

THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.

A MAGAZINE

DEVOTED TO THE PUBLICATION OF SERMONS AND OTHER
MATTER OF HOMILETIC INTEREST.

VOL. VII.—JUNE, 1883.—No. 9.

SERMONIC.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

By JOSEPH T. DURYEA, D. D. [CONGREGATIONAL], BOSTON.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.—TITUS ii: 11, 12.

By the force of events certain truths have been placed into prominence before our minds. They have excited, not only investigation, but discussion. I have no doubt many of us have been anxious; some have been alarmed. I do not think there is any reason for trouble, any ground for fear. The truth can bear the light; it always comes out of discussion more definite and stable. It is true that for a moment the minds of some are unsettled. This cannot be helped: it has always been so. Anything is better than indifference; and if we need to be roused even by opposition, it is well if only our minds shall be candid, our temper shall be earnest, and we shall seek knowledge in its sources—the Word of God, and under the light and guidance of the Spirit of truth.

It is not my purpose to consider at all any of these matters which have been in this manner prominent, and which have been subject to discussion; but, as I have watched the course of things, taking no part, attending to my own duties, and trying with all humility, if not modesty, to keep my place, I have come to believe that certain misapprehensions have been disclosed that ought to be removed, and that certain practical errors have become manifest that ought to be corrected. And I desire to contribute something to this end, now and here, for your edification, and for the good of all those whom you may serve in the Gospel and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

I think we have taken too narrow a view of the purpose and method of divine grace. We have all of us undoubtedly conceived that God intends to manifest to men His mercy and loving-kindness in Jesus Christ, that He may draw them to Himself; that He vouchsafes to them in Christ the promise of the forgiveness of sins and peace with Him, through the sacrifice once offered, but always ample and availing; that He intends by His Spirit to enlighten and

[The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.]

world's literature, and even now it will take time before it grows to maturity and bears fruit among all nations. This doctrine has three parts:

I. Unity of the Creator.

1. Each nation in the dim past had its own gods, its own mythology, and the belief that its own deities were superior to those of their neighbors.

2. But, opposed to all this, is the revealed idea that there is but one God, one Creator, one universe, one Governor over all, who is all and in all.

II. Unity of mankind.

1. God created man, male and female.

2. This was one act, not divided into parts, and repeated at intervals in different quarters of the globe.

3. From this first pair the world has been peopled through the laws of generation and dispersion. This contradicts the superstition of the heathen with reference to their origin, *e. g.*: the Athenians believed themselves to be *autochthons*, *springing from the soil*, in token of which they wore golden grasshoppers.

III. Unity of destiny.

1. Man has a common nature—a mind that thinks, a heart that feels, a will that chooses, a soul that never dies.

2. Each nation has the same problems of society, government, and religion, to discover and apply.

3. Each nation is subject to the same diseases physical and moral, and runs a like career of ruin or prosperity.

IV. Results.

1. The purple tide of related blood (it has all issued from one spring) writes a common declaration of rights which no Christian is at liberty to disregard. Simply to be a man, simply to be a woman, is to have claims upon the whole race.

2. Nations are so bound together in progress and privileges, material, moral, and spiritual (the world through steam, rail, wire, and press, has become very small), that whatever helps or injures man in one quarter of the globe is ultimately a help or an injury to all.

3. It is the common duty of Christian nations to labor for the general diffu-

sion of religion and civilization, so that peace, art, and science may universally prevail, and every human faculty find unhindered liberty to develop itself to the glory of God, individual well-being, and the good of mankind.

BEST METHODS OF PREACHING AND SERMONIZING.

No. III.

The Presbyterian View.

By T. DEWITT TALMAGE, D.D.; HENRY S. VAN DYKE, D.D., of BROOKLYN, N. Y.; AND C. S. ROBINSON, D.D., of NEW YORK CITY.*

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

WITHOUT attempting to give any advice to others, I will give only my own experience.

My mode is to extemporize. By that I do not mean I avoid careful preparation. I never go into the pulpit without enough ideas profitably to occupy the whole time. The ideas that are most acceptable to the audience may not occur to me until I am on my feet before them. I consider it essentially requisite in a preacher that he shall not go into the pulpit, or before an audience, unless he has ideas enough to occupy the whole time.

The chief use of a pen with me is in making my own ideas the more definite. I always write out in my study a full analysis of what I purpose to say. If there is a point I am not very clear about I write it out in full, not with the idea of using it, but for its action on my own mind; or, if there is a delicate shade of thought I wish to express, I write it out. Illustrations come to me naturally, and it is generally a matter of selection between a good many. I think in metaphor.

