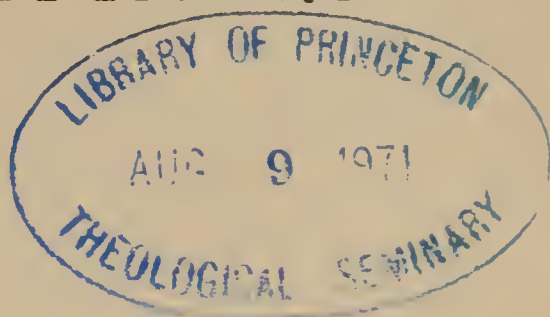


EMINENT AUTHORS



ON

EFFECTIVE REVIVAL PREACHING.

COMPILED BY

✓
REV. WALTER P. DOE.

HATFIELD, SHEPARD, PARK, FINNEY, BARNES, McILVAINE, McCOSH,
BEECHER, STOWE, MURRAY, CUYLER, TAYLOR, HALL,
TALMADGE, SPURGEON, MOODY, AND OTHERS.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

A. CRAWFORD GREENE, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER, RAILROAD HALL.

1876.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1876, by WALTER P. DOE,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

CHAPTER LIV.

PREACHING TO THE MASSES.

[AUTHORIZED EXTRACTS]

BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D. D.

Who are the masses? The very great majority.

The people who do not belong to this class are the exception; they are men who, through vast accumulation of wealth or through unusual culture of mind, are set apart from other people in the community. What I understand by the word "masses" is, "the most of folks." Well, now it is a settled fact that the great majority of people in our cities and country do not come under religious influence. There are fifty thousand people in Edinburgh who receive not the Gospel; there are one hundred thousand in Glasgow who come not under Christian influences; there are three hundred thousand people in the city of Brooklyn who are not touched by the Churches; there are at least five or six hundred thousand people in the city of New York who are no more interested in the Church of the Lord Jesus than if they had never heard of a Church. And the great and growing question of to-day is, "*How shall we bring these people in contact with the great heart of Christ?*"

We talk about large churches and large audiences. The largest audiences are not in the churches; they are in the temples of sin. The tears of unutterable woe are their baptism; the blood of crushed hearts is the wine of their awful sacrament; blasphemies their litany; the groans of a lost world the organ-dirge of their worship. A vast multitude outside the kingdom of God are untouched. We do not come within five thousand miles of reaching them. We talk about people living four, five or six blocks from a church. There are in our great cities those who practically live thousands of miles from any church. A great many people suppose that the Gospel is a sort of "swamp angel gun," with which you can stand away off and shoot six miles. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a sword; you have to clutch it in your right hand and go down where men are and strike right and left, slaying their sorrows and their sins. We must go down where the people *are*. If the Lord Jesus Christ had stood in the door of heaven inviting a lost world, would the world have come? No, no! Jesus Christ came down, and amid the sorrows, the sins, and the sufferings of the world, invited men up to something better.

The condition of a great majority of the people in our cities is illustrated by a lad who stood at the gate of one of our parks sometime ago. A minister of Jesus Christ was passing along, and said: "You seem to be poorly off. Do you go to Sabbath-school?" "No." "Do you go to church?" "No." "You ought to be a good boy." He answered: "We poor chaps aint got no chance." That just expresses the condition, the desolation, the moral bankruptcy of a great multitude of people scattered all

through the towns, villages, and cities of this country. The great suffering class in this day is the middle class. Go into the cities and larger towns and you find the rich and the poor. The rich can go anywhere they please; they can get any kind of religious influence they please; they can pay large pew rentals; they can move in brilliant society, and if they do not like one church they can go to another. They are not the suffering class. For the miserably poor, as they are called, there are mission-schools established, and these people, who are the very dregs of society, or so called, may be gathered up into these mission-schools. But how about the middle classes? and what do I mean by the middle classes? I mean the men who have to tug to get a living, who make a thousand dollars a year and spend a thousand, or who make two thousand and spend two thousand dollars a year of their income. That is the history of a vast majority of the people both in the country and in the city. The vast majority of people have no worldly surplus at the end of the year. These are the men who do not get the Gospel; these are really the suffering classes. They cannot go to the high-rented pew church; they cannot seek out the brilliant sphere in which they would like to move, and they are too proud to go down into the mission-schools, and so they get no kind of religious influence.

