

CHAPTER X.

DECLAMATION OR DELIVERY.

The fourth department of Homiletics is known as Declamation or the delivery of the sermon from the pulpit. It covers the whole subject and science of Sacred Oratory or pulpit elocution. In some respects it is the chief thing, as all that precedes it, including Invention, Division, and Composition, are but preparatory to it.

In the delivery the end is reached, and the purpose and preparation of sermons is fulfilled. An indistinct or uninteresting delivery will spoil everything, and make all previous study and labor of little or no account. It is here our artillery is brought into action, and to fail in this means defeat. Every man therefore who enters the pulpit is bound by the highest motives to give all diligence in cultivating his powers of speech, and in studying the recognized laws of sacred oratory.

The word **Oratory** is derived from the Latin noun *Os, oris*, meaning the mouth and also speech, or from the verb *oro*, to speak, to pray, to plead. It includes all manner of public address pertaining to the ministry, and also the reading of the Scriptures, liturgy, and hymns at public services.

It is called **Sacred** Oratory not only because it pertains to sacred things, but because it has

a character of its own, and differs in many respects from the oratory of other public-speaking professions. What may be proper at the bar, in legislative halls, or on the stage, may be altogether improper in the pulpit. The purposes of preaching are sacred and spiritual, and its style of oratory should always correspond with its purposes and ends.

At the same time there are habits and faults attached to pulpit oratory to which other public speakers are not tempted, and which ought to be pointed out and put away. There is a peculiar pulpit-tone, a sing-song pronunciation, a professional whine about many preachers, which, with other faults, need to be corrected, and require special rules, suggestions, and drill.

For these reasons Declamation or Sacred Oratory becomes not only a distinct but most important branch of homiletics and theological study. It has been objected that preaching is too sacred to be governed or restrained by rules or studied manner of speech; and affirmed that less mixture of art and greater simplicity of nature in the utterance of religious truth, will make it the most successful. But this objection comes from a false conception of oratory as a pompous display of voice and gesture. The true design of sacred oratory, however, is the art of presenting religious truth in such a way as to please, convince, and persuade men to accept and obey the gospel. Certainly an ordinary sermon well delivered, will accomplish more than an abler sermon poorly delivered. We urge the study of rules of oratory, not to encourage special displays

of voice and gesture, but to correct and restrain the tendency to such display.

Declamation or Oratory may be divided into three branches: the Voice, Utterance, and Gesture.

THE VOICE.

Next in importance to having something to say, is to say it well; and "a good voice" is a strong recommendation of any preacher. It has been called the organ of the soul, and through this instrument our sermons must be delivered. Concerning it we give the following directions:

1. **Get a voice.** A voice is something more than sound produced by the vocal organs. Other animals can utter sounds, but only man has a voice.

It must be carefully cultivated to produce such tones as will lay hold of the hearer, attract attention, and convey impressions in a pleasing and forcible manner.

A good voice makes itself easily heard, without apparent effort on part of the speaker, and draws the congregation to like the preacher as well as the sermon. It carries with it the personality of the speaker and helps him readily to express different shades of thought, giving variety of tone according to topic. It is a great mistake for any public speaker to neglect or pay no attention to proper voice culture.

2. **Three conditions** are necessary to have and maintain a good voice:

(a.) **Physical.** Keep up your general health. Take care of your digestion, as inflamed throats are generally caused by dis-

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ordered stomachs. Make your muscles storage-batteries of nerve force. Do not become physically exhausted by violent exercise or much talking, before preaching.

(b.) **Mental.** The voice is an index of the mind. If the mind is uncertain or unprepared, the voice will show it. It is the empty cart that rattles. Therefore intelligent persons generally have the best voices. The voice, more than dress, will tell of education and culture. Keep up your studies and general information. Let the voice have something worth saying, and generally it will say it well.

(c.) **Spiritual.** Sincerity and earnestness reveal themselves in the voice. Spirituality of mind and purity of heart give tones which cannot be counterfeited. It is the voice which most frequently reveals whatever of the "old Adam" remains in us. Be right and true, and the voice will be so. Be filled with the spirit; with the love of Christ and of souls, for a lover's voice is **always** pleasant.

3. **Take care of it.** A cracked bell cannot be repaired. No instrument of music is more delicate or sensitive than the human voice. Avoid all patent nostrums, troches, and various throat remedies. Let no one but a skilled physician prescribe for so delicate and important an organ. Strong coffee and strong drinks of every sort make rough voices.

