* themselves do a large part of the preaching. That is to say, they project their wants into the speaker's heart, while he simply adapts his discourse to a satisfaction of those wants. The most fervid and the most effective sermons are preached in that way. We must talk from the heart to the heart. I can hardly advise the entire disuse of notes, although I use none myself; but I feel like advising that a grand bonfire be made of all our manuscripts, feeling persuaded that a good Providence will condone all errors of grammar, etc., for the larger amount of good accomplished. If we would have hot sermons we must throw away the inkstand. It must

occur to any one, from the very nature and object of preaching, that appeals and exhortations intended to reach the heart must spring warm and spontaneous from the heart. What we need in the pulpit just now is a larger confidence—a proper, intelligent confidence, in the promise of Him who said, "It shall be given you in that same hour *what* ye shall speak."

Edward Everett Hale has written very suggestively on "Extempore Speaking." He makes *seven points* which strike me as so valuable to beginners that I will quote them here: 1. Speak whenever any body is fool enough to ask you; speak anywhere; speak to fifty till you have well mastered stage fright. 2. Say nothing about yourself; address yourself suddenly and promptly to the subject. 3. Have one thing at least to say; do not try to fix it in words; be sure of the fact. 4. When you have said it, sit down. 5. If you have more than one thing to say, arrange the order. 6. Stick to your order. 7. Care nothing for the opinions of the people, but lose yourself in your cause. And he adds, "No man can speak well *extempore* who is not willing to make a fool of himself for his cause."

There are some, perhaps many, who avoid the extemporaneous style of delivery, on account of the great drafts which it makes upon the *nervous vitality* of the speaker. Without a doubt, the extemporaneous preacher is much more liable to be powerfully exercised, wrought upon, and wrought *up*, than the reader of sermons, and is more likely, therefore, to experience unpleasant reactions. Ministers of stupid temperament

—mere blocks of men—are in no great danger at this point. The more they rouse and bestir themselves, and make demands upon their sluggish vitality, the better it is for them, and the more useful they become. If there is one method that will draw them out more than another, that is the method they ought to pursue. But active, nervous, rapid men, enthusiasts in the ministry, whom a little trouble keeps awake at night, should guard themselves with jealous care and never make a useless or wasteful expenditure of their nerve power. They should certainly not waste their lightning on things of no account. One has said, "Better lose a pint of blood from your veins than have a nerve tapped." But, after all, this capability of nervous excitement in preaching is a most precious gift. As a talent, it is one of the very best. It may always be let loose in the delivery of sermons. The most powerful pulpit efforts known in all the churches are those which have been made extemporaneously by nervous natures set on fire by the Holy Ghost.

I now go on to say that it is against true art, against nature, and, of course, against the dominion of the Holy Spirit, in delivery, to put among preparatives for it a prescribed, or *premeditated*, scheme. To determine beforehand what the emphases, looks, gestures, are to be in particular parts; and, perhaps, to preactualize them in a rehearsal practised at the glass, would be preposterous. Just action in speaking cannot be anticipated. The time for it must indicate it. It is only the critical moment itself that can suggest

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it. It is contingent on the unimaginable futuritions and incidents of actual delivery. With a programme of action artistically perfect, the preacher would have no advantage. He could not carry it out justly. The very attempt to use it would disable him for proper elocution. And what art could conceal the art he would be trying to practise? And if the hearers must detect it, would not that itself be the surest testimony to its absurdity?

“Therefore, avaunt! all attitude and stare,
And start theatric practised at the glass!”

There should be no labor when speaking to carry out a scheme of delivery. The study of delivery then should be entirely forborne. At the time of speaking the preacher pays too much attention to his delivery if he pays any at all. The study is previous, like the educational training by which one is fitted for all particular art performances. A good pianist cannot think of graceful motions while his soul is engrossed with the music he is making. His motions are graceful, but grace was acquired by previous practice. So acts the accomplished preacher in delivering his discourse. He *has* studied delivery, but he is not studying it now.

It is absolutely essential to impressive delivery in the pulpit that the speaker be *unconscious of self*. Any flippancy, such as may be easily acquired by young men who do not maintain intimate communion with God, both in the study and in the pulpit; any affectations of voice or manner, which, whatever the

speaker may believe to the contrary, are readily perceived by the listener; any studied gesticulations, or attitudinizing, or tones modulated to an unnatural niceness, will reveal the fact that, even in the most impassioned parts of his address, he is not so lost in his subject but that he can think of himself, and will be fatal to spiritual impressions on the hearers. They see at once that he is concerned not only to impress the truth on the minds of his auditors, but also to acquire for himself the reputation of an orator. The Spirit of God alone, dwelling in the heart of the preacher and actuating him, can save him from those manifestations of self-consciousness and selfish ambitions that must seriously detract from his delivery; and, on the other hand, inspire him with the true dignity, humility, and holy earnestness that are becoming to the Ambassador for Christ in the pulpit, and give weight and authority to his words.

After proper self-culture in elocution, and renewing the requisite communion with the Holy Ghost, the only object of preliminary concern in reference to a particular instance of preaching, is to be *fully possessed* and thoroughly inspired by the subject and the occasion. This is a prime necessity of *all* eloquence. Let the preacher ruminates his subject over and over again, not committing the words he must repeat, with premeditated action; but working its meaning and strength into his soul, vitalizing himself with his subject in its length, and breadth, and depth, and height; let his heart be burdened with its importance; let him claim

the promised presence of Jesus ; let him arise before his audience conscious that he *is* an Ambassador for Christ, sent to treat with lost men ; that upon the effect of that hour's message hangs probably the eternal destiny of more than one of his hearers ; and he needs nothing more to ensure appropriate delivery.

It is impossible to prescribe a *standard* of action for all preachers. Beyond palpable, self-evident improprieties every preacher is a law unto himself. What would be a just measure to one would be a defective, or excessive and absurd one to another. The lion does not differ more from the lamb than preachers from one another in elocutionary gifts. In different preachers vehemence and gentleness, thunder and whisper, whirlwind and zephyr, are alike appropriate characteristics, as they are also very suitable and natural in the same preacher at different times. They are also alike acceptable to the Holy Ghost, who attempers His influences to the natures of His instruments, making them now as the softest breath, now as a rushing, mighty wind, and again as lightning and fire. There may be the sublimest form of spirituality in abundant and stormy action ; there may be nothing but the affectation of tenderness in a quiet, soft manner of speaking.

It follows that *imitation* can have no place in proper delivery. In the delivery, as well as in the invention, the disposition, the entire construction, and the finish of his discourse, the preacher is himself and not another. Without renouncing his own identity, he may

profit by observing excellences and faults in the elocution of others. He may thereby acquaint himself better with his own defects ; instruct himself better in the regulation of his voice, emphases and attitudes ; stimulate himself in studying the principles and philosophy of delivery ; but he could not but mar his own action by endeavoring to model it after that of another man. A tolerable speaker he might have become had he been content to be himself ; he has made himself an intolerable one by his pitiable emulation. In the editorial columns of a late English Methodist paper I found this sentence : " Successful imitations of Dr. Punshon no longer secure popularity." It seems, then, that England has been swept by a wave of that contemptible spirit of imitation that passed over us a few years ago, some of the effects of which are visible among us even yet. Certain peculiarities of hymn-reading, of gesture, and of prolonging the vocalization of certain sorts of words, that were interesting in him because they were original, became in his copyists " things for laughter, fleers and jeers," because they were only imitations, and poor at that. In his first ordination charge, delivered in the city of Kingston, as if he foresaw how ambitious but mistaken young men, like some he had seen laughed at in his own country, would seek to vault into greatness by aping *him* rather than by improving themselves, how earnestly he advised the young candidates for ordination to avoid being mere copyists and to form their own style ! If, admiring the delivery of a certain

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orator, his admirers seek to put it on, or any peculiarities of it, they will find it, or others will, a ludicrous misfit. But if they will heed advice such as Dr. Punshon gave, and scorn to be imitators even of the greatest, they may gather hints and stimulus from their *beau ideal*, and from every other source, to assist them in developing their own capabilities, make a right use of a model delivery, retain their own identity and dignity, and escape the anything but flattering animadversions that have visited the men, both in England and in Canada, who by riiiiing, siiiiiing, crooiiiiing, and *fizzling*, and in various other ways, have vainly endeavored to don the lion's skin !

Lorenzo Dow understood human nature in himself and in others. A young man who had heard his strange, weird, yet powerful sermons, was captivated by their grotesqueness, and effect upon the people, and sought an introduction. Said he, "Mr. Dow, I have heard you ten times ; I admire you, and I intend to imitate you." Said Dow, in a most solemn manner, apparently without noticing the possible double application of which his reply was capable, "Young man, if you imitate me you will go to the devil." And so, perhaps, he would. I advocate training—elocutionary training—but maintain that only that training is desirable which imparts its advantages without mutilating a man's own personality. "To thine own self be true; thou canst not then be false to any man," is a saying of the English dramatist which should never be

forgotten. I would venture to add: To thine own self be true; and thus thou canst best reverence God and benefit men.