This great mass outside the Church of Jesus Christ need to be brought in. They have their sorrows and their trials; they have their dead children in their houses; they have their sicknesses. Why is it that they are not brought to Christ? why is it not now, as it was when the Lord Jesus was upon earth and he went through the streets, and the people brought out their palsied and

leprous? We have just as much suffering now as there was then, and far more; for the population of the world is so much increased. Why is it that the masses of the people do not bring out their suffering ones to Jesus Christ? Why don't mothers bring their little ones, and say: "Lord Jesus, if thou canst not bless me, bless my child; and if thou canst not bless this one that is well, bless this poor little crippled one; let thy mercy fall on him."

I will now mention three or four reasons why the masses are not reached, and then give you some brotherly advice as to how you may be qualified to reach them.

The first reason of failure is, *intense denominationalism*. The world watches, and thinks we want to make them all Methodists, or all Presbyterians, or all Episcopalians. There is an intense denominationalism abroad in the Church of Jesus Christ. There are too many who cannot look over the wall of their own particular denomination. I believe that every denomination ought to look after its own interests, and that the fences ought to be kept up between the denominations; but in every fence there ought to be a gate that might swing open, or bars that you might let down.

Now we need to show the world that we have a desire dominant over all sectarianism, and that our first desire is to bring the people into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether they join our Church or some other Church.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Christ, one doxology, one heaven! The time must come when all the people belonging to the kingdom of Christ, of all names and denominations can join hands around the cross and

recite the creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, and *in the communion of saints.*" But depend upon it, as long as the masses of the people outside have an idea that we are chiefly anxious to have our own sect and denomination prospered and dominant they will not come in.

Another reason why the masses have not yet been reached is because *we have adhered too much to the conventionalities and severe proprieties of the Church.* Take the matter of church architecture. For the most part the churches in this country are not so attractive as the halls and the theatres. By a natural law, it seems to me that all audiences ought to be gathered as around a great fireplace, in a semicircular form of architecture. Then, instead of seeing simply the back of a man's head, which is the most uninteresting part of him, you see his face or his side face. When there is a half-circle form there is a law of sympathy flowing through from heart to heart that you cannot get in an angular church. While other buildings have been comparatively well ventilated, churches have been but poorly ventilated; while other edifices have been brilliantly lighted, churches were but dimly lighted. Christianity sits shivering in Gothic churches, and religion is laid out in state. Let every Church committee that is going to put up a building resolve to have a church just to suit themselves, regardless of stereotyped notions. This disposition from generation to generation to stick to the angular kind of church has hindered the kingdom of God mightily among the masses. The people outside who have not been brought up to go to church will not go into a building which is unsympathetic and cold.

We have been attempting, also, to adhere too much to conventionalities in the item of preaching. 'The question is, "How do others preach?"' Then we must preach just as they do. If we cannot save the world in our way we won't have it saved at all. Let the twelve hundred millions of the race die, but do not spoil our patent leathers! We have no right to be stopping to consider how others do the work. The question is, "How does God want us to do the work?"' But the mere conventionalities and severe proprieties of the Church of God have kept back the people. To us who have been brought up in Christian families, and have been taught all our days to go to church, and to whom going to church is natural, it does not make so much difference what is said, or the way it is said—we will go to church anyhow. But those people who come in from the outside, who have no proclivities toward the Church of Jesus Christ, if they sit down and find everything is cold, conventional, formal, and on stilts, they will not come a second time. So, I think, the Gospel has been kept back from the masses because we have been such sticklers for the mere technicalities of religion. I think it is very important that we have all the definitions of religion, and that, in our own mind, we have the technicalities; but we never must bring them before the people. We must come in the plain vernacular, or they will not receive or understand us. I do not think there is anything more important than that the young man going out of a theological seminary should have all the definitions of faith, repentance, adoption, and sanctification in his mind. There are those men who think they are orthodox when they

are not ; they simply do not know what are the grand definitions of religion.

