

LESSON XXVI.

THE

THEORY OF PREACHING

LECTURES ON HOMILETICS

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SERMON ASSIGNMENT

You will now begin assembling a sermon using the CUMULATIVE SUMMARY on the following pages. This summary consists of the main points of the entire textbook, including the chapters following this current chapter and on to the end of the textbook.

- 1.** When you assemble your sermon you are to reference every point in the CUMULATIVE SUMMARY and decide if they apply or do not apply to your sermon. If they do not apply you are to mark that point of the summary as **NA**, meaning not applicable and you do not have to include the textbook chapter reference for that point.
- 2.** The other points in the summary are to be marked with a brief note. The note can state such things as: that you have **considered** them and either utilized them or not utilized them; or that you have **adjusted** your sermon according to their precepts; or that you have **incorporated** them into your sermon; or other brief statements concerning each of those points. Include in the brief statements how you used the precepts stated in the point or how it affected the way that you used them in the indicated part of your sermon.
- 3.** Also include any other pertinent facts that you want in the brief statements.
- 4.** Also include the chapter reference from the textbook for the points in the summary that you do use.
- 5.** Both the Cumulative Summary and the outline are to be submitted to the college and accepted by us before you submit your Finish Sign In form and your Closed Book Test Contract form for the course. Even if you are planning to write out the sermon verbatim for your own use, you must still complete, and submit and have accepted, an outline written according to the precepts taught in the textbook and completing the Cumulative Summary as you write the sermon. You cannot pass the course without completing both parts of this assignment.

CUMULATIVE SUMMARY

A sermon is: An oral address - to the popular mind - upon religious truth - as contained in the Scriptures - and elaborately treated - with a view to persuasion.

A sermon is a structure: it is something put together with care.

It has: unity - coherence - proportion - a beginning - a middle - and an end.

Sermons may be arranged in four classes, - the explanatory, the illustrative, the argumentative, the persuasive.

1. The preponderance of one method, not the exclusion of others, gives character to every class.
2. These four elements of discourse cover every variety of oratorical composition.
3. The proper classification of sermons is fundamental to the subject of unity of discourse.
A sermon cannot be pointed in its aim if it has no oneness of rhetorical character by which to classify it.
4. Proper classification is equally fundamental to the subject of proportion in preaching.

Numbering in this summary:

The roman numerals used to enumerate the main points of this summary are not the same as the roman numerals used in the textbook to divide the text into lessons. They are only for the purpose of numbering the main sections of this Summary.

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I. THE TEXT

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| A. Sources. | |
| B. Forms. | |
| C. Emotions. | |
| D. Dignity. | |
| E. Novelty. | |
| F. Personality. | |
| G. Pertinency. | |
| H. Completeness. | |
| I. Accommodation. | |
| J. Mottos. | |
| K. Miscellanies. | |

II. THE EXPLANATION

A. Definition: It is that part of a sermon which comprehends all those remarks of which the object is to adjust the meaning of the text to the homiletic use which is to be made of it.

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| B. Objects. | |
| C. Materials. | |
| D. Qualities. | |
| E. Locality. (Where should it be in relation to other parts of a sermon.) | |

III. THE INTRODUCTION

A. Theory: How do I bring my audience and my subject together is the practical question.

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| B. Specific objects. | |
| C. Simplicity. | |
| D. Unity. | |
| E. Directness. | |
| F. Congruity. | |
| G. Modesty. | |
| H. Suggestiveness. | |
| I. Varieties. (Of method in approaching subjects of discourse.) | |
| J. Composition. | |

IV. THE PROPOSITION

A. Definition: That part of a discourse by which its subject is defined.

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| B. Necessity. | |
| C. Substance. | |
| D. Forms. | |
| E. Simplicity. | |
| F. Brevity. | |
| G. Specificness. | |
| H. Elegance. | |
| I. Its preface. | |