It is a great error to imitate others to an extent that obscures one's own personality. Men may resemble each other in many things, but there are some things in which nature intended every man to differ from every other man. The training, education, or imitation, which obscures this radical difference is pernicious. Respiration, accent, intonation, rate of mental motion and of speech, number and character of gestures, and such like things, make up the personality of the man, and there is nothing so efficacious for him as to be himself. The polish and the pruning must be superficial, and subordinate to the man's individuality. The Great King does not intend that His Ambassadors should all be of the same pattern, nor that they should deliver His message in the same style. They exemplify the great truth that "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," (1 Cor. xii. 4.) How unlike Paul is James! How unlike John, the theologian, is the enthusiastic Peter! And how unlike the whole four are Jude and Matthew! Yet all these men were needed in the early Church to bring before the world the manifoldness of the grace and the gospel of God. This diversity in the Apostolic Church gave it much of its adaptation to meet the wants of the world, and under God was the means of its rapid progress. Those, therefore, who desire the progress of the Kingdom of God in the earth, will not

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seek to obliterate the differences that God has ordained among men, nor insist that all ministers should be after one model—that is, wave the hand, purse the mouth, and pronounce the word “sighing,” precisely as he does.

Let me merely mention two causes of bad delivery in the pulpit. The first is the *character* of the ordinary sermon, especially its deficiency in the oratorical element. The manner must take its stamp from the matter. Oratorical delivery requires an oration. If there be in a sermon no stirring thoughts, there can be no expressive countenance, no animated action. Let sermons, then, be made in presence of the thought that they are to be delivered to an audience of sinful men who are to be “plucked as a brand from the burning.” No field of thought in which the human mind can expatiate can furnish the tongue of the orator with such an exhaustless supply of moving, exciting, thrilling topics as the word of God and the stupendous themes which it unfolds. Not all the other departments of human life put together—politics, law, statesmanship, military affairs—have given to the world the amount of genuine oratory produced by the department of religion alone. Surely if the pulpit is deficient in true oratory it cannot be for lack of a subject.

The second source of bad delivery is the *preacher's place* in the sanctuary. He stands above, and at a distance from, the people, in a pulpit that conceals more than half his person. His position is no advantage to him in delivering his discourses. If an earnest

speaker, as Sidney Smith says, "articulates with every joint and limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices," how much is he curtailed of his means of bodily expression by the narrow enclosure in which he is confined, I might almost say "cribbed and coffined" as well. It is a great boon that in many places the pulpit has retired in favor of a simple desk, or a table, placed upon a platform. But on this ground springs up another evil in delivery. The occupant of the pulpit has not known always how to use aright his new-found liberty, and in the exuberance of his sense of freedom has gone skipping and tripping from side to side of the desk, nay, from end to end of the platform, to the sacrifice of ministerial dignity, not only, but to the destruction of manly eloquence also. There can be no objection to occasional changes of position, but when there is a constant perambulation of the platform, the audience will conclude that the preacher feels quite too much at home; and, especially if he be a *young* man, they will assign a reason for it not very complimentary to the preacher. A merely free-and-easy manner sometimes—a pretentious manner *always*—will array against a young man the prejudices of three-fourths of his congregation. An evidently modest, or even embarrassed, demeanor will always secure, in as large proportion, their sympathy, good-will and prayers. However a young preacher may choose to bear himself in the pulpit after his people have seen him and heard him a few times, by all means, on his first appearance before them, let him go with an un-

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assuming and unaffectedly modest mien, otherwise he will excite unfavorable feelings which will require much time, and much genuine good conduct, to remove. Too often that excellent impression which the young man sought so earnestly to make in his first sermon to his new people, has been unfortunately an impression of a very different character, which it took him half his term to overcome.

There is one good reason for standing beside the desk instead of behind it. In nine cases out of ten it is *too high*, either because the builder had no proper idea of what its height ought to be, or because it was made high for the accommodation of some brother accustomed to the use of manuscript or notes. No preacher with a good and natural manner of delivery can preach with comfort behind such a structure.

There is one more phase of this subject which I must present before I close. If, being at the conclusion of this lecture, it is consequently more likely to be retained in mind, its importance will justify the place I give it. I am more and more convinced that the delivery of a sermon should be marked by deep Christian *feeling*. The subject is one of extreme delicacy, without question. Nothing is more odious than an affectation of pathos; and nothing is more likely to be resented than an artificial attempt upon the emotions of the congregation. There must be emotion in every effective sermon—earnest, loving sympathy; but it will not do to *put* it in. The *falsetto* voice will not do. The artificial *tremolo*, however well executed, will not

answer the purpose. The make-believe that one is just about to burst into tears will accomplish no more. The tears themselves, when they come at command, will prove quite as futile. Even if all these expedients, or artifices, are resorted to in prayer (where last of all they should be attempted), when heads are bowed and eyes closed, and there are not the same facilities for observing as in the sermon, still they must fail. The disguise is too thin. The painted fire, though perfect as a work of art, will warm no one. Intelligent people must be repelled, and the Holy Spirit grieved, by devices so hypocritical and abominable. Young preachers cannot be too carefully on their guard against the least intrusion of elements of this kind in their delivery.

But emotion in preaching is one of the divinest, and one of the most potent influences in the world. *Heart power* is as essential as mind power. The Ambassador for Christ must represent both Sinai and Calvary. He must understand and *feel* the importance of human destiny. He must understand and *feel* the awfulness of human sin and danger. He must understand and *feel* something of the Infinite Love that interposed to save men from otherwise inevitable death. He must understand and *feel*

“ on what a slender thread
Hang everlasting things;
The eternal states of all the dead
Upon life's feeble strings.”

He must understand and *feel* how bitter must be the consequences of fatal neglect on the part of any of his

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hearers. And he must understand and *feel* his own grave and inexhaustible responsibility before his God. With such understanding and feeling he will have no need whatever for artifice or effort to supply him with emotional power in the delivery of his sermon.

The Bible is the best instructor as to how the message of God to His rebellious subjects should be delivered. It is very constant and earnest in its demands that the truth, and the truth always, should be spoken. It is also careful to teach how it should be declared—"Speaking the truth *in love*." (Ephes. iv. 15.) "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Sometimes the message of the man of God is a painful one. It will give pain, but he must give it utterance. It is like a surgical operation on a sensitive spirit. First of all, he should never utter it except when duty demands it. If there is a clear necessity, the most terrible truth will lose none of its sharpness, but it will lose its sting. It will wound but it will not exasperate. The truth does not harm. The spirit in which it is sometimes spoken does. I met a remark in my early Christian life, before I became a minister, that has always accompanied me as a warning, and I trust has done me much good all along the way of life, "We often spoil the good we seek to do, by doing it in our own spirit, rather than in the spirit of Christ." This remark will apply exactly to the work of preaching the gospel. "I gave it to them last night on 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell;' I

gave it to them." So said a young preacher somewhat flippantly, as if he rejoiced in having performed an exploit, to a friend of maturer years and tenderer heart. The instant, earnest reply was, "O, my brother, did you do it tenderly?"

The only right way is to speak the truth in love. The whole counsel of God must be declared, but it must be declared in the most melting mood of soul. One preacher said that he could "preach the doom of the wicked, leaning over the mouth of the pit, and never shrinking from the awful vision." Such preaching of this dreadful truth never brings the sinner to his Saviour. The heart is hardened against the hardened heart that so coldly and sternly proclaims his doom. The

"Hash them, slash them, all to pieces dash them"

style will never, never do any good in the pulpit. Far wiser is the style advised by one of the tenderest and truest men that ever stood in the sacred desk, "Never preach hell unless you feel your tears hissing on its burning gates." Such preaching awes and melts, convinces and converts.

It was this spirit of love that made the awful truths so vigorously proclaimed by ministers of the olden time so mighty through God in the awakening and conversion of sinners. Some say that there is less of hell and punishment preached now than formerly. This I doubt. But if less, then it is because there is less of faith and love in the ministry. The passionate

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pleadings of Baxter, of Whitefield, of Wesley, of Benson, of Edwards, of Cookman, are still heard in many a pulpit, warm, faithful, affectionate, true.

I suppose that no more *terrible sermons* were ever preached on this continent, nor, perhaps, on this planet, than those of Edwards. They have been denounced as harsh and cruel, and critics, reading them, have wondered how he dared frighten people with such horrible pictures of the state of the lost, and what made his hearers grasp their pew doors in their agony, and cry out, "Is there no hope?" It was not the truth that overwhelmed them, it was the spirit in which it was spoken. It was the visible concern of the great soul of a great man racked with an agony of anxiety lest some of his people should be lost. All his preaching was wrought in love. He was himself melted into tenderness by the "Spirit of burning."

All great revivalists have this same spirit of tender love as a characteristic of their preaching. Every one of them preaches the plainest and sternest doctrines. They never shrink from portraying the state and future of the wicked. They believe in present and not future probation, in the present and no future moment; in everlasting hell and everlasting burnings. They preach these doctrines boldly, ceaselessly. What makes them differ from less successful preachers? Two great things—they *believe* their own words with all their heart, might, mind, and strength, and they *feel* their message a burden of crushing weight. "How shall I save sinners from hell?" This weighs them

down. They go before their congregations full of sad sincerity. The thought of how they hold their hands, or intone their words, never comes to them in the act of preaching. Nor is there anything intended to draw admiring eyes to themselves. All hearers see their self-forgetfulness, and feel the love gushing through every awful truth they are compelled to proclaim. The papers copy their words, and mockers sneer at them. But those who heard the words were melted by them, or awed into silence if not into submission. The very phrases criticised as harsh, were not harsh as they were spoken, but loving and true.

