LECTURE XXXV.

THE CONCLUSION: APPLICATIONS OMITTED, CONTINUOUS, AND COMPACT.

IV. THE intensity of the applicatory element in preaching, which we have seen to be intrinsic to the Christian theology, leads us naturally to an inquiry which forms the fourth general topic in the discussion of conclusions: it is, Ought truth ever to be discussed in a sermon without an application? Several things should be observed in reply to this question.

1st, Some apparent exceptions to the general principle are not real exceptions.

(1) A double sermon, in which the application is reserved for the peroration of the second part, is not a real exception. Rhetorically the two discourses are one. The application of the second is the application of both. At the bar or in the senate an equal amount of material would be spoken without a break.

But, even in double sermons, a partial application of the first is often practicable at the time of its delivery; and, if practicable, it may be desirable. The case will rarely happen in which it is logically necessary to dismiss an audience with absolutely no indication of the uses of the subject for something more than intellectual entertainment.

The same principle applies to serial preaching. Every

sermon in a series should, if possible, be a unit: its moral uses should, if possible, be developed at the time of its delivery. Round it off, and apply it on the spot, as Dr. Chalmers did each one of his discourses on human depravity. The best serial sermons are those in which the serial feature is latent. But, if this is not so, still the exception to the general rule in the delivery is only apparent. The whole discussion is a unit, and is applied at the end.

(2) Another apparent exception which is not a real one is that of a discussion which a preacher fails to apply through excess of emotion. This has been sometimes adduced as an evidence of the power of conclusions without applications. The preacher closes a sermon in tears, instead of words. Hearers weep in sympathy. This exception needs but a word in reply. The most powerful of all applications is made. The silence of suppressed emotion surpasses all eloquence. Speech then may be silver; but silence is golden.

(3) A third apparent exception which is not a real one is the case of a sermon closed with a prayer in place of an appeal to hearers. This is sometimes advanced as proof of the value of sermons without applications. But what does it prove? If it is not genuine, it is a piece of charlatanry. It impresses nobody to the purpose. If it is genuine, it is the equivalent of an application. It hints at the reserved power of truth. The preacher is overawed by his own vision. He feels truth so profoundly, that he turns from men, and throws back the work of admonishing them upon God. Are not ejaculatory prayers to God, if they are not profane, among the most affecting expressions of appeal to men? So of a closing prayer in a sermon: it may be, as an indirect appeal to hearers, like the cry of a drowning man for divine mercy.

It is evident that these are apparent exceptions only, to the general rule, which demands intense applications of truth in preaching.

2d, But a real exception occurs. When the subject of discourse is one on which solemn application is the usage of the pulpit, and when the discussion points to a hackneyed application as the only natural one, it may be well to omit all application.

(1) Some themes are most naturally treated in one way, and only one. They lead to one conclusion; they reach it by one avenue of discussion; they culminate in one strain of exhortation. Yet they are standard themes of the pulpit, and must not be ignored.

(2) Consequently the very announcement of such a subject predicts the whole story to the hearers. They know all that is coming. They have never been surprised by any variation of either the discussion or its uses. In such a case it may be breath wasted to reiterate the hackneyed application in their hearing. Disappoint, then, the expectation which renders that application useless. The value of the soul, the duty of repentance, the certainty of death are themes of this kind. Who ever heard a novel appeal on these themes? Who can make one? A hearer of good memory can recite as glibly as the preacher the one trite hortation by which these subjects are naturally applied. Close the discussion, then, without an application. Withhold the inference, the remark, the appeal. Assume that the hearer's conscience is preaching. Surprise him by your silence, since you can not do it by your originality. Excite the inquiry, "Why did not the preacher exhort me as usual?" Conscience often needs quickening by something that is not usual. Novelty itself, and because it is novelty, sometimes turns the trembling scale of motive.

(3) Conversion is often a work of great delicacy, as it respects the adjustment of means to end and of motives to action. Painters say that their art involves a delicacy of conception and of execution which they can not explain to a critic. It intermingles intuition with skill in a way which nothing but prolonged practice enables them to understand in themselves. Similar is the work of preaching, in that close encounter with the wills of men in which their conversion may hang on the utterance of a moment, or, as probably, on the silence of that moment. The law of the Holy Spirit's working often involves this intricate operation of his chosen instrument.

In powerful revivals, when sensibilities are wrought up by sympathy, and multitudes are hovering around the act of critical decision, the burden of one breath may win a soul, or repulse a soul. Then the absence of an appeal when an appeal is expected, and planned for, and forestalled, may be the one untried expedient which shall result in a soul's conversion. Rarely adopted, this expedient may transfer the work of the pulpit to the conscience of the hearer. A roused conscience never speaks a hackneyed word.

3d, These remarks suggest, further, that both the real and the apparent exceptions to the general principle before us depend for their impressiveness on the infrequency of their occurrence. They can not be genuine if they are frequent. Habitually employed, they take on the look either of trickery or of insensibility. Hearers receive them either as stolid expedients or as a solemn way of imposing on them.

For example, one of the most spiritless of all modes of closing a sermon is that which was common at one time in the pulpit of Scotland, and was imported to

some extent into this country, — that of repeating the Christian benediction, or the doxology. This was closing with prayer. When this was an original, and of course a rare outburst of the preacher's emotion, it may have been often the culmination of power in a sermon. Rarely imitated now, it would be impressive. But some preachers have rarely adopted any other ending. Thus abused, the expedient becomes flat. Routine is in no other form so flat as in forms of prayer. Prayer is nowhere else so void of meaning as where it seems foisted in as a convenience. When it forms the stereotyped close of a sermon, it is only saying by indirection in a religious way what it would not be profane to say directly, — that the hour is ended. The Rev. Dr. James Wilson of Philadelphia used to preach just one hour by the clock, no more, no less. At the instant when the hour-hand pointed to twelve o'clock, he would stop short, and say, "Brethren, the hour is up. Let us pray." This was bald; but, as a uniform formula, it was not so unmeaning as the benediction would have been in its place.

I once heard the late Rev. Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh preach a sermon which was to be followed by another appointment, for which his name was announced, in another part of the city. He was pressed for time. During the latter part of the discourse he frequently eyed his watch, and evidently preached in a hurry. At the close he had less than ten minutes in which to cross the city. He drew out his watch nervously, and, with watch in hand and his eye upon it, he exploded the customary formula of the benediction: "Grace be unto you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!" Almost before the last word had left his lips he shot down the pulpit-stairs like a rocket. I had

before seen a priest take his pinch of snuff in the midst of the celebration of high mass; but that was not so revolting as the benediction and the leap of the Scotch divine.

Here let us observe, in the way of an *excursus* from the topic now before us, the true office and significance of the benediction in the service of prayer. A special reason exists, in the very nature of it, for not using it as a form of homiletic conclusion. It is the only act of clerical prerogative, except the administration of the ordinances, in which the idea of clerical mediatorship is retained. The sacerdotal theory of it does no harm to either preacher or people. Let it be reserved as an act of clerical intercession for the whole service. There it is in its place. There it becomes often the coronation of the devout feelings of the hour.

I have said that the sacerdotal theory of it can do no evil. Looking at it with no bias derived from the history of the sacerdotal theory of the clerical office in other respects, I find in it a reality, which, call it what we may, meets a certain natural craving in the hearts of a worshiping assembly. Often the final effect of public worship, with its accompaniment of song and sermon, and rehearsal of God's word, is to excite a profound sense of dependence, of which a craving for the blessing of a "man of God" is the natural sequence. The intervention of a solitary human voice between the silent assembly and God, speaking in his name, and pronouncing his blessing upon them, becomes a relief to their wrought-up emotions. They feel the naturalness of it. They volunteer to clothe it with the authority of their own devotional desires. It is an act in which the preacher is not as other men. He is invested by the wants of the people with mediatorial

office. He is an intercessor by divine appointment and by popular choice. The people will have it so. They are assisted by it in their own devotions, if no hereditary iconoclasm disturbs the natural working of their devout feelings. Did not the assembly at Enfield, under the preaching of Edwards, probably feel this? Have we not all been sensible of it in the services of the Lord's house, when they have been conducted by a preacher whose character as a man awakened in us the reverence which his office claimed? Has it not been a joy to bow the head, and receive a benediction from one whose office has given a unique significance to the act?

The popular nomenclature by which the clergy have been designated from time immemorial also indicates the genuineness of this view of them in the popular conception. Why is a minister of religion called a "divine," a "man of God"? Why is the title "Reverend" prefixed to his name? Why does the very dwelling in which he lives receive a name — "parsonage," "manse," "rectory" — not given to the dwellings of other dignitaries? Why does the popular taste, when not sophisticated by the ultraisms of democracy, always feel the propriety of some simple badge of dress, which shall make a clergyman always known as such? The idea of the separateness of the clergy from the rest of the world, and, in some sense, of their mediatorship between God and men, is expressed by these incidents to the clerical office.

Are these things relics of Romish corruption? Why, then, has not Protestant iconoclasm, admitted to have been extreme in some other things, succeeded in uprooting these tastes from the popular mind? If they had not some real basis in human nature, the fire to

which they have been subjected through three hundred years of polemic reform should surely have burnt them out by this time. Yet there they are, as fresh and as prompt to express themselves as they were when the people of Israel said to Moses, "Speak *thou* with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die."

Time has indeed wrought revolutionary changes in the ancient theory of worship. We will not ignore them. But it has not destroyed, nor essentially impaired, that instinct of human nature which exalts a teacher of religion above other men, and often invests his service with a mediatorial significance. The one thing in the public worship of the sanctuary in which our Congregational severity recognizes that instinct, and in which the people, if left alone to follow their religious intuitions, will cordially obey it, is this act of pastoral benediction. We are in no danger of an abuse of it in the direction of sacerdotal arrogance. We can not afford to spare it. It is not wise to sacrifice it to ecclesiastical theory. Human nature craves it, and in some form will have it. For the want of it, and some things kindred to it, Congregational and Presbyterian churches are losing their hold upon certain materials in the constituency of churches, which by hereditary affinities belong to them. Let us retain this clerical benediction, then, in the simple and natural form in which even iconoclastic democracy has left it. Let us not transform it from official benediction to mere intercession. Above all, let us not reduce its level in the popular esteem by making it a rhetorical expedient for the ending of a sermon. This, if done often, will often be done with a vacant mind; and in no other form of public worship can we more offensively take God's name in vain.

V. The fifth general topic in the discussion of conclusions is the inquiry, "Which is the superior, — the continuous application in the body of the sermon, or the compact application at the close?" The answer is involved in the following particulars.

1st, The compact application at the close is frequently demanded by the logical necessities of the discussion. We have before observed, that the logical necessities of an argument often forbid the weakening of a conclusion by anticipation of its materials. The same principle often forbids the dispensing with an applicatory ending for the sake of a continuous application through the body of the sermon. An argument incomplete often can not logically be applied to any thing of homiletic use. The practical uses of a syllogism may all lie in its conclusion, not in either premise. If, in such a case, the continuous application is attempted, the process will be forced. It will not be attempted by a logical mind.

2d, The compact application at the close is the more natural to any elaborate discussion. Be it argumentative or not, an elaborate discussion demands continuity of attention to the thing in hand. It is unnatural to break such a train of thought for the sake of an appeal to the sensibilities of hearers. If such an appeal be made, and be successful, what is the effect? The hearer's mind drops from the labor of intellectual tension to the luxury of emotional relaxation. The toil of thinking gives place to that which we so significantly call the "play" of feeling. So far the transition is easy; but how shall we secure the return to severe thinking which an elaborate discussion requires? "*Facilis descensus — sed revocare!*"

It is often said, however, in defense of the continu-

ous application, that intellect and sensibility are mutual tributaries. Transition, therefore, from the one kind of excitement to the other, is helpful to both. "Weave discourse, then," is the advice, "with both the intellectual and the emotive threads; ply back and forth from discussion to hortation, and from hortation to discussion, like a shuttle in a loom." The principle here involved is true only of the inferior kinds and degrees of intellectual and emotive excitement. Severe thought and intense feeling both tend to continuity, not to rapid interchanges. Severe thought is iron in its tenacity: intense feeling is iron red-hot. Neither is flexible like a thread of tow: neither can be woven as with a shuttle. Mental oscillation is natural, only when the mind is at play on the surfaces of thoughts. It is natural where feeling of no profound degree is concerned. An audience may be moved from mirth to sympathy, or from tears to smiles, all the more readily for the contrast, but never from anguish to ecstasy, or from ecstasy to anguish, in rapid oscillation. Edward Everett was once censured for even entertaining with an elaborate classical metaphor an audience assembled to provide relief for Ireland in the time of famine. Imagine that his offense had been an attempt to amuse the audience with a jest! An impassioned audience is in no mood for the play of contrasted emotions. Still less natural is oscillation between impassioned feeling and severe thinking. These run in grooves.

This view is confirmed by the structure of discourse adopted in the best examples of secular eloquence. A speech by Edmund Burke, by Lord Brougham, by Daniel Webster, may be enlivened by descriptions, by sallies of wit, by historic narrative, by classic illustration, but rarely by fragmentary and interspersed ap

peals. Argumentative appeals may occur; but persuasive application is reserved till the close. Such was also the Greek and the Roman ideal of the peroration.

3d, The compact application at the close is the more favorable to concentrated impression. Continuous application, whatever be its advantages, must have this incidental drawback, that it divides force.

(1) Delay often reduplicates the force of application when it comes. The resources of it accumulate by delay on the preacher's side: the recipient demand for it is intensified by delay on the hearer's side. The very calmness with which a preacher explains a stupendous truth, proves a fearful conclusion, illustrates an overpowering alternative, without a word expressive of its sway over his own sensibilities, — except the inevitable hints of his reserved emotion, which he can not repress, — will work, by the mere contrast of stillness with energy, upon the responding sensibilities of the hearer. Feeling will rise and swell, and gather volume, till at length an appeal from the preacher, urging to executive expression, will be welcomed as a relief.

(2) Further: concentrated impression is often the only possible impression. The pulpit is peculiar in the conditions of its work in two respects. It must address a vast amount of spiritually torpid mind; and its most necessary materials grow stale by repetition. From these conditions there is no escape. Concentration of force, therefore, is often the forlorn hope of success. Brief, sharp, condensed processes, from beginning to end, are among the only possible expedients of impression. Weight, not bulk of appeal, becomes the test of value.

4th, The compact application at the close is the

more secure against the danger of exhausting the sensibilities of hearers. Nothing else is so flat as an appeal which moves nobody. Hearers are often injured by applications of truth which fall upon exhausted sensibilities. Exhausted feeling, under such conditions, borders hard upon disgusted feeling.

This suggests an *excursus* from the topic immediately before us, on the duty of the pulpit to those who are repelled from its message by some of its methods.

Religious effort in all its departments has among its fruits an unwritten volume of disgust. This suggested to John Foster his celebrated essay on "The aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion." We know but a small fragment of that aversion within our own ecclesiastical borders. The apparent successes of ill-timed and unphilosophical expedients of usefulness we know. Success, or the resemblance of it, in any thing, trumpets itself. But we do not hear much of its cost in the deadened sensibilities, and disgusted tastes, and contemptuous judgments, and acrid enmities, and silent departures, which they occasion. Men thus affected by unwise policies of the pulpit go out from us, and that is the last we hear of them.

Say what we may of the weakness, or the guilt if you please to call it such, of those who permit themselves to be repelled from truth by such causes; yet they have on their side of the question some powerful allies. They are supported by those auxiliaries to conscience which high culture creates in the ultimate stages of civilization. The equipoise of a well-balanced mind, the intuitions of good taste, the instincts of refined sensibility, the craving of intelligence for thoughtful discourse, and that tendency to reticence which appertains to all deep emotion in strong characters on sacred

themes, — these are auxiliaries to conscience which Christianity itself develops, and without which it can not achieve its ultimate conquests. Yet these are all on the side of these disgusted ones, and plead for them when they go out from Christian churches, repelled by the vagaries of a weak or an ignorant pulpit.

An educated pulpit is inexcusable in a crude and rude policy towards these "Martyrs of Disgust," because it is filled by men who ought to study wiser methods of procedure. An educated ministry ought to be able to do, not only best things, but in best ways. They ought to be able to reach the lower classes of society without resorting to expedients which necessarily repel the higher classes. Their range of policy should be so broad as to cover the wants of all classes.

We should not content ourselves with wasteful ways of doing a little good. The cost of religious usefulness is to be taken account of, like the cost of any other human effort. Laws of spiritual success are as inflexible as those of nature. That is, therefore, a needless waste which aims to reach rude minds at the expense of repelling cultured minds. That is an unwise policy which strives to win ignorance and coarseness by methods of preaching which are intrinsically fitted to alienate learning and taste. Specially is that an uninstructed conscience which impels a man to modes of moving the sensibilities of inferior minds, which good sense pronounces repulsive to their superiors. The divine method of working involves no such separation of classes. It denies the necessity of the repulsion of one class for the salvation of another. It always looks towards, and in its practice works towards, the higher level rather than the lower. But it does this by methods which are intrinsically adapted to both classes, and which elevate both.

An illustration on a large scale of the neglect of this law of divine working is witnessed to-day in the pulpit of Germany. German religious assemblies are generally composed, in overwhelming proportion, of women and children. As a rule, not one person in six in such an assembly is a man. Multitudes of Germans have fallen into the theoretic belief that Christianity is fitted only to women and children. If the theory reflects upon their estimate of their mothers and wives and daughters, the German pulpit is largely responsible for it. Such a degrading conception of the aim of Christianity, and such glaring injustice to more than half the human race, could never have existed under the *régime* of a pulpit which did justice to either. The German clergy, as a body, have neglected what I have elsewhere termed "masterly" preaching. They have sacrificed strong thought, argument, doctrinal preaching, to the more emotive forms of religious discourse. They have indulged excessively in hortatory preaching. As a consequence, only the more emotive classes of society are usually found in German churches. Professor Tholuck foresaw this result twenty-five years ago. He said in 1855, that, of the pastors of German churches, not one in twenty retained his habits of study after obtaining his pastoral charge; and that German preaching, therefore, did not generally consist of the fruits of study. It was impossible, in the nature of things, he said, that such preaching should long command the respect of thinking men. He did not speak of the separation of the sexes; but this result is exactly that in kind which he foreshadowed.