I began by writing out every word of a discourse, and reading it in public without the variation of a word. The work was so arduous, and was such a complete slavery, that I found my health demanded that I give it up. To this day I sometimes write out a sermon and

* In interviews for this publication.

read it to an audience, but that is on special occasions, and exceptional.

I did not find it difficult to change from the reading habit to the extemporaneous. It came very easy and natural. In the theological seminary a fellow student and myself were accustomed to meet once a week, and he would preach, extemporaneously, a sermon to me, and I would preach a sermon to him—each of us having an audience of one. We kept that custom up for one or two years, and I have no doubt it had a very helpful influence on me. We pursued this practice—first, for the purpose of cultivating the habit of extemporaneous speech, and, second, to get the advantage of each other's criticism.

I think better, standing before an audience, than I do in my own study. My brethren tell me it is an effort to be animated. My entire effort is suppression of emotion and vehemence.

I do not think any rule can be laid down as to the relative advantages of written sermons and extemporaneous preaching. I think it is far better for some brethren to write and read. I know some of the very best clergymen have had their efficiency destroyed by holding to the theory that everybody must extemporize. They get into a hesitancy of speech and an unnaturalness of manner that finally become stereotyped.

For many it is difficult to get into the habit of extemporaneous preaching, and for some it is an impossibility. I think about one-half of the preachers would do best with notes, and the other half without. The right method can only be found out by experiment. A good rule is: Do that which turns out, after hard work, to be the most natural.

I think a man will come into ease of pulpit exercise in proportion as he can obliterate the idea of criticism. If he is going to be watchful of what this man will say, and what that man will say, he will have a very uncomfortable time. He needs to cultivate what I have sometimes called a "holy recklessness." A minister gets his commission from God,

and he must realize that he is not to consult the patient as to what medicine shall be given him: he is to consult his own ideas as to what it is best to give.

But, as I have already said, the great secret of success in preaching is to have enough ideas at the start to go the whole journey. If a man is going to Albany he don't want simply money enough to carry him to Poughkeepsie—he wants enough to pay his way to his destination. If a preacher starts his sermon with the idea that somewhere along the journey he will pick up enough ideas to make up the discourse, he will be apt to find himself in a very poor plight.

As far as memory goes, it is possible for me to read over a stenographic report of my sermon and reproduce the substance of it. Sometimes, if I am in good health, I can reproduce the whole of it.

I would say to young students especially, Look after your health. It is not only important to be well, but to be exuberant and abounding in health.

REV. DR. VAN DYKE.

As to the best methods of preparing sermons, you cannot make a statement that will be applicable to all subjects and all audiences. There are a thousand good ways of preparing good sermons, all different. Sometimes I read a sermon; sometimes I preach from a brief outline; and, when I am "cornered," I preach without any preparation at all. But I never do that unless I am "cornered."

The best method depends, first, on the man. My judgment is, that any man, however endowed with genius and with such preparation as a man can get before the age of thirty, who undertakes to be purely an extemporaneous preacher, will "run drippings" before he gets to be forty-five years of age. I do not believe that a purely extemporaneous preacher has ever succeeded. By "extemporaneous" I do not refer simply to the non-use of the manuscript in the pulpit. A great many men are extemporaneous like the

colored man who said, "I speak it to you extemporaneous, but I studied it three weeks ago." There is sometimes too much affectation on the part of preachers who, after making careful preparation beforehand, want to make it appear that they are speaking extemporaneously. Such preachers do a great injury to younger men who try to do the same thing honestly, and fail.

The subject. There are some subjects upon which no man who reverences his theme or his audience will undertake to speak without preparation. Doctrinal statements ought always to be carefully prepared. A man ought not to rush in to define the Trinity, or the Incarnation, or the Person of Christ, or the doctrine of the Atonement, or the doctrine of Future Punishment, or any such important questions, without knowing what he is going to say. There are other statements, again, where accurate statement is not required, and where a freer and more flowing style would be more effective. Under such circumstances a man need not prepare his exhortation word for word, nor his illustrations; in many cases it is better that he should not do so, because there is a sympathetic, magnetic influence which he gets from the audience of which he ought to avail himself. They talk about some preachers being "magnetic;" I have seen audiences who were far more magnetic than the preacher. Even when a man reads from manuscript he ought to train himself so that he can avail himself of sudden impressions and thoughts that come to him in the presence of the audience, and do it without extravagance.