There are those who do speak the truth *harshly*. They fancy that the sins that are brought to their notice must be sternly handled. They must cut up the offence by the roots. They must put down the offender instantly, openly, firmly. They set their teeth, straighten their backs, and proceed to discipline the transgressor. Such ministers are often the best of men in all respects save one. They have integrity, courage, consistency, everything but love. We have heard of one such who disciplined about half his church out of it, not by the truth he enforced, but by his harsh, and merely *just*, way of applying it. This cold, hard, relentless way of dispensing the truth is not scriptural. It is the opposite of God's way. It is not Christ-like. It must have been of a preacher of this spirit that the remark was made, "He serves the Lord as if the devil were in him."

In the spirit of love alone can the truth prevail.

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The preacher must remember this. He must love the sinner, and make him feel that he loves him while he tells him plainly all his sin. Let him spare no error, but be harsh with no errorist. It is far easier to denounce than to persuade. On this account there is a temptation to employ the flail too freely.

Young brethren, be faithful to the truth, the whole truth. Never fear to preach it. The world will rot without it. Sinners must perish if they do not obey it. But it must be spoken in love. Fearless, yet affectionate, courageous, yet kind, never compromising never vindictive, you, and the truth you are ordered by God to utter, will be alike successful. The sinful will receive the truth, and will ultimately acknowledge the excellency of the spirit in which you have proclaimed it. In the deepest love and self-forgetfulness set forth Christ's most solemn and most winning truths, crying always—

“ O arm me with the mind,
 Meek Lamb, that was in Thee,
 And let my knowing zeal be joined
 With perfect charity.

O let me learn the art
 With meekness to reprove,
 To hate the sin with all my heart
 And still th sinner love.”

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The Ambassador for Christ.

LECTURE IV.—THE RESULTS.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.—*James*.

He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way hath won a crown,

“Compared with which,
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.”

—*Dr. Porter*.

Lord, if at thy command
The word of life we sow,
Watered by thy Almighty hand
The seed shall surely grow.—*Wesley*.

And is it to be so at last?

All our life-work disclosed and tried!
In memory of the faithless past

Who may the stern assize abide?

Those who, on Sion's sure foundation old,

Build steadfast, day by day, the silver and the gold.

—*Punshon*.

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LECTURE IV.—THE RESULTS.

I COME now, my young brethren, to the last lecture of this series. I am to speak to you to-day of the *Results* which follow, or may be expected to follow, the faithful fulfilment of the Divine Ambassage. I admit that the title of this lecture is so comprehensive as to be somewhat indefinite, yet I protest that it has not been selected for the reason for which, as I said in a previous lecture, certain texts for sermons are chosen, namely, because "I can say anything on that," but simply because under such a heading I can properly group a number of points to which I must call your attention, and which cannot be omitted from any series of *Lectures on Preaching* without rendering them seriously defective and incomplete.

First of all, there must be on the part of every Heaven-sent Ambassador the confident *expectation* of Results. Heaven's blessing on his efforts is one of the ways by which he is accredited as a Messenger of God. Christ's sublime and unrevoked command is "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway,

even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) And it is declared as a matter of history that "they went forth, and preached, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following." (Matt. xvi. 20.) Results, then, in a greater or less degree, are a reasonable expectation.

A minister of the gospel, now laboring in Ontario, said a little while ago, in a company of ministers, "I do not look for results; I have nothing to do with them. I preach the gospel and leave results with God." It does not require a prophet's insight to predict a fruitless ministry in such a case. There is an absence of faith—faith in himself, as well as faith in God—that is necessary to success. I say faith in himself. "Do you see that star?" said Napoleon, as he pointed to the mid-day heavens, to one who asked him the secret of his unvarying success. "No," was, of course, the only possible reply. "But *I* see it," said Napoleon. And as long as that great soldier saw the star of his destiny in the ascendant, he was invincible; but when he lost faith in his star he became weak as another man. Such wonders faith can do—natural faith. Faith in a strong cause, in adequate instrumentalities, in hard work, will go a long way towards crowning the earnest laborer's efforts with complete success. The Ambassador for Christ, strong in the goodness of his cause, with his back to the throne of God, and his feet planted on the rock of truth, may expect to triumph. But the gift of power through the Holy Ghost, promised to the preachers of the gospel,

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and available to every one of them, makes success in winning souls to Christ a certainty. Happy is that minister who, while He makes in God's name his proclamation, is taught by his theology that there is nothing to stand in the way of his success but the unwillingness and sinfulness of the human heart; for although that is much, yet it is a source of confidence to know that there is nothing more—no discriminating decree, no partial atoning merit, no withholding of the effectual, irresistible grace. Doubtless, one reason why Methodism has been, from the beginning until now, such a mighty agency for evangelism, is that Methodist theology teaches all its heralds that it is God's will and their privilege to make the gospel victorious on every occasion. Indeed, the sentiment prevails in Methodist circles that if preaching is not followed by the reconciliation of rebel souls to their God and King, it is not the gospel that is preached, or he is not an authorized Ambassador who preaches it.

The *test of preaching* is the renewal and sanctification of the heart by the Holy Ghost. All other fruits are fictions. Does the preaching save souls? If not, it is barren theology—perhaps false theology. It may be eloquent; it may draw crowds; it may bring a large salary. But all *this* is naught without *that*. The Ambassador sent to effect the reconciliation of enemies must regard his mission as a failure if not successful in that, however imposing it may have been in other respects. The minister must aim at Results, and must obtain the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in

order thereto. His talent will avail naught without that gift; with that, it will do all things. The poorest will be rich with that power. The plainest, thus endowed, will be fairer than all his rivals. The rudest will be fiery-tongued if his lips have been touched with the live coal. It will not follow that every soul will be saved to whom the Message comes, nor that every sermon will certainly be a success in this direction, but such must be the general career. A heap of chaff called eloquent preaching has been piled up in the pulpits of the ages. God wants *effective* preaching; fighting, not dress parade; firing balls, not salutes—in a word, *execution*. The officers of the Lord's army, in the Day of Judgment, will be first examined. "Judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Pet. iv. 17.) Saved souls will be the stars of their rejoicing, and the shield of their defence.

The preacher should judge of the *quality* of his sermons by their effectiveness in saving souls. He should not be satisfied with his sermonizing until he sees it followed by such results. "That was a good sermon," is a remark that is very frequently made. Hearing the remark, however, we can have no conception of what the individual speaker means by it. Should we make enquiry we would get a different answer in every instance. Hearers of sermons differ endlessly in their estimates of what constitutes a good sermon. I have no objection to give mine. A good prescription by a physician is not merely one that is beautifully and correctly written out, nor one that is melodiously pro-

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nounced, but one that points out the medicine which counterworks the disease for the cure of which it is prescribed. A good direction for the lost and discouraged traveller is not a poetic description of the road he must pursue, and of the beauties of the country through which it takes its course, all accompanied by abundant and most graceful pointings this way and that; but it is rather a simple, clear account of the proper path—one that he can comprehend and remember, so that he shall not err therein. A good shot is not one accompanied by a terrific report, but one that centres the mark. So a good sermon is not one that is beautifully composed, logically arranged, and oratorically delivered only, but one that accomplishes the ends for which sermons are preached. Those ends are, to use the old and perfectly suitable phraseology, to convince and convert those who are in sin and out of Christ, and to build up believers in their most holy faith. Those are the ends which the Christian preacher should ever seek to reach in all his discourses. And the sermon that does this is, in very truth, a good sermon.

As an *admonition* to young preachers, and to show the estimate that unconverted persons themselves sometimes place upon fine sermons, let me relate an instance that occurred in the city in which I live. A shrewd but very worldly and wicked man accompanied his wife and daughters, who were members of the Church, to the House of God on Sunday morning, to hear a stranger who enjoyed the reputation of being a

very eloquent preacher. The sermon was one of the reverend gentleman's very finest efforts. The wife and daughters were greatly delighted. On the way home and at the dinner table, "splendid!" "eloquent!" "beautiful!" and other terms less elegant, were liberally employed to give expression to their admiration. At length the old gentleman exclaimed, "Now, I have heard enough about that sermon. I did not like it at all. That sermon never touched me. And any man that can fire away for a whole hour nothing but rockets, and never once hit a big old sinner like me, does not know the a, b, c about preaching the gospel." If that criticism was unjust, it may be classed with many another opinion respecting preachers and preaching, and allowed to go for nothing; but if it was just, then no more scathing or condemnatory criticism could possibly be pronounced on the work of the pulpit. Every good sermon will either so point out the evils of sin, on the one side, or the beauty of holiness, on the other, as to compel the unregenerate to see, either by direct showing or by contrast, that they are guilty and unhappy. It will be instinct with the unction of the Holy One, and brimful of the glad tidings of great joy, which will make the soul feel not only its own sinfulness, but especially the worth, the worthiness, and the love of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

But the genuine Ambassadors of the Lord Jesus, Christ are not all *equally successful* in accomplishing results in any given direction. One is an able expositor, another is a flaming exhorter. One is very instruc-

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tive in his preaching, and the souls of believers are made fat with the marrow of the gospel; while another succeeds more especially in laying the truth on the consciences of sinners and leading them to repentance. One enlarges the borders of Zion, another builds it up. One minister succeeds on his fields of labor because of a certain business tact and ability whereby all the *affairs* of his charge are kept in a prosperous condition; another has such admirable social qualities, and does such effective pastoral work, as to win many souls to the Lord's side. Each of these is specially useful in a certain domain of the Lord's work, but it would be impossible, even for a competent judge, to decide which does most, on the whole, for the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

In order to the largest aggregate of good results every minister of Christ should seek to become what has been called a *good-all-around* man—good preacher, good pastor, good business man, good in every department of his work. The specialist, is, as a rule, a failure in the regular pastorate. An English Wesleyan paper, speaking of such a one, says, "Three-fourths to one-half of his work is left undone, and leaves trouble and vexation to his successors. If a minister cannot preach well his congregations go down, and some successor has to fetch them up again. If the business of the circuit is neglected, it makes an easy time for the sluggard, but his successor has to suffer for it. If a minister is always visiting, and never in his study, he, by his mistaken zeal, makes his successor unpopular."