V. THE DIVISION (Lectures 26-29)

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| A. Abuses of Divisions | |
| B. The Materials of Division | |
| C. Classification of Division | |
| D. Forms | |
| E. Order | |
| F. Announcement | |
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VI. THE DEVELOPMENT (Lectures 30-31)

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|--|
| A. Definition | |
| B. Prerequisites | |
| C. Character- istics | |
| D. Unity | |
| E. Unity Concluded (Ch. 31) | |
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VII. THE CONCLUSION (Lectures 32-39)

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| A. Causes of Weakness (chs. 32-34) | |
| B. Applications (Continuous or Compact) | |
| C. Radical Elements (Inference, Remark, Recapitulation) | |
| D. Radical Elements (cont.) (Appeals, ch. 39) | |
| E. Order | |
| F. Announcement | |
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LECTURE XXVI.

THE DIVISION: NECESSITY, EXPRESSION.

THE word "division" defines itself. We designate by it the principal sections of an orderly discussion.

I. Are divisions necessary in a sermon? The question is twofold: Is the existence of divisions necessary to the speaker? Is the statement of divisions necessary to the hearer?

1st, The objections to either the existence or the statement of divisions are briefly these: 1. That preaching by pre-arranged plan tends to the exclusion of extemporaneous thought; 2. That it tends to excessive formality in preaching; 3. That it impairs the freedom of direct appeals; 4. That it is unfavorable to unity of discourse; 5. That in argumentative sermons it gives needless prominence to weak arguments.

2d, Yet these objections will disappear as we proceed to consider the reasons for both having and stating divisions in the discourses of the pulpit. We suspend, for the present, all questions respecting the number of divisions, and the numerical form of statement. All that is claimed at present is that good discourse in the pulpit demands that a preacher shall have divisions in his own mind, and that he shall so state them that hearers shall be distinctly sensible of them.

(1) Divisions thus formed and stated promote per

spicuity of discussion. They aid a preacher in gaining perspicuity; clear mental action works instinctively by plan, and each assists the other. You understand a subject the better for having reduced it to a plan of discourse. A natural division of a subject for use is no more nor less than a philosophical analysis and arrangement of its materials; your own thoughts are the more lucid for the discipline. Divisions also assist the hearer to clearness in understanding a discussion. Why should not a hearer, in this respect, profit by a statement of a plan, as well as a preacher by the existence of a plan? The fact that he is a hearer, that he must depend on the momentary perceptions of the ear, that he has no chance for review, for delay, for growth of thought, renders him specially dependent upon the facilities which logic suggests for an understanding of oral discourse. The whole argument for the statement of propositions bears with nearly equal force upon the necessity of stating divisions also.

Specially is it to be borne in mind that the subjects of the pulpit are such as to render divisions necessary to clearness in their oral discussion. The range of thought with which the pulpit has to deal is immensely above that to which the popular mind is stimulated by any other form of public speech. A preacher has a very critical work to do in attempting to bring down themes of high discourse within reach of the common mind, and to secure for them an intelligent and interested hearing. Science tells us that a drop of water contains a flash of lightning. Thus electric are the elements of the common stock of thought in pulpit discourse. Common are they as the raindrops; yet the forces of vivid conception and of intense impression are locked up in them. A preacher's work is to release

and to develop those forces. To do this, we need every facility of expression which logic gives to vividness.

Hence has arisen the peculiar favor with which these forms of analytic discourse have been regarded in the pulpit. So far from their being a deformity, originating in the pedantry of the pulpit, they are one of the necessities to which the pulpit has been driven by the lofty nature of its subjects. How large a proportion of the common people, taken at random, could Ralph Waldo Emerson hold together by his cementless periods on Immortality? Yet the pulpit sets itself to the task of making immortality a living truth to men whose days are spent in shoe-shops and hay-fields, and to women who live over wash-tubs and cooking-stoves. The thing can not be done by the fluent and unscholarly method of the lyceum.