History is constantly repeating itself in this thing, and proving that it is only on the foundation of strong preaching that preaching of feebler stock can sustain

itself. Only on the basis of learned preaching can ignorant preaching achieve success. Only by the support of argumentative preaching can hortatory preaching command respect. Only when surrounded and held up by thoughtful and tasteful preaching, to men of thought and cultured tastes, can emotive and crude preaching to the uneducated have any long or vigorous life. Only upon the labors of studious and hard-working pastors in their libraries, can itinerant evangelists in the pulpit command the hearing which they often receive from excited crowds.

Returning to the topic immediately before us, I would bring the weight of these fundamental truths to enforce the superiority of the compact over the continuous application, by the fact that it is less liable to the danger of exhausting, and thus disgusting, the sensibilities of hearers. This is the great peril of a hortatory sermon.

We are slow to believe that men have none too much power of feeling. No man has any sensibility to waste. Sensibility is not the ultimate faculty of our being. It is a tributary. It is the motive force to executive action. The supreme faculty is will. To work upon sensibility monotonously, leaving the will no chance to throw itself into executive duty, is the surest way to benumb sensibility. Pain itself becomes at last anæsthetic to tortured nerves. They die of pain. So the moral sensibilities grow torpid under extreme and rude appliances which do not leave them at the right moment to do their own work silently upon the will. A wise preacher, therefore, will be wise in this, using discreetly the sensibilities of an audience. He will apply truth, as a soldier fires who has but a limited amount of ammunition. Frequency of shot is less to be regarded than efficiency of shot.

This economy of sensibilities is also urged by another principle which enters into all eloquence. It is that a hearer is a participator in all eloquent speech. Powerful speech is always dramatic. An interested hearer engages in silent colloquy with the speaker. Thought responds to thought; feeling to feeling. Therefore a hearer's range and power of sensibility are as much to be taken into account by a speaker as his range and power of intellect. The moment a hearer ceases to respond to the appeals of a speaker, that moment he ceases to be a party in the case. He becomes a mere recipient. He is clogged; he nods. Lord Brougham accounts for the failure of certain parliamentary speakers on the ground that they shared nothing with their hearers. They were teachers, not orators.

For the reasons thus far advanced, we may conclude that, generally, the compact application at the close is preferable to the interspersed application in the body of the sermon. But the general rule is subject to exceptions.

5th, It should be observed, therefore, that certain forms of discussion may require, and certain other forms may admit of, the continuous application.

(1) Some discussions require the continuous application. A hortatory discussion, for instance, is nearly all applicatory.

(2) Some discussions, though not requiring, may admit of, the continuous application. An expository discussion which is not severely critical is one of this class. In such a sermon the train of thought is secured in place by the text. If dropped for the sake of an applicatory appeal, it may easily be resumed. A biographical or historical discussion admits of a similar freedom of interplay. Such a sermon will commonly

follow either the order of biblical narrative, or the order of time. Either of these, if suspended, is easily recovered. A discourse of peculiar intensity of practical bearing may branch out naturally into a succession of appeals. Instances occur in which practical application grows out of the very roots of a text or a theme. The applications are immediate, obvious, urgent. Not to make them would do violence to the natural uses of the subject. The oratorical instinct of the preacher allies itself with the instinct of hearing in the audience, to demand the utterance of them. The sermon is most naturally made up of a series of touches of discussion, alternating with touches of application. It is constructed like a Norway spruce, which is bearded with branches to the very ground.

6th, Exceptions to the general rule of compact application may be created by peculiarity of occasion. An occasion of unusual religious excitement may demand exception. A state of ebullient emotion on the part of an audience demands something responsive to such emotion from the pulpit. The principle always holds good, that existing excitement should be used. The iron must be struck while it is hot.

Hence it is, that, in revivals of religion, hortation will be useful in larger proportion than when a community is at a dead level. In revivals delicate junctures of influence abound. Critical moments occur in the delivery of a sermon, for which no premeditation can provide. The oratorical instinct must be largely trusted. A direct appeal in the midst of a discussion may then be the instrument of a soul's conversion. No theory of art in preaching must be permitted to tyrannize over the liberty of speech at such moments. The late Rev. Dr. Kirk once told me that he thought

he could commonly judge, by certain indefinable evidences, of the condition of an audience, when they were, and when they were not, moved responsively to the emotion of the preacher so as to invite or to reject interspersed appeal. Not every man's judgment can be implicitly trusted on a point of such delicacy; but one who has had experience in addressing assemblies under religious awakening may have a discernment which shall equal intuition.

7th, Exceptions to the general rule of compact application may be required by the intellectual character of the audience. An audience of children may need the continuous application. Why? Because they have little power of sustained attention, and almost no power of abstraction. On the same principle, an audience composed mainly of undisciplined minds may have the same need.

These remarks upon exceptions to the general rule suggest a threefold principle which obviously underlies such exceptions, and with the statement of which we close this part of the discussion. It is, that the less elaborate the sermon, or the less cultivated the audience, or the more emotive the condition of the audience, the more readily is the continuous application admitted or required.

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE CONCLUSION: RADICAL ELEMENTS, RECAPITULATION, INFERENCE AND REMARK.

VI. PROCEEDING now to examine more narrowly the compact application at the close of a discourse, we are led to inquire, in the sixth place, "What are the radical elements of a conclusion?"

1st, Ancient oratory recognized two such elements, recapitulation and appeal. Either or both were deemed fitting to popular discourse.

2d, To these two elements of the conclusion the usage of the pulpit adds a third,—inference, or remark. On what grounds has the pulpit originated this feature of applicatory discussion?

(1) The foundation of it lies in the intense practicalness of the work of preaching. Preaching, in the high ideal of it, never discusses truth for the sake of discussion; never illustrates truth for the sake of display: it is aimed at uses. The homiletic instinct is to put it to as large a range of uses as possible. The inference, or remark, is a silent witness, so far as it goes, to the fidelity of the pulpit in reaching after the practical usefulness of preaching.

(2) This is seen in the fact that the use of the inference, or remark, brings to practical bearings a large range of abstract themes which can not be applied in

any other way. The pulpit gives proof of its intellectual dignity in the fact that it discusses themes more profound than secular eloquence ever ventures to produce before a popular audience. They are themes, the practical bearings of which are developed wholly by inferences drawn from them, and remarks suggested by them. In themselves they are aerial in their height above the level of human interests. Note as examples of such elemental themes, the Deity of Christ, the Nature of the Atonement, the Personality of the Holy Spirit. Without these, the gospel is a nullity; yet they reach their practical uses only through inferential processes. In themselves they can be discussed with exactest logic, without touching a conscience, or moving a heart; but, by inference from them, truths of richest and sweetest flavor flow out to every conscience and every heart. Thus treated, the most scholastic doctrines of theology become the most practical.

(3) The inference and remark often aid the usefulness of preaching by exhibiting the practical bearings of truth in climactic order. Truths in a series admit always of climax in impression. The closing paragraphs of a sermon, therefore, often concentrate in a rapid rise of interest the practical uses of an entire discussion. Mental ascent from a lower to a higher level of interest is exhilarating.

(4) The inference and remark are valuable as a device for disclosing the prolific nature of truth in resources of practical application. Force of impression is often gained by multiplicity of points of impression. The great object of preaching is to bring the gospel home to real life by showing at how many points it touches real life. A sense of the omnipresence of truth is thus quickened. Hence the pulpit has by intuition

seized upon the inference and remark as a most natural device of sacred oratory.

(5) Inferences also aid impression by presenting a practical truth through the logical process. A truth inferred is a truth proved. Practical logic is the strongest form of application. Cavil is forestalled by the momentum of argument.

(6) Inferences often assist impression by introducing truth unexpectedly. Hearers concede the process of discussion without foreseeing the results. Says Dr. Emmons, "I usually brought in those truths which are most displeasing to the human heart by way of inference. This I often found to be the best method to silence and convince gainsayers."

(7) Inferences and remarks promote impression by inviting the hearer's participation in the process of application. A truth inferred invites a hearer to perform the process of inference in his own mind. A remark naturally suggested by a subject invites a hearer to test mentally the naturalness of the suggestion. The freedom of the Methodist usage of public worship, which permits the hearer to give vent to his own emotions awakened by the voice of the preacher, has this to say in its defense, that it is grounded in the nature of all eloquence. The reticence of Calvinistic assemblies is so far unnatural in that it stifles the dramatic nature of oral discourse, and tends to reduce it to monologue.

Any thing is valuable, which, without sacrificing a greater good, draws the hearer into the circle of activity in the reception of discourse. Beguile him into the habit of reaching out and taking the truth with his own hand, and you second nature in one of the finest processes of oral speech. Physicians deem it a

vital point gained, if they can induce a patient to co-operate with remedial prescription. Hearers of the gospel are in a state of chronic disease in which their own voluntary participation in redemptive counsel is invaluable. True, at any one moment, in any one given case, the advantage is minute and transient. But the success of all persuasive speech is made up, in the aggregate, of such *minutiæ* of moral influence. Truth works upon mind as light works upon vegetation. No analysis can detect the increments of growth; yet without such infinitesimal increments there is no growth.

These are, in brief, the grounds on which the applicatory expedient of the inference and remark rests its claim. The pulpit has in the sheer exercise of good sense originated this device. Whatever may be true of it in secular persuasion, preaching needs it for the full use of its applicatory resources. Of this the almost unanimous usage of the clergy in elaborate discourse is conclusive proof.

VII. Having, then, these three elements of the closing application, — the recapitulation, the inference and remark, and the appeal, — we proceed to inquire, On what principles shall we select and combine the several elements in conclusions?

1st, Study first congruity of conclusion with discussion.

(1) Not all discussions admit of recapitulation. The salient points of a discussion may be so simple and so few, that to recapitulate them would burden them with needless form. Recapitulate a hortatory sermon, and you reduce it to burlesque.

(2) On the same principle, the nature of the discussion may invite or reject the inference and remark.

A subject very prolific of practical bearings may need inferences to develop them. The same is true of suggested remarks which are not logical inferences. Some themes abound with them, others are less fruitful.

(3) Congruity with the discussion will also often determine the question of the use of an appeal. A discussion, which, instead of branching out into logical inferences, like the delta of a river, converges to one burning point of application, may demand the direct appeal as the only natural expression of that application.

(4) All that criticism can say to the point is, Make the conclusion sympathetic with the discussion. Recapitulate, infer, remark, appeal, — one or all, — as may be requisite to evolve most richly the applicatory force which is latent in the body of the sermon.

This study of congruity of conclusion with discussion is especially needful as an offset to the temptation to twist subjects to unnatural uses. The impulse of the homiletic instinct is to use a discussion by applications at all hazards. Therefore a doctrine is sometimes used in ways for which the discussion has made no natural preparation. It is thrust home as if by brute strength. Strict pertinence of conclusion forbids this. It is an artifice. It only conceals one error by another. Pertinence demands more than logical congruity between a discussion and its uses. No matter where the discussion began, it must end with that which is natural to the process which leads to the ending. A scion from a pear-tree, grafted into a quince-stock, fruits into pears, not quinces. So a very abstract discussion develops naturally into a temperate rather than an intense application. Like to like is the law.

2d, Study progress of moral impression. Why is a

hortatory sermon frigid, if ended with inferences? Because an appeal is *per se* more intense than inference. Having exhorted throughout the body of the discourse, it is retrogression to end with any thing else than an appeal. On the same principle, recapitulation may be too cool a process to follow an impassioned argument. The closing division of an argument may be so intensely wrought that immediate appeal derived from that division only may be all that can make a crescent impression.

3d, Study variety of conclusion. The chief peril of the pulpit in applications is monotony of form. Therefore do not always recapitulate, nor always close with inferences, nor always appeal. Never make the pulpit a music-box with only two tunes. Sometimes the most obvious reason for not adopting one method of conclusion in the afternoon is that you did adopt it in the morning. In applications of truth to the conscience and the sensibilities, more than in any other process of discourse, nature craves variety. It will bear a stale subject; for that may be freshened. A hackneyed discussion it will tolerate; for that may be the most truthful discussion. But humdrum in application either indurates or nauseates. What else is so flat as an exhortation which you know by heart? What else is so vapid as any form of practical approach which you have foreseen from the beginning? The moral sensibilities, above all others, demand the stimulus of variety; for they are benumbed by sin, and stagnant under the habit of moral somnolence.

VIII. What qualifications are requisite to a good recapitulation?

1st, The first quality is brevity. The nature of recapitulation implies this: its object requires this. Reca-

pitulation is synopsis. It is the discourse in miniature. Its object is to compress and epitomize, so that the hearer shall feel the whole force of the discussion at a blow. In such a syllabus of the discourse nothing is pertinent which the hearer can not easily carry in his memory.

2d, Restriction to foregoing materials is essential to a perfect recapitulation. Preachers of loose logical habits insert new material into the recapitulation. If not a new division, an appendix to the development of a division is interpolated. Imperfect discussion is thus amended at the close. Ragged argument is patched. Meager illustration is eked out. This is unnatural: rhetorically it is false. Recapitulation is a purely logical process. It gives no room for new material, or a new expansion of the old. It should be conducted with the utmost severity of restriction to the materials already presented.

3d, Perspicuity is an essential qualification of a perfect recapitulation. Not only the clearness of it as a specimen of style, but clearness as a recapitulation, is requisite. It should not possibly be mistaken for new material, or for blundering repetition of the old. The preface which introduces it, the forms of its statement, even the tones of voice in which it is announced, should be such that an attentive hearer can not fail to recognize it for what it is. The whole force of it is obviously lost if it is obscure. The advantage of good divisions in a sermon comes to view in their recapitulation. Clear, compact, forcible divisions fall into line beautifully in an epitome of the discussion. One of the most valuable single rules for constructing divisions is so to frame them that they can be easily and forcibly recapitulated at the close.

4th, Climactic order should characterize the recapitulation. Generally this will be the order of good divisions; but if, for exceptional reasons, it is not, it should be the order in the closing rehearsal. Climax appears grandly in a good synopsis. The rapidity of its utterance, the conciseness of its style, its compact reproduction of the whole discourse in miniature, may disclose the logical energy of the sermon with a concentration and vividness which the discussion did not possess.

5th, The elegance of a recapitulation may often be enhanced by varying the language in which the divisions were stated in the body of the discourse. Variety of style is the natural exponent of mastery of thought. It is especially expressive of ease of thought. Hence it is natural that recapitulation should often vary the forms of the original statement. The extent to which recapitulation may be varied in style is illustrated by the fact that some of our venerable hymns of praise are sermons in miniature. Doddridge often used to compose a hymn made up of the leading thoughts of his sermon, and offer it for "the service of song" at the close. Some of his discourses now exist in no other form than that of hymns for public worship. The hymn commencing, "Jesus, I love thy charming name," is one of those synopses in metre of homiletic discourses.

But this suggests a caution respecting diversity between the forms of divisions and those of the recapitulation. It is that the elegance of variety should never be sought at the expense of perspicuity. The whole force of this expedient of logic depends upon its being seen to be what it is.

6th, In extemporaneous preaching the recapitulation

should be thoroughly committed to memory. This is self-evident; but ridiculous scenes sometimes occur from neglect of it. Especially if the force of recapitulation depends upon the order of climax, a failure of memory is equivalent to a failure of logic. The late Rev. Dr. B—— of Philadelphia once preached an extemporaneous sermon in which he attempted to recapitulate his arguments in the order of climax. He had developed them to his satisfaction in the body of the sermon, and then, by a self-delusion which we can all understand, he assumed that materials which had been so successfully treated would not forsake him, and he remarked with the confidence of assured logic, "We have seen that not only is this true, and that true, and the third, the fourth, the fifth positions also true, but we have seen that it is true that — that — hm — that even — hm" — But it was in vain: the cap of the climax was no longer extant. It had gone the way of the lost arts. His frantic gesture with the whole arm aloft could not rediscover it. How to close that recapitulation was the agony of the moment. "Well, doctor, how did you close it?" his friend inquired. "Oh, I invented some flat piece of impertinence which deceived nobody. My failure was the town talk before night."

IX. What qualities are requisite to the construction and development of the inference and remark?

Why are these two things classed together? and in what do they differ? Rhetorically they do not differ, and therefore they are classified as one. Logically they differ, and therefore they are not synonyms. Both are rhetorical sequences from the body of the sermon. An inference is a logical sequence: a remark is a suggested sequence. Both are rhetorically related to the discussion as consequent to antecedent. The following principles should regulate them.

1st, They should be *legitimate* sequences from the body of the sermon. The inference should be what it professes to be, — a logical sequence. The remark should be all that it professes to be, — a natural suggestion from the sermon. It is no objection to a remark, that it is not a logical deduction from the discussion, and it should not be introduced as an inference. So of an inference, it is not sufficient that it be suggested naturally by the discussion; and we fall short of its claims if we introduce it as a remark only. Call each by its right name, and make each all that is claimed for it. The late Rev. Dr. Skinner of New York was so exact in his nomenclature, that he would say of a series of applicatory materials at the end, "I shall now close this discourse with a notice of three inferences and one remark." The announcement was needlessly formal; but the distinction was essential.

(1) The excitement of composition easily deceives a preacher respecting the logical and natural relations of his theme. Truths may be associated in his mind by circuitous lines of connection not obvious to hearers: therefore he may remark that in a conclusion which to a hearer may seem to have no legitimate connection with the subject. Some of the inferences of Dr. Dwight have been criticised as illogical; whereas they might stand as remarks, without censure.