Now, it is the duty of every man to be faithful and effective in all things. He will be required to put forth much effort and practise much self-denial. If there is anything in his work that ought to be done, but to which he is disinclined, let him do that first and most heartily until he has conquered his disinclination. If there is anything that he is inclined to neglect, let him do that most thoroughly of all. He who loves to study and to preach will not be likely to neglect the pulpit. He who finds great pleasure in the society of his people will be a great visitor. He who loves Sunday-school work passionately will be in danger of making a hobby of it. So proclivities differ. But the visitor should drive himself, if necessary, into his study. The preacher and student should force himself to go conscientiously from house to house. And although business and finances are the *bête noir* of many a good man, yet for the sake of the Master's kingdom let him take up his Cross, and, like the Master Himself, learn obedience by the things which he suffers.

But all ministerial excellence, particular and general, must be trained and directed to the one great end—the salvation of lost men. The fisherman is not content with the paraphernalia of his business. He may even be able to manufacture them himself—the best of nets, rods, lines, and hooks—but, not catching anything, he is only an artisan, or a merchant, and not a fisherman. So the fisher of men must be satisfied with nothing short of Results, and for these seek every

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possible personal excellence, and upon all, and over all, the efficacious energy of the Holy Ghost.

“ In the still air the music lies unheard,
 In the rough marble beauty lies unseen ;
 To make the music and the beauty needs
 The master's touch, the sculptor's chisel keen.
 Great Master, touch us with Thy skilful hand.”

I must now speak in particular of the Results which follow a faithful performance of his duty by the Ambassador for Christ. And, first of all, it is to be said, and it is a grateful and joyful task to say it, that *his own soul will prosper* abundantly while he is doing his Lord's work. It is a divine axiom that “ he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” (Prov. xi. 25.) While it is true of every Christian, it is emphatically so of the Christian minister, that *his path* is as “ the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. iv. 18.)

Whatever may be to others the results of his labors, even though they should prove a savor of death unto death, the effect with regard to himself will be certain and glorious. He shall not only rise in the Divine favor, but there will also be within himself a development and *growth* of all his spiritual faculties. His own views of the truths he is endeavoring to unfold will be wonderfully clarified, and his grasp of them greatly strengthened ; his own faith will be increased, and his gifts and graces matured ; he shall be *planted* in the house of the Lord, and he shall go from strength to strength till he appears in Zion before God.

It seems to me that no faithful worker can fail to observe how endeavors to simplify the way of faith to a seeker make it *clearer* to his own mind; how expositions of the nobleness of Christian purity and integrity in circumstances that try men's souls, re-act on himself and enable him to play the magnanimous part in times of trial; and even how homilies on the folly, guilt and danger of sin, and exhortations to turn from it, and thus escape its penalties, are constantly intensifying his own revulsion from it, and imparting to himself higher power to overcome its solicitations. But, besides all this, while he is "handling the word of God," not "deceitfully," but honestly, and with singleness of purpose, and is reaping such a rich harvest of reflex benefits, among them there is another most important advantage, namely, the truth pervades more and more his whole nature and he becomes *inspired* by it. By inspiration of the truth I do not mean, simply, conceptions of truth and correct views of it. The preacher may conceive of truth very clearly, and understand it as a great system very comprehensively, and yet be destitute of that inspiration of truth that is necessary to its highest power. Some of the best theologians are poor preachers. By the inspiration of truth, as an element of power in the pulpit, I mean those strong convictions of truth which make it a living presence in the inmost soul of the minister at God's altar; truth going down to the depths of the immortal spirit, and powerfully touching all the springs of its action; so that the preacher knows,

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in this deeper sense, whereof he testifies. Then, in the words of the Apostle, he speaks "with much assurance." Until the truth is thus inwrought in the very soul of the preacher, he will lack one great element of power, and of healthy, holy influence over the world of minds and hearts around him. In order to possess this inspiration he must make the truth of God a part, so to speak, and a large part, of himself. This will account, to some extent at least, for the great success of the Methodist ministers of former years. They had not so much to read, and they read the Bible more, and read it as God's book. If they were not so familiar as their sons are with historical and classical allusions, and many other useful things, they certainly were very familiar with the truth of the Bible—with the very soul of truth. Having few other books, they lived on this one. It was their meat and drink, their salvation and power. They could point to the Bible, with its Cross, and exclaim, "By this we conquer!" The more ministers of the gospel frequent the grand and sublime temple of God's eternal truth, the more will they love it and be hallowed by it; and standing beneath its awful dome, they will feel in themselves, more and ever more, the concentration of its heavenly powers.

All the elements of true ministerial manhood, which I enumerated at some length in my first lecture, are wonderfully *susceptible of increase*, both as to intensity and productiveness. They are not found in full maturity at the beginning of spiritual life, nor yet at

the beginning of public ministerial life. More and more they come into possession as the Cross, with its bleeding victim, is apprehended, and the promises glowing in the light divine are appropriated. And they expand oftentimes both rapidly and satisfactorily, as the servant of God is absorbed, not with concern for himself, but for the people of his care. Moreover, his unremitting exertions here, even if unappreciated and ineffectual, so far as the indifferent of his flock are concerned, are all the while telling upon his eternal destiny, and building higher and higher his throne in glory, for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

"I count this thing to be grandly true,
That a righteous deed is a step toward God,
Lifting the soul from its common clod
To a purer air, and a clearer view.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round."

A second Result of the proclamation of the Divine Message, a result very different from what it ought to be, is its *rejection* by great numbers of those for whose benefit the proclamation is made. Week after week, year after year, the offer of salvation is made to dying men, and yet, strange to see, is as persistently rejected. There must be some sufficient reason, or reasons, to

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account for this fact. Every preacher should inquire most anxiously why it is that his labors are, to so large an extent, fruitless.

This lecture has to do with preaching and with the preacher, and only indirectly, therefore, with those to whom the Message is addressed, yet there are two causes, outside of the minister himself, of the ineffectiveness of preaching, which I desire to mention as briefly as possible.

First, and chiefly, the Gospel Message is rejected because of the *natural wickedness* of the human heart, and its disinclination to the obedience and unselfishness which Christianity requires. The race is in a state of rebellion, and is reluctant to be reconciled. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.)

Secondly, warnings and appeals fall powerless at the feet of the impenitent when there is a *discrepancy* between the religion that is described from the pulpit and that which is exemplified by those who occupy the pews. The lives of some (I admit that they are few comparatively) who profess religion are so inconsistent, and their characters so imperfect, that the effect upon those who are disposed to cavil is to keep them from the Cross, and to render the preaching of Christ unfruitful. It is not because truth ceases to be truth, nor, of necessity, because it is preached in a less vivid manner, but because there are so many preaching *against* the preacher. He is one; they are many.

His attempts to convince and persuade are counteracted by the lives of far too many who profess what is better, but do worse. But where the people of God are glowing with spiritual devotion to Him, and love to men, the result is very different; because then they are all preaching *with* the preacher, and surrounding his words with an atmosphere of warmth. Would that it were always so! Perhaps, my young brethren, the most serious hindrance and discouragement you will ever meet in the ministry of your lifetime will be the imperfect, to say the least, exemplifications of the faith, hope, and holiness of the Gospel which you proclaim from the pulpit.

But within the minister himself, or in his preaching, there *may* be found causes quite sufficient to produce that fruitlessness of his ministry over which he mourns; and to these he ought to give most serious heed.

In the first place, it may be that the preaching is not of an *awakening* character. The world, asleep in guilt, demands an awakening gospel. It has been too often assumed that sinners need a *teaching* pulpit, that they may know fully their sinfulness, and understand its consequences. It has even been assumed sometimes that they require an *entertaining* gospel; that their misapprehensions of the joyousness of religion may be removed. And fine scholars and attractive pulpit orators have concentrated their energies on one or both of these, and have utterly failed, because, chiefly, they have left out of account

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the profound slumbers of the human conscience. In the presence of the stupefying power of sin, the deep lethargy that has fallen upon human souls, how evidently are all literary prelections, all beguiling words, all soothing tones of truth, all perfunctory pulpiterring of any sort, utterly inadequate to awaken the world. No man can preach well who ignores these slumberings of conscience. No Bible teacher is doing evangelical work who does not know that his pupils are asleep, and must in some way be awakened. The "still small voice," it is true, may be charged with awakening power; the charm of love may reach sleepers on the brink of ruin; but the alarm must be sounded, the watchman must declare that the sword is coming, that he sees it coming, and in thunder tones call out to the people, "Awake! thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Ephesians v. 14.)

The work of God inevitably languishes whenever intellectual excitements, or pulpit amusements, take the place of alarms. Souls living in sin are moving off to eternal damnation for the want of an awakening gospel. This can come only from an awakened, vigilant watchman on the walls of Zion, thoroughly aroused to the fact that his people sleep while the fires of hell are flashing around them. Unless the minister is impressed by the reality of things, that men are locked in deathly slumbers, "while fiery billows roll beneath," his warning will be too feeble, and men will sleep on, rejecting his Message on every side.