(2) Divisions promote comprehensiveness of discussion. They assist a preacher in collecting and arranging the materials for such a discussion. Try the experiment on the materials of a half-digested sermon. Reduce such thoughts as you have to a plan. The effect will be to reveal to you at once what deficiency exists, and where it is. That is to say a deficiency, if it exists, is disclosed by classification. Is an argument missing? Is an objection unanswered? Is a fact wanting for illustration? Is one side of the subject a blank? Is an application of it impracticable, or far-fetched? Whatever be the gap in the fabric, classifying in a plan, in which statement shall be definite, and arrangement orderly, will discover the gap, and will set you at work to fill it. In this respect, the materials of a discourse are like the specimens of a cabinet of minerals. Nothing but a reduction of them to order by classification

will disclose what vacancies exist, and must be filled. Important omissions in a sermon are thus avoided.

Divisions also assist a hearer in perceiving and appreciating the comprehensiveness of discussion. St. Peter's at Rome makes no such impression of magnitude from an outside view as from the interior. So it is with a complete discussion. To be appreciated, it must be explored: the parts of it, in their order, must be seen. Materials classified in a visible plan will make the impression of immensity, when the same materials thrown together miscellaneously will seem diminutive, because incoherent, and, if arranged in invisible order, will be monotonous.

The entire force of textual preaching depends on this power of divisions to reveal a subject. The fullness of thought in a commonplace text may often be disclosed to the dullest hearer by the expedient of textual divisions. A modern preacher, on the text, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," divides his discussion thus: 1. The text commands a duty, which a modern philosopher has pronounced the "most stupendous" act of which man is capable,—"To pray;" 2. The text enforces the duty of prayer by appeal to the supreme faculty of our nature,—"Men ought to pray;" 3. The text suggests that, so far as we know, no other order of being exists, to which prayer is a duty so imperative as to man; 4. The text implies that success in prayer depends on that state of mind which insures its constancy,—"Men ought *always* to pray;" 5. The text teaches that prayer is an act of courage in times of extreme emergency: "Men ought always to pray, and *not to faint*." Does not this plan illustrate how hackneyed texts may be freshened, and how biblical authority may be given to a suggestive

train of thought, by the mere sense of fullness in the discussion, produced by a textual division elaborated and formally stated?

(3) Divisions promote unity of discussion. They assist a preacher in preserving unity. That preacher must habitually think in slipshod gait who can deliberately plan a vagrant discourse. The very effort to classify materials tends to unify them in the result. It is an excellence in divisions, that they thus stand guard over extemporaneous thinking, and shut out all that is not tributary to the result. Still more do well-constructed divisions assist hearers in perceiving the unity of a sermon. Why is it that the incidents often seem to make more impression than the doctrine of a sermon? A standing grief is this to preachers. An illustration, an anecdote, a pictorial passage, an antithetic sentence will be remembered and commented upon, when the drift of thought to which they were tributary will not seem to have been understood. The reason often is that the drift of thought has not been made palpable by landmarks. If you have ever read Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution," you were doubtless sensible of the fact that it is unfit for a beginner in the study of French history. Familiarity with other histories of the same period is necessary to an understanding of Carlyle. Unity of aim exists in his work. Trained readers can perceive that unity. But to other readers it is a chaos of inconsequent remark, from which they get nothing but here and there a thought, a metaphor, an invective, which stands alone in a wilderness of incoherences. History to such readers the work is not. Very similar are those sermons which require trained thinkers to perceive the drift of them underlying their incidents.

(4) Divisions, further, promote progress in a discussion. They assist a preacher in making progress. Organization achieves in discourse that which it achieves in every thing else, — rapidity of execution. Sir Walter Scott lamented late in life that he had never habituated himself to compose his imaginative fiction by previously formed outline of materials. He advised young writers not to imitate his carelessness in that respect. He pronounced it intellectual recklessness to trust, as he did, to the excitement of composition for the evolution of his plots. That he could do it he attributed to the imaginative character of his work.