Do not wrap the neck with manifold coverings, thereby making it the most sensitive and tender part of the body. Yet do not unnecessarily expose the throat to colds or any disease, and never carelessly strain the vocal cords. Never go to your highest pitch in

preaching, but at your best leave the impression you could go a tone higher. It saves the speaker's throat, and the ears of the people.

4. **Use it naturally.** Avoid all false, affected and "professional" tones. Open the mouth and speak like a man. Do not muffle the pipes in the organ, but give the voice a chance to come out. Open the gates, and do not compel the sermon to force a passage.

Above all, keep out of the minor key, so customarily used in preaching, and speak in major tones.

When it is said the voice should be used naturally, it is not meant it should be in the way to which you have been accustomed. A natural voice is had only by careful drill and exercise in getting rid of the false voice we may have had from childhood. Our first elocutionary teachers were our mothers, nurses, and playmates, whose faulty tones and pronunciation we learned to imitate. It may take years to get rid of many evils they unconsciously did us in this respect. A natural voice is the voice coming by and through the organ of speech when in a natural or normal condition, and free from whatever is false or affected. To attain this after we have grown to manhood may be a difficult task, but is worth all it may cost.

5. **Cultivate its powers and tones.**

(a.) Singing and reading aloud frequently will strengthen the voice. It is a mistake to think the voice is injured by frequent use. Musical instruments used everyday have better tones than those used sparingly. It has been affirmed if ministers would preach every day,

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their voices (used naturally) would be the better for it. Great singers sing in public every day for long periods, and have frequent rehearsals in addition.

(b.) Learn to explode the voice on the vowels and not on the consonants. For example, in uttering the word faithful, let the stress of voice be on the *a*, and not on the *th*, nor on the *j*. In the vowel sounds the throat is in a normal position, and no ordinary explosion of the voice can injure it.

(c.) Cultivate especially the tenor or higher tones, because less common, most musical, and more clear-reaching farther and easier understood than very deep tones. For deepening the voice a good exercise is found in repeating a sentence and dropping the voice a tone at the last word, until the lowest possible tones are reached.

(d.) Accustom yourself to deep breathing, especially when walking and taking exercise in the open air. It will expel the foul air otherwise remaining in the recesses of the lungs and supply fresh air instead. It therefore not only gives strength and richness to the voice, but improves the general health and lessens any danger of pulmonary trouble. The more pure air a man can breathe, the stronger man will he be in his thinking and speaking, as well as in his general health. The brain as well as the lungs needs a good supply of fresh air.

6. The **pitch of voice** requires attention. By this is meant the key-note or starting tone with which we begin to speak or read. It should be natural, *i.e.*, the tone produced by the vocal cords in their natural position. It

should be a medium tone, neither too high nor too low, so as to allow an easy elevation or lowering of the voice, as the sentiment or meaning of the discourse requires. It should be subdued yet distinct, as this produces the most pleasing impression, and it is harder to get down than up after the start is made.

A proper pitch can generally be obtained by addressing those farthest from the speaker, care being taken to grade the pitch to the size of the building in which he speaks.

7. **Proper inflections** of the voice make speaking easy for the speaker and pleasant for the hearer, and give beauty and force to what is spoken or read. A monotonous style will make any discourse disagreeable and dull.

Inflection is not an arbitrary varying of tone from high to low, or low to high. This may result in a sing-song style which is worse than a monotone. Especially avoid flying from one extreme to the other, or always beginning a sentence on a high tone and descending as the breath gives out.

The best rule for proper inflection is to aim to express the sense and sentiment of what is uttered, and to produce those emotions the subject demands.",...

As a rule, the important word or part of a sentence, and positive assertions, should have the downward inflection, and the less important the upward inflection. In asserting a fact, even in a question, (*e.g.*, Rom. viii : 35,) the downward inflection should be used.

It is well to remember that inflection is the gesture of the voice, and should always be graceful and appropriate.

PRONUNCIATION.

UTTERANCE.

Utterance is the putting forth of the voice to impart instruction or excite emotions by means of language. An uncertain, indistinct, or otherwise improper utterance, is not only a serious fault but a fatal defect in a public speaker.

Paul's admonition against speaking in unknown tongues, may also be applied to utterance: "Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." 1. Cor. xiv: 7-11.