But while every young man going into the ministry ought to be familiar with "theological terms," he must not employ them before the people. After we get into the ministry we spend the first ten years in letting the people hear how much we know ; we spend the next ten years in getting them to know as much as we do ; and the next ten in finding out that none of us know anything as we ought. It is always a failure when a man in any department carries his technicalities into business. What would you think of a physician who should go among the people and talk about the "pericardium," or the "intercostal muscles," or "scorbutic symptoms." He would scare a man to death. A man would be as much confounded as the one who was studying up the case of his wife who was ill. He prided himself on doing everything by the book. He had a book upon practical medicine. He was talking with his neighbors, and said he had been reading his wife's case up, and, as far as he could tell by the book, she was threatened with a *diagnosis*, and if she got that it would certainly kill her ! Away with all your technicalities. If you want to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the masses do not talk about "complutensian edition," "hypostatic union," "French encyclopedism," "Erastianism," and "the eucharist." They would not listen ten minutes to it.

If you talked about these things you would see the people take their hats and clear out. When you come into the ministry there will sit before you hundreds of sinning, suffering, struggling, dying people. They come in hungry for the bread of life ; they want to know how

to be saved ; they are fully persuaded that this world is a cheat, and cannot satisfy their immortal nature. There will be hundreds of people in the audience who do not care about your definitions. Give them something practical from the Bible and from your own heart, and they will take it ; and they will not take it in any other way. Suppose when you get into the ministry you rise and preach an orthodox sermon on justification, and you say, in the words of a learned divine of the past century, whose definition I copied, for I could not remember it : “ Justification is purely a forensic act, the act of a judge sitting in the forum in which the supreme ruler and judge, who is accountable to none, who alone knows the manner in which the ends of his universal government can best be attained, reckons that which was done by the substitute in the same manner as if it had been done by those who believe in the substitute, and not on account of anything done by them, but purely on account of this gracious method of reckoning, grants them the full remission of their sins.” Now, can any of you tell what justification is ? A man would want a directory to find his way out of church after hearing that. While this definition of justification may be most excellent, I should rather tell the people, “ Justification is this : you trust in Christ and God will let you off.”

I had in my first charge an Irish girl, who came to my house one Friday afternoon and said : “ I would like to join the Church to-morrow evening.” I said : “ Bridget, do you think you are ready to come in ? ” She replied : “ I think I am.” “ Well now,” said I, “ you come to-morrow night to the meeting of Church officers and we

will talk it over, and if you are ready we will be very glad to have you." So on Saturday night she came. I put a few plain and simple questions to her, and she answered them all satisfactorily, whereupon a very good man in the consistory (for then I was in the Reformed Dutch Church) said: "Bridget, how many *covenants are there?*" Well, she burst out crying. Of course she could not answer. The good Scotchman who asked the question shook his head, as much as to say, "I don't hardly think she is ready to come." Well, I said I would like to ask that question all around of the consistory to see how many could tell how many covenants there are, and what they are. Then I said: "Bridget, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes, I do." "Are you sure you love him?" "Yes, I am." "How do they treat you up in that place where you are now since you became a Christian?" "They treat me very badly because I have become a Christian, and they laugh at me a great deal." "How do you feel when they laugh and scoff at you?" "I feel very sorry for them, and I pray for them." I said: "I think that will do." She was just as fit to come into the Church as any man in all that consistory. She did not know how many covenants there are, but she knew Christ.

Another reason why we do not succeed in bringing the masses into the kingdom of God is *because of a real lack of sympathy for them.*

The masses come on the outside and they see, by reason of the conventionalities of the Church, "No admittance;" they go on to the second door, and there is something in the chilling frigidity which says again: "No admittance;" but they press on through, out of

curiosity, and they get inside, and there they find us hammering out our little niceties of religious belief, pounding into shape our little peculiarities of theological sentiment—making pins. We seem to act as though we were disposed to say to these people who come in from the outside, “Why, this is a church for respectable sinners with a gloss on, and not for such sinners as you. The few people that we get into our Churches are the exceptional cases. The Church of God is very much like a hospital, into which you might go in the summer time, after a severe battle, and there find a thousand patients, and up in one corner of the hospital you find a doctor who is taking care of two or three patients; he is taking very good care of them. You say, “Doctor, haven’t you attended to these other cases?” “No,” he says: “I have three interesting cases.” “How long have you have you been here?” “I have been here three days; these are very interesting cases; I am keeping the flies off.” We have got a few nice cases in the Church, very interesting people, indeed. We are looking after them; but the great battle field is outside, and thousands and tens of thousands are dying of their wounds, and we have not the courage to go out and get them. I ask if those thousands outside are not worth more than the three or four inside?