The same expedient assists a hearer, also, in perceiving progress of discussion. Few things are so essential to impressive discourse as the sense of progress. Hearers crave the consciousness of achievement. Have you never listened to sermons in which this sense of achievement was so feeble, that hearing was labor? Very earnest and animated preachers may produce this effect. They remind you of a top at the height of its invisible revolutions, so tremendously busy are they spinning on their own axis; but you do not seem to get on with them. Why do hills, valleys, rivers, ravines, mile-stones, guide-boards make a traveler sensible of progress? Any thing which diversifies the monotony of scenery creates the sense of advance. St. Paul, when he came to "The Three Taverns," "thanked God, and took courage."

Our modern usage in oratory, by which we say "in the first place," "in the second place," and so on, had its origin in the old Roman custom which the speakers in the Forum had, of associating mentally the heads of a speech with certain localities around them. This thought was deposited in one place, that thought in

another place; and, as the speech advanced, the orator moved around mentally from one locality to another, gathering his materials as he went, and labeling them for the aid of the hearer's sense of progress, as well as his own, with the formulæ of introduction, "in the first place," etc. In the first rank of forensic appeals the transitions are marked with even more than the clerical precision of "first," "secondly," "thirdly." "I have now finished this part of my argument;" "I beg you to remember the fact which I have proved;" "And now let me ask your attention to another point,"—such is the style of transition which you hear in court-rooms, where pleaders have a point to carry, with twelve plain men in a jury-box. The smooth ground-swell of discourse so often chosen in the pulpit by men who affect a literary style would find no favor among the leaders of the English or American bar.

(5) Divisions also promote conciseness of discussion. They aid a preacher in being concise. Skillful architects will tell you to the inch the shape and proportions of the building which shall most successfully economize space. So, in a sermon, good divisions help to compact structure. A perfect sermonizer will trust largely to them for crowding the greatest bulk of thought into the shortest time.

Divisions also assist a hearer in appreciating a compact discussion. To make an undisciplined hearer sensible of the fact of crowded thought in a sermon, you must in some way tell him of it. Divisions do this indirectly. They call attention to one thing at a time: therefore they concentrate attention. They disclose, if it exists, all waste of words. Consequently preachers who spin discourses of thin fabric are not fond of definite divisions. Nothing discovers poverty

of thought more surely than a pertinent plan. A good division would cause many an inflated sermon to collapse. "Oh for a thought!" said one layman, after listening to a fluent preacher,— "Oh for a thought! I get nothing to carry away with me." Probably the sermon contained no thought which would admit of crisp statement; nothing which would bear to be numbered "one, two, three:" therefore nothing worth carrying away. So far from being an evil, it is an excellence in divisions, that they restrain excessive hortation. For some men it is a healthful restraint upon tiresome appeals, that it is unnatural to say, "In the fourth place I warn you, and in the fifth place I exhort you, and in the sixth place I beg you to weep."

(6) Divisions promote elegance of discussion. But are not divisions formal, hard, angular? I answer, Is there no beauty in a plan of thought, in logical order, in fitness, in proportion? Is transparency never beautiful? Are not the angles of a star beautiful? The truth is that there may be very great beauty in an outline of a sermon. Clearness of statement, finish of form, orderly succession, unity of aim, completeness as a whole, and growth in construction are all elements of graceful discourse. By having framed one such division, a preacher is unconsciously quickened. The hearer, too, feels the magnetism of it, though unconscious of its origin.

(7) Divisions may be made to assist a preacher in meeting without loss of power the popular demand for brevity. This demand is a threatening evil. Audiences will not tolerate the old measurement of length of sermons. Preachers can not control the public taste. We have only to accept it, and to make the best of it. How to do this is a very intricate problem. We can

not do it by brevity of speech alone. Much as the popular mind craves brevity, it will not now, any more than it would a century ago, tolerate preaching which has no solid thought. The task of the preacher, therefore, is to compress into the smallest possible amount of time in the delivery the greatest possible amount of solid yet interesting matter.