Attention is called to the following points, both in public reading and speaking:

1. Familiarity with language is essential. We cannot properly pronounce words with the nature, meaning, and spelling of which we are not familiar. Hence the study of words, especially as to their derivation and use, is important. To this end we should read much, especially the Bible and the best authors, and keep a standard dictionary at hand so as to examine immediately the meaning and pronunciation of every unfamiliar word.

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To pronounce correctly you must be sure you have the right word, and not say advice when you mean advise- nor froward when you mean forward-nor diseased when you mean deceased, etc. We have heard carved used for craved-reprobation for reputation-expectation for expectation-and other gross blunders, in reading the Scriptures. They arise either from inexcusable carelessness, or because the difference in the meaning of the words was not clearly understood. A single mistake of this sort spoils the entire service, and exposes the perpetrator to judgment without mercy.

2. **Distinctness in articulation.** By this is meant that every syllable, and even every letter, especially the over-looked consonants (except they be silent letters), be given their due force.

It is this distinctness of articulation, rather than volume of voice, that makes any speaker to be easily heard and readily understood. It also aids in overcoming any tendency to read or speak too rapidly, or of ..telescoping" or running syllables or words into each other, and at the same time prevents the drawling of words.

Distinctness may be acquired and cultivated by exercising the voice in reading aloud by syllables instead of words, and also by reading or speaking in whispers. In all such exercises, use freely your lips, tongue, and teeth.

3. **Proper accent must be observed.** This has been described as the soul of language, giving to it both feeling and truth. Accent is stress of voice or prominence put on a syllable.

EMPHASIS.

Every word of more than one syllable has an accented syllable, and mispronunciations generally occur through placing the accent on the wrong syllable. Even the meaning of words is sometimes dependent on which syllable the accent falls, *e.g.*, refuse, incense, etc. The rules of accent often appear arbitrary, and it is best to consult some recognized authority.

4. **Emphasis** is equally important. It is to the sentence or paragraph what accent is to the word, and determines which word is to be made prominent. It is of value not only because it gives interest and animation to what is uttered, but often is necessary to the proper understanding of what is read or spoken, as the entire meaning may depend on the emphatic word.

Emphasis is made by stress of voice, either in elevating or depressing it, or by unusual pause, slowness, or solemnity of expression.

There is a tendency in young preachers to make too many words emphatic, which destroys the purpose, use, and beauty of emphasis, and turns eloquence into mere rant. Many sentences, especially in preliminary statements, have no emphatic word; whilst at other times the stress of voice should extend over a number of words, as, *e.g.*, "Why will ye die?" "But where are the nine?" etc.: but as a general rule emphasis should be given to but one word in a sentence. Where the same word is repeated in a clause or sentence, the emphasis never occurs on it twice, but is usually transferred to another word. It generally falls upon a noun or verb as the more important word, - but **sometimes** on the

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smaller words, like the prepositions in Rom. xi: 36.

Emphatic words are sometimes indicated by *italics*, but this is not always the case in the Bible, where words not in the original language are indicated by being printed in italics.

The best guide is to study the meaning of the writer and find out what he wishes to say, and it will decide where emphasis should be placed.

5. Attention must be given to pauses. A pause in reading or speaking is meant to indicate the limits and relation of sentences and their parts, and when properly used is effective in bringing out the sense of what is spoken or read. They also aid the speaker by furnishing proper breathing places and rests for the vocal organs.

In reading, these pauses are indicated by certain signs known as the comma, semicolon, colon, and period,-the length of the pause being equal to the time in counting one, two, three, or four.

The only rules for pauses in speaking are, let them be natural and not artificial ;-use them for breathing places and relief of the voice; -let them aid you in emphasis and giving effect to some important truth or appeal ;-and rarely prolong them to an unusual extent.

6. Great care must be taken to get rid of any provincialism in pronunciation.

We have already alluded to the fact that those born and reared where the English and German languages are intermixed, needed great care to get rid of certain expressions of language to which they were accustomed

But greater care and pains must be taken to break from incorrect pronunciation and provincial tones of voice, as being much more offensive in a public speaker. If Demosthenes practised declamation with pebbles in his mouth to overcome a defect in his speech, surely they who intend to proclaim the gospel should use every possible means to compel lips and tongue to be not only correct, but agreeable in delivery.

Patience and perseverance in careful practice, before a competent instructor or faithful friend, will generally be rewarded with surprising success.

7. **Stammering or Lipping** in speech will be a serious hinderance to a successful ministry, and nothing should be left undone to conquer such defects or faults of utterance.

GESTURE.