(2) Sometimes the legitimate connection of conclusion with subject lies outside of the range of the discussion. The connection may exist; it may be legitimate. The inference may be logical: the remark may be natural. But the discussion may not have established the connection of either. Are such materials legitimate in a conclusion? No. The properties of a hyperbola have a legitimate connection with a cone; but a dis-

cussion of the parabola does not establish that connection. No logical mind, therefore, would discuss the properties of the hyperbola under the head of the parabola. So, in homiletic conclusions, the *nexus* of the inference or remark with the subject is not legitimate to the hearer, if it lies outside of the discussion. The hearer has only that to guide him to logical or natural sequences. He can see only straight on. What the preacher may see in secret connection with the subject is nothing to the point. The actual range of the discussion, not the possible range of the subject, governs the hearer's range of thought. He has a right always to presume that a remark or an inference is a result of the discussion. If that presumption is often falsified, confidence in a preacher's logical faculty is impaired.

Let it be observed here, that the authority of the pulpit with hearers depends largely on the reputation which preachers establish for the integrity of their logical power. No other intellectual quality equals this of logical reasoning power in giving to a clergyman the authority which the pulpit needs to make it a power of control. A genius in illustrative power may be very popular as a preacher; but he is never an authority, if his logical faculty is weak.

A young preacher was, not long ago, very flatteringly recommended to the vacant pulpit of a large Presbyterian church in a Western city. The chairman of the committee of supply wrote to inquire about his character when a member of this seminary. "We have heard," wrote the keen judge of good preaching, "that Mr. B—— constructs his sermons by first collecting a number of telling illustrations, and then builds his sermon around them. Is this true? If it is, he is not the man for us." The man in question, it is true, was

noted for his illustrative invention. It was disproportionately developed as related to his reasoning power. Some sagacious hearer had detected the disproportion, and had fastened upon him the label of the criticism I have quoted. It may require years to enable him to outlive it.

Incidental to this topic of the legitimacy of conclusions is the inquiry, "May an inference or remark be derived from only a part of the discussion?" I answer: Yes, if the inference is logical, or the remark natural to a part of the discussion. Sometimes you will discover that every division of the body of a sermon suggests something peculiar to itself in the way of practical observation. The conclusion branches out from them like the spokes from the hub of a wheel, all fitted to the purpose, but no two fastened to the hub at the same point. The perfect use of a discussion may depend on its being applied thus with differences of leverage.

2d, An inference or remark should be *forcibly* deduced from the discussion which precedes it.

(1) Legitimacy of deduction is not the equivalent of force. A perfectly logical inference may be far-fetched: a perfectly natural remark may be feeble. We want the practical results of a discussion in striking lights. A conclusion should be a specialty of the subject. It should, therefore, seize upon the strong points of the discussion, and only those. Inferences and remarks should always be selected materials, never a conglomeration.

(2) This suggests the radical defect of certain conclusions which are otherwise faultless, — that they are not characteristic conclusions. Lord Brougham said of Junius, that his delineations of character were severe,

yet weak, because they were severe abstractions. They would fit one bad man as well as another. They hit nobody, because they hit everybody. They were character, instead of characters. Similar is the defect of certain homiletic applications. In their logic you detect no flaw. Their connections with the subjects in hand you can not pronounce unnatural. You can not say that in themselves they are unimportant. Still, forcible conclusions they are not, because they are not characteristic conclusions. Did a group of Chinese or Japanese faces never impress you with a sense of monotony? They all looked alike. They were individualities like other men; but your unpracticed eye could not see behind the one mask of the national portrait. So homiletic applications impress a hearer who discerns in them no idiosyncrasies created by connection with the subject in hand. They do not grasp the strong points of application, and only those. They might often be interchanged, — the peroration of one discourse for that of another, — and the effect would not be varied. It might be legitimate in both, yet forcible in neither.

An example of this defect, which is met with not infrequently, will illustrate it. You sometimes hear a preacher remark in his conclusion, "We see the importance of meditation on this subject;" and on this inference he proceeds to enlarge. This inference, or its equivalent, introduces the closing appeal in scores of sermons. Yet what force has it? Every subject which is fit for discussion in the pulpit deserves meditation. The inference might be appended to every sermon; but in the large majority of cases it would be nerveless, because it has no individuality. One preacher frequently closed a sermon with the remark, "We see the importance of preaching on this subject." What

force can such a remark have? None, unless the subject be one on which the right or propriety of preaching is doubted. It might properly close a sermon on the Seventh Commandment; but to the vast majority of conclusions it has no forcible because no characteristic pertinence. That you do preach on a subject assumes the importance of doing so. To defend your doing it implies that it needs defense.

(3) Care in selecting forcible materials for inferences and remarks is the more necessary, because many of the most essential applications of truth are derivable from a variety of sources. Conscience, in relation to the applications of the gospel, stands in a center of radiance, like a man in an apartment where light is reflected upon him from a thousand mirrors. The peril of preaching seems, therefore, almost inevitable in the direction of sameness of applicatory remark.

But this is no necessary evil. Every truth has something characteristic in its suggestion of a trite application. It gives to that application something which other truths do not. Every mirror reflects light at its own angle. No two in the thousand are precisely similar. Neither do any two doctrines enforce a duty in precisely the same manner, with the same motives, in the same channel of deduction, by the same proportion of forces, in the same perspective of moral sentiment, as seen by a watching conscience. It is not necessary that a description of a bad man should be true of all bad men. The worth of the soul does not follow from its immortality precisely as it follows from the Atonement. The love of God does not follow from the law of the seasons precisely as it follows from the gift of a Saviour. The duty of repentance is not urged by the doctrine of providence as potently as it is urged by the doctrine of the cross.

(4) Here, then, lies the scope of art in constructing applications by inferences and remarks. It is to make those applications represent, not the sameness, but the diversity, of truth. Effective preaching is very largely the art of putting things. It is not invention nor discovery so much as the apt placing of familiar things. We care little for the genus of any thing. We crave species. We do not admire the genus flora: we enjoy elms, maples, lindens, oaks. We feel no sympathy with the genus *homo:* we are moved by men, women, children. So of the applications of all truth. Let them show by logical inference and natural remark whatever is peculiar to the theme, and they can not fail to form a forcible conclusion, if the theme has any force.

(5) Yet it deserves notice that forcibleness of inference and remark is a matter of degrees. Some themes have a more distinctive character than others. The French call a man of marked person and demeanor *distingué:* some homiletic subjects are thus *distingué.* The very mention of them excites curiosity; the discussion of them commands interest; the application of them fascinates the hearer. Such subjects develop into strongly-marked conclusions.

(6) It is a healthful restriction on the topics of the pulpit to rule out subjects which have nothing characteristic in their practical uses. Much that is secular, much that is scholastic, much that is sentimental, much that is feeble is justly excluded from the subjects of sermons, if we compel ourselves to construct them with an eye mainly to the force of conclusions. Work always for results, not for processes; for ends, not for means. So shall we gain the most vigorous processes and the most effective means. A pulpit thus ruled becomes the mouthpiece of only choice thought.

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE CONCLUSION: INFERENCE AND REMARK, APPEALS, EXCURSUS.

THREE incidental inquiries occur in connection with the topic of the forcibleness of inferences and remarks discussed in the last lecture.

The first is, Ought an inference to be derived from an inference? If one inference has been drawn from the body of the sermon, may a second be added, which is only an inference from the first? The answer should depend on force of connection with the body of the sermon. It is no objection to an inference that it proceeds from a previous inference, provided that it be also forcibly suggested by the discussion. It may be related to the primary inference by logical deduction, and to the discussion as a suggested remark. This complication is not objectionable, nor is it as complicated in practice as in statement.

The second incidental inquiry is, Ought contrast to be tolerated between an inference, or remark, and the body of the sermon? For instance, ought an inference which appeals to fear to be derived, if logical, from a discussion which in the main appeals to hope? Ought a remark addressed to the impenitent to follow a discussion addressed to Christians? In reply, several memoranda deserve mention.

In the first place, contrast in itself considered is a natural mode of suggestion and impression. It does not necessarily impair unity of impression. It may heighten the impression of unity. Contrasted inferences, therefore, may be desirable in conclusions.

Secondly, contrast in an application sometimes has the advantage of creating indirect impression. A discussion which has seemed to aim at the impenitent may, in the conclusion, reach Christians by reflected application, and *vice versa*. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" St. Peter uses in this text the unconscious art of antithetic admonition. Men will often listen by stealth to indirect reproofs which they would resent, if given directly. Like Nicodemus, they will seek truth, if they may do so under cover. They will preach to themselves applications which they would repel if thrust upon them. Contrast, therefore, may be desirable as one means of indirect impression.

Thirdly, contrast is not desirable where the material introduced by it is relatively feeble. With all its advantages, contrast involves an interruption of harmony. This is a sacrifice. The object gained, therefore, should be obviously worth the sacrifice. The material should be weighty. Relatively to preceding thought, it should mark increase of intensity. Otherwise the chief impression made will be only that of a jar upon continuity.

Fourthly, contrast is not desirable at the close of a comparatively feeble sermon. No clock always strikes twelve. We all preach some sermons the intellectual constitution of which needs tonics. Discretion must be exercised when we come to the application of such sermons. In the application the strength of a sermon

is put to the test. Contrast in its nature involves violence of change. It is to persuasive discourse what heroic treatment is to medical art. A strong discourse is needed to bear the vigorous working of it. The sermon should have been composed of positive thought, striking truths, vivid representation, resulting in electric impression. A phlegmatic, nerveless, negative, or commonplace sermon — and we all preach some such sermons — is like a frail constitution in a man who belongs to a decaying race. Its feebleness may be overwhelmed by the vigorous handling which contrasted force involves.

Finally, contrast is not natural, when the materials thus introduced can not be speedily dispatched. By prolonged amplification the force of contrast defeats itself. Contrasted impressions depend on transient expression. No art can make stationary lightning impressive. We are sensible of contrast only in glimpses. A contrasted inference, or remark, therefore, should be concisely developed. It may be dense with thought; but it should be rapidly traversed.

From these considerations it appears that contrast in a conclusion may be the best material possible, but that it needs to be selected with care, and developed with force.

The third incidental inquiry is, Ought inferences or remarks to converge, or diverge, in their relation to the discussion? Obviously two methods are possible in constructing this form of conclusion, which may be distinguished as the convergent and the divergent methods. In the one case, the series has a single aim. It bends steadily and cumulatively to one result. In the other, the series is versatile. It branches out luxuriantly. In the one, the application is pointed, like a

thorn: in the other, it expands like a palm-leaf. The question is, Does force of application require its restriction to either of these methods?

I answer, In the first place, concentration is intrinsically more powerful than expansion. Dr. Lyman Beecher used to claim that a sermon should have one, and but one, "burning-point." This is generally rather than universally true. The great majority of evangelical sermons find their natural resultant in some one duty to be done, or one privilege to be accepted, or one sin to be abandoned, or one truth to be believed. Unity is so intense and so compact in all earnest discourse, that it will commonly project itself in the application; so that an obedient hearer goes away with the resolve, "This one thing I do."

But, secondly, the divergent method may exhibit the fruitfulness of a truth in practical results. Much is gained sometimes by disclosing an affluence of practical bearings. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Vine-dressers recommend one grape for its quality, and another for its abundant fruitage. A certain force of application consists in volume rather than in pungency. Conscience surrounded by many monitory hints may be more profoundly moved than if goaded by one.

The divergent method also facilitates variety of application. Respect for truth is awakened, if it is made to appear versatile in its reach, and many-sided in its practical uses. Criticism exalts Shakespeare as the "myriad-minded man." As we respect men who can do many things well, so we revere a truth which seems capacious in its uses.

The divergent method, also, may make one application auxiliary to another. An appeal to one class of hearers, suggested by one inference, is assisted by an

appeal to another class flowing from another inference. Men will bear to be reproved by one application of a sermon, if they see that others are reproved by another. Inferences or remarks may thus work as allies when they do not converge to one point.

To some subjects of discourse the divergent method is a necessity. Some themes are so many-sided that you can not apply them thoroughly in any one line of thought. Condense them to a point, like the flame of a blow-pipe, and you leave unused, it may be, their best resources of practical impression. They flash light at a multitude of angles. They eject heat through innumerable orifices. Therefore they suggest appeal in all directions. For illustration, take such a theme as the justice of God. One powerful application you can make by an inference from it addressed to the fears of men. But you can not thus use exhaustively, or even affluently, the practical resources of that doctrine. You can not thus illustrate its most amiable uses. You must revolve it, show how prolific it is in practical uses, reveal its attractive as well as its repellent virtues, unfold its minute as well as its sublime bearings, make believers love it, as well as make the ungodly fear it. In no other treatment can you develop to the full its applicatory usefulness.

3d, Passing now from these inquiries incidental to the forcibleness of inferences and remarks, I observe a third suggestion respecting their treatment, in the principle that they should be developed without needless formality of statement.

(1) Formality which may be necessary in the body of the discussion should, if possible, be relaxed in the application. The applicatory process must be flexible, its transitions easy, its forms, therefore, as ductile as

may be consistently with perspicuity. Often ease of access to the heart of a hearer may depend on whether you say, "I infer from this subject, seventhly, another application; namely" . . . or, "Again: this subject teaches," etc. So slight a rhetorical difference as the omission of the personal pronoun and the numerical announcement may assist the passage of your thought to the spot where you wish to lodge it, in the sensibilities of the hearer, rather than in his intellect only.

(2) We have the more need of care for this principle, because the inference and remark very easily fall into and under the formality of discussion. Inference, especially, is a logical process. It readily takes on the logical baldness of statement. This is illustrated in the excessive multitude of inferences to which allusion has been made as burdening the sermons of the old English preachers. Flavel has a sermon with twenty-four inferences in the conclusion; another, with fifty-six inferences and remarks. President Edwards has a discourse with twenty-two divisions in the application; another, with thirty-one.

4th, Inferences and remarks should be developed, if possible, by the use of interesting materials.

(1) Barrenness of treatment is nowhere else so great an evil as in an application. Interest elsewhere is of little use, if not sustained here. Interest elsewhere should, if possible, be reduplicated here. Yet some sermons are more interesting everywhere else than here. Some preachers are more inventive, more prolific, more racy, in every other process of sermonizing than in that of applying truth to its practical uses. They explain lucidly, they prove forcibly, they illustrate vividly; but they do not apply truth eloquently. In their applications they never seem fresh.

They give the fruit of jaded minds. The conclusion falls like the dull, chill pattering of a November rain.

(2) Therefore we should never trust to the elaborateness of a discussion alone for the impression of a sermon. That is like trusting to the trunk of an apple-tree for its fruitage. We should never trust to the truthfulness of an inference or remark for its applicatory force. We must interest men in the uses of truth by using it in interesting methods of detail. No art of invention should be despised by a preacher in the effort to throw a spell over an audience by the raciness of closing thoughts and the magnetism of last words.

5th, The necessity of racy materials in this part of a sermon suggests, however, that, in constructing and developing the inference and remark, we should avoid fantastic materials. That is an ill-formed or ill-trained mind which revels in eccentric applications. Odd laws of suggestion are weak in practical results. Inferences are vapid if extorted rather than derived from a subject. Remarks are apt to be irrelevant if foisted into conclusions. Such conclusions seem scatter-brained. The credit of a sterling truth is sacrificed by the substitution of conceit for sense.

In nothing is the weakness of eccentric work more obvious than in the practical part of the business of the pulpit. It may interest, it may stimulate, it may, therefore, gain a hearing; but it seldom develops that sensible and solemn aim at results which is essential to practical force. Above all other intellectual qualities in practical affairs, men prize good sense. They crave to be sensibly appealed to. They demand to be treated like men of sense and by men of sense. No other opinions are so weak as those which are crotchets.

Hence it is that genius so often more than balances

its good work by the evil of its vagaries. Good sense, on the contrary, has, in kind, the momentum of the planets. Its every movement is power, and with no drawback from waste of force. Here lies the strength of the great bulk of the Christian ministry, not in cultivating or imitating the coruscations of genius, not in stimulating or assuming theatric arts, but in the planetary working of common sense. This is a power which, as Wordsworth says, "has great allies." Time is its invincible auxiliary. All social forces second it with the certainty and the reach of gravitation. Nothing else gives such power of command; nothing else wears with such durability.

It deserves to be recorded that fantastic uses of preaching were the chief cause of the degradation of the English pulpit which Macaulay so vividly portrays in his narrative of the state of the rural pulpits of England at the time of the Restoration.

X. The tenth and last general topic relating to conclusions is the inquiry, How should appeals be conducted?

1st, Appeals should be founded on the strongest materials which the sermon contains.

(1) An appeal is intrinsically the most intense form of speech to a hearer. It needs, therefore, to be supported by intense materials of thought. The single burning-point of the discourse, if it has one, should be the point from which exhortation grows. If appeal is made from more than one point, they should be the strong points of thought. Never build an appeal on petty items, never on things incidental to the main channel of discussion, never on an anecdote, unless it is illustrative of the central ideas of the sermon.

(2) Discourse should, therefore, be so shaped as to

bring the strongest material to the front in the conclusion, so that it can be naturally used as the basis of appeal. Appeal drawn from a closing division is natural only when that division offers a climax or a concentration of the truth discussed.