Mark this: there is a judgment seat in every man’s heart. Now the idea is abroad that in order to have an audience, especially in the cities, you must preach humanitarianism, or you must preach the doctrine of development, or you must hold back the idea of the necessity of the new birth, or that you must not tell the people that there is a hell, while on the other hand you

tell them there is a heaven. There never was a greater mistake. There is in every man's heart a judgment-seat. You come before that man: he knows he is a sinner, and there is no need of your trying to persuade him anything else. You may please his ear by another story for a little while, but he goes away despising you. That judgment seat, which is in every man's heart, is what you need to appeal to; and coming before an audience in that feeling and in that appreciation, you will make them hear and make them feel. It is not a question whether they like what you say or not: they will come again, and the more you disturb them the more certainly will they come again. Do not be afraid of such holy recklessness, or of driving people away from your church. Where one man goes because you tell the whole and the flat-footed truth, there will be five men that will want his place.

I advise you, also young gentlemen, in your effort to address the masses, to *study tact in the presentation of Christian truth.*

It is amazing how men with but little mental faculty, and little mental furniture, may accomplish great things for God just by studying the best way of doing the thing, by exercising Christian tact and strategy. I never was more impressed with that than by the conduct of Mr. Osborn, an American evangelist. Perhaps none of you ever saw him. He was an old man when I was a mere boy. He came to my father's house, and I was the only one of the whole family that was not a Christian. We sat down by the fireside in the evening in the country, and Mr. Osborn said to my father: "Are all your children Christians?" Father said, "Yes, all but DeWitt."

Well, the old evangelist sitting by the fire, did not even turn toward me, but looking into the fire, he began to tell a story about a lost lamb on a mountain, and it was a stormy night, very much like this, the wind blowing and howling around the house. He described the lost lamb out on the mountain, and how they tried to find it; how everything was warm in the sheepfold, and at last that lamb perished. It was all still in the room. Every body knew it meant me; I knew it meant me; but he did not say it meant me, and still kept looking into the fire. I never found any peace till I became a Christian. That is what I call Christian strategy. If he had turned to me after he got through and said: "DeWitt, I mean you!" I should have been as mad as fire.

Let us be cautious when we come to speak of the terrors of the law, and not preach as though we were glad to preach on that theme—not preach as though we were glad to have them perish if they kept on in their sins. Let there be something in the tone, something in the manner, which will represent to them the fact, "I am a sinner, too; if God by his infinite grace, had not changed my heart, I should have been under the same condemnation."

Again: *Use great naturalness of manner.* Do not try to preach like any one else. See what you can do the easiest, and then do that. By that I do not mean to inculcate laziness, or to put a premium upon any kind of indolence; but it is generally the case that that which you can do easiest at the start, you can do the best and most successfully all the way through. In regard to preaching without notes—a subject which every

man discusses in this day who has any idea of the ministry—while it may best for the majority of those who enter the ministry to preach without notes, I think there are marked cases where it is not a man's duty so to do. I know men who have ruined their life-time work by perpetual struggle to speak without notes. Though they had large intellect and warm Christian hearts, they never got facility in the extemporaneous use of language.