To achieve this, well-framed divisions are indispensable. Short, crisp statements of the salient thoughts of a discourse will often save the necessity of prolix argument. Statement which carries in itself the force of argument is the style of divisions now needed in the pulpit. With such divisions to emphasize the imperial points of a discourse, you can pack into it vastly more material than can by any ingenuity be put into the same length of slipshod harangue. Take some of President Finney's sermons, for example. Although he carries division to an extreme, yet his sermons show illustriously the power of solid thought, when sharply stated, arranged in rigorous logical order, and enforced by a profound evangelical spirit. One of his most powerful discourses contains thirty-one of these massive blocks of thought, some of them with no amplification whatever. Few preachers of our own age have illustrated so splendidly as he did the power of naked truth to reach the human conscience. Such preaching is to the pulpit what the telegraph is to the press. It is force and speed combined in the superlative degree. Yet it would be impossible without a vigorous and constant use of the organizing power, which expresses itself in good divisions.

(8) Divisions promote interest in a discussion. This they do by promoting clearness, unity, elegance, and speed. The enthusiasm of the preacher is most

vigorously sustained by a clear, unified, elegant, progressive plan of thought before him as a model. The act of framing such a plan creates a courageous interest in executing the details. The interest of the hearer is even more dependent upon good divisions. The unity which they create prevents the tedium of confused thought; and nothing is more tedious than confused thinking. Their elegant structure invites interest in their expansion. The sense of progress which they quicken stimulates attention; and the mental rests which they furnish relieve the weariness of prolonged attention. Observe the rhetorical structure which Coleridge has given to the essay which he has entitled "The Friend." He introduces several *excursus* from the main subject, which he terms "landing-places." They are chiefly a rhetorical device for relieving the tedium of prolonged and abstract discussion. John Locke would have sought the same effect by means of chapters and sections. Sermons find the same relief in the expedient of divisions.

Even that class of hearers who are beguiled by false tastes and affectations can always be reined up to healthy thinking by a compact, racy statement of an elemental truth, like those which divisions should express. Plain sense pithily uttered will catch and hold a wandering mind. No sane man ever clears himself wholly from common sense. Let that speak in concentrated thought, and thought will spring to answer thought. On the contrary, that style of discourse which needs no divisions is not weighty enough to produce in the hearer any interest which demands relief. It may please; it may entertain; it may excite curiosity; it may reach the superficial feelings: but it does not penetrate profound sensibilities; the great

passions are not moved by it; hearts are not swayed by it. It is a style of thinking which resembles the work of a portrait-painter who was noted for the beauty of his faces without the expression of character in them, and whom Chantry criticised by saying, that, "in painting a head, he took out all the bones and all the brains."

This view of the necessity of divisions to that style of thinking which most deeply moves hearers is confirmed by the fact that really powerful preachers who have been theoretically opposed to them have still used them. The most potent arguments against them which I have ever seen were attributed to Robert Hall. Yet he generally employed them. Only two or three of his published sermons appear without them; and those were occasional sermons, like that on the death of the Princess Charlotte, in which he thought it necessary to be specially literary and ornate. In his ordinary discourses, in which he aimed to achieve the direct business of preaching, he found them necessary, as do other preachers. In our own country, no man has contended against the fetters of divisions more earnestly than Dr. James Alexander. His "Thoughts on Preaching" is full of flings at them. Yet he, also, in his practice, used them. These men were both of them strong preachers. They found, that, theory or no theory, the great strength of the pulpit can not find utterance without these "angular" expedients of logic.