Again, if the Divine Message is rejected, it may be that the preaching is of too *argumentative* a character. That may be the reason why it is not awakening. Argument has but little power to convince the unwilling, and none to persuade. There is a great deal of "foolishness" that is not the "foolishness of preaching;" and it has no promise of success as a means of converting sinners. Any argument in favor of the existence of a God, or of the reasonableness of a Bible doctrine, *used for the purpose of winning souls*, is a specimen of another "foolishness" than the "foolishness of preaching." Who doubts the existence of a God? "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm xiv. 1.) The man who preaches a sermon, or delivers an address, to convince an unbeliever of God's existence, sets himself to convince a fool by solid argument! His breath and strength are poorly spent. "Wisdom is too high for a fool." (Prov. xxiv. 7.) "As he that putteth a precious stone in a heap of stones, so is he that giveth honor to a fool." (Prov. xxvi. 8.) Even to one who believes that there is a God, but denies the scriptural view of Him, no argument for the correctness of that view equals the assertion, "Thus saith the Lord." No defence of Bible inspiration and accuracy, by the ablest religious scientist living, is likely to have such weight with an unbeliever, as would the declaration of Bible truth from the lips of a simple-hearted disciple, spoken as the oracles of God.

Nor is *controversial* preaching any more effective.

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Perhaps the most fruitless and profitless preaching of the day is that which is aimed at the refutation of sceptics who never heard, nor heard of, the preacher ; and the destruction of theories of whose existence nine-tenths of the hearers are totally unaware. It stings no conscience, it wounds no heart, it brings no sinner to Christ, it comforts no saint in sorrow. It is hard for "the wise," "the scribe," "the disputer of this world," to realize that this is so. Men who are fond of studies in the department of apologetics, and count themselves able to prove the existence of a God, the authenticity of the Scriptures, the general reasonableness of each evangelical doctrine, and, besides all this, to settle all the disputes about the philosophy of the Atonement, are unwilling to admit that all this line of effort is not in God's plan of saving souls ; that to win sinners to submission to God, His truth is to be simply declared, not defended ; that He asks no Uzzah to steady His ark lest it should totter and fall ; that He gives a power to the preacher which He denies to the philosopher ; and that, indeed, He has chosen "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Cor. i. 27.) But this, after all is God's way.

Discussing religion with sceptics is a poor business, a hopeless task. *Preaching* the truth to unbelievers is the way God approves for soul-saving. The experience of the more successful "fishers of men," of course, corresponds with the Bible as to which way is the better way of working. Some ministers count them-

selves "preachers," and declare God's truth as the words of the King. Some ministers count themselves "advocates," sent to defend God's words and ways, as if He were on trial before His peers. Only the preachers are wise to win souls.

"I want to argue one point of your sermon with you," said an unbeliever to the minister, as they came out of the church together one Sabbath morning. "I argue with no man," said the minister. "I *preach* the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." That minister has been permitted to rejoice in a ministry unusually successful in good results. Unreasonable as this may appear, it is the way God has ordained for soul-saving. Sinners must trust with their hearts, without waiting to have their heads convinced. Rebels must lay down their arms, instead of cavilling about the authority of the Ambassador.

In the great majority of cases, there is no time more completely lost than that which is spent in arguing with persons who, when approached with regard to the salvation of the soul, propose at once some theological conundrum. A collection of knotty questions is an armory to many persons out of which they select weapons to parry the shafts of truth. They have no real interest in their own questions. They never lost an hour's sleep over the whole of them. They never pined for their solution as the prisoner pines for freedom. They never thirsted for light on these dark problems,

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and it is only a waste of time to answer them at all.

How wisely the Lord Jesus dealt with such triflers when He met them! As soon as the woman of Samaria saw that He who sat at the well was a prophet of God, instantly, instead of inquiring the way of salvation for her own soul, she submitted to His decision a question in dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. Without answering her question, He addressed at once to her heart and conscience the truth that it most behooved her to understand. When Christ's words and works had begun to take effect in Peræa, the argumentative objector was on hand: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" How ridiculous! Unconcerned, though lost himself, but very anxious about the fate of the world! He obtained no answer to his question, but was promptly exhorted to agonize for his own soul. Imagine a cancer patient and a great physician sitting down together and discussing politics, science or agriculture, and not a word about the corroding, death-dealing ulcer! One of the rules regulating "Band Work," of which we hear somewhat in these days, wisely and peremptorily forbids arguing with those with whom conversation is held on the subject of salvation. Our Great Master's example will lead us to a similar practice. There is a time to argue and a time to refrain from argument. The time to refrain is when the Message of the King is delivered to rebel men, commanding them to be reconciled to God.

There are other possible causes of the rejection of the Divine Message, of which these that I have just given are specimens, upon which I have not time to dwell, but merely mention, namely :

The preaching may be adulterated with elements of *error*. God is not likely to bless false teaching to the salvation of men's souls. There is no doubt that the *truth* of the gospel has often been *nullified* by a deleterious admixture of error. Above all things, let the interpretation of God's truth be *true*. From the leaven of Plymouthism, Pre-millenarianism, and Rationalism, good Lord deliver us !

Again, preaching may fail in effectiveness by reason of a *want of adaptation* to the occasion, or to the circumstances of the hearers. I have often heard sermons at camp-meetings and in revival services that were most erudite and eloquent—good sermons in all their dimensions, length, breadth and depth, and yet, from lack of *point* or appropriateness, utterly powerless and fruitless. A preacher's literary taste may tempt him to use a style of language which his conscience condemns as unsuited to the capacity of his hearers. Or, on the other hand, the readiness of some hearers to applaud clap-trap, and even slang, may tempt him to the use of language utterly unsuited to the pulpit. The tendency to adopt the style of the "Rev. Sam Jones" is one of the ephemeral dangers of the day. Wesley employed language of beautiful propriety and accuracy, yet he preached in a familiar, conversational manner. The ignorant, illiterate miner

heard the gospel in his own speech. Preach in the tongue of the street, the mart, and the factory, and your message will be understood and appreciated; but avoid slang and soot, or hearers of refined feeling will be repelled, and perhaps, on that account, remain without good impressions.

Again, there is sometimes a *harshness* in presenting truth that effectually obstructs its way to the mind of the unconverted. I dwelt at some length on this matter in speaking of the delivery of a sermon, but as it is a point of paramount importance, and as it pertains exactly to the subject now under discussion, I mention it again. If a minister of Christ suffers himself to become impatient, sour, sarcastic, caustic, let him not be surprised if his people catch his spirit and refuse to accept the proffer of love and reconciliation from his lips. It ill befits the dignity of an Ambassador to be scolding and fuming at men because they disregard his message, or even insult his Royal Master. Such conduct only disgraces the Ambassador and the Power which he represents. He should perform his errand with dignity and firmness, yet with gentleness and tenderness. If the gospel is thus offered to men as full of divine love, told in winning words, clothed in attractive forms, it will be accepted by many a man who would certainly reject it if it were scolded at him. The solemn truth must be declared, of course. We all believe in an old-fashioned Bible, but preached in a new-fashioned manner. The gospel is the gladdest news that ever came to sin-stricken humanity, and it ought

to be preached in the freshest and most solemnly joyful manner. When a man has other good news to tell, his whole face brightens up with joy; but when it is the grand news of the gospel, it is often delivered by the minister as if he were pronouncing his own funeral eulogy.

Just in this vicinity lies another cause of the ineffectiveness of preaching in the conversion of souls. Some sermons are altogether too *amusing* to be powerful. If God has given to any man an endowment of wit or humor, let him use his talent to the glory of the Giver. But this is a talent which none but a genius can safely bring into play in preaching. And, without controversy, not all the good men who occupy the pulpit are geniuses in this direction. The poor and bungling attempts at smartness and wit, now too frequently witnessed in the pulpit, are very disastrous in their effects on the hearer. Many a sermon, otherwise valuable, has been completely deprived of all spiritual influence by the introduction here and there of sayings supposed by the speaker to be very bright and clever. So far as I am aware there is no recorded instance of a witticism of any kind in the preaching of our Lord, or of His disciples. They seemed to think that their messages to the people were of an urgent and serious character, and they were not so solicitous of the admiration of those who listened to them from time to time, as to be induced to counter-balance the weight of their discourses by the introduction of light and trifling matter. When one who professes to be a Messenger

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from God, sent to warn men of appalling dangers, and to impress their minds with a suitable sense of those dangers, introduces pleasantries and jocularities into his warnings, he produces in the minds of others the inevitable conviction that he himself is not impressed with the thought of danger, and hence that the alarm is a false alarm. It must follow that the Messenger will be disregarded and his Message rejected.

Moreover, the conspicuous *lack* of any of those elements of Christian and ministerial *manliness* which I enumerated in my first lecture—intellect, good sense, culture, truth, sincerity, honor, fairness, dignity, humility, etc.—will divest any man's ministry of the power that is requisite to produce results in the conversion of souls, in any large degree.

But chiefly, so far as the minister himself is concerned, the *lack* of the *influence* of the *Holy Ghost* is the cause of the barrenness of his preaching. His strongest words will be weak indeed without the accompanying energy of the Divine Spirit. Man's "yea" to the claims of the gospel is not to be the "yea" of the jury box, extorted by external evidence, even against sympathies and inclinations; it is to be the "yea" of cheerful submission and trusting obedience. This is to be brought about, not by force of argument, nor flights of oratory, but by Divine influence; "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) The urgent need of the world to-day is an increase of the number of witnesses for Christ who have received the pentecostal baptism.