(3) The weakness of a sermon is often disclosed by the fact that at the end no other than pettifogging appeal is possible. Imagine a sermon on "The Vestments of the Clergy," "Genuflexions in Prayer," "The Marriage of a Deceased Wife's Sister," "A Temporary Diaconate." Would not the intrinsic feebleness of such sermons, as growing out of the insignificance of their themes, be betrayed if an attempt were made to close them with hortatory applications? Yet similar to these in principle is any conclusion in which the weighty materials of the sermon are overlooked, and the closing appeal is grafted upon a fragment or an anecdote. In one instance, an exhortation to promptness in attendance on divine worship followed a sermon on divine omnipresence. In another, an appeal on the duties of the choir followed a discourse on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Absolute irrelevance to all parts of the discussion may not have been the defect in either case; but relevance only to incidental or fragmentary materials must have been the defect in both.

Appeal expresses the soul of the sermon, the very ψυχή of oratorical discourse, as no other feature of it can in equal degree. The organic life of it ought to pulsate there. Therefore the most powerful of resources should there be put to use.

2d, Appeals should be aimed at feelings as distinct from convictions. It is one thing that a hearer should believe that he ought to feel: it is a very different thing

that he does feel. Therefore to produce the conviction is not necessarily to produce the feeling.

(1) These two things mark the chief distinction between two classes of preachers. One will make an audience believe that they ought to be moved, that they are profoundly guilty for not being moved, that their insensibility is the extreme of depravity; yet they are not moved below the surface of the conviction of sin in being what they are. Another, without uttering a word upon the solemn character of the truth, the obligation to feel it, the sin of indifference to it, will so use it, and so appeal on the strength of it, as to take possession of the hearer's sensibilities, either by storm or by insinuation, so that tremulous and obedient emotion shall be responding to the truth before he is aware of it.

(2) Appeals to convictions, as distinct from the feelings, are very apt to express themselves largely in an exclamatory style. "Oh my hearers, how solemn is this truth!" "What responsibilities we sustain!" "How deeply we ought to feel in view of them!" "What gratitude should swell our hearts!" "How fearful is the guilt of deadness under the sound of the gospel!" "Oh that divine grace may melt our obdurate souls!" and so on. I do not say that appeal should never take this form. It may rarely be the legitimate object of a sermon to show to hearers that they *have* stolid sensibilities. Then such appeals, so far as they go, are pertinent. They are forcible just to the extent of the thought expressed by them, no further. The emotive drapery of style, beyond that, goes for nothing.

The most powerful preacher that I ever heard in appeals to the emotive nature never in my hearing resorted to the exclamatory drapery. The resources of

his appeals were his facts, his principles, his doctrines, his arguments, his cumulations of solid thought. These he so manipulated that they made their own appeal. Silent emanations from them were going forth through the whole discussion, which softened the feelings, and won the affections, and gave them an object to grasp, and prepared them to respond with reduplicated volume to the few unimpassioned words of hortation at the close. There was no need of an appeal to the conscience. That outwork was carried long before.

Such conquest of the sensibilities by the force of plain truth is often forestalled and forbidden by appeals of which the point is not feeling itself, but the obligation to feel. Philosophically regarded, no more sure bar to right feeling can be created than the assault upon conscience alone and in isolation from other faculties. Introvert a man's mind upon himself in the act of soliloquy, — "I ought to feel, I ought to love, to mourn, to hate," — and that very introspection forbids all feeling except the sense of duty.

(3) Appeal to conscience alone, if successful, is by virtue of its success failure. A moral nature, indurated in all respects except that of a quickened conscience, if the proper objects of right feeling are present, is depravity consolidated. Like a suspension-bridge, which is strongest when the heaviest weight it will bear is upon it, the guilt of a soul is most hopelessly consolidated under the burden of aroused conscience, if, with the objects of other feeling in mind, nothing else is aroused. But, if the legitimate objects of holy feeling are not present in thought, the torpid mind is only a philosophical necessity.

3d, Appeals should be aimed ultimately at the executive faculty of the soul.

(1) If appeal should not rest with conscience alone, neither should it rest with any emotive quickening. The doing of something is the end which we strive to reach through the emotive nature as the natural avenue of approach. To arouse emotion, therefore, and stop there, is as unphilosophical as it is to address truth to the intellect only, and pause with that. If the doing of something is not always expressed in a naturally framed appeal, it is always implied.

(2) In this consists the chief difference between hortation in the pulpit and the scenic impression of the stage. Theatric passion ends with itself. Homiletic appeal aims at an execution of something beyond the emotive excitement. "What will you do about it?" is a question which the pulpit always asks, the stage never. Appeals, therefore, should always be constructed with fidelity to this distinction. They should never fall into the theatrical vein, never play upon the emotions as the end of discourse, never rest with working up a given heat of feeling, never pause with success in making tears flow.

(3) Hearers need sometimes to be made to see that their religious emotions are melodramatic. Emotive luxury sometimes needs to be checked in an audience by putting the question plainly to each one, "What will you do about it?" The sympathies of a crowd in the street, who were giving vent to abundant exclamations of pity for a blind man who had been run over, were suddenly brought to their genuine level by the inquiry of one of the crowd, "How much do you pity him in your pockets?" So the emotions of an assembly of worshipers often need to be brought, by an appeal, to the test of executive action. Did you ever observe how quickly the tears of an audience are dried

by the passing of the contribution-box? The executive test of feeling is sure to put a stop to its effervescent indulgence. The deeper reach of feeling penetrates below the level of words and tears to that of deeds.

4th, Appeals should be kept true in their aim to the vital acts of religious duty. It has been remarked that appeals should be supported by the strong points of religious truth, also that intrinsically they are the most intense form of religious discourse, that they are the acme of persuasive speech. In keeping with this, the dignity of appeals should be sustained in the acts at which they are aimed; they should urge the vital duties of a religious life. They should press upon hearers the things most essential to salvation; they should persuade men to the discharge of the most critical obligations. To expend the force of such intense forms of speech derived from most weighty resources of truth upon insignificant affairs is an incongruity and a waste. The dignity of religious hortation is degraded, if laid out upon things not vital and decisive.

This suggests an *excursus* on the danger, in revivals of religion, of exalting unduly acts of the impenitent which fall short of the scriptural conditions of salvation. Much is often said, in conducting revivals, of persuading men to "commit themselves." The impenitent are often exhorted to pray, to read the Scriptures, to ask the prayers of others, to observe hours of religious meditation, to attend meetings of religious inquiry. These duties are sometimes urged upon children of tender age. The more public these secondary acts are, the more positive is thought to be the "committal" of the inquirer to something which stands as the equivalent of a religious life. Hence, if he can be induced to let his voice be heard in a Christian assembly, or to take

a seat assigned to religious inquirers, or to append his name to a religious covenant, he is regarded as being in a hopeful state. Under the pressure of sympathetic excitement these acts of self-committal are often made to appear, especially to unthinking youth, as the vital duties of the hour. Is this a wise policy in conducting revivals of religion? The question is often a very perplexing one, on which Christian zeal and Christian wisdom are not agreed. In answer to it the following things deserve consideration.

(1) To defend this policy is much more grateful to Christian feeling than to oppose it. In itself it is plausible. At the first view it seems harmless. In our own day it is often the policy of the most earnest and spiritual portion of a church. On the other hand, it is often opposed by the ultra-conservative, the worldly, the formal, the silent membership, by those who are satisfied with other successes than that of winning souls to Christ. A pastor sometimes finds himself between these two fires in respect to this method of conducting a revival of religion. On the one side is all, or nearly all, the Christian enterprise of the church, and on the other are all, or nearly all, the dead-weights upon Christian progress. Under such conditions it is much easier to adopt the policy in question than it is to create a wiser one, if there be such.

(2) But, looking at the question in its intrinsic merits, the fact is a very significant one that impenitent men are never exhorted in the Scriptures to any thing preliminary to repentance. But one thing is the center of all biblical appeal to the ungodly; that is repentance and faith, — a complex yet a single act. Nothing short of this is deemed worthy of mention by inspired preachers to the unconverted. "Repent, believe;" "believe,

repent;" "turn ye;" "obey;" "cease to do evil;" "take up thy cross;" "follow me:" in varied phrase, the one thing is the only thing on which the attention of the awakened conscience is riveted in biblical persuasion of the impenitent. Biblical hortation never even directs men to pray, except as an act of Christian faith. Impenitent prayer is never named in the Scriptures but as an object of divine abhorrence. This fact has great significance as a representative fact: it fairly and indubitably illustrates apostolic policy in the conduct of revivals.

(3) In the nature of things there are no impenitent acts auxiliary to repentance. Nothing commits a sinner to a religious life but religious living: nothing binds him to repentance but repenting. One and but one thing is the thing to be done; nothing else takes the place of it; nothing else assists it; nothing else approaches it, the soul remaining impenitent. Impenitent prayer is blasphemy. As the subject of religious obligation and religious motive, an impenitent soul is at a dead-lock until impenitence ceases.

(4) Yet human nature unregenerate is prone to acts of religious substitution under the goading of an angry conscience. Condemned in this thing, condemned in that thing, condemned in every thing but in the one thing which alone can set him right with God, an awakened sinner often feels it to be an immense relief if he may even temporarily persuade himself that there is any thing else than repentance which he can do, which shall have in it the semblance of good. Reined back by retributive conscience from every thing that he will do, impelled by the Holy Spirit towards the only thing which he will not do, and crowded on all sides by penal forebodings, he gains time for consolidated resolve in

sin, if he may but be permitted to contemplate as a duty any thing that falls short of that one thing, which for him, in the moral crisis which is upon him, monopolizes all duty. The whole history of religious formalism is a record of such substitutions under the pressure of an indignant conscience. Religious formalism may be as intense and as self-delusive in taking an "anxious-seat" as in attending "high mass."

(5) It is remarkable that a certain class of revivalists who have rebuked this abuse in an ancient form should so often have reproduced it in modern forms. The time was, when awakened men were exhorted by preachers and other Christian workers to pray, and read the Bible, and seek religious counsel, and thus, as it was called in the theologic dialect of the time, "use the means of regeneration." Later theologians have detected and routed that form of substituting for repentance acts which are not repentance; but by exhortations to take the "anxious-seat," and to rise for prayer, and to attend meetings for inquirers, they have often created another class of precisely the same sort of substitutions, by which men have been allowed to regard as duties things which fall equally short of God's requirement.

(6) The sympathetic excitement of a revival may assist the self-confusion of an impenitent mind as to the real aim of God's command. Lord Macaulay says that every large collection of human beings, however well educated, has a strong tendency to become a mob. The religious excitement of multitudes does not protect them from this drift of human nature. If solitude in religious awakening has its perils, so has companionship. Sympathy in itself is a blind instinct. Numbers aroused to high enthusiasm tend to act upon unrea-

soning impulses. Therefore, under such impulses, the commands of God are easily displaced and obscured in the impenitent mind. Impenitent youth especially, who have no religious experience and little self-knowledge to protect them, are easily beguiled, under such conditions, into substitutions of the less for the greater in crises of their history in which the greater is the only thing, and the less is nothing.

(7) Great care is needed, therefore, in revivals of religion, to guard men against deceptive substitutions. These subsidiary acts, in whatever sort the temper of the age may originate them, need to be handled cautiously. I do not say that they should never be allowed; in themselves they may be innocent; but the wise policy is to make little of them. Do not emphasize them by crowding men to them, nor, on the contrary, emphasize them by violent opposition to them. Do not swing a flail to crush a pepper-corn. Treat these acts, done or not done, as trivialities. Exalt above them that which has a decisive religious meaning. Keep in the foreground of popular thought the one elective act by which the soul chooses God. Treat every thing else as relatively of no moment.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION: EXCURSUS, APPEALS.

We have considered, in part, that policy of the pulpit which often urges men to the performance of acts which are not decisive of religious character.

(8) It is frequently asked, however, "What shall we do in place of exhorting awakened men to such acts of apparent self-committal?" A period often comes in the experience of the impenitent inquirer, in which every thing seems to be at a stand-still. He does nothing, and will do nothing, to the purpose. What, then, shall we do to break the syncope of inactive guilt? I answer, Do just that which the Scriptures do to such inquirers, — urge anew the motives to repentance. Men repent in obedience to motives. They act under the sway of moral ideas. Press home, then, those ideas which are the natural inducements to repentance. The idea of God, the idea of immortality, the idea of sin, the idea of penal justice, the idea of the day of judgment, the idea of Christ, the idea of love, the idea of dependence on the Holy Ghost, — these are the great central motive-powers to repentance. They ought to be the staple materials of thought and prayer in a time of revival. Set the whole firmament ablaze with the glow and the heat of these eternal verities. Preach them, talk them, pray about them, sing them,

make them the central thoughts of public and private religious services, till men can see nothing else, and think of nothing else, and till they are convinced that you are thinking of nothing else. Bring the force of sympathy thus to the work of deepening Christian thinking upon those truths, which, in the nature of things, must induce repentance, if any thing does.

(9) Let me illustrate this policy in a single detail. Experience in revivals will teach you that there is an inexhaustible resource of suasion to repentance in the single idea of God. All motive to holy choice centers in, springs from, and returns to, the one thought of God. The human soul has occult affinities for that one idea. Neither time nor sin can ever stifle them. It is surcharged with spiritual cravings which find rest in no other conception than the being of God. Therefore it is, that, in revivals of religion, that preaching is most effective which superlatively exalts God. All preaching that is effective owes its regenerative power ultimately to that one truth.

Surprise has often been expressed, that, in the religious awakenings of the last century in New England, the doctrine of election and kindred truths were so largely treated by the pulpit, and were so effective. Some critics account for the phenomenon by the hypothesis of some peculiarity in the religious temperament of the times. I do not so understand it. Those truths exalted the sovereignty of God; they made God seem overwhelmingly great; they realized God as he is to the souls of men; they brought God near to the quaking conscience. Such preaching ought, by all the laws of mind, to be productive of revivals in any age, whatever be the religious diathesis of the age.

Analyze it briefly in its working. Such preaching

brings the heedless soul into contact with the most electrifying spiritual fact within its knowledge. It realizes to the awakened soul the most stupendous conception of which it is capable. It subjects the convicted soul to the sway of the most intense regenerative truth of which thought is possible. It lays bare the consciousness of sin under the burning eye of infinite and eternal justice. It is to a guilty conscience like the exposure of a diseased eyeball to the glare of a tropical sun at mid-day. It arraigns an obstinate will face to face with the only thing in the universe which is its superior. No other preaching is conceivable, which, in the nature of things, is better fitted to make the condition of an impenitent soul appear to itself intolerable, and to break down the defenses of its will against the love of Christ. Conceive of the descent, headlong and far, which a soul must make in coming down from the empyrean of such ideas to muddle itself with the question of taking an "anxious-seat"!

(10) Again: experience in revivals will teach you that often there is a point in the development of the work of divine grace at which it is expedient that human persuasion should cease. It has done all that it can do. It has tried every thing but silence. Wisdom dictates that now the awakened sinner should be left alone, and for this reason, — that he is *alone with God.*

Always, I think, before conversion takes place, if it occurs in such form as to disclose itself to the consciousness of the sinner, always there is a period, long or brief, of conscious moral solitude. The soul feels itself to be alone in the universe with God. The isolation of the day of judgment is foreshadowed in its vision. A wanderer in infinite spaces, cut adrift from

the solace of companionship in sin, with no friendly hand to support it, or voice to cheer it, the soul sees only a holy and offended God, whose rights it has outraged, and from whose burning eye it finds no hiding. It is best that this should be so. By this experience a sinner's individuality is intensified to his own consciousness. To break in upon that awful seclusion, to bring a sinner back from "God's silence" into the circle of human sympathies by our devices of "anxious-seats," and inquiry-meetings, and persuasions to self-committal in the sight of multitudes, may be a perilous intrusion. Secret intercessory prayer is infinitely more safe. By our suasions to acts which fall short of God's requirements at that critical period of a sinner's experience, we may furnish him with the very escape which he unconsciously craves from that sense of moral loneliness in the presence of God.

(11) Silence is, therefore, often the best protection a sinner can receive from his spiritual guide against the peril of the social element in a revival. Study narrowly the inner working of a revival, and you will find that often, at a certain stage in its development, men fear nothing else so much as to be alone. They will rush in crowds to a religious meeting for the sake of the social sympathy with which it surrounds them. As men in an earthquake will huddle together for the sake of escape from dying alone, so awakened men in a revival will often crowd an inquiry-meeting. They will seek thus just what the sons of Belial in the community, who are disturbed in conscience by the revival, seek in a carousal. Any thing is welcome, if it drowns God's voice in the soul's silence. Therefore I say, at such a juncture it is safer to take the risk of silence. Do nothing more, leave the sinner to himself; drive him, if need be, into solitude with God.

I have been much impressed, in reading the autobiography of Rev. Dr. Finney, with the fact that some of the most remarkable conversions which he records occurred instantly when he took himself out of the way. The result was perfectly philosophical. When man's voice was dumb, nothing was left to the inquiring soul but God's silence, and to that it must succumb The principle here, which Dr. Finney seems to have come upon occasionally, I would lift into rank as one of the elemental principles for which large place should be given in every revival of great power and of long continuance. There may be peril in it, but not so great peril as that of continuing and exalting the protection which an awakened conscience often finds in sympathetic excitements.

(12) In the same line of thought I remark that the popular curiosity about numbers in a revival is a misfortune. It is too often morbid. Sometimes it is a device of temptation. Never count the numbers of those who rise for prayers. Do not dignify thus that indeterminate act. The good sense of an eminent evangelist was notably evinced on one occasion, when he was asked how many rose for prayer last night, and he replied, "I never count." Do not be solicitous to know how many attend an inquiry-meeting. By skillful manipulation of an audience you can secure the attendance of hundreds as easily as that of dozens at such a gathering. Yet as evidence of conversions, or the prospect of them, such attendance may have no significance. Use an inquiry-meeting as you would use a Bible-class. Make it the means of religious instruction, not a test of religious awakening, still less a means of augmenting religious excitement. Above all, never trumpet these things as tokens of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

(13) We degrade the work of the Holy Spirit if we exaggerate a sinner's consciousness in our assumption of the working of divine grace within him. If we use as evidences of that work experiences which he can attribute to no such origin, we may do him an irreparable injury. We may give him degrading notions of God's work. He may fancy that it consists in suasion to petty and indecisive duties. That which he believes of himself he is likely also to believe of others.

