

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. IV.

JULY 1900.

No. 3.

Doctrinal Theology.

CHRISTOLOGY.

(Concluded.)

II. THE OFFICE AND WORK OF CHRIST.

Christ the Prophet.

A prophet is an official spokesman of God. Thus said the Lord to Moses, "Aaron shall be *thy spokesman* unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee *instead of a mouth*, and thou shalt be to him *instead of God*."¹⁾ And in this capacity Aaron was a *prophet*. The Lord said unto Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be *thy prophet*."²⁾ It was not Aaron who of his own accord stepped in to supply the deficiency of which his brother Moses complained;³⁾ but by divine appointment he was made a spokesman of God, and thus was he constituted a prophet. *Prophecy came not by the will of man*.⁴⁾ The prophet does not appear in his own name, but comes with a commission from a superior, whose agent or public officer he is in his capacity of a prophet, a spokesman by divine commission, uttering the thoughts and will and very words of him from whom he has his commission.⁵⁾

1) Exod. 4, 16.

2) Exod. 7, 1.

3) Exod. 4, 10.

4) 2 Pet. 1, 21.

5) Matt. 1, 22. Acts 1, 16; 3, 18. Amos 3, 1. Jer. 1, 2. al.

Practical Theology.

ELOCUTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PULPIT ORATORY.

(Published by Request of Conference.)

Cicero, the famous Roman orator, repeatedly quotes Demosthenes, perhaps the greatest orator the world has ever known, as saying, that in oratory "delivery is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing, and—the whole thing." Cicero, who is quite an authority as far as oratory is concerned, endorses this quaint saying of Demosthenes, as being inherently correct. Taking it *cum grano salis*, and rightly interpreting it, my readers may likewise endorse it. Demosthenes, as every one who has studied his orations, knows, did not exactly mean what he seems to say. He knew that an orator must above all things have something to say; and that this something must be worth saying. Even Demosthenes, with all his oratorical powers, could not have made more out of the soul-stirring poem: "Mary had a little lamb" than there is in it. Imagine him, with powerful voice, with graceful action and gesticulation, with flashing eye and great earnestness of manner, declaiming: "Mary had a little lamb, and oh, how she did love it, but it grew to be an ugly ram, and she made mutton of it." No, the first, second, third, and fourth thing in oratory, is to have a good oration; to have something worth saying; and then *in* saying it, delivery is very important. This is not correcting Demosthenes, but only stating what he really meant to say. Not in *oratory*, but in *elocution*, delivery is the first, second, third, and whole thing. Oratory includes the oration, the *what* is said. Elocution has only to do with the manner of saying it. Elocution ignores the materials composing the pudding, or rather, presupposes them, and then teaches how they may be prepared into palatable food.

Applying these preliminary remarks to pulpit oratory, we learn as our first and most important lesson, to be diligent in preparing a good sermon, to study, meditate, pray, and think, so that we may have something worth saying; something wherewith to instruct and edify our hearers; something wherewith to feed them. The reason why, as Isaiah affirms, an ox and an ass know the crib of their master, is undoubtedly, because they always found something good *in* the crib, not because the crib itself was so beautiful. Let the crib be ornamented with rich carvings, polished and studded with diamonds and gems,—still even the ox of Demosthenes himself would always have decided that the first, second, third, and whole thing was *not* the crib—but the hay, corn, or oats *in* the crib. So it is with elocution. Elocution adorns and beautifies the crib. But woe to the preacher who attempts to feed his audience at an empty crib. In speaking we use the tongue, the lips, the teeth, the throat, and lungs. But all authorities agree that something *else* is of vital importance—of such great importance, that without it no good delivery is possible. It is the *soul*, the heart, the feelings, and emotions. Goethe is disgusted with an orator who has everything else in his favor, a pleasing exterior, a captivating personality, a magnificent voice, graceful action, and highly artistic delivery,—if his heart is not in what he says; if only the mouth makes a noise, if only lungs and tongue and lips are at work. Such an orator, especially if he happened to be a preacher, Goethe called a “*cymbal-tinkling fool.*” To listen to him, produced a similar effect on the great poet as a combination of castor oil, nux vomica, and vermifuge would on an ordinary mortal. He lets Faust say:

“Children and apes will gaze delighted
If their critiques can pleasure impart.
But never a heart will be ignited,
Comes not the spark from the speaker’s heart.”