The Church is not lacking in genius or scholarship, but neither of these, nay, not even both of them combined, can produce the effects which follow the simplest testimony spoken in the power of the Holy Ghost. We do not depreciate learning. When it is consecrated to the Lord, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, it is inestimable. But if the choice must lie between learned men and living men, there can be no hesitation in our decision. For having, or not having this gift of power, the minister himself is responsible. It is promised. It is available constantly. With it he will go from conquering to conquer, not by reason of any might or skill that is in him, but because his hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. Without it his words will be the ordinary words of men, and sinners will not be converted.

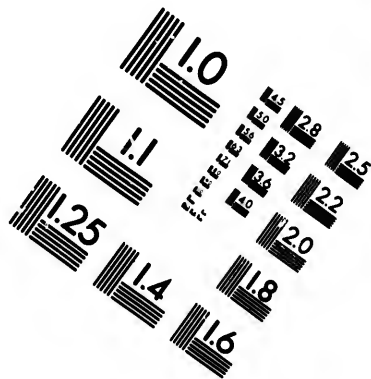
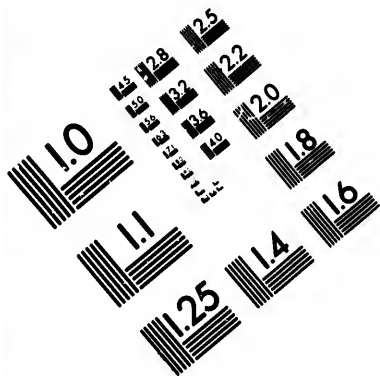
There is a peculiar *attractiveness* and impressiveness in sermons which, in any marked degree, are accompanied by the Divine influence; and men do not need to be converted in order to feel it. Their consciences may be alarmed, their fears excited, their hearts troubled, sleep banished from their eyes; yet, even while they withstand the invisible power, they are strangely attracted towards it. Witness the crowded congregations that almost invariably attend the services of the Methodist churches on Sunday evenings, when, as a rule, the minister delivers his most vigorous onslaughts upon sin, and his most conscience-probing and alarming warnings to imperilled souls. The unconverted will throng the places where the Gospel

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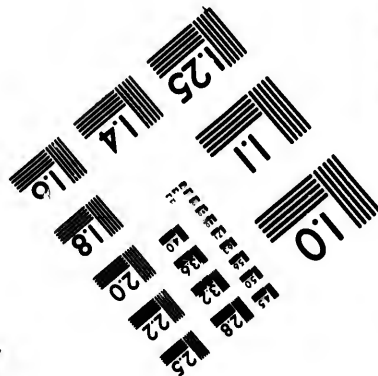
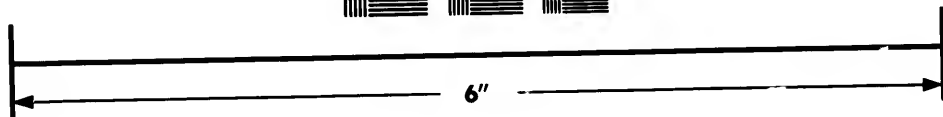
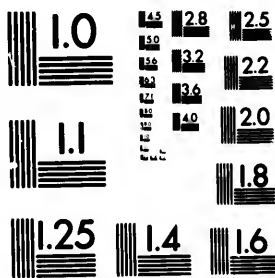
is preached in demonstration of the Spirit. They cannot be frightened away. Sin's alarms, louder than the rumblings and re-echoings of mountain thunders, may be made to ring in the chambers of their souls, but, with profound respect for the faithful man who declares God's truth, and under a sort of fascination for the preaching of one who, while he tells them of their danger, shows them also the way of escape, they will continue to frequent the church and the services where God reveals His presence and power. On the other hand, there is no preaching that is more certain to repel, in the long run, than that which, though it may be adorned with all the graces of scholarship and oratory, is destitute of the power of the Spirit. It is useless to defend preaching, as preaching, when it is emphatically of this kind. People will get tired of it, and it is simply of no avail to tell them that they ought to go and hear it, or to lament that they disregard it or scoff at it.

Noah Webster, the dictionary maker, said: "I like to hear a preacher who makes me feel that the devil is after me." The expression is somewhat rough, but it describes very nearly the true ideal of preaching. Very few of the ministers of any denomination can afford to give their time and their life to an attempt to delve to the bottom of all Christian scholarship. At least three-fourths of the preachers and the preaching should be evangelistic, directly denouncing God's wrath on sinners and proclaiming the provisions of mercy. Not more learning, so much as more of the evangelistic spirit, is needed.





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But what is the faithful Ambassador to do when his Message is rejected? He must one day render an account to the Sovereign who commissioned him of the manner in which he has performed the duty assigned him. What must he do now? First of all, let him carefully and honestly consider whether the cause of the impenitence of those sinners who continue to listen to his preaching is in himself, either his personal character, or his preaching. If he find it in his own lack of visible, exemplary piety, let me say solemnly, that the penitent's altar of prayer is the place for him, until, by the grace of God, he is able to walk as a Christian among his people. He can do no one any good, excepting those saintly ones whose charity will cover any multitude of sins, and he will be a constant grief even to them. I am sorry to say that I am not now speaking of a state of things that can be imagined, but which we may not expect to find in actual life. Too often we see the work of the ministry in hands that are not doing it at all, or, at least, are not doing it well, simply because of dispositions, or actions, or both, which do not comport with the ministerial vocation. The minister's "calling" should be apparent in the mind, life, temper, and purpose of the man. "What manner of person *ought*" a man to be, "in all holy conversation and godliness," who is placed among men to be an accepted teacher and leader in holy things? The necessity of personal, visible godliness in the minister, in order to win sinners to Christ, will be recognized at once by all, but we cannot expect young

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men to appreciate it fully at the beginning. It takes time and experience to unfold to them the far-reaching interests that centre in the religious life of both ministers and members of the Church. But if there is not in the young man who has entered upon the Christian ministry, or has it in view, a constant growth in true manliness, and sincere piety, and self-denying interest in the good of those around him, so that he shall be marked by all as a man of worthy Christian life, he cannot reasonably expect to be a successful minister of Christ. We do not expect the result of long experience in a young man, but we do expect some manifestation of moral and religious power in any man outside the pulpit, or he cannot be a power when he is in it.

If, however, the preacher find reason to suspect that the weakness of his ministry is in the character of his preaching, then let him give all diligence to remedy, by every means in his power, so serious a defect. Let him lay aside his own cherished notions, if need be; consider advice from friends or foes; accept suggestions from the wisest and best of his people; above all, lay hold on Divine aid, and he will commend himself to God and men as a faithful steward, so that if sinners are not converted the fault will not lie with him.

But has a good man, and good preacher, finished his work when he has faithfully and repeatedly proclaimed the message of mercy? Has he exhausted his resources for effecting the reconciliation of rebel men to God, by

preaching alone? I think not. God does not deal with men in congregations—in masses. Guilt is an individual thing, and character in any congregation is endlessly varied. The Spirit of God strives with individuals alone. Sinners are not saved by regiments. Of the three thousand who were converted on that historic day in Jerusalem, each one repented for himself, and each one by a personal faith laid hold upon the risen Christ. The New Testament treats abundantly of personal labors with individual sinners. Andrew "findeth his own brother Simon," "and he brought him to Jesus." (John i. 41, 42.) Peter goes to the house of Cornelius to instruct him in the way of salvation. Philip expounds Isaiah on the Messiah to the treasurer of the Ethiopian Queen, as they were riding together in a carriage. The great Bible-class of Aquila and Priscilla consisted of only one person, the eloquent Apollos. Dr. T. L. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, tells us that nearly all the converting work done in his church has been done by personal contact with souls. Of the more than three thousand persons received by him into Church-fellowship during his ministry, he says, "I have handled every stone." He is the honored author of that expressive term "hand-picked," now much used in reference to converts who have been led to Christ by personal, individual efforts.

It is only by *face-to-face work* that the labors of the pulpit can be completed. In many cases real impressions made will vanish unless they are followed up and deepened by personal interviews. A sermon that

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could not be delivered from the pulpit at all can be preached most appropriately at the fire-side. If a man is spoken to alone, he will take to himself what he would apply to another if they were side by side in a congregation. When a man is sought out for private conversation concerning the welfare of his soul, he feels that a mark of respect has been shown him, and his heart is open to receive the message as it would not be if he were addressed in common with hundreds of others. And still further, when an unconverted man is addressed in private, and in circumstances calculated to open his heart, he will be led to state his own feelings on the subject of religion, his objections and difficulties, if he has any, and thus afford the preacher a further opportunity of explaining and applying the truth which he has already announced publicly.

The friendly and affectionate attentions of the minister of the gospel to those who are estranged from God, are among the best means of conveying to them an idea of the compassionate love which dwells in His heart, who, by His servants, beseeches them to be reconciled to Him. It is only by face-to-face, heart-to-heart work of this kind that an Ambassador for Christ can fulfil the duties of his office. It was by laborious, well-done work, such as this, that St. Paul was enabled to say, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts xx. 26-27.)

I proceed now to speak of Results which follow the

publication of the Message of Reconciliation which are of a far happier character. While that message is rejected by some, it is gladly *accepted* by others. Here opens immediately a new sphere for ministerial labor and faithfulness. Penitents are to be pointed to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. This is one of the most delightful of the minister's tasks, and happy is he who has much of it to do.