Hence arises the theory that a revival is nothing different from other sympathetic ebullitions; that you can always have a revival if you desire it, and can induce sufficient numbers to combine in the persistent use of the right measures to evoke it. Certain revivalists make a most damaging concession when they admit that a revival of religion depends on the magnetism of numbers. Once sink the popular theory of revivals to a level with that of other social ferments, and they will be, like other social ferments, shallow, pretentious, short-lived. The grand idea of "visitation from the living God," having mercy on whom he will have mercy, drops out of them. They have then no more religious value than a commercial panic. Few things in this world are so disastrous to the cause of Christ as a perverted and degraded revival of religion.

Learn a lesson from St. Paul. Mark the unconscious satire with which he treats even a duty commanded by God, when men would exalt it out of place. When appealed to by certain cliques of Christians who thought it of vital importance whose hands had rested on them in baptism, and were crying, "Apollos baptized me,' and "Cephas baptized me," and "Paul baptized me," he responds, "I know not whether I baptized," as if he would say, "Baptism — what is that? Who cares

for it? I do not remember any thing about it. I am sent to preach the gospel." So nothing is worth remembering which men would lift into rank with repentance, but which is not repentance.

So far as my observation of revivals has extended, impenitent men, and especially impenitent youth, need much more frequently to be warned against these religious substitutions in acts of "self-committal" than to be exhorted to the performance of them. Their value is immensely overrated, and their perils overlooked, in modern evangelistic labor.

(14) Another principle bearing upon this subject is that the tendency of popular religious excitement to morbid growths is proportioned to the insignificance of the executive action to which it is directed. Neither nature nor grace in normal action fosters profound agitations of conscience about petty things. Make such things the center of intense convictions of conscience, and you inevitably create religious distortions. The prick of a needle in the spinal marrow may make a child a hunchback for life. So let an awakened conscience be penetrated deeply concerning action which is not significant of character, and its working becomes diseased. The penetration results in ulceration.

(15) Therefore it is always the aim of a wise preacher in a revival to guide the current, and, still more carefully, a torrent of quickened emotion, as soon as possible into the even tenor of life's ordinary duties. The speciality of a revival of religion in itself is not a desirable thing. The sooner it ceases to be exceptional, and flows into life's common channel of interests, the better. Religious excitement has no value any further than it can be thus utilized in the sanctifying of common life. All conversions, until they receive the test

of real life, are of the nature of death-bed repentance in this respect, that they have not been subjected to the divinely appointed discipline of religious character. Hence it is seldom, if ever, wise to suspend for any long time the common routine of life, because of the presence of the Holy Ghost in regenerating power. We can devise no better means of moral discipline. We dislocate the divine plan, if we displace that in the attempt to improve upon it.

On one occasion, in a powerful revival in Amherst College, the more zealous Christian students sent a petition to the faculty, that for one week the collegiate curriculum might be suspended, that the whole time and interest of students might be concentrated upon the concerns of eternity. The object of the petition was above question. The methods proposed were plausible. But the president, the Rev. Dr. Humphrey, had had large experience in revivals. He told the young men that their policy was unwise. He said, in substance, that their theory assumed that the Holy Spirit was pressed for time, and was in haste to go elsewhere. The routine of collegiate duties was the very test which God had then and there ordained of the sincerity of those religious conversions. If students were converted, those very duties were to prove it, and to discipline their piety. Religion was to make them more industrious students, better scholars, more faithful to college laws. The monitor's bills would test their piety. The scale of scholarship would disclose it. On the other hand, he told them that the surest way to divert their religious interest into unhealthy moods, which would soon end it, was to relax the discipline of academic duty, and leave them nothing but prayer and praise and religious conversation to think

of and to do. He told them, in a word, that they could not improve upon the divine method of procedure in the discipline of Christian character. The petition was kindly refused; and the result was a prolonged and healthful work of divine grace, quiet and deep in its progress, — quiet, because deep, and so powerful, that, at the close of the year, seven-eighths of the students in college were Christians.

The principle involved in President Humphrey's reasoning was the same with that now before us. As religious excitement degenerates if isolated from common life, so, if you restrict it to secondary and indecisive duties, its tendency is to the same morbid growths. The more petty a thing is, the more tumultuous is popular excitement about it when once the *furor* is ignited. Great ideas tend to deep emotions: these, again, tend to tranquil and balanced action. Petty ideas, insignificant objects of feeling, indecisive duties, tend to effervescent emotion, and this to noise and clatter and confusion. Proverbially the great workings of God are still workings, and this because they are deep workings. Grace follows the analogy of nature. Everywhere greatest power is stillest power.

(16) Therefore the phenomenon is often witnessed in revivals, that, the more complicated the human machinery is which is set in motion, the more uncontrollable is the drift to morbid paroxysms. Such machinery almost always precedes pathological disturbances of the physical system. Even when popular excitement does not rise to hysteria, you will often perceive that the things men are thinking of, and talking of, and exciting themselves about, relate to the machinery alone. The anxious-seat, the inquiry-meeting, the rising for prayer, the covenant, the public speaking, the street singing,

the thousand and one expedients to promote the interest of novelty, absorb the popular thought. You hear almost nothing of deepening convictions of sin, of new discoveries of God, of new disclosures of the work of Christ, and of new conceptions of the work of God's Spirit. Ask for these evidences of regeneration, and you are met by a painful silence, or a gaping ignorance of your meaning.

(17) The conclusion of this train of thought, then, is this, that the true policy in the conduct of modern revivals is the old apostolic policy. Exalt the one and only act which God requires of an impenitent sinner. Exhort men to repent. Exhort them to be reconciled to Christ. Show them that they are enemies to Christ. Show them that they are exposed to eternal woe, because they have exposed themselves to eternal sin. Hold up Christ as the only and sufficient Saviour. Emphasize the work of the Holy Ghost as the only spiritual power that equals their spiritual helplessness. Ply thus the immeasurable motives to repentance, without which no man ever did repent, or ever can. Never permit the awakened conscience to elude that one act. Keep secondary things in the background. Warn men against counterfeits of repentance. The Scriptures are full of such warnings. Human nature in every age needs them.

I have termed the method here advocated "the apostolic policy." So far as we know, it was the policy of the Day of Pentecost. There is nothing in it which should limit it to apostolic times; nor is there anything discernible in the diathesis of modern society which should require the abandonment of it in modern revivals. Experience indicates, that, just so far as it is displaced, revivals become a mixture of good and evil,

with a constant tendency of the evil to override and overwhelm the good.

5th, A fifth principle respecting the conduct of appeals is that they should be specific in their basis and their aim. The point from which they spring should be well defined: the point at which they strike should be equally so. They should never course at random in the air. The following facts deserve attention.

(1) Our common stock of religious thought contains much which may stimulate, yet not discipline, religious emotion. The majority of men in Christian lands are trusting to a certain religiosity of temperament. They prize their good moods. Their dialect in speaking of religious subjects indicates that they have no strong points of religious experience. Indefinite religious appeal works directly into the service of this capital error. Start the flow of natural religiosity by exhortation founded on nothing specific, and aiming at nothing in detail, and you may make ungodly men think very well of themselves for possessing sensibility enough to enjoy a mood of good feeling, when it may be that they have experienced nothing but a response of their nervous system to your elocutionary magnetism. There may be as much religion in their sympathy of nerve with the electric currents of an *Aurora borealis*.

(2) Sensibility to indefinite religious appeal easily passes also into the imaginative type of religious character. Not being reined up to specific duties by clear-cut convictions and intelligent emotions, it revels in æsthetic imaginings. The beauty of religion, rather than its obligations, the poetry of the gospel, rather than salvation by it, the literature of the Bible, rather than its authority, the sign of the cross, the worship of the eucharist, rather than the life of spiritual conflict which

Christianity reveals, become the charm of religious service. "Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that can play well on an instrument."

Nothing more surely diverts religious thinking into this channel of imaginative luxury than the habit of listening to indefinite religious hortations from the pulpit. Exhort men merely to "be good and do good," and end there, and the probability is almost a certainty that they will wander from the strong points in Christian faith to amuse themselves with melodramatic trifles. Feeling which might be consolidated into a principle is thus kept in a fluid state for the want of something concrete to consolidate itself upon. In sheer debility of grasp upon any thing in real life, it muses over a wreath of evergreen or a painted window.

(3) Very different are preaching and its effects as recorded in the Scriptures. Prophets and Apostles and our Lord start with definite forms of religious doctrine, and aim them at specific points of religious practice. When men wander into dreamland in their notions of religious life, they are brought back to realities by such rebukes as these: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?" "Bring no more vain oblations;" "Your feasts my soul hateth;" "Wash you; make you clean."

Not the sinfulness of sin, not the beauty of holiness, are the scriptural topics of appeal so frequently as the guilt of covetousness, of pride, of lying, of unbelief, of evil-speaking, of licentious imagination, and the duties of almsgiving, of honest weights, of self-sacrifice, of prayer, of repentance, of faith. The strong points and sharp points of Christian truth are the very points which inspired preachers use most eagerly. On the other hand, the sensitive points of human practice, the

festering ulcers of human guilt, those which a deceived conscience covers most carefully from rebuke, are the very points which they attack most mercilessly. To the most saintly devotees of the age they say, "Ye generation of vipers!" To such, they apply the lancet and the scalpel.

The character of the emblems by which truth and its effects are symbolized in the Scriptures proclaims the same design. Truth is a sword; it is a two-edged sword; it pierces; it divides soul from spirit. Things which no human analysis ever separated, it analyzes, and holds up to the eye of conscience. They to whom Peter preached were pricked: they were pricked in the heart, — the organ which a needle can not enter without causing death. Saul of Tarsus was goaded by pricks. The hoof of an ox could not resist them. An ox-goad is the emblem of the truth which prostrated him "trembling and astonished."

LECTURE XXXIX.

THE CONCLUSION: APPEALS.

6TH, Continuing the discussion of appeals, we remark, in the sixth place, that appeals should not be unnaturally passionate, nor weakly pathetic. Nothing cools the feelings of an audience more effectually than to see a preacher beside himself while they are comparatively tranquil. It is said of the appeals of Patrick Henry that they were never vociferous. They commonly had the stillness of solitary thinking. Vast is the distance between violent appeal and earnest appeal.

(1) Earnestness in exhortation is apt to be in inverse proportion to violence of style and boisterousness of elocution. The palm of the hand is more expressive than the fist. The eye may be more authoritative than either. Some of the appeals of President Edwards declaimed by a theatrical speaker would appear ferocious: their vehemence would neutralize their force. But uttered by the meek pastor at Northampton, and the exiled missionary at Stockbridge, with his subdued tones, without a lifted hand to enforce them, with looks of only benevolent eagerness, they were overwhelmingly earnest.

(2) Hortation should be conducted with entire self-possession. This is the only principle by which this

form of conclusion can be honestly premeditated. If a preacher loses his self-control, it should be because he can not help it. He may literally *lose* it: he has no business to hide it, or to pawn it. It is affectation to cultivate tears, or tremulous tones, or inaudible whispers, or hiatus in the voice, or a style of thought and expression which depends on and invites these theatric expedients. Never shed a tear in the pulpit which can be suppressed. It is a misfortune to be unable to suppress tears. I once knew a preacher whose most remarkable quality was the readiness with which he wept. He once shed tears in exhorting Christians not to be tardy in their attendance at the weekly meeting of the church. He was wonderfully attractive on a first hearing; but he had ten brief settlements.

(3) Those who have the least character have the most abundant flow of tears. Tears are the natural expression of infancy and paralysis. A sleepless night may make a man weep over a tooth-ache. Chronic insomnia may evoke tears over one's morning toilet. Infirmity of the lachrymal glands is not numbered among the Christian graces. Cultivate strength of nerve rather than delicacy of nerve. Use tonics, study mathematics, take the fresh air, take to the saddle,—any thing rather than chronic tears. We must appeal with feeling indeed; but it should be the feeling of men, not that of schoolboys, or of paralytics.

(4) In the long run men are not moved by a whining pulpit. A rare freshet of emotion they will tolerate: a reputation for freshets they do not revere. With the majority of men, life is too serious a business to allow the expenditure of sensibility in morbid moods. Their sober second-thought does not approve such

moods in the pulpit more than out of it. Why should they approve them in a preacher more than in other public speakers? Once only in the forensic career of Daniel Webster, in his plea for Dartmouth College, is it reported of him that he wept in the court-room; and I believe it is the present opinion of the bar that law was then against him. But suppose it had been his habit to weep before juries and judges, would he have been Daniel Webster? If a preacher habitually loses self-control in his appeals, sensible hearers set him aside as a man to be taken care of, not to be followed as a leader in the thick of real life.

Possibly it may appear to some of you that I have spoken with needless severity of the loss of self-possession in the pulpit; but the facts of clerical experience justify this and even stronger criticism. I find in the "London Christian World" of Jan. 5, 1877, an advertisement which reads thus: "Henry Wiggan, London, Evangelist, better known as 'the Weeping Preacher.' Mr. and Mrs. Wiggan, Evangelists of London, will hold evangelistic and soul-saving services in 1877, as follows." Then follows a list of Mr. and Mrs. Wiggan's public "weepings" for the whole year. Imagine a man's having gained the *soubriquet* of "the Weeping Preacher," and having accepted it as an honorary title, and publicly inviting the metropolis of the British Empire to come and witness the paroxysms of his lachrymal disease! Can the dignity of religion be subjected to a more humiliating burlesque than this?

Perhaps the lachrymose sermons of Henry Wiggan may be the means of saving some souls. Scarcely any thing in human experience is so weak or so wicked, that the Spirit of God can not extort some good out of it; but conceive of the immense volume of disgust at

religion which such a couple as these wailing Wiggans must produce among sensible people. The great majority of mankind are men of sense. The "*common* sense" is the phrase by which we designate the working of the grand balance of the human mind. Those who will be nauseated by the Wiggans of the pulpit are not the few whose fastidious tastes and infidel prejudices make them natural grumblers and chronic cavilers. They are the great majority of those who come within hearing of the blubbering apostles, or within sight of their advertisement. The silent repulsion from evangelical religion caused by one such paralytic in the pulpit is a fearful offset to any possible good he may accomplish in the conversion of a few souls.

Lord Macaulay was the son of Zachary Macaulay; and Zachary Macaulay was distinguished as a Christian philanthropist, and was the son of an estimable Scotch clergyman. It has astonished the readers of the biography of the gifted peer, that not one line appears in it from beginning to end which gives evidence that he ever had a thought of his soul's salvation. To religion as a personal concern there is no evidence that he devoted an hour of his brilliant career. How is it possible that the child of such an ancestry should have lived such a life, and died without a word in acknowledgment that he had ever heard of Jesus Christ? Is it not more than probable, that, at some critical and sensitive period of his youth or early manhood, he was repelled from the faith of his fathers by some such mountebank as this "Weeping Wiggan"? A fact which renders this probable is that Zachary Macaulay was one of the leaders of the "Clapham sect," — a small and erratic clique of Christians, who, like all fragmentary sects, had peculiarities which alienated from them the good sense of

the great body of English churchmen and dissenters. Some religious weakness of the Clapham preachers probably gave to Macaulay's mind an anti-Christian lurch from which he never recovered. Destruction of gifted souls in silence is the natural fruit of Henry Wiggan's method of saving souls. The loss of Lord Macaulay alone to the Christian faith would have been a great price to pay for the exploits of the "Weeping Preacher."

(5) Several things need to be taken into account in judging of the degree of earnestness with which an appeal should be pressed. Of these, one is the intellectual culture of the hearers. The tendency of cultivated mind is to the regulation, often to the suppression, of feeling.

Another factor in the account is the strength of the material which constitutes the body of the sermon. Vigorous discussion lays the train for a powerful appeal. Robert Hall's most thrilling extemporaneous appeals closed his most elaborate sermons. Hearers must see that a preacher's hortation stands firm on the strength of the truth on which it is built. Not otherwise can he exhort as one having authority.

The earnestness of an appeal must take into account, also, the mood of an audience at the close of the discussion. Abrupt transition from discussion to hortation is perilous. To appeal with great animation to a jaded audience is hazardous. Shakespeare represents Marc Antony as burning with indignation over the dead body of Cæsar at the very outset of his harangue: but he does not disclose that indignation by an outburst of mordant invective. His first words are, "I come to bury Cæsar." Calmly and sadly he accepts the mood of his auditors in place of his own. But at the close of his address he has wrought them to fury.

7th, Appeals should be so constructed as to imply the expectation of success. This suggests one of the subtle pivots on which the success of an exhortation often turns. The general principle of character, that hopeful men are successful men, applies with special pertinence to the effort of one mind to win the obedient sensibilities of another. In this, more surely than in many other things, men who expect to succeed do succeed. There is a certain fling of a preacher's whole being into an appeal to excited hearers which is often irresistible. Therefore, men should never be exhorted from the pulpit in the mood of despondency. They should not be appealed to as if they were too far gone in depravity to be hopeful subjects of appeal. Jeremiads are suited only to retributive prophecy, not to Christian hortation. Preachers of melancholic or ultra-conservative temperament are in chronic peril of failure in this respect. It is noticeable in biblical appeals, that, almost without exception, they are expectant in their moods. Even denunciatory expostulation has a ring of courage and expectation in it which prepossesses the hearer's mental bias.

Note some of the implications involved in an expectant hortation.

(1) An expectant appeal implies a good opinion of the hearer. It implies the belief that he is a reasonable man, open to persuasion. The most depraved of men have been saved by the awakening within them of that single conviction that honest men think well of them.