The audience. An audience has a character and expressions of countenance as truly as an individual. The same sermon which will be very effective for good in one congregation will fall flat in another. To a sympathetic preacher the presence or the absence of a single man in the congregation will often have a great influence. A minister ought to be free from the fear of man, but he ought never to be free from the respect due to all men. If he sees one igno-

rant person, or any number of ignorant people in his congregation, he ought—even at the risk of not being regarded "learned" by the more cultivated—to make the preaching perfectly plain to the simple-minded. To strike the average sense of a mixed congregation is a far more difficult achievement than those who are not preachers can easily conceive.

REV. DR. ROBINSON.

For eighteen years of my ministry I wrote my sermons, lectures, and communion addresses. Then I changed to preaching, without taking notes into the pulpit, occasionally. When the Evangelical Alliance met in 1873 I gave up notes altogether, and for quite a while preached without taking even a skeleton into the pulpit; then, for two or three years, taking a skeleton into the pulpit. Since that time I have varied, just as the mood struck me; sometimes for a year not using so much as one written sermon, and sometimes for a year not using so much as one extemporaneous sermon. Two years ago, when my health failed me somewhat, I returned to notes, preaching what I had written, and for the last two years I have scarcely extemporized at all.

My opinion about the matter is this: I have no doubt that any one with moderate gifts, fair education, and proper personal self-control, can extemporize; and the difference between the impression produced will be that preaching without notes will produce the greatest immediate impression as far as eloquence and vivacity are concerned. So far as spiritual good, definite Christian results, are concerned, I am inclined to believe that the written sermons will do equally well: I would not say any better.

There is no labor saved in preaching without notes. The work of preparing an extemporaneous sermon, and the nervous exhaustion following its delivery, are, with me, three times as great as in the case of a written sermon.

If I were asked to give advice to a young student, I should give four rules

to help him along. First, let him take his best and strongest service for the extemporaneous work—probably his morning discourse. Second, to choose his most definitely intellectual sermon for extemporization. Third, to make a very lengthy skeleton, with many subdivisions and details; and, fourth, to cast his skeleton into the form of questions, so as to arouse his old instinct as a debater, and so make use of all the experience he may have had in extemporaneous speaking before. And let him persist from the very beginning in making one unwritten sermon and one written sermon each Sabbath for a term of years.

In extemporizing, I think the young man will do better than the old man—not, may be, as felicitously in a literary way, but in real effectiveness and good work. The old preachers throw themselves back on previous acquisitions, failing to remember that those acquisitions are trite and worn, and that the people know pretty well what is coming.

Another thought: Take old Dr. Tyng and old Dr. Cox, men who filled a place in public estimation as big as anybody you can name, and who would be considered among the foremost extemporaneous preachers of the country: what is left of them? Then, again, Dr. Kirk, and even Whitfield: there is nothing left of them. The memories of them are like Wirt's remembrances of Patrick Henry's speeches: everybody knew that Patrick Henry did some great thing, some time, but what, nobody could tell. They don't "foot up." People don't remember an extemporaneous sermon as long as they do a written discourse. I should say without any hesitancy, after all these years, that the sermons in my ministry that are remembered as having done most good and given most strength have been written sermons; and those that bore a reputation afterward as having been brilliant and interesting have been my extemporaneous discourses.

The main thing in extemporaneous preaching is to get self-control and to lose the consciousness of self: then you

can go along well enough. For that reason, the preacher had better select an intellectual subject, for such a subject holds the man and makes him forget himself. His strongest subject holds him; but, in order to make it do so, he must write out his transitions, his definitions, his close-cut lines of thought, and very often his figurative passages. He must write the emotional part beforehand, otherwise he will be ratty beyond expression. It is the thing that he thinks he can do easily, and that he has done so often until it is tiresome, that he cannot do well.

PROJECTILE FORCE.

BY REV. A. McELROY WYLLIE.

NO. V.—(CONTINUED.)

II. This leads us to remark that projectile force depends largely upon the voice. It is not loudness which insures penetration. The pulpit is not the place to fling dirt into the air and bellow like a bull. Loudness of voice no more constitutes penetrating efficacy of utterance than does loud singing constitute music. As in matter so in voice, the hearers must feel that the speaker shows strength without calling upon his reserve. That general is the greatest who, for the most part, wins his battles without setting his reserve corps upon the charge. This, every critical hearer has observed, characterizes all the world's greatest orators. The man rides, and calmly controls his voice, even at the climax of his charge. He maintains complete mastery, and is never thrown under foot by emotions he cannot govern. To be sure, Horace's famous maxim is often quoted—"Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi;" but this is an overstatement. Your lachrymose apostle loses power immediately that his tears get the mastery of him. The leaking engine is the weak engine. The best work is done when there is not spurt or spill of steam, but all is compressed noiselessly within, to add to the energy of the engine's harmonious movement. The preacher is a herald, and not an auctioneer or court