Again he says to all eloquent preachers whose sermons are only lipwork:

“Yes, your discourses that are so refined,
In which humanity’s poor shreds you frizzle,
Are unrefreshing as the mist and wind,
That through the withered leaves of autumn whistle.”

In a like manner, and even more forcibly, Aristoteles, Plato, Cicero, Demosthenes, and all the authorities express themselves. Shakespeare, above all, is most vehement in his denunciation of such “cymbal-tinkling fools” whose orations are only lipwork and only mouthdeep. The professional teachers of elocution claim that it is impossible for a speaker to do justice to his subject unless his heart and soul, his emotions and feelings are also engaged. The heart has great influence on the voice, also on the expression of the face and especially on the eyes and, in fact, on the whole person. If the speaker’s soul is not in sympathy with his speech, not interested in what he says, his speech will always be more or less of a schoolboy’s declamation. It will always resemble the “*saying their piece*” of children on Christmas or on some other festive occasion. It will never exert great influence on an audience. It is not the stove that heats the room, but the fire *in* the stove. Let the stove be ever so grand, ornamented with nickel and silver plating, polished and burnished, till it is as bright as a Venetian mirror. Still, without fire in it, it will dispense no genial warmth. Such a stove would be utterly worthless on such a cold day as this 31st day of January, 1900, happens to be. So it is with the water. Looking at it philosophically, we soon discover the reason. An oration, is *not* so much an address of the lips of the speaker, to the ears of his audience as a communication of what is in the speaker’s soul to the soul of the listener. Now if there is nothing in the soul, what can you communicate? I know that even if there is no water in the well, you can still work the pump handle. But nobody’s thirst will be quenched.

Only the creaking of the pump handle will be heard. A great many orations are nothing else than frantic workings of the pump handle; an abortive attempt to get living water out of a dry soul. All actors of any distinction recognize this as a fundamental principle. They therefore not only memorize, but *study* their parts. They must get into sympathy with the author's feeling. They must, if they would be successful, artificially create the feelings and emotions in their soul, which they are dramatically to represent to the audience. The famous Garrick was once asked by a bishop, how it came that he could move a whole audience to tears, although only representing artificial feeling and fictitious characters and occurrences, whilst he, the good bishop, and so many other preachers, utterly failed to move their audiences. Garrick replied, "We actors speak fiction as though it were truth, whilst you preachers often speak truth as though it were fiction." A Scotch farmer who was a regular church attendant once said to his minister, "You speak of the joys in heaven in such a way as to make me disgusted with them." That minister's soul, evidently, was not in his sermon. Perhaps he was a materialist at heart, an epicure who valued the joys of the table more than the joys of heaven. All great orators owed their greatness mainly to the one fact, that they meant what they said; their heart, their whole soul was in their utterances. Where this is lacking, everything else,—a fine baritone voice, a commanding, captivating personality, polished action, and graceful gesticulation—are of but little value. This is what made Demosthenes a greater orator than Cicero. This gave Whitefield such a phenomenal influence over an audience. His soul was on fire when he spoke. It was the same with Moody.

Applying this principle to pulpit oratory, it teaches that, above everything else, we must always look well into our own heart; that we must always preach to *ourselves* first, always apply the word of warning, reproof, admonition, and also consolation first to our own heart and conscience.

Here it is also true: that it is "not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." It is God the Holy Spirit who with his sanctifying grace must prepare our hearts. We must be anointed from above. We must, therefore, be diligent in prayer, that the Holy Spirit may sanctify our hearts and make us fit instruments for the preaching of the Word. Without the Holy Spirit and his gracious work in our hearts, we can do nothing; we shall never be able to say, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." Not only the preparation, but also the *delivery* of the sermon, requires the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, and so this first and most important principle of elocution requires us to bow our knees before the God of all help.