Let every man judge for himself the best way of preaching; but be natural, and let it be an improved naturalness. Why is it when men come to talk on religious themes they talk in a different tone and in a different way from that in which they talk on any other subject? I think we could reach the masses a good deal better if we had the naturalness of tone which we have in the street and shop. I do not know why there should be any such thing as a pulpit tone. It not only goes into the pulpit, but it goes into the pew—this disposition to act out a peculiar manner and a peculiar tone as fitted for religious service. You will find a man who stands on Friday afternoon in his store on Broadway selling a bill of goods. He wants so sell a bill of suspenders. Now he talks naturally and persuasively. He says to the purchaser that these are really the best suspenders in all the city, and the customer buys them saying: "What a delightful merchant this is! Where do you attend church?" "I attend such and such a church. We have a prayer-meeting to night; won't you come around?" The customer says: "Yes." Well, Friday night he goes into the prayer-meeting, and the merchant who that afternoon had been talking so cheerfully about the suspenders, and in such a successful way, stands up

in the prayer-meeting to recommend the religion of Jesus Christ; but he talks in such a funereal tone, and in such a lugubrious manner, that it is enough to make an undertaker burst into tears. Now, why not have the same cheerfulness of tone in speaking of religion as in speaking of secular matters? The religion of Jesus Christ is the brightest thing that ever came down from Heaven. It is compared to sunlight, to flowers, and to all that is beautiful and glorious. Why should we, in our manner and in our tones, indicate that it is anything else? We should certainly be as natural in the pulpit as in the street and in the home.

I advise you also to go forth in *the spirit of all prayer*. Certainly you believe, we ought to believe, in the power of prayer.

Make every service decisive for eternity. If you preach to the masses, the people will come in to one service and they will never come back again. It is an awful thing to stand in the pulpit and feel, "Now here is an audience, some of whom I will never meet until the thunders of the last day break on the world; if I do not touch them to-night they will never be touched." Just as certainly as you go into a service before the masses and resolve that there and then souls shall be saved, they will be saved. There will be no experiment about it. Now just single out one man. I think it is a grand thing to single out a man in the audience and preach to him. My custom is to single out a man on the last seat in the gallery—I mean in that line, or standing clear out by the door—for the reason that I have noticed I can make all the people hear between that point and this. I like everybody to hear in the church and if I preach to the last man in the gallery, I am pretty

certain they will all hear me. I take a man far back, I imagine to myself that that man has never been in the church before, or has not been in a church for twenty years, and perhaps he will never be in again; he may come from curiosity; this is my last chance; the Lord help me! Then I think of what man's soul is worth. What is a soul? Why, it is enough to break a minister down in the midst of his sermon to think of what a soul is. A wheel within a wheel, wound up for endless revolutions; a realm in which love shall forever lift its smile, or despair gnash its teeth, or pain strike its poignard, or hope kindle its auroras: a soul just poised on the pivot, and if it swing off or break away the lightnings of heaven have not feet swift enough to catch up with it. No wonder that many a man in his last moment has awakened to think he had a soul and was not prepared to go, and in the excitement of the moment ran his fingers through his hair, and then, though a minute before he lay helpless on the bed from disease, not able to turn his head, in the anguish of the moment rose up and shook off the three watchers and looked out into the darkness and cried, "O my soul, my *soul*, my SOUL!" Now to have fifty such souls or twenty such souls in the audience, and to feel that this is the only chance at those souls: it is awful. It seems to me it is like empaneling a jury for a trial. The verdict is to be rendered, the Judge of quick and dead has given the charge, the minister has now come to the close of his sermon, and they are to render the verdict, not about somebody else, but about themselves. What an overwhelming consideration!

I wish you great joy, young men. Great fields are opening for you. Be praying men; be holy men. Re-

member that you can never lift your people higher up than the place on which you stand. Consecrate yourself, body, mind, and soul, to God. Have high anticipations in the ministry. There are great solemnities, great trials, and great hardships; but where there is one hardship there are five hundred compensations in the inward consciousness of doing the Lord's service. I know a great many things are written in books this day about the hardships and the trials of the ministry, and they are all true. O for somebody to write a good, vivacious, enthusiastic, Christian book about the joys of the Christian ministry! I have not wanted to make anything I say to-night personal; I have not wanted to say anything about myself; but I will tell you before I quit, the ministry to me is one long exhilaration. I believe I should have been dead if I had been engaged in anything else than in preaching the Gospel of the grace of God. It is healthy; it is good for the body, it is good for the mind, and it is good for the soul.

Note.—The above is regarded as a very superior specimen of spicy illustrative writing.—*Compiler.*