A soul that is in darkness and is seeking the light must be *led*. It is very important to be able to guide such a one aright. It is, of course, the office of the Holy Ghost to enlighten, teach, and guide men, but for these purposes He makes use of the Word of God, read or expounded, and of converted men who have an experience of their own and are therefore competent to guide and comfort anxious souls in this crisis of their lives. They have to be told what they have not seen nor known on account of the darkness and ignorance in which they have been living. They have to be told and taught almost everything in connection with a Christian life. At first thought, it is astonishing how almost absolutely nothing is known, that is to say, *understood*, concerning salvation, by men who have been sitting, with apparent appreciativeness, all their lives, under the preaching of the gospel. But a religious life is an experience; and how can the most intelligent know matters of experience except by experience itself? All their preconceived notions of conversion are necessarily wrong, and yet those notions will occupy their minds as they come to the mercy-

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seat. Their thoughts will be absorbed by their past sins, their present feelings, the improbability of their future steadfastness, and a score of other things which tend only to discouragement and confusion. Penitents, without exception, have to be told and taught that in seeking the Lord they must attend to this question alone, "What does my Saviour Himself require of me now?" And they have to be taught, generally with much reiteration, that the penitent's whole present duty may be summed up in two brief words, first, "Come unto Me," and secondly, "Believe." Or, these scriptural requirements may be combined in one, "Yield yourself trustingly to the Lord Jesus." If they are left to themselves, without the aid of an experienced guide, they will try every expedient which Satan, or their own darkened minds, can suggest, before they will take the simple gospel plan; and not until they have passed through weeks, or months, or perhaps even years, of fruitless struggle, and have come to the borders of despair, will they accept of God's terms, the easy way of a trustful surrender to Him.

Penitents have to be taught that in returning to God they are coming to a *God of love*. This is a fact very difficult for them to realize. They have been living in sin, and for years they have been habituated to the impression that God is angry with them, and that there are good reasons why they should be afraid of Him. These impressions they carry with them to the mercy-seat, and under their influence they mistakenly suppose that only on the ground of pungent

sorrow on their part, and after many tears and entreaties, will God be induced to bestow upon them the pardon which they do not deserve. Now they have to be taught that God loves them, that He *has* loved them all the while; that as the sun is up before the sluggard and greets him when he rises, so while they were asleep during their long night of sin, God's love was shining over them, and will shine at once into the heart that is open to receive the light; that no tears, promises, or prayers are necessary to induce God to have mercy; that returning sinners have not to wait for Him one moment, but He, rather, "waits to be gracious," so that no penitent sinner needs stand one hour outside the door of mercy trying to reform more fully, or feel more deeply, or weep more bitterly, or break his heart more painfully, because through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, God will accept at once any sinner, however guilty, who will yield and trust.

But I have sometimes thought that it is no wonder that seeking sinners hesitate to embrace their privilege of instant abandonment of sin and instant acceptance of a Saviour, when I have seen experienced Christians, ministers and others, who were not slow to express their doubts of the genuineness of a work of grace when it seemed to them that the seeker found Christ too easily. I know that there are certain "believe-and-live" ideas of the way of salvation that are current in these days that are vitally erroneous and consequently misleading. There are teachers who address

the sinner, penitent or impenitent, in this wise, "Do you believe that Christ bore your sins in His own body on the tree?" Supposing the answer to be affirmative, their immediate reply is, "Then you are saved." They seem to put faith in a fact, or faith in a mere proposition, in the place of that acceptance of Jesus Christ as Master, and trust in Him as Saviour, which are indispensable to acceptance with God. Such faith as that is not accompanied by the Witness of the Spirit. Consequently, we find the teachers of this doctrine denying that there is any other Witness of the Spirit than the Word of God itself. They teach that the Word says that if one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as having borne his sins on the Cross, he is saved. He may have no other evidence than the Word. He must not expect any other. He must believe that he is saved, and he *is* saved. The Calvinistic ground of this teaching is very apparent. Of course, according to this creed, if Christ has borne the sins of any individual sinner, he is redeemed. He has only to believe a fact, and get the comfort of it. A person may be saved (if I may use that word) in this way, in a moment, at any time, without taking the cup of penitence, and even without renouncing his sins. This is only a specimen of the easy and expeditious ways of being saved which are taught in these days.

But this is not Methodist doctrine, nor is it scriptural. If God has promised the Witness of the Spirit, He will give the Witness of the Spirit, and those who undertake to instruct the anxious in the way of Salva-

tion should be careful not to tell them that they are saved, while yet the Holy Spirit has not given His attestation of the fact. Just at this crisis of the soul there is necessity of clear preaching respecting the love of God to the sinner, repentance, purposes of obedience, and faith in the atoning merit of Christ, in order that the seeker be led to a scriptural apprehension of Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Such instruction, however, does not require weeks, nor even days. The every-day instruction of the pulpit is to the effect that the *moment* the rebel lays down his arms and returns to his allegiance to his Divine Sovereign, he shall be pardoned. Such instruction is as good and true for revival as for other times; and no one needs suspect the genuineness of a sinner's conversion who kneels down in conscious guilt and rises in peace, a pardoned soul. Yet when such cases occur, unaccompanied by any marked manifestation of feeling, either of contrition, in the first place, or of joy, in the second place, ministers and others, as I have said, do sometimes suspect that the work is not thorough. I remember when six weeks was not thought too long for one to be under conviction for sin, if, at the end of that time, he came out with a clear, shining experience. That would be regarded as a very satisfactory case of thorough conversion. Later, two or three weeks was regarded by many as a proper length of time. The period of conviction appears to be contracting gradually, but yet there are many good people now who would not be quite satisfied with a case of

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conversion in which, after only a day or two of seeking, there should be a profession of change of heart; unless, indeed, there should have been meanwhile the exhibition of deep emotion. The idea seems to be that the operation of grace on the heart is like the action of chemicals upon the fabrics in a dyeing vat; that time must be given for the colors to *strike in*, or it will not be a permanent piece of work. One of the clearest duties of the Ambassador for Christ, in dealing with penitent sinners, is to insist that "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." (Gal. vi. 2.)

While the faithful minister is preaching a present salvation, he may expect not only to have the privilege of directing an inquirer now and then how he may be saved, but also that he will see times of *revival*, when multitudes will feel and act and move together in reference to the great question of salvation. In a large degree, his sermons should be revival sermons, aimed directly at bringing men to repentance; nor should he be content to preach month after month if this result does not follow to some extent. He must never suppose, if sinners are not converted, that such is God's good pleasure. Sometimes the oft-quoted Scripture is cited so as to favor this conclusion. "My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah lv. 10, 11.) The words have been made to purport that if sinners were not converted, some other good was done; at all events, that just what God designed was effected. Now

the words, almost invariably misapplied, are only the fragment of a sentence and cannot be understood unless the whole sentence, comprising two verses, be taken together. The meaning of the passage is pivoted on the two little words, "as" and "so." For *as* the rain cometh down . . . from Heaven," "*so* shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth." That is to say, that as God sends rain, and sunshine, and seasons, that there may be a harvest for the man who sows the seed, and bread for him who works for it, *so* God gives His Word and spiritual influences that, first, the individual who labors for the bread that perisheth not shall have it in abundance, and secondly, the minister who labors for souls shall have seals to his ministry.

You have all heard the phrase, "I believe in the revival that *comes down*, not in one that is *got up*." The phrase is a very pretty one. It is somewhat flip-pant, but the antithesis is quite taking. I will not say that the expression can never be properly employed, but this I will say—as it *is* used it is most mischievously, I may almost say wickedly, inappropriate. A revival, genuine and successful, may be just as legitimately worked up, or "got up," as a harvest may be. Two things should be ever borne in mind, first, that God's time for saving souls is always current, and secondly, that His servants are not mere *instruments*, but *agents*; not only *to be wielded* for the accomplishment of what God designs, as an unthinking sword is wielded by the hand that grasps it, but *to act* as in-

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telligent beings, capable of designing and planning for God's glory, and then, in His strength, executing what they have planned.

In this department of ministerial labor and usefulness, quite as much as in any other, there are great "*diversities of gifts.*" Some ministers of undoubted piety and devotedness to their work, and of visible usefulness, are not revivalists; others, not superior to their brethren in many things, and not equal in some things, have special aptitudes for revival work and are specially successful in it. Even among revivalists gifts vary so that sometimes they work most successfully after the original pattern, in pairs, each being the complement of the other. Moody and Sankey are a notable example. In our own Church at the present time there are two brethren laboring together, and signally honored of God in their joint endeavors.

In the early Christian Church there was a sphere for specialists, and, among them, the *Evangelist*. In Methodism, which we believe to be New Testament Christianity, the sphere still exists, and should be occupied. Every Methodist preacher should be, and is, more or less, an evangelist, but there are many who have not the gifts for evangelistic work that some others possess. It is of no use to deny it; it would be unwise to ignore it. What, then, can be so advantageous to the Church as to avail ourselves of the principle of reciprocal helpfulness that has always prevailed among us, and utilize under proper regulation, for the benefit of the whole, the special qualifications of the few.