(2) An expectant appeal implies, also, a preacher's confidence in his own cause. Why does he expect another mind to believe, another conscience to feel, another heart to obey? Because he is assured that truth deserves it all. Every hopeful exhortation is an

indirect utterance of his faith. That faith allures by sympathy the hearer's faith.

(3) Again: an expectant appeal implies personal fellow-feeling of the preacher with the hearer. In a suasive appeal more than in any other utterance of the pulpit, we come near to men with this power of fraternal feeling. We do not say it; but it may be all the more effectual for being implied, not said. "Brother-man" is the keynote of the whole. "I would that all who hear me this day were such as I am," says St. Paul to Agrippa. That is the spirit of an expectant appeal.

(4) Once more: an expectant appeal implies the preacher's assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit. All hopeful preaching implies that. Hopeful preaching honors the spirit of God: God, in return, honors it.

Such are the implications involved in hortations which are expectant of success. Every one of them is a source and a development of power. They go far towards explaining on philosophical grounds the successes of certain preachers whose exhortations are marvelous in their results.

8th, Appeals, above all other utterances of the pulpit, demand a natural elocution. The close contact implied in direct hortation needs to avoid all possibly repellent adjuncts of speech. Nowhere else, therefore, is unnatural delivery so hurtful. We need but to name the chief defects of pulpit elocution to be made sensible of the truth of this. Inanimate appeals, sing-song in appeals, theatrical appeals, declamatory appeals, excessive passion in appeals, unmeaning or unfit or inordinate gesture in appeals, whining appeals, hysteric appeals, appeals through the nose, guttural appeals, the peculiarity of an untrained voice which resembles the quacking of a duck in appeals, screaming and bellow-

ing, with alternate whispering, in appeals, rolling of the eyeballs in appeals, the scowl, the grin, the froth of saliva in appeals — is there any other feature or process of oral speech in which these faults of delivery are so repulsive as in this, in which we aim to speak to the inmost being of a hearer, and to get possession of his heart? That which we tolerate elsewhere is unendurable here. That which is only unpleasant elsewhere is disgusting here. That which we smile at elsewhere nauseates us here.

Elocution has indefinable graces and blemishes which are like perfumes and unpleasant odors in the atmosphere. We may not observe them, if our attention is not called to them; but, in the close intimacy between hearer and speaker which an appeal assumes as its prerogative, they are forced upon our attention. The curve of a lip, or the movement of an eyelid, may, in such a connection, be the decisive thing which wins a soul, or disgusts a soul.

9th, The foregoing remarks suggest that appeals should be prepared and spoken under the sway of genuine feeling on the part of the preacher. Most of the defects in exhortations which we have noticed arise from one form or another of fictitious emotion. Genuine emotion is, to a large extent, a law unto itself.

(1) An artistic appeal is always frigid. It may be bold, pungent, mordant; or it may be beautiful, pathetic, melting. We may marvel that it is not impressive, yet it is not impressive. It is the voice of one who describes, not of one who feels.

(2) Preachers experience a temptation and a peril in this respect, growing out of long practice in homiletic exhortation, which renders it easy and fluent in execution. Frederic Robertson somewhere speaks of "the

fatal facility of religious discourse" produced by the professional habits of preachers. Words of earnest appeal may flow glibly, yet the preacher may feel only the glow of professional excitement. When such perfunctory appeals become the habit of the pulpit, the violence they inflict on the moral nature of the preacher is appalling. It is a truism — yet its profoundness obscures our vision of it — that religious hortation should find in the preacher's own soul its most docile hearer. He should take to himself the admonitions which he so feelingly addresses to others. In no other way can he be honest in their utterance. In no other way can preaching secure the advantage so obviously aimed at by the divine arrangement by which human nature is made to appeal to human nature.

(8) Why are the chosen oracles of the gospel men? So far as we know, superlative orders of being might have been superlative preachers of the gospel; yet the advantages of an angelic and sinless apostleship God has seen fit to forego for the sake of that which we must therefore believe to be the superior force of a human ministry. A human intellect, human sensibilities, a human voice are chosen before the trump of archangels. The principle of sympathy is clearly exalted above the principle of authority. Even an experience of sin is put to higher uses than might have attended a history of spotless purity. But the wisdom of this whole system of instrumentalities for saving men by the persuasions of men is nullified, if the preacher does not take the place to which his mission assigns him as a fellow-man and a fellow-sinner who needs, first of all, the appeals which he aims at other men. Says President Davies of Virginia in one of the soliloquies with which he sometimes closed his most thrilling sermons,

"Oh my soul, hear thou this word; for I must preach to the one who needs it most."

(4) An artistic appeal will commonly betray itself to a practiced hearer by something characteristic of imaginative fervor. A bookish vocabulary, traces of archaic diction, involution of sentences, elaborated metaphor, rhythmical construction, scholastic illustration, — one or more of such signs will appear, showing that the head has labored more than the heart in the framing of the appeal. Hearers may think it very fine in its way; but they will feel that it is not the way in which hearts talk to hearts. "I thought your sentences were very pretty," was the commendation by which one plain hearer thought to please a youthful preacher who had just finished a sermon on the Day of Judgment.

(5) Sometimes the artistic counterfeit will betray itself by rudeness of hortation. Appeals to the feelings, if genuine, will always be studious of proprieties. They are not regardless of age, of sex, of time, of circumstance. They will not descend to low illustration or rough description. When Latimer, for example, in an appeal to certain afflicted hearers, said, "In this visitation God shaketh us by the noses, and pulleth us by the ears," he was working up his peroration artistically. He was not speaking from a full heart, in sympathy with bereaved men and women. Art can not manufacture a genuine appeal. As easily might the science which analyzes an eyeball create an eyeball. No audience will habitually mistake the fictitious for the genuine hortation. Preachers, like other men, and in this as in other things, are always found out in the end, and pass for what they are.

(6) An appeal, therefore, which is genuine in the composing, should not be preached, if it is not genuine

in the delivery. A written appeal should be reviewed and revolved near the time of its delivery, so that the mind shall resuscitate the mood of its composing. If this fails, let the appeal be dropped. You have lost it, if you have lost heart in it. Do not expose the corpse of it. Preach whatever is alive to the mood of the hour.

(7) To accomplish this without sacrifice of premeditated appeals, the habit of spiritual preparation for the delivery of a sermon is indispensable. Those who have been most successful in achieving the great ends of preaching have been most faithful to this discipline of secret prayer. Baxter used to pray thus with his Bible open before him, and his finger on the text of his sermon. Often, with tears of impassioned desire, would he pour forth his supplications for the spiritual success of his day's work. On one occasion when the thought occurred to him, when thus prostrate before God, of his popularity as a preacher, and of the throngs which he knew would crowd the church where he was about to preach, he broke out with the exclamation, "Not this, not this, O Lord! but the souls of this poor people of Kidderminster!"

St. Paul illustrates in his own person the genuine mood of homiletic exhortation, when he says, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead." That consciousness of being the representative of God to men, delivering the message which God dictates, uttering God's thought in God's words, expressing God's heart in intense desire to save men, is the true mood of Christian appeal. To obtain it, a preacher must often go aside into the thick darkness where God is, and where God shall speak to him as to a friend.

10th, Appeals should not be developed at great length. With men, as with God, we are not heard for our much speaking. Cicero says that nothing dries up sooner than tears. Sensibility, from its very nature, does not bear long-winded appeal. How shall the peril be avoided? I answer, By oblique progress. Intersperse appeal with didactic remark. Suspend appeal, and speak didactically; then renew the appeal, and again suspend it. Tack, as in oblique sailing. A discourse may thus preserve its predominant character of hortation without the weariness of unremitting hortation.

11th, Appeals should possess unbounded versatility. One writer on homiletics prescribes the rule that sermons ought not all to end with the words "life everlasting."

(1) Appeals should be varied in respect to the class of sensibilities to which appeal is made. Sensibilities inferior to the sense of right are its natural auxiliaries, and should often be summoned to its support. The sense of order, the sense of beauty, the sense of honor, the patriotic instinct, the social affections, the love of knowledge, self-respect are natural allies of conscience. They are, therefore, proper objects of appeal in preaching.

(2) Hortations should be varied, also, in respect to the truths on which they are founded. Preachers who have a large range of discussion often narrow that range unconsciously in their conclusions. They adopt favorite ideas, which, with little variation, are wrought into all their exhortations. The favorite of one is death; of another, the day of judgment; of a third, heaven; of a fourth, the proportion of responsibility to privilege; of a fifth, the degeneracy of modern times.

The same class of feelings ought not always to be excited by the same class of truths. Appeals to fear may often be more effective if founded on the peril of eternal sin than if founded on the peril of eternal suffering. The chief advantage of novelty in preaching is that it touches the sensibilities of hearers in a way in which they were never moved before.

(3) Appeals should be varied, also, in their rhetorical structure. Vary them in respect to their degree of directness. Vary them as to the use of the personal pronouns. A delicate but often very valuable difference in structure depends on whether a preacher says "we," or "you," in an exhortation.

Vary appeals, also, in the methods of designating the character of hearers. There is more than a rhetorical difference between "sinner" and "fellow-sinner," between "impenitent hearer," and "impenitent friend,' between "Christians" and "Christian friends." By circumlocution the rhetorical form may be diversified indefinitely. William Jay used to employ such forms as these: "You singers to God's praise," "you worshipers in God's house," "you hearers of God's truth." He was not always studious of connections in his forms of address. On one occasion he said, "Some of you are so inconsistent in your lives, that, if I should see the devil running off with you at this moment, I could not cry, 'Stop thief!' He would but carry off his own property." Yet this invective he introduced by the address, "My dear brethren."

(4) In seeking variety of rhetorical form, care should be taken to avoid some terms which the pulpit has employed improperly. Dr. Payson used to address Christians as "professors." Professors of what? The title is a technicality. "My professing friends" was

also a favorite with Dr. Payson. It is ambiguous. President Davies often addressed his hearers by the title "Sirs." In Virginia this was a title of social distinction; but it expresses no distinction with which the gospel is concerned.

(5) In seeking variety of address in the forms of appeal, we should be sparing in the use of affectionate titles. "Dear hearers," "dear friends," "dear brethren," "dear sisters," "beloved in the Lord," and the like, can not become habitual in appeals without impairing their force. This may occur in two ways. Often used, these forms degenerate into forms only. To many hearers they mean nothing. They are like the affectionate address and the servile subscription of the beginning and ending of letters. Any thing has become an encumbrance which has become only a form. Every thing else should be sacrificed rather than an impression of sincerity. In hortation we should say nothing which we do not mean. Moreover, affectionate titles, if habitual, and yet so employed as to escape the danger of formality, will often appear unmanly. To an audience of children they might not do so; but full-grown men are chary of such titles in the realities of life, and suspicious of them in the pulpit. To many, if not rarely used, they seem indicative of constitutional softness in the preacher. Excessive tenderness disgusts their taste. They shrink from saccharine lips. Why is it that Anglo-Saxon tastes do not encourage the kiss between full-grown men? The same principle governs the use of affectionate forms of appeal.

12th, Appeals should be uttered without forewarning. One writer on homiletics deliberately recommends the following as the proper preface to a hortatory conclusion: "Time warns me to pause, and to close all.

finally, with one solemn exhortation;" and this, also, as another becoming formula, "Christian brethren, a word of serious and close application to the conscience shall now close this discourse." Imagine Lord Brougham introducing a peroration thus to the House of Commons. Fancy Gen. Butler addressing a jury in a criminal court with such forewarning of his appeal at the close. Some preachers commit this error by a preface which makes the impression of laziness. Bishop Lowth introduces an appeal thus: "But to draw to an end, and to make use of what has been said to our future establishment, from the foregoing discourse, I shall now draw a consideration or two, and so conclude." Could any thing picture more truthfully the plodding of the bishop's pen on his study-table? A sportsman hunting a partridge has more of oratorical force in his very attitude than a volume of such cathedral discourse.

Sometimes the forewarning of an exhortation gives to it the look of irony. A speaker at an anniversary in Boston rose on one occasion to address an audience of two hundred, in a house capable of seating three thousand; and he began thus, "I am deputized to appeal to the feelings of this audience to increase the contribution which is now to be taken." One would have imagined that the contribution-box would have been sufficiently cooling to such an audience without a refrigerant speech like that. What had they to do with his being "deputized" to appeal to them? Compare this appeal with the rhetorical policy of the prophet Nathan in his designs upon the conscience of David. All forewarning of appeals puts hearers at once on the defensive. They gird themselves up, and feel secure from the attack. They are at leisure to look out of

their loopholes. An appeal should have the skill and the suddenness of an ambuscade.

This ends our discussion of the several parts of a sermon. Some remarks of a more general character will be added in the closing lecture. For the present, two suggestions deserve to be recorded.

One is that the critical study of the constitution of discourse deserves to rank by the side of the study of psychology as a means of mental discipline. The rhetorical and mental sciences are close kindred to each other. Neither can be exhaustively analyzed without incursions into the other. The same is true of the relation of rhetoric to logic. The science of speech, and the science of thought, and the science of thinking power, all salute each other in any thorough analysis and study of them. Such was the dignity of rhetorical research as represented by Aristotle, the only strictly original rhetorician the world has ever known.

The other suggestion is that the habit of studying plans of discourse should be extended into secular literature. The principles which should govern the literature of the bar and the senate are the same with those which should govern that of the pulpit. The study of them in their secular applications, by preachers in active service, tends to preserve them from professional routine, and to render the clerical taste pure and robust. Some of the ablest preachers in the history of the American pulpit have also been lawyers; and some of the ornaments of the American bar have been vigilant students of the literature of the pulpit.

LECTURE XL.

CONCLUDING LECTURE: MINISTERIAL CULTURE.

GENTLEMEN, I complete to-day the course of homiletic lectures, the delivery of which you have made a pleasure to me by the kindness of your attention. I am constrained, by certain convictions which are sometimes a burden to me, to add a few words of comment upon the general drift of the instructions to which you have listened, and the spirit in which they should be applied to your life's work.

My treatment of the theory of preaching has grown up, in a course of years, on that model of homiletic teaching which the Calvinistic mind has generally held to be essential to the training of a preacher. The ideal of a preacher which I have uniformly had in view is that of a Christian scholar using his scholarship with the aim of a Christian orator. I have spoken to a group of scholarly hearers, and have aimed to help you to a more enlarged growth of scholarly culture. I do this every year, with an increasing conviction, that, as it respects intellectual preparation for the pulpit, this high Calvinistic ideal of a preacher is the true one. I can not believe that any less severe ideal is equal to the range of apostolic thought on the subject.

At the same time, I have found, by the side of this conviction, another, which is also deepening with years.

I have tried, in various parts of these lectures, to give you a hint of it in the way of warning. It is that our Protestant denominations are not in all respects using this theory of high culture in the ministry in a Christian way. Somehow or other, it is not working altogether right in practice. I acknowledge some alarm at the prospect before us, if the present drift of things, in one respect, be not arrested. A scholarly ministry, taken as a whole, we must confess is working away from the unscholarly masses of the people. Perhaps it would be more strictly accurate to say that the unscholarly masses are working away from it. But practically this makes no difference. The ministry is in its conception aggressive, not receptive. The commission is, "Go," not "Wait."

In Great Britain the fact is attracting more attention every year, that the clergy and the people are drifting asunder, and, I repeat, it makes no difference which is anchored, if the other is moving. The religious press of England and Scotland confesses the sundering. Infidel critics triumph over it. "The Westminster Review" discusses the fact, as one which candid men will not dispute. "The London Times" and "The Saturday Review" explicitly affirm that the clergy are no longer leaders of the religious thought of England. Reformers and statesmen are looking about them for other agencies than those of the Church and the pulpit to elevate the degraded, and control the "dangerous" classes. Is it not an ominous event, that, in a country which Christianity has civilized for a thousand years, vast masses of society should be so vast and so brutal as to be classified in the national mind by that title "dangerous"? They are no longer thought of by statesmen as objects of hope, scarcely even of compas-

sion, but simply as a threat hanging over the safety of the rest. They are given up to the police.

In our own country, with the advantages of our voluntary system in the support of the gospel, the same widening of the distance between the Protestant ministry and the masses is palpable. Politicians accept the fact, and act upon it. The secular press, to a great extent, treats it flippantly. Meanwhile what are our churches and ministry doing about it? Much that is cheering, but somewhat that is not so.

In the Episcopal Church it is frequently claimed, by a minority, I am glad to believe, that it is the mission peculiar to that branch of the Church to reach the cultivated strata of society. Many times have graduates of this seminary who possessed more than the average of gentlemanly address, and familiarity with cultivated society, been told that they had too much culture to waste themselves in the charge of missionary churches. In some cases, the gilded bait has been caught at. Worldly wisdom charges upon churches of Puritan origin, that they have in them the elements of low life; that their historical antecedents are not respectable; that their founders were low-born and low-bred; that their social affinities are not those of culture and refinement; and that therefore a re-action from them is periodically inevitable. From such argument one might reasonably infer that the chief glory of a church is to gather to its bosom the *élite* of cultivated life, to minister to the masses by churchly authority rather than by sympathy, and to rescue from low-bred sects the "Martyrs of Disgust."

Yet in our own churches, and in the whole Presbyterian group, the present drift of things is, to a considerable extent, in the same direction. The under-

current may still be right in the main; but many of the surface-currents, and certain local currents, are not so. Our craving for artistic music, worldly views of what constitutes ministerial success, and, more than all else, the principle of elective affinity in the gathering of churches, by which identity of social rank is made to mark practically the outline of church-membership, and still more sharply that of Christian fellowship, — are all tending the same way. It is not difficult to see whither.