(9) Divisions promote permanence of impression. We may safely say, that, other things being equal, that is the best sermon which furnishes the most effective means of holding it in the memory. The most effective of such means commonly are the text, the proposition, and the divisions. These are the parts of a sermon which usually have the longest life. A preacher, above

all other public speakers, aims at lasting impressions. He needs, therefore, as many expedients as are natural, to make truth penetrate the memory. Dr. Lyman Beecher used to tell an audience, in his uncouth way, at the close of a division which was vital to his argument, exactly what he wished them to remember. "Hold that fast," he would say; "Nail that thought down;" "Don't let this slip away;" "Put a peg in there." Just this is the natural working of clear, concise, orderly divisions. They are the "nails fastened by the masters of assemblies."

I have dwelt thus long upon the necessity of this expedient in sermonizing, because it is so often underrated. The present drift of clerical taste underrates it. Secular literature ignores it. Wit, which has no claim either to piety or to literature, makes a butt of it. Many preachers, therefore, are inclined to surrender it as an antiquated fixture of the pulpit, which should go with the sounding-board. Yet one thing is noticeable; that the depreciation of the use of divisions accompanies the depreciation of elaborate preaching. The less esteem a preacher has for them, the less he feels for the preaching which needs them. Argumentative sermons, doctrinal sermons, intellectual sermons, long sermons are generally decried in the same breath which pronounces against divisions. Talks, exhortations, pious remarks take the place of sermons in the practice of such critics.

By this review of the necessity of divisions, and of the style of thinking in sermons which divisions represent, I am reminded of what Pascal has said of the "geometrical spirit." He contends that all profoundest thinking involves a tendency to geometrize. That is, it involves that bent of mind which defines, which

proves, which demonstrates, which therefore affirms positively in the end. Plato said of the Infinite Mind, "it constantly geometrizes." This drift towards definitive truth is characteristic of all vigorous preaching. As we observed of propositions, so, also, is it true of divisions, that they represent this style of thinking in the pulpit; and the disuse of the one is destructive to the other. Cultivate, then, that which Pascal calls the geometrical spirit. Only thus can you fairly deliver the inmost spirit of Christianity. Ours is one of the few "religions of the book" which the world has known. It claims to be definite, revealed, positive, authoritative. It is reason addressed to reason, and faith commanding faith. To speak to men in the full spirit of it we must "geometrize." We must construct. We must be architects and builders. Sermons must be elaborated and finished structures. No other part of them should be so deftly elaborated as the inner framework. That should be a finished mechanism, even if nothing else is finished.

II. The second general topic in the treatment of divisions is the inquiry, To what extent should visible division of the materials of a sermon be carried? This is a topic on which we should keep clear of artificial rules. Yet certain general principles every preacher's good sense can apply in a flexible way.

1st, The extent of division should be regulated primarily by the nature of the subject.

(1) Some subjects repel numerous divisions. A house built of bamboo could scarcely admit of a second and third story. So a theme may by its nature be restricted to divisions simple and few. For example, transparent subjects are burdened, if treated with numerous divisions. "The value of the soul,"—how

would you naturally divide a sermon on this theme? The subject is commonplace; the best materials of thought upon it are painfully so: the aim of a sermon upon it is clear from the outset. There is no opportunity for the surprises induced by an unexpected train of thought. Is it natural to load down such a subject with a long array of division and subdivision? Obviously not. Division and subdivision are the index of elaboration. A public speaker must be watchful of his implications as well as of his expressions. The title of one of Fichte's philosophical tracts is this, "A statement, clear as the sun, of the true nature of my philosophy; or, an attempt to *force* the reader to understand." What is the implication in such a title? Either that the volume is very abstruse, or that the reader is very obtuse. So the framework of a sermon may have its implications. Elaborate division and subdivision imply their own necessity, either because of the nature of the subject, or the character of the audience. When, therefore, they are applied to a very simple theme, they awaken a sense of incongruity by the contrast of great labor with easy and foreseen result. We do not like to be dragged laboriously to a foregone conclusion. Subjects, also, of which the chief use is to appeal to the sensibilities of hearers do not admit of numerous divisions. A sermon of consolation to the afflicted could scarcely be minutely subdivided. Divisions are the index, not of an emotive, but of an intellectual process. The crisis of a tragedy can not naturally be developed in the form of a syllogism.