A speech, in the strict sense of the term, exists only in the act of speaking. All that precedes it is preparation for the speech. This preparation ought never to be injurious to the act of speaking. As something very injurious, all the authorities condemn such preparation as would weaken and harm the *act* of speaking. Anything that is injurious to the speaker also injures the speech. A preparation that robs the speaker of a good night's sleep, may also rob the audience of a good speech. The best preparation, not for the speech, but for the act of speaking, so the authorities affirm, is—sleep. For those who have to speak twice in one day, they advise an hour or two of sleep between the two orations. The speaker should always take good care of his health. He should eat wholesome food easily digested. He should breathe God's fresh air every day and—every night too. A minister who has been all Saturday in an overheated study, and then has slept, or rather dozed, in a bedroom where fresh air could by no possibility enter, arising the next morning with a thick head and a beclouded and be-fogged brain, such a minister, the authorities claim, is physically disabled to do his best in the pulpit. He has detracted about 75 per cent from his sermon, as far as delivery or elo-

cution is concerned. The children of this world are in this respect wiser than the children of light. The stars amongst the actors, such as Garrick, Booth, Mansfield, and others, always were very careful to be in the best condition, physically, when they had to appear before their audiences. They took abundant sleep and rest, exercise in the fresh air, they punched the bag, swung the dumb-bells, and took refreshing baths as necessary preparations.

Talmage, who, although he knows little enough of theology, yet knows a great deal about speaking, follows this recipe. He has his day of rest on Saturday. He claims that ministers, too, must have their day of rest. Saturday he spends as much as possible in the parks and by the seashore, breathing fresh air. Then early to bed. He claims that no minister has any business to be out of bed an hour after supper. The next morning a good bath and a good breakfast, then a little rest on the lounge, and then into the pulpit. Henry Ward Beecher, a man not worthy of being called a preacher of the gospel, yet unquestionably a great orator, had nearly the same rules and lived up to them conscientiously. He says in his advice to theological students: "Never forget that behind all our spirituality there is this great fact of flesh and blood. The body is the spirit's horse. Let the jockey be ever so good, but if he keeps his horse in a poor condition, he cannot win the race. Always keep your horse in a good condition." Something of this commonsense wisdom of the children of this world will also prove beneficial to us who have the high calling to preach the gospel.

Another thing which all the authorities highly recommend is—deep breathing. Ordinary breathing, especially when sitting in our easy chairs in our study, or when engaged in no more violent exercise than walking, which is often the only exercise a minister takes, is not sufficient. Only half of our lungs is exercised by it. Therefore deep breathing is necessary and very beneficial. Special instru-

ments have been invented by physicians, which assist a person in deep breathing. They force you to fill your whole lungs with air. These instruments can be had for the sum of 100 cents. The writer possesses one, and must say that he has received great benefit from it.

Lemon juice applied to the throat externally, and well rubbed in, is very beneficial. It strengthens the nerves and is a great preventer of coughs, hoarseness, and colds. A bath, complete if you can have it, otherwise a spongebath, applied to the upper part of the body, with a few handfuls of salt, and taken regularly every morning, is a wonderful invigorator and will assist greatly in the act of speaking. All these rules have special reference to pulpit oratory only when the preacher applies them, and lives up to them.

We now come to the act or art of speaking itself. Here the authorities are very voluminous. The writer has counted the pages he has waded through. More than 1500. A great deal of it is trash. I have condensed what seemed to me valuable. The first thing to be well remembered, to be taken to heart, and rubbed in deep, is this: *Be natural!* Be your own self! Be what God has made you. Don't try to be somebody else when you are standing before an audience. Speak with your own voice. Don't yell and scream. It is not necessary that we should attempt to raise the dead. Christ will attend to that without our assistance. Let your speaking be speaking, not a declamation, not the reciting of something you have committed to memory, and are now "rattling off" because you have to. Take your time. Beautiful scenery cannot be enjoyed when you are looking out of the windows of a lightning express rushing through space at the rate of 60 miles an hour. Things fly past you in a whirl, and you will be dizzy and bewildered. It is the same with a speech. If the orator fires his ideas and thoughts at the audience as fast as mouth and lips can perform their work, his speech will make no great impression. His audience will be dizzy and bewildered. A slow walk, with the

opportunity of standing still once in a while, is much to be preferred to the best lightning express, when beautiful views are to be enjoyed. So it is with an oration or sermon. As you would speak to your wife and children or friends, especially when you tell them something of a solemn nature, so preach to your congregation, and then you will be about right.