Yet the complaint is universal among us, that a less proportion of the uneducated masses of American birth is to be found in Calvinistic churches than was found there thirty years ago. Christian men are innocently wondering, and inquiring, "Why is this?" We are entering upon an era of experiments for remedying the evil. I have not a word to say against those experiments. They may all be excellent in their way. They are all welcome, as evidence that good men are feeling after the right way. But this fact is observable in them thus far, that, to a large extent, — not entirely, — they either leave the clergy out of the question, or assign to them a false position. We are creating vast organizations of lay-laborers, Sabbath-schools, mission-schools, mission-chapels, young men's Christian associations, colporters, Bible-readers, etc., to reach the masses of the people, because of the admitted fact that our pulpit, as administered to our own wants and tastes does not reach them. We are working, in great part upon a system which takes it for granted that our own clergy, in our own churches, can not reach them. In some cases, the avowal is whispered that we do not want to reach them there.

We are looking more and more to divine interposition in raising up men of exceptional zeal and tact as

evangelists, at whose feet our scholarly and learned clergy sit for instruction, given not always in even grammatical English. That was a most humiliating circumstance to the cultivated clergy of one of our Atlantic cities, that the chairman of a meeting assembled to devise plans for the continuance of special services, and other efforts for a revival of religion, told the audience that the evangelist who had been laboring there would bring to them certain clergymen and other helpers from abroad, who would be *qualified* to carry on the work. As if the corps of pastors of all denominations with which that city was blessed — admitted to be unsurpassed in culture and in training for the pulpit — were incompetent for such a service, and exceptional men, clerical and laical, must be sought out, and brought from afar. This surely is an abnormal state of things. It ought to have set every thoughtful man to searching below the surface for the causes and the remedy.

Even in the Methodist churches, the boast of which, from the time of John Wesley, has been their apostolic adaptation to the lower classes of society, the same complaint begins to be heard. Recent Methodist authorities say that they are losing in some degree their ancient hold upon the lower orders of the people. They affirm that the spirit of their denomination is rising in the direction of refinement, of education, of social position, and pecuniary beneficence: but they are not lifting the masses with them: they are simply soaring overhead. The ideal of an educated ministry being of recent origin in the Methodist Church, many earnest friends of culture there think they see that the work of clerical education is not wholly a gain. They acknowledge, that as their ministers become more

highly cultivated, their tendency is to work away from those portions of the people which are not so. Like seeks its like. The danger is that nature will outweigh grace. Their educated preachers and their humble classes are in peril of parting company, because they are in peril of losing sympathy.

In view of these facts, it is not strange if the whole question of clerical education undergoes revision. It must not be wondered at, if many Christian laymen infer that our process of cultivation is a destructive one. It is not unnatural that one of them should say, as he did, "Our ministers are educated to death;" or that another should write, "They are so trained as to make it difficult for the churches to support them with their expensive tastes;" or that a third should believe that "they are so cultivated as to indispose them to become pastors of rural churches;" or that a fourth should affirm that "they are so made over by ten years of scholastic seclusion as to wither their godly sympathy with the people everywhere." All this, and much more, is said by laymen in their conversations and correspondence on the subject. You perceive inklings of it now and then in the reports of public assemblies.

I do not indorse these criticisms; far from it. Indeed, so far as my observation goes, the men who make them do not express in them their own personal wants, but what they suppose to be the wants of others. I have yet to find the first layman, with intelligence enough to have a reasonable opinion on such a subject, who wants any other than the first order of intellect, and the most perfect culture, in the person of his own pastor. Still, such criticisms contain a truth; and they may become wholly true, unless the clergy prevent that

result, each in his own experience. The youthful clergy have a special responsibility respecting it. Dr. Emmons said that he never expected to convince a man of any thing which he did not already believe, after the age of forty years. There is less of hyperbole in this as applied to educated mind than as applied to the illiterate. Clerical mind, especially after spending fifteen years in the pulpit, exercising there the authority of a religious teacher, is apt, from that time onward, to float on currents of opinion formed and set during those years. The junior ministry, therefore, must commonly change the currents of clerical practice, if they need change.

I wish, therefore, to commit these homiletic discussions to you with the most solemn charge that you receive them with a spirit *of practical good sense and of practical piety.* These two things are the substance of the whole matter. I have tried to proportion the theory of preaching as symmetrically as I could. But in a thousand applications of it you must do the work of adjusting its proportions. You must qualify rules. You must balance principles. You must interpret precepts in the light of circumstances. You must judge when it is a use, and when it is an abuse, of any truth you may have heard here, to apply it to your own practice. Good sense and piety should shape your applications of it, as of all knowledge, and always should so shape them as to *make* your pulpit reach the masses of the people.

I tell you frankly, that no theory of preaching is worth a farthing which can not be worked practically to that result. No theory of ministerial culture is either scriptural, or philosophical, or sensible, which can not bridge the gulf between the clergy and the masses.

The pulpit never can accomplish its mission on any such theory — never.

The methods of lay labor which are so popular at present for the evangelizing of the masses, and which, in the main, are so hopeful a sign of our times, are defective, and will fail, just so far as they assume to confine to laymen the duty of personal contact with the lower orders, and to exalt the clergy into an upper layer of influence, in which they shall simply be preachers to select hearers, and teachers of teachers, reaching the people only by proxy. No preacher can afford that kind of seclusion. Such an adjustment of powers in the Church is hierarchical. The philosophy of it is priestly. It is a return to the genius of Judaism and of Paganism. Nothing could doom the clergy to a wasted life more fatally.

If I could be persuaded that the theory of ministerial culture which I have tried to represent to you could result legitimately in any such drifting asunder of the pulpit and the lower orders of society, I would abandon the whole of it. I would drop it as I would a viper. A preacher had better work in the dark, with nothing but mother-wit, a quickened conscience, and a Saxon Bible to teach him what to do and how to do it, than to vault into an aerial ministry in which only the upper classes shall know or care any thing about him. You had better go and *talk* the gospel in the Cornish dialect to those miners who told the witnesses summoned by the committee of the English Parliament, that they had "never heard of Mister Jesus Christ in these mines," than to do the work of the Bishop of London. Make your ministry reach the people; in the forms of purest culture if you can, but reach the people; with elaborate doctrine if possible,

but reach the people; with classic speech if it may be, but reach the people. The great problem of life to an educated ministry is to make their culture a power, instead of a luxury. Our temptations are all one way. Our mission is all the other way.

It is not, then, less education that our clergy need. It is inconceivable to me how any educated man can see relief from our present dangers, or from any dangers, in that direction. Ignorance is a remedy for nothing. Imperfection of culture is always a misfortune.

Some remarks made once at a meeting of the General Association of Massachusetts, suggested, if correctly reported, a reduction of the term of years in our seminaries for all students of theology, and hinted at the need of "recovery" from the influence of the training in theological seminaries. Every truly educated man knows better. We do not want inferior culture, if we can get any thing else. The world will not bear it from us when it can command any thing else. If this world is ever to be converted to Christ by other than highly educated agencies, it must be by the aid of miraculous agencies. Nothing short of inspiration and miracle ever has made ignorance and low culture successful in the propagation of Christianity on any large scale and for a long period of time; and nothing short of such powers ever can do it. But miracle and inspiration we can not look for. In place of them we must look for consecration of culture. This is the thing which the world is blindly craving. We need subjection of the personal tastes, which high culture creates, to apostolic and Christlike motive. We need contentment under the limitations of culture, which the necessities of labor in our profession demand. We need to

revise our theories, and moderate our desires, respecting pecuniary support. Are we right, are we apostolic, in the conviction that we must live in such a style that we can not obey a call of God and of his Church to the humblest fields of pastoral usefulness? Does not this conviction imply a mistake in our self-adjustments to the work of Christ?

Above all, we need faith in the Christian ideal of culture which measures its value by its use, its dignity by its lowliness, its height in character by its depth of reach after souls below it. This was Christ's own ideal of culture. He possessed no other; he respected no other; he denounced every other most fearfully. Not an act of his life, not a word from his lips, gives any evidence that he would have tolerated the awful anomaly of clerical life in which a man ministers placidly in a palatial church to none but elect and gilded hearers, with all the paraphernalia of elegance around him, and with culture expressed in the very fragrance of the atmosphere; while "Five Points," and "Boweries," and "Ann Streets," are growing up, uncared for by any labors of his, within hearing of his organ and his quartet.

Our guard against the peril here indicated, then, is spiritual, as distinct from intellectual, in its nature. The cry should be, not "Less intellect, less study, less culture," but simply, "More heart, more prayer, more godliness, more subjection of culture to the salvation of those who have little or none of it."

I beg you to ponder the subject in this spirit, and to begin your ministry with a bold rejection of every thing that implies your personal seclusion from the poor and the ignorant classes. Reject every theory of preaching which contemplates that seclusion as a necessity. Rec-

tify the proportions of any theory, which, though true in its parts, yet, as a whole, blocks your way to the hearts of the people. Prune down any theory, which, for reasons yet unknown to you, you can not work to advantage, so as to make your way to the people's hearts. Stretch your theory to the facts of your life's work, be they what they may. Hold no theory for a day which is not elastic enough to compass the necessities of your position. I have failed in my endeavors to help you, if you have derived from my words any such theory.

Esteem no institution sacred which sets you above and aloof from the commonalty. Revere no clerical usages, no laws of etiquette, no guards of your reputation, no proprietary claims, which require you to hold back from personal labor with the humblest or the most guilty. Yield to no churchly sentiments, or whispered arrangements, or tacit understandings, or unuttered disgusts, through which churches shall be gathered by the law of social affinity, instead of the law of benevolence; so that their pastors can not get at the poor and the degraded, because there are none such within hearing.

Refuse to be pastors of such churches, if they insist upon their exclusiveness. Accept, rather, the calls of the "low-born and low-bred." Accept the "plain living and high thinking," if they are necessary to give you access to the low grounds of society, unless you can clearly justify to your own conscience your right and duty to do otherwise. Let it be said of you, "This man eateth with publicans and sinners," unless you can give a reason to ministering angels and to God for choosing rather to eat with princes and magnates of the earth. Refuse to be tempted by churches in which

pageantry of architecture, pomp of worship, operatic music, patrician caste, sumptuous dress, and other forms of unchristian luxury will conspire against you, making it impossible for the poor to be there if they would, and making them unwilling to be there if they could. The man was never born who could long carry the load of such a church as that with a Christ-like love of souls in his heart.

The spirit which should lead you anywhere into Christian work should be that which we commonly laud as the missionary spirit. That type of character and that habit of mind which time has clothed with romance in the persons of Henry Martyn, and William Carey, and Alexander Duff, are the same which should carry any man anywhere as a preacher of Christ. In no other spirit is a man called to preach at all.

Begin, I pray you, begin your work, with faith in the practicability of this. Believe that you can go to your metropolitan pulpit in Boston, or New York, with the same Christ-like mind with which you would expect to go to Beyroot, or to the Zulus. There is no difference between the two. The call of God which summons you to the pulpit means the same thing everywhere. If you do not feel this, if the missionary question does not leave you here at home with entire repose of conscience, if you are entering on your life's work here on a lower level of Christian life than you would think necessary if you sought commission from foreign missionary boards, be sure that you are beginning wrong. You are not yet at peace with God in this thing. It is not God's call that you hear.

Look at the elder President Edwards. What do we know of him? We know him as a philosopher. We know him as pastor of one of the then most powerful

churches of New England. We know him as president of one of the most venerable colleges of America. We know him as the humble missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge. Yet is he not in all these positions of ministerial labor the same kind of man in character? Did not the same consecration lead him to every one of them? Did not the same type of Christian life move him to write the "Essay on the Will," which dictated his sermon at Enfield, and his missionary talks at Stockbridge? As the peer and the rival of David Hume and John Locke, does he not seem to us precisely the same Christ-like man that he was as the biblical teacher of Pequot children?

That is the true ideal of a Christian minister. He should be able to go, without a ripple of difference in his sense of personal distinction, to the Feejee Islands, or to the Fifth Avenue in New York. Pass on to your work, brethren, in that spirit of profound consecration and repose of conscience. Get down to those deep soundings of the sea of the life that is with God. Then God will make your life a song to you.

APPENDIX.

HOMILETIC AND PASTORAL STUDIES.

A COURSE of lectures on homiletics, in a professional seminary, must necessarily be fragmentary. It has been my habit to preserve a record of topics belonging to this department and to the twin department of pastoral theology, the large majority of which are not discussed in the foregoing pages. These topics have been suggested by the criticism of manuscript sermons, by the inquiries of students, by letters from clergymen and intelligent laymen, and by my professional and general reading. They are now the relic of earlier years, in which I hoped to discuss these subjects, either orally or through the press. On many of them I have prepared lectures which I have found no time to deliver. On others I have lectured extemporaneously. But the chief value of them is found in the hints which they give of the range of study which is open to a studious pastor in the direct line of his professional work, — a range which the studies of a lifetime can not exhaust. They seem to me important enough to be recorded as an appendix to the present volume. Those which belong to pastoral theology will not be found incongruous with the rest. I give them substantially as I find them among my papers, with only such general grouping as is necessary to save them from apparent disorder. I hope that they will, at least, suggest some worthy conception of the dignity of the pastoral office as the object of a life's labor.

I. The first group of these topics concerns the homiletic treatment of the *Being of God*. 1. Is the Being of God a proper subject of argument or discussion in the pulpit? 2. Ought purely scientific atheism to be treated in popular preaching? 3. The uses and abuses of the argument from the human conscience for the divine existence. 4. How should that type of infidelity be treated which recognizes moral government without a moral governor?

5. Should the doctrine of evolution be discussed in the pulpit? If so, in what way?

II. A second group of topics concerns the *Attributes of God.* 1. How can the attributes of God be best classified and represented in the pulpit, for popular impression? 2. The value of the divine attributes as themes of sermons in times of religious revival. 3. The limitations upon the use of the human mind as an image of the divine mind. 4. Should the divine sense of right be represented as an authority to the divine mind? 5. Can the popular mind conceive of divine suffering without loss to its thought of divine perfection? 6. Defects of the ordinary methods of preaching on the attributes of God. 7. A plan of a series of sermons upon the attributes of God.

III. A third collection of inquiries clusters around the doctrine of *The Trinity.* 1. Should the Trinity be preached as a whole, or by preaching the Deity of God in each one of his three modes of existence? 2. Ought the Trinity to be represented by the use of the word "persons"? 3. Ought the Trinity to be taught as a doctrine of the Old Testament? 4. Ought the modern pulpit to concern itself with the doctrine of the "eternal generation" of Christ? 5. Can the theory of a double consciousness in Christ be usefully taught in the pulpit? 6. Should the personality of the Holy Ghost be taught as an essential doctrine of Christianity? 7. How shall the pulpit use those texts which seem to speak of the Holy Spirit and Christ interchangeably? 8. Can the pulpit profitably use any intimations of Trinity derived from other sources than the Scriptures? 9. How shall the popular sense of contradiction in the doctrine be treated? 10. What analogies are most useful in illustrating the Trinity? 11. How can the deity and the humanity of Christ be represented, so that neither shall impair the popular sense of the other? 12. How shall that theory of Christ's person be treated which represents him as superhuman, yet not an object of worship? 13. A plan of a single sermon — also of three sermons — on the doctrine of the Trinity.

IV. A fourth list of topics centers in the subject of the *Inspiration of the Scriptures.* 1. Is Dr. Arnold right in conceding that the doctrine does not admit of definition to the popular mind? 2. Does the popular conception of inspiration need revision? 3. What is the most useful line of argument in the popular treatment of inspiration? 4. What use, if any, should be made of other

forms of mental illumination to illustrate biblical inspiration? 5. What is the bearing of inspiration on the literary character of the Bible? 6. Are discussions of the canon of the Scriptures desirable in the pulpit? 7. What difference, if any, should be taught between the Old and the New Testaments, respecting their inspiration? 8. How should popular faith in dreams and visions, as forms of divine revelation, be treated? 9. How should the pulpit treat the drift of modern Christian thought which tends to dispense with inspired authority in religion? 10. Should the Swedenborgian theory of inspiration be discussed in a sermon? 11. A series of plans of lectures to the people on inspiration.

V. The fifth class of topics relates to the *Creation and the Fall.* 1. Ought the pulpit to treat the narrative in Genesis as history? 2. How shall its adjustment to the facts of modern science be made clear to the popular mind? 3. How should objections to the biblical account of the Temptation be treated in preaching? 4. Is it expedient to attempt a popular discussion of the literary history of the biblical record of the Creation? 5. How should the unity of the human race be treated in preaching? 6. A plan of a series of sermons on the Creation and the Fall of Man.

VI. A sixth group of topics is gathered around the doctrine of the *Natural Character of Man.* 1. How can the natural antipathy of hearers to this doctrine be overcome? 2. A review of John Foster's essay on "The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion." 3. Ought the moral nature of man to be represented by the phrase "total depravity"? 4. Ought the consequences of the Fall to the character of the race to be represented by the phrase "original sin"? 5. How shall the popular sense of injustice under the doctrine of inherited depravity be removed? 6. By what rhetorical auxiliaries to the doctrine of depravity can the popular conscience be quickened to a biblical sense of sin? 7. Ought sin to be represented as the penalty of sin? 8. How shall we make the distinction palpable between depravity and sin? 9. How should the pulpit treat the unpardonable sin? 10. Ought the pulpit to discuss the character of infants? and, if so, what should be its teaching? 11. How are the biblical representations of the divine authorship of sin to be explained to the popular comprehension? 12. Is the Freedom of the Will a proper subject for discussion in the pulpit? 13. How shall the popular sense of the rectitude of natural affections be met in preaching the fact of

entire sinfulness? 14. Does the modern Church need admonition against ascetic self-examination? 15. A series of plans of sermons on the Depravity of Man.