By gesture is meant the use and motions of the body as aids in expressing thought or arousing emotion. It includes the posture and movements of the speaker, the expression of his countenance, and the use of his arms and hands.

1. **Posture and attitude.**

By this is meant the way a minister presents himself before the congregation, and refers to his whole attitude and appearance, which are of no small importance. The manner of a well-bred man has a certain confident diffidence which is particularly attractive; it is the consciousness of power combined with respect for the presence and sensibilities of

others. Of all men a clergyman should manifest good manners. His whole bearing should win the esteem of those to whom he ministers.

While not prescribing rules in this matter, we give the following suggestions:

Let the body be upright, whether in the stall, at the lectern, or in the pulpit. A loose, lounging, lazy attitude is undignified, and looks irreverent. The body should rest easily on both feet, and not have one twisted about the other. It is ungraceful to place the hands on the corners of the desk, and appear to be propped up by the arms. An appearance of self-conscious importance, or a haughty and defiant attitude on the one hand, or a stooping, cringing one on the other, must alike be avoided; whilst the habit of resting an elbow on the Bible, or leaning the body over the pulpit, needs only to be mentioned to be condemned. The body should maintain its erect position during the entire sermon, yet be flexible and move easily in facing all parts of the audience. All contortions of the body and restless moving to and fro should be avoided, not only because undignified and ungraceful, but as indicating a lack either of thought or of ready utterance.

2. The expression of the countenance.

The human face is the index of the soul, revealing and illustrating the thoughts and emotions within. It is of great aid to the preacher in expressing his thoughts, and to the hearers in understanding them. It reveals often more than the speaker wishes to disclose, and before he is aware, betrays the emotions he prefers to hide. It is a hard member to control, but the

true orator seeks to make it his servant instead of his betrayer. Not that the countenance is to assume what the heart does not feel, but its natural expressions can be so controlled as to make it an aid and never a hinderance to effective speech. There was a time, for example, when it was considered a mark of effective oratory for the preacher to shed tears at every pathetic passage in his sermon. A tear starting in the eye detracts nothing from the eloquence of speech, but it must rarely be allowed to come outside the gates. If you will notice how weeping distorts the face and cracks the voice, you will need no argument to convince you it is the foe, and not the ally, of eloquence. It is a mark of weakness to be suppressed and never encouraged.

So, too, no matter what feelings of righteous wrath and indignation may at times be stirred within, the preacher's countenance must show it as under control, and never as having the mastery over him.

Two features of the face are of special value in preaching.

a. The eye. The eye is the window of the body, through which the soul looks out and others look in. It is also an instrument of great power. It is said an earnest, steady, and fearless gaze will cower the fiercest beast; and we know it was the look of the Saviour's eye that made Peter go out and weep bitterly. It is susceptible of varied expression, and its power to plead and persuade is well known.

The habit of keeping the eyes partly or wholly closed when speaking, is a serious fault. So too, a lifeless or vacant look of the

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eye detracts from eloquence. **It** indicates the speaker is indifferent to what he is doing, or is thinking about something else. **It** is an evil to be watched for and guarded against especially when preaching a sermon committed to memory.

It is a rare gift to be able to look directly into the eyes of the hearers without becoming confused. Where this cannot be done, it is safer to look at the congregation generally, and not at individuals. Care must be taken, however, not to look in vacancy, or over the heads of the congregation. We should look at their faces to catch their responsive look in return, as there must be "a pull from without, as well as a push from within," in effective oratory.

b. The lip. Next to the eye, the lip is the most expressive feature of the countenance, and by its lines and motions can aid in expressing and conveying feelings and thoughts. A loose, flabby lip not only prevents distinct articulation, but indicates want of information and lack in decision of character; whereas a firm lip reveals scholarly habits and strong convictions.

The lip of the speaker should not be hidden under an overhanging beard,-but its lines, movements, and varied expressions be distinctly seen by the audience. **It** not only facilitates deaf persons in understanding the preacher, but aids the voice in expressing and conveying the feelings of the soul. Whilst its movements must be natural and sincere, they can be cultivated and improved by proper attention and effort.

3. **The use of the arms and hands.** This is sometimes called action in oratory. Cicero advised "a bold and manly action of body," and Demosthenes styled it the chief thing in oratory.

To allow the hands and arms to hang idly by the side during the delivery of a discourse is unnatural, and leaves the impression the speaker feels no interest in what he is saying. The whole body should manifest the emotions and enthusiasm of the soul, and this must be done chiefly by the arms and hands. By these utterance can be assisted, truths illustrated, and emotions aroused and expressed. To neglect gestures or to be awkward in their use is to lack an element of great power in the delivery of sermons.