Gesticulation must also be taken into consideration. Cicero calls gesticulation the "sermo corporis" and claims that it is in some respects more effective than the spoken word. The old Roman was not very much mistaken. He had learned this wisdom from Roscius, an actor famous for pantomime. Cicero requested an unwelcome stranger to leave the room. The fellow stayed. Roscius, with an expressive gesture, pointed to the door—and the visitor thought it was high time to get out. Gesticulation is natural. All children, when speaking to each other, unconsciously gesticulate. Herbert Spencer says, "A shrug of the shoulders would lose much by translation into words." And Dabney, a teacher of elocution, says, "He who is master of this sign language has indeed an almost magic power. When the orator can combine it with the spoken language, he acquires thereby exceeding vivacity of expression. Not only his mouth, but his eyes, his features, his fingers speak. The hearers read the coming sentiment upon his countenance and limbs almost before his voice reaches their ears; they are both spectators and listeners; every sense is absorbed in charmed attention." The authorities are again so voluminous that the writer is obliged to condense and give everything in a nutshell. In gesticulation the most necessary thing is, "that we be as the little children." Why? Because the gesticulation of little children is free from artificiality and affectation, it is *natural*, corresponding in a natural way to the feelings and emotions of their little souls. Of course, nowadays, the children to be taken as models must be *very* little. As soon as the elocutionary schoolmistress has handled them, they are spoiled. Hope-

lessly spoiled. Generally for life. The first, second, third, and fourth thing in gesticulation is to be natural and not to overdo the thing. It is not necessary to accompany everything you say with a gesture. When speaking of heaven, it is not necessary to always point upwards. A minister who had been invited to preach to the students of a university, said in the course of his address, "You shut your eyes to the beauty of piety," and he shut both his eyes to illustrate the remark. He proceeded, "You stop your ears to the call of the gospel"—he stopped his ears with his fingers. He proceeded, "You turn your back on every thing that is holy"—to illustrate it, he turned his broad back to the audience. That was too much for the boys, and the good done by the well meant sermon was below the freezing point. In suiting the action to the word, this man "overstepped the modesty of nature." All the authorities condemn excessive gesticulation. Too much of it spoils the speech and detracts the attention of the listener. It is like putting too much catsup or mustard on your meat. You spoil the taste of the meat and perhaps do not taste the meat at all. Whitefield was the unsurpassed master of gesticulation. Statesmen, poets, scholars, artists, and actors traveled great distances to hear him and to *see* him speak. Garrick, perhaps the greatest actor the world has ever seen, freely confessed that Whitefield was mountain high above him in dramatic power. And yet there was nothing artificial about Whitefield. He had never taken a single lesson in elocution and he never bestowed a thought on his gestures. They came to him as the bird flies and the fish swims. Lord Bolingbroke once heard him speak about the spiritual blindness of natural man. He illustrated it by speaking of a blind man walking towards an awful abyss. Whitefield brought the man step by step towards the abyss. So naturally did he imitate him, that the whole audience was breathless; they trembled for the blind man and his awful fate. Lord Bolingbroke was so overcome that he

jumped up and yelled, "For God's sake, the man is gone." He described a storm and shipwreck so dramatically, that the sailors in the audience jumped up and cried, "The lifeboat! Quick, take to the lifeboat!" That came natural to Whitefield. We could not imitate him. The rule is not to *express* nature and not to *force* it. To aim not so much at the positive improvement as at the negative, that is to say, at the correction of your faults. Our faults of delivery and gesticulation should be pointed out to us. Every preacher should tell his wife to watch him with a critical eye and to tell him his faults. Correct your mistakes and your faults if possible, but, the authorities add, better let them remain than to be succeeded by artificiality. The professional teachers of elocution have a hundred little rules, but they always come back to the fact, that a speaker must not mind the rules when he speaks, but let nature have its sway. Therefore I will say no more about all these rules. Applied to pulpit oratory we must remember, that we ourselves as God has made us, are called to preach the gospel, and that with our individuality unimpaired but with our faults, as much as possible, corrected, we are to do the work to us appointed. Then, in the fear of God and with love to our fellow-men, let us speak out what we feel and believe. No doubt we will make some blunders. A child can never learn to walk without sometimes falling. But a child will not keep on falling the same way all the time. There will be improvement. So we ought not always to make the same blunders, but try to correct them. Woe to the man who imagines he makes no blunders or that his audience does not see them. Let us be humble and accept all kind or unkind criticisms and profit by them. Above all, let us pray diligently for the anointing from above, so that we may speak acceptably of the wonderful things God has done to save a sinful world; and that not only the sermon but also the delivery of the sermon may redound to the glory of God.

L. ZAHN.