(2) Some subjects demand minute division. The necessity of analysis is evident on the face of them. Subjects on which the truth is easily misunderstood or may be plausibly perverted may require numerous

divisions. The doctrine of decrees is one of the difficult subjects of discussion in the pulpit; and the difficulty lies largely at the point of making hearers understand what the doctrine is. It must therefore be analyzed, distinguished from what it is not, defended against perversions, shown to be a necessary outgrowth of any form of divine government. It is one of a class of themes on which we not only must distinguish truth from error, but must as carefully distinguish truth from truth. Proportion and perspective are every thing in such discussions. In like manner, truths which are open to many and intricate objections often need to be treated with numerous divisions. The doctrines of depravity, of prayer, of the Trinity, are exposed to a multitude of objections. So far as they go, the objections are forcible. Around all the centers of Christian thought real difficulties are dense. If such truths are to be thoroughly handled, objections must be fairly stated, and conclusively answered. This requires divisions proportioned to the points to be discussed. Guarded statement, explanation, assertion qualified by assertion, truth balanced by truth, proof multiplied upon proof, — in a word, all the arts germane to logic, may be needed to disentangle such truths from the crowd of real difficulties which surround them in the minds of hearers.

Further: subjects which are very prolific of practical applications may need numerous divisions. Of some themes the distinguishing feature is their marvelous fecundity in practical applications. They branch out into innumerable uses. You can not unfold their affluence without stating and distinguishing those uses. The natural vehicle for their conveyance is divisions.

(8) One general principle, therefore, which should

regulate the extent of divisions is this, that, the more severely the subject tasks the mind, the more imperative is the need of a thorough division of materials. Even when the power of intellection is not severely tasked, the power of recollection may be.

2d, The extent of division must be regulated, in part, by the character of the discussion proposed. The same subject may admit of a difficult or a facile discussion. An argumentative discussion obviously demands more careful division than an exhortation. An explanatory discussion may require a more thorough analysis of the materials than an argument on a subject well-known. A polemic discussion may call for more cautious and multiplied distinctions than a practical treatment of a truth undisputed. A comprehensive discussion would clearly necessitate more numerous divisions than one of restricted range. I name these particulars only to enforce the principle which they all illustrate, that division should equal, not exceed, the demands of the discussion. To determine what those demands are criticism can not go back of the good sense of the preacher.

3d, The extent of division must be regulated, in part, by the character of the audience addressed. An audience of children would demand that divisions be few. But they would demand, also, subjects and discussions which require but few divisions. An uncultivated audience of any kind would require that divisions be moderate in number and degree. To an undisciplined mind, multiplied or intricate divisions are as burdensome as a labyrinth of thought undivided. But no audience is independent of divisions in any elaborate discourse. It is a mistake to trust to the intelligence even of a select audience to follow an elaborate train

of thought, without the helps to perspicuity which visible divisions furnish.

4th, The extent of division must be regulated, in part, by the time at command in preaching. You will soon discover that the same amount of material can be presented in less time with only a general division than with a general division and a subdivision. Every division is a rest. Its statement requires time. The chief change which the outline of a discourse often needs is to abandon subdivisions, and to throw the salient thoughts into one continuous series. The difference between the two methods is like that between a way-train and an express-train. You traverse the same distance at different rates of speed, because with different numbers of rests.

More definite rules than these are impracticable. But a sensible study of these criteria enables us to pass judgment upon certain abuses of divisions which have brought them into disrepute. The application of these principles to those abuses will be considered in the next lecture.