Too much gesticulation, like too rapid utterance, is a serious fault in a public speaker. To keep the arms always in motion and flying at random indicates a bewildered mind rather than an earnest soul.

It is very difficult to lay down definite rules in the use of the arms and hands, because different men, with different temperaments and tendencies, will require different rules. Not only must some restrain what others should cultivate, but what would be proper and forcible in one may be ridiculous in another.

We venture, however, some suggestions:

(a.) Gestures should be **from the shoulder** and not from the elbow. This prevents awkward, stiff, and disagreeable motions.

(b.) Their motions should be **outward**, *i.e.*, from and not toward the body. The shoulders

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should not be thrown forward, but remain in position, while the arms act freely.

(*co*) Upward gestures should rarely be made when the face is toward the manuscript in reading a discourse, but generally should be in the same line as the look of the eye.

(*do*) Gestures should usually be made with the right arm or both arms, and rarely with the left arm only. Where both arms are used they should not be in parallel lines except in the downward motions or in pronouncing the Benediction.

(*eo*) The fingers should not be outspread, nor should they "make a fist" when the hand is closed. In pointing it is better to use the whole hand than the index-finger only. The hands should not vehemently strike each other or any part of the body, the Bible, or the pulpit. Gestures of approbation, affirmation, and acceptance should be with the palm of the hand up; and those of negation, rejection, or distress, with the palm down.

(*f.*) Gestures should be graceful. To this end the curved lines of the arm are preferable to the straight, except when speaking under strong emotion.

(*g.*) Gestures should correspond to the sentiment or emotion expressed. Not that we should attempt to imitate in gesture what we are describing, unless it be only suggestive; but there should always be fitness and meaning in our motions. Deep feeling and strong assertions require strong and determined (but never wild or violent) gestures, while gentler ones befit such parts as are mild or pathetic.

(*h.*) Gestures should be varied. There is as

much beauty and force in variety of gestures as in the tones of the voice, and monotony should be avoided in both. We should not always point upward when speaking of God or heaven, nor downward whenever we mention the grave. If we get a liking for any particular gesture or attitude, we must guard against using it too often.

(i.) Gestures must be natural, not artificial. Do not "make gestures," but let them come naturally as the subject prompts. Do not begin gesticulation too soon in the sermon; not until you have entered earnestly into its presentation. Never think about where they should come, but let them come of their own accord.

METHODS OF DELIVERY.

Three methods are employed in the delivery of sermons:

1. Preaching from the manuscript, commonly known as reading the sermon.

It has certain advantages, chief of which is the calm confidence the preacher feels when all he wishes to say is written out and placed before him.

Its chief objections are that it is unpopular with the great majority of hearers, cripples the preacher's oratory, and prevents the introduction of arguments or illustrations which the occasion often suggests.

2. Preaching without manuscript, but with the entire sermon committed to memory.

The argument in favor of this method is that it combines the advantages of having a carefully written sermon, yet delivered with the

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freedom of extempore speech. The objection to it is, it becomes simply a recitation rather than preaching, in which the mind is chiefly occupied with recalling words instead of urging truth and duty, and the constant dread of a treacherous memory, which prevents that freedom of manner essential to all true eloquence.

When a preacher has plenty of time to memorize what he has written, these difficulties may be largely overcome, -but to attempt it every week would consume too much time and mental strength to be justified.

3. Preaching unwritten sermons. This is sometimes called "preaching without notes," and by others extemporaneous preaching. This method consists in preparing the plan or skeleton of the sermon, in which not only its divisions, but also its proofs and illustrations are noted, yet leaving the language to be chosen at the time of delivery. It cannot always be called "preaching without notes," as the preacher may have the skeleton before him as an aid to memory. Nor is it strictly "extemporaneous preaching," as nothing short of some great emergency will justify preaching without previous study and preparation. It is extempore only in language.

The objections to this method are:

(a.) The dread of failure in properly expressing what the preacher wishes to say.

(b.) The danger of repeating what has been said, and of becoming diffuse and wearisome in multiplying words.

(c.) The temptation to preach with insufficient preparation.

(d.) The difficulty of reproducing the sermon, if desired.

The **advantages** of this method, when it is well done, are very great.

(a.) It is the true idea of preaching, and is so recognized by nearly all congregations.

(b.) It gives the preacher more time for study and research in his preparation.