It is not difficult to see, as we lift our eyes upon the field at large, that the day of the evangelist has come. Some are laboring with distinguished success, in favor with God and men; but, at the same time, the evangelistic tramp is abroad, with his hobbies, scattering the seeds of his petty heresies wherever the opportunity is given him. Methodist pastors have found cause of regret, sometimes deep and lasting, in giving their pulpits and congregations into the hands of itinerating revivalists, responsible to no one either for doctrine or conduct. But we have in our Conferences men who are our own brethren, whom we know, in whom we have confidence, and whose doctrines are in entire accord with our own, with whom we can labor with advantage in extending the Kingdom of our Redeemer. Let not a word that I have said on this subject deter any one of you, my young brethren, from cultivating and employing most diligently all the talents for revival work with which your Creator has endowed you. A grave and exhaustless responsibility is upon you. If you are less strong in the natural gifts which some possess, supplement them by larger acquisitions of Divine aid. God has called you to save souls. You may confidently expect that He will sanction your conscientious and unremitting endeavors by gratifying successes.

Once more, another species of Results following directly upon the preaching of the gospel are those which appear in *building up* an intelligent, honest, truthful, benevolent, sober, God-fearing class in the

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community. The preacher's work is not done, by any means, when he has succeeded in persuading men to renounce their evil ways and enter upon the loving service of the Lord Jesus Christ. After conversion and conscious adoption there is a sense in which a yet greater work remains. The mustard-seed idea of the kingdom of heaven in a human soul should never be forgotten, either by the minister, or by the young convert. It is small in its beginnings, but is designed to grow. The beginnings of Christian life in any soul are necessarily small. Every new-born child of God, no matter what his age, his intelligence, his maturity in other things, is nothing but a babe in grace to begin with. He must be fed. He must be carefully, patiently instructed. This work will devolve chiefly upon the minister. His sermons, that have been of an awakening character, must now be full of instruction, If the truth which new converts have received is not confirmed in them by clear and repetitious teaching, serious peril must be the result. Inexperience must be taught by experience concerning the peculiar temptations, difficulties, dangers, and duties which are incident to the beginning of a holy life; for instance, that converts must not doubt the reality of the life of God in the soul because it is only a spark at the beginning; that they must not judge of their spiritual state by their feelings, but must learn to "live by faith;" that they must stand as witnesses for Christ; that, as they value their soul's life, they must enter upon some course of Christian activity; and many

other things which must be the burden of patient, persevering instruction. This work is chiefly educational, and may, consequently, be much less stirring and interesting to the general congregation than sermons of another character. Let no one suppose the work to be inferior in importance on this account. No better work is done by any minister for his Master than that which serves to establish the young and inexperienced in the knowledge and love of God.

The preacher of the gospel must never get away from the Cross, but he must ever remember that there are great practical duties springing out of the new life that the Cross imparts to men. Preaching was ordained, not merely to hold up Christ—the gospel's great central mystery—not merely to show men what they must do to be saved; it was ordained for the uprearing of Christian character, the edification of the body of Christ; for the healthful, symmetrical growth both of the individual believer and of the collective body, which is the Church; for the furnishing of the man of God for every good word and work.

Nothing is more important than that Christians should learn that "believing in Christ" means a great deal more than believing in Him as a personal Saviour. It means believing in Christ's principles of trade, in Christ's rules of social intercourse, in Christ's ideas of politics. The minister of the gospel must show his people what Christ expects of them. He must preach of repentance and faith, life and death, heaven and hell; but he must also expound the Sermon on the

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Mount from beginning to end. He must preach practical godliness in its myriad forms. He must take for his text, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." (1 John ii. 6.) He must show his people, by precept and example, how to follow the footsteps of the Master, not in such remarkable things as walking on the water, or climbing the clouds, but in wholesome eating, pure drinking, truth speaking, fair dealing, well doing, cross bearing, self denying, and all those unworldly things that tend to make the disciple as his Heavenly Lord.

How much the preacher may find in the life of St. Paul to instruct and stimulate him in this work! How tender he was, and yet how earnest! He prayed and wept over those whom he had won for Christ. He remembered them in his travels over sea and land; he sent messages of love to them; he sought out the best helpers available, and commissioned them to comfort and establish the saints; he grieved when from any quarter tidings of defection came to him; and so impressed was he with the importance of spiritual maturity in those converts, whether Jew or Gentile, that one might almost conclude that it was his pre-eminent mission to build up believers. He never wearied in this holy service. Much there was to test his patience, but his quenchless zeal is disclosed in almost every line of his epistles. Such expressions as "growth," "leaving the principles," "strengthened with all might," "built up in Christ," and many others, are indications of what he regarded as the privilege of all converts.

The age in which we live requires this kind of preaching. The Church *needs* it, and the outside world *demand*s it. The Kingdom of Christ must have souls established in the faith, rooted and grounded in love, that they may be epistles known and read of all men, whose testimony no cavil may overthrow, whose power no doubter may resist.

The one line of preaching, then, is just as important as the other. The preacher whose sermons simply elaborate and amplify the truths fundamentally connected with the way of salvation will fail of large and enduring success. The Church Militant must not only be recruited but drilled. As the commanding officer drills and disciplines an army for valiant service, in the hour of battle, even thus must the Christian minister prepare the Church for her work. He is not simply an *overseer*, ordained to look after the spiritual interests of the flock ; he is a *leader*, to drill and discipline the army for holy conquest. He is closely to observe the gifts that are enwrapped in the Church, then *stir* them *up*, giving to each a work to do, thus bringing the entire body into pulsating sympathy with all the operations of the Kingdom of Jesus.

Never in the history of Christianity has the Church needed *leaders* more than to-day. You may remember having read, a few months ago, in the *Christian Guardian*, the letters of an intelligent "Layman," controverting the doctrine of Entire Sanctification as held by the Methodist Church and taught in her standards, and maintaining that the Methodist pulpits of to-day

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do not teach the doctrine, or rather, that the preachers themselves do not profess the attainment of the experience. Then he compares them to the mountain guide who points the traveller to heights beyond and attempts to describe the way, although he has never scaled those heights himself. Then he says, very significantly, "We wonder if this experience which soars into cloud-land is not as unreal as the *ignis fatuus* that leads the dazed traveller over the boggy waste."

Now observe, first, that any truth that is not preached will soon be controverted. Heresies will spring up like weeds on ground that is not cultivated. I believe that much of the Adventist and Pre-millennial nonsense of the present day is the result of dropping out of pulpit discourses so largely the doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord. I believe, also, that the swarming theories of future existence, Annihilationism, Restorationism, a Future Probation, etc., are the result of not preaching with proper faithfulness the scriptural doctrine respecting Future Punishment. Many other illustrations might be given. Now, if Methodist preachers cease to press upon the attention of their congregations what the Bible teaches in regard to the attainability of a pure heart, unscriptural notions will be sure to arise on that ground, compelling them to the task of clearing away the weeds in order to save the truth itself from being lost sight of entirely.

But observe, secondly, the importance of the preacher's being a leader of his people, as well as a teacher,

in all matters of faith and experience. He should not only *point* to brighter worlds, but *lead the way*. He should aspire to the very highest experiences that he may be the more competent as a teacher. Nevertheless, it must not be thought for a moment that a minister's authority to teach is limited by his own experience. You, my young brethren, will frequently find in your congregations, especially in your earlier ministry, saints of the Lord who, by reason of age, or by the blessing of God on the tribulations of life, are in possession of an experience much more mature than your own: yet you are to preach for even their instruction what the Bible discloses to you as the Christian's privilege. "Layman's" illustration of the mountain guide is not entirely applicable to the preacher. "Preach the Word," says St. Paul, not merely "preach your own experience." The ordination charge is in harmony with the Scripture, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God." Therefore, my brethren, preach Entire Sanctification "for the perfecting of the saints," even if you do not enjoy the blessing yourselves; preach it, as Wesley exhorts, that you may attain it. If the pulpit becomes silent on that subject, if ministers and members no longer press forward "unto perfection," Methodism must lose much of its old-time power, and *its* history will certainly *not* repeat itself. Let the preaching of Entire Sanctification pass into neglect, and Methodism will never see another Fletcher, or Bramwell, or Stoner, or Carvosso, or Hester Ann Rogers, or Mrs. Palmer, or

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Cookman, or Inskip. A great host of Methodist worthies would never have been heard of, but for the actualization of this doctrine. The Church could not have been and done what it was raised up to be and do, without it. It is for you, my young brethren, to see to it that Methodism does not deteriorate in your hands. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

My task is now done. It has been to me, I will say, a very agreeable task on many accounts. I doubt if there is another minister of my years in our beloved Canadian Church to-day, outside these walls, who has had so much to do with the young men, candidates and probationers for our ministry, as I have had. Immediately after my ordination I was placed on the Board of Examiners, and there I have been ever since. Every successive year I have met, and been associated with, the young men in their studies and examinations. I have marked with great pleasure the gradual improvement of the course of study, and the elevation of the standard of qualification for our young ministers. Any of them seeking to improve his mind with a view to higher usefulness has had my instant sympathy and best advice, and, applying for permission to attend college, has had my assistance. I rejoice in the increasing numbers who are aiming at a full course. I think I see an improvement in the quality, in all respects, of those who are entering our ranks year by

year in these later times. I cannot help feeling myself drawn strongly towards them. They have much better privileges and opportunities than we, their predecessors, had. They ought to be much better than we. If, by our help, they become so, we will share with them the honor. I am glad to do anything that I can do towards such a result.

The themes which I have endeavored to present to you during these days are very congenial to my own mind. I think, write, and talk on them *con amore*. I think we have the grandest theology in the world. And we have theological institutions under the direction of men who are capable of expounding and defending it. All that we can require as a Church is the continued blessing of God upon the labors of men called and qualified by the Holy Ghost for a career of permanent and glorious successes in conquering the world for Christ. If we see it not ourselves, we can each contribute something to the approach of the day when He whose right it is shall reign over all the earth, and every knee bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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