VII. A seventh cluster of inquiries finds its center in the doctrine of the *Atonement*. 1. Ought the theory of a limited Atonement to be specifically treated in the pulpit? 2. To what extent should the philosophy of the Atonement be discussed in preaching? 3. Ought any theory of the Atonement to be presented as covering all the reasons for its necessity? 4. How shall we guard the faith in an unlimited Atonement against the abuse of it towards the doctrine of universal salvation, in the theology of the people? 5. How shall we guard the doctrine against Antinomian abuses in practice? 6. How shall we protect the doctrine from that abuse of it which ascribes vindictiveness to God? 7. What should the pulpit teach respecting the suffering of the Deity in the Atonement? 8. What should the pulpit teach of the cravings of the human conscience as giving intimations of the nature of the Atonement? 9. Of the several theories of the Atonement, is it wise to present any other than the one which is to be defended? 10. Does the doctrine of Justification by Faith require now the prominence given to it by the Reformers of the sixteenth century? 11. Should the ancient distinction of the offices of Christ, as those of prophet, priest, and king, be made obvious in the methods of the modern pulpit? 12. A plan of a series of sermons on the Atonement.

VIII. An eighth group of topics relate to the doctrine of *Regeneration*. 1. How should the subject of impenitent prayer for regeneration be treated? 2. How should religious inquirers be addressed, who profess to be waiting for regenerating grace? 3. How can the necessity of regeneration be reconciled, to the popular satisfaction, with the duty of immediate repentance? 4. Is it expedient to preach either of the two doctrines, regeneration and repentance, without allusion to the other? 5. To what extent may the philosophy of the human mind be used in interpreting the biblical symbols of regeneration? 6. Ought man's ability to repent to be taught expressly, or only by implication in his responsibility? 7. Should preachers exhort men to use the means of regeneration? 8. How shall the difference between regeneration and miracle be made clear to the popular mind? 9. In preaching the two doctrines of ability and dependence, under what conditions should either take

precedence of the other? 10. Should Dr. Bushnell's theory of Christian nurture be preached? 11. A series of plans of sermons on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

IX. A ninth collection of topics surrounds the subject of *Retribution*. 1. Should any experience of this life be represented as retributive? 2. How shall a morbid conscience in afflicted men be treated? 3. May the pulpit properly be silent as to the duration of future punishment? 4. May the question of a future probation be safely left unanswered? 5. How shall the belief of the Church in endless retribution be made a practical faith? 6. How shall the pulpit meet the popular objection to the doctrine that faith in it can not consist with a happy life? 7. The uses and the limitations of the illustration of divine by human government. 8. Ought preachers to represent retributive woe as the result of natural law only? 9. How shall the conflict between the traditions of the pulpit and the testimony of physicians, respecting the remorse of the impenitent on death-beds, be treated? 10. How is the tendency of refined culture to ignore this doctrine to be overcome? 11. What is the relative value of the argument from reason as compared with that of the argument from the Scriptures for this doctrine? 12. How ought the conflict of authorities in the interpretation of the Scriptures upon this doctrine to be treated by preachers? 13. The use and the abuse of the biblical narrative about Lazarus and Dives. 14. What use should be made of the biblical symbols of future punishment, by the pulpit? 15. What proportion should be given, in popular discussion of the doctrine, to eternal suffering as compared with eternal sin? 16. What accompaniments of style and elocution should attend the preaching of retribution? 17. How should a pastor treat suspense of faith in the doctrine, on the part of believers who have lost impenitent friends? 18. What are the most important auxiliaries to the doctrine in the popular faith? 19. Does the popular theology at present need to be guarded against excessive conceptions of divine justice, as related to those of divine love? 20. How can the intrinsic loveliness of divine justice be made vivid to the popular thought? 21. Should the doctrine of endless punishment be *often* preached expressly? 22. A series of plans of sermons, covering the whole doctrine of Retribution.

X. A tenth group of topics concerns the subject of *The Resurrection of the Body*. 1. Is it sufficient for practical uses to teach

the immortality of the soul? 2. How should the pulpit treat the apparent teaching of two resurrections in the Scriptures? 3. Does natural science require any modification of the obvious meaning of 1 Corinthians, fifteenth chapter? 4. What notice should the pulpit take of scientific objections to the doctrine? 5. How shall the natural recoil of the human mind from disembodied existence be treated? 6. What analogies of nature are most effective in illustrating and impressing the fact of resurrection? 7. Should the body of our Lord at the time of his transfiguration be represented as an illustration of the spiritual body of believers? 8. What shall the pulpit teach of the "second advent," and its sequences? 9. The historic fact of our Lord's resurrection — should the people now hold it in the same relation to faith in his teachings in which it was held by the Apostles? 10. The adornment of popular cemeteries as an auxiliary to religious culture. 11. A brief series of plans of sermons on the Resurrection.

XI. An eleventh class of subjects relates to the *Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*. 1. How can the pulpit create the home-feeling in the popular anticipation of heaven? 2. How shall we make heaven a reality to hearers as a place? as a state of activity and spiritual development? as a state of organized society? 3. How shall we treat the traditional sabbatical idea of heaven? 4. How can we make heaven attractive to children? 5. How shall we treat the subject of the Recognition of Friends in Heaven? 6. Is the pulpit justified in teaching the continuance in heaven of *any* of the social relations which exist on earth? 7. How shall the traditions of literary fiction respecting the eternity of conjugal affection be treated? 8. To what extent may the pulpit indulge in conjectural discussion of the heavenly life? 9. How shall we most effectually make the person of Christ central in the popular thought of heaven? 10. What is the legitimate use of the biblical symbols of heaven and its conditions? 11 How shall the pulpit treat the subject of the intermediate state? 12. What use, if any, can the pulpit make of the visions and preternatural hearing of the dying? 13. Has the singular pre-eminence given to music in the biblical representations of heaven any occult significance? 14. Should that form of Christian experience which consists of habitual meditation upon heaven and its employments be urged upon Christians? 15. A series of plans of sermons on Heaven.

XII. A twelfth cluster of themes gathers around the *Angelology*

of the Scriptures. 1. What are the proper uses of the biblical angelology in the modern pulpit? 2. Has the Protestant recoil from Romanism on this subject been excessive? and does it need correction? 3. What shall we teach on the subject of guardian angels? 4. Should we teach the agency of departed human spirits in earthly ministrations? 5. What treatment shall the pulpit give to modern Spiritualism? 6. Ought preachers to discuss the extent of sin in other portions of the universe? 7. Should we represent Satan as a person? and is it wise to suggest to the popular mind the opposite theory, by discussing it? 8. Does modern Christian thought equal the Scriptures in its recognition of the agency of evil spirits? 9. Has the biblical witchcraft any modern counterpart? 10. Do the Scriptures teach the cessation of demoniacal possession? 11. How should we treat the representation of Satan in the Book of Job? 12. The extra-biblical angelology of Milton. 13. A series of plans of sermons on Good and Evil Angels as represented in the Bible.

XIII. A brief list of inquiries centers in the subject of *Miracles.* 1. What is the exact use of miracles in the teachings of the modern pulpit? 2. What principles should govern a preacher in cases of doubt as to the miraculous character of a biblical event? 3. How shall the pulpit meet the objections of science to miracles, so as to command the popular faith? 4. Is the story of Jonah to be treated as allegory? 5. Is the necessity of miracles in proof of Christianity limited to times, or classes of mind? 6. What are the chief abuses of miracles in the usage of the pulpit? 7. How shall preachers treat the alleged modern Romish miracles? 8. How shall the popular confusion of spiritualistic phenomena with miracles be treated?

XIV. A fourteenth group of topics relates to the subject of *Prayer.* 1. What is prayer considered as literary composition, — prose, or poetry? 2. How shall a preacher combine facility with spirituality in public prayer? 3. The substance, the form, the order, and the delivery of public prayer. 4. Ought public prayer to be premeditated? 5. The abuse of prayer to the purposes of preaching. 6. What instruction should the pulpit give on the subject of biblical sortilege as practiced by the Moravians? 7. How can preaching most effectually train a church to the development of power in prayer? 8. How should honest skepticism as to the reality of prayer be treated? 9. To what extent, and how, should

scientific objections to prayer be discussed in the pulpit? 10. What public use may a preacher properly make of his personal experience in prayer? 11. Should the pulpit encourage audible responses to public prayer? 12. Does the usefulness of public worship require the revival of liturgies in non-prelatical churches? 13. Is it expedient to open churches for daily prayer? 14. To what extent should private requests for public prayer be encouraged? 15. How should the alleged cure of disease by prayer alone be treated? 16. To what extent should the details of the sermon be recognized in the structure of the prayer preceding or following it? 17. How shall the pulpit reconcile unanswered prayer with the specific promises of the Scriptures? 18. A series of plans of sermons on the reality of prayer, conditions of success in prayer, unanswered prayer, the relation of prayer to Christian activity. Another series on public, social, family, and secret prayer. A third series on the chief examples of prayer recorded in the Scriptures.

XV. Another collection of topics gathers around the subject of *Missions*. 1. Should missions to the heathen be advocated on the ground, that, as the rule, heathenism results in the loss of the soul? 2. To what extent is the history of missions a valuable subject of discourse in the pulpit? 3. Ought uninspired missionaries to be made the subject of biographical sermons? 4. How may foreign missions be best protected from the spirit of romance in the Church? 5. What are the right proportions of interest in foreign as related to home missions, and how can they be preserved? 6. How should monthly concerts be conducted? 7. Should the pulpit teach the Jewish principle of tithes in the contribution of property to religious uses? 8. How can the pulpit most successfully develop the missionary spirit in the Church?

XVI. Another group of topics relates to *Social and Political Reforms*. 1. What is the province of the pulpit respecting political parties in the Republic? 2. What relation has the pulpit to those reforms which are an outgrowth from Christianity? 3. The policy of dependence upon the indirect influence of the pulpit for the support of Christian reforms. 4. How shall the pulpit best perform its duty in relieving the mutual hostility of classes in modern society? 5. How should we preach on the Seventh Commandment? 6. Should abstinence from alcoholic drinks be taught as a duty *per se*, or on grounds of expediency only? 7. What use

should the pulpit make of the personal example of Christ respecting the use of wine? 8. Are reforms properly made tests of church-membership? 9. How shall the pulpit treat the frequent affiliation of reform with infidelity?

XVII. A seventeenth class of inquiries concerns the subject of *Revivals*. 1. What is the true theory of a revival? 2. Are revivals the normal method of the growth of the Church? 3. Are the laws of the working of the Holy Spirit in revivals discoverable? 4. Is a revival always practicable to the prayers and efforts of a church? 5. What agency of the pulpit is preparative to a revival? 6. Under what conditions should public religious services be multiplied in revivals? 7. Are the labors of evangelists desirable under a settled ministry? 8. What executive machinery may be wisely employed in revivals? 9. What type of theology is most effective in revivals? 10. What place should be assigned to doctrinal preaching in religious awakenings? 11. How may the service of song be made most effective as an auxiliary in such awakenings? 12. What are the pathological perils incident to sympathetic religious excitement? How avoided? How treated when not avoidable? 13. How should the disinclination of refined culture to sympathetic religious awakenings be treated? 14. What should be the treatment of children under the excitement of a revival? what of their admission to the church? 15. Does the subsidence of a revival indicate religious decline? 16. What should be the policy of the pulpit in the period immediately following a season of revival? 17. What preaching is best fitted to the training of recent converts and the testing of conversions? 18. Is President Edwards's work on the "Religious Affections" suited to the present generation? 19. Is President Edwards's sermon entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" a suitable model of comminatory preaching in a modern revival? 20. What manuals of Christian experience are most valuable for the reading of young converts? 21. The comparative power, purity, and worth of modern and ancient religious awakenings. 22. A series of plans of sermons on Revivals.

XVIII. The next group of inquiries finds its center in the idea of *Proportion in Preaching*. 1. In argumentative preaching, what proportions should be given to the Bible, to reason, to intuition, and to tradition, as sources of proof? 2. In the choice of subjects, what proportions should be given to explanatory, illustrative,

argumentative, and hortatory preaching? 3. How should the proportions be adjusted between topical, textual, and expository discourses? 4. What should be the proportion of comminatory to encouraging sermons? 5. What proportion should be aimed at in the use of the Old Testament and the New? 6. What should be the proportion of negative to positive methods of discussion? 7. In what proportion should preaching be controversy with infidelity? 8. What proportion of preaching should be on the person, life, teachings, works, and death of Christ? 9. What should be the proportion of preaching to believers, and preaching to the impenitent? 10. How shall preaching develop most healthfully the active and the passive graces in Christian character? 11. How shall the doctrinal perspective in the faith of the people be kept from distortions and extremes? 12. What should be the proportion of written to extemporaneous sermons? 13. What should be the proportion of serial preaching to that of isolated sermons? 14. How can the pulpit adjust in due proportion the conservative and the progressive tendencies in Christian thought and action?

XIX. Another group of topics clusters around the subject of *Church Polity*. 1. To what extent is it wise to interest a church in questions of church government? 2. Should the pulpit defend any form of church government as by divine authority, to the exclusion of others? 3. The chief advantages and the chief abuses of the three great historic forms of church polity. 4. Use of the Congregational polity to the development of Christian character. 5. Ought women to be recognized as part of the ruling power in the church? 6. Has a pastor authority, in any sense, over his church, and, if so, how is it to be exercised? 7. Ought discipline to be executed against delinquency in Christian belief? 8. Does the Congregational polity at present need development in the direction of authority, or in that of liberty? in that of fellowship, or in that of individualism? 9. A series of plans of sermons upon the offices which are germane to a Congregational church.

XX. The twentieth collection of inquiries relates to the *Sunday School*. 1. What is its relation to the church? 2. By what methods supplementary to the school can the pastor best control the biblical instruction of the young? 3. Should catechetical instruction be given, and how? By the Westminster Catechism?

4. Under what conditions, if at all, may the school be wisely made a substitute for one of the preaching-services of the Lord's Day? 5. How should a pastor conduct teachers' meetings? 6. Is it expedient to select one of the subjects of sermons on the Lord's Day from the lesson of the school? 7. What should be the frequency and character of sermons to children? 8. Should a pastor encourage the employment of unconverted teachers? 9. Is the hymnology now current in our Sunday schools the best for the religious culture of the young? Is there any reason why the hymns of the church and the hymns of the school should be different? 10. A series of plans of sermons on subjects most appropriate to thoughtful children.

XXI. A brief collection of queries concerns the *Christian Work of Laymen*, so far as related to the pulpit. 1. Under what conditions should lay-preachers be encouraged? 2. What services should be the exclusive prerogative of clergymen? 3. Ought women to be admitted to the pulpit as lay-preachers? 4. What attitude should the pulpit take toward young men's Christian associations, and similar organizations, not ecclesiastical, for Christian labor? 5. A series of plans of sermons to Christians on methods of Christian work.

XXII. A group of topics concerns the *Lord's Supper*. 1. Is it wise to preface its administration with a sermon? 2. Is it expedient to administer it in silence? 3. Under what circumstances may it be administered privately? 4. Should its administration to the dying be encouraged? 5. Should the use of fermented wines be discouraged in its administration? 6. What are the best subjects for sacramental sermons? 7. A series of plans of sermons on the Closing Scenes in the Life of Christ.

XXIII. Another list of topics concerns the ordinance of *Baptism*. 1. Is the mode of baptism important enough to be made the theme of a sermon? 2. Should the baptism of infants be taught as a duty, or as a privilege only? 3. Should the pulpit give importance to the baptism of the dying who are unbaptized? 4. How may the moral significance of infant baptism be most effectively represented in the pulpit? 5. How shall faith in baptismal regeneration be treated among immigrants from State churches? 6. A series of three sermons on the moral significance, the proper subjects, and the modes, of Christian baptism.

XXIV. A considerable class of topics must be ranked as *Mis-*

cellanies. 1. Under what conditions is it desirable to preach funeral sermons? 2. Is preaching upon the Catechism a desirable method of doctrinal instruction? 3. Ought a preacher to preach beyond his own experience of truth? 4. Ought sermons on national Fast Days to be churchly, or secular? 5. Ought Christmas to be observed by preaching-services? 6. The uses and abuses of the argument from analogy in preaching. 7. To what extent should the immediate wants of a people govern the choice of subjects for the pulpit? 8. To what extent, and by what methods, may a preacher wisely labor for the intellectual culture of his people outside of the work of the pulpit? 9. What is, and what is not, plagiarism in preaching? 10. To what extent are biblical quotations desirable in sermons? 11. May theatrical literature be properly quoted in sermons? 12. The uses and abuses of preaching on the prophecies. 13. The uses and abuses of the parables in preaching. 14. The three modes of delivery in preaching, — by reading, from memory, extempore. 15. How should the biblical imprecations be treated in popular discourse? 16. How should the apparent barbarism of the divine government of the Israelites be treated in the pulpit? 17. How should preachers treat the subject of repentance on a death-bed? 18. How should the funerals of those who seem to have died impenitent be conducted? 19. The compilation of a collection of biblical burial-services. 20. How should the day of national thanksgiving be observed? 21. The construction of forms of marriage-service.

XXV. I find among my papers notes of the following subjects, as specially adapted to *Serial Preaching.* 1. The theology of Christ. 2. The chief events in Christ's life. 3. The Christology of the Old Testament. 4. Biblical emblems of Christ. 5. The Messianic Psalms. 6. The Lord's Prayer. 7. The Beatitudes. 8. The Sermon on the Mount. 9. Our Lord's farewell prayer in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. 10. A selection of the friends of Christ named in his biographies. 11. The parables. 12. The miracles of the New Testament. 13. The miracles of the Old Testament. 14. The fulfilled prophecies. 15. The destruction of ancient cities. 16. The representative characters of the Old Testament; the same of the New Testament. 17. The canon of the Scriptures. 18. The biblical descriptions of heaven and hell. 19. The messages of St. John to the seven churches of Asia. 20. The process of conversion, — man as the gospel finds him, as awakened,

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