(c.) It allows the introduction of new thoughts and illustrations, as often the highest flights of eloquence come in the enthusiasm of preaching or the inspiration of an interested audience.

(d.) Its continued practice begets facility of expression which every preacher should have. Emergencies will arise when he is compelled to preach or speak with little preparation, and he can readily do so if accustomed to this method.

RULES CONCERNING THESE METHODS,

1. Every beginner should try repeatedly each of these methods of delivery, and then determine by experience which is best suited to his comfort and success.

2. Extemporaneous preaching should not be exclusively practised until the preacher, by written sermons, has gained a good command and style of language, and can be calm and collected in presence of a congregation.

3. Whichever method you employ, preach. If you use a full manuscript, do not be its slave but its master; and if you preach without notes, do not rant, nor "give merely a

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talk," nor attempt to imitate the tones or manners of the stage.

4. Each method has its own manner of delivery. If you preach without notes, do not keep your eyes on the Bible as if reading; and if you read, do not attempt the same freedom of manner as in extemporaneous discourse.

5. When preaching from a skeleton or simple outline of thought, memorize it, whether you have it before you or not.

6. Under any method, let your manner of delivery be pleasing and attractive, so as to win the hearts of all before you; keep your voice and movements under control, and avoid pulpit tones and mannerisms; and aim at the highest excellence in this important thing in your preaching.

7. We quote two rules which deserve to be memorized by every preacher:

The first is from Luther:

"Tritt frisch auf; Thu's Maul auf; Hoer bald auf." Which may be translated, Get up freshly; Speak out freely; Conclude quickly.

The second is from an unknown source:

" Begin low: proceed slow;
Aim higher: take fire;
When most imprest, be self-possesst."

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING NOTES AND PRINCIPLES.

In closing this volume, we add some general principles and suggestions on preaching, which should be kept in mind.

1. The design and purpose of preaching is the proclamation of the Gospel, and not merely the moral improvement of men. Whatever other ends it may accomplish, if a sermon fails either in the conversion of sinners to Christ, or the edification and establishment of believers in Him in their faith and life, it fails in that for which preaching was intended and appointed.

2. Every sermon should contain the three elements of instruction, illustration, and application, *i.e.*, it should have head, heart, and hands. The usual division of sermons into doctrinal and practical is not wise. Doctrinal sermons ought to be practical-and practical sermons should have doctrine as their basis. The gospel should reveal the excellence of the law, and the law the absolute need of the gospel.

3. A sermon should be intensive rather than extensive. To this end it should get at the heart of the text. Many sermons go round about the text or dwell on its insignificant points, but miss its central and main thought or purpose. Analysis should often be employed not so much to show how many things

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are in the text as to clear away unimportant matter, and thus bring its main points more prominently into view. It is a good rule to find out which is the emphatic word in a text and fasten the sermon to it. Yet frequently the heart of the text is not expressed by any of its words, but consists in its general truth or thought.

4. Preaching should be positive rather than negative. The language of the law is "thou shalt not;" but in the gospel it is "thou shalt." While truth is often made clear by contrast with the opposite error, we should speak more about the truth than about the error, and give less attention to the enemy and more to our own cause. While not negligent to warn of danger, take more pains and time to show the right way. Give the devil his due, but have more to say about the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Do not waste time or exhaust patience in proving what all admit. In typical or figurative sermons do not scatter the mind with trifling, unimportant, or merely curious resemblances or comparisons, but consider only such as help the understanding, illustrate the truth, or convey practical and useful lessons.

6. That preaching may be successful, the preacher must know and understand the people to whom he preaches. The more he knows of their history, situation, temptations, and sorrows; and likewise of their characters, prejudices, sentiments, and peculiarities, the better will he know how to attract, convince, and persuade them to accept and obey the word preached. Hence ordinarily a faithful

pastor preaches the best when before his own people. Congregations differ, and hence often sermons which are effectual at some places, altogether fail at others.

7. The highest test of a sermon is not its intellectuality, but spiritual power; not the excellence of its language or construction, but its effect and results; not in the number of people drawn to listen to it, but in the evangelical change it produces in them.

8. The order given in Ezekiel xxxvii. reveals the essential elements and proper order in the construction of a sermon: first there must be the sermon-skeleton," the bones came together, bone to his bone ;" then come the sinews, flesh, and skin, in its elaboration, development, and composition; but then over all must fall the baptism of the Spirit, the breath of heaven, to make it a living power,- and the ideal sermon is complete.