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BY

JOSEPH GAIL GARRISON B. A.

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## PSYCHOLOGY OF PREACHING.

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JOSEPH GAIL GARRISON.

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## PSYCHOLOGY OF PREACHING.

### 1. INTRODUCTION.

A. The purpose of this thesis will be to set forth the value of those elements and principles in preaching, which may be classified as psychological, in so far as they contribute effectiveness to the pulpit ministry of our time. (The first quarter of the 20th century.) The method is Theoretical; the aim is a practical one; the point of view is comparatively recent, the field of research which is extensive is also limited in so far as actual material is concerned. As a science, psychology is in its infancy. Much of the phenomena of mind and the interplay of minds still remain unexplored and unexplained. The popular use of the term "Psychological" has a tendency to enshroud the facts and materials of this new science in a vague mist of words. "Psychology is the study of the mental processes as we continually observe them in ourselves and those about us." To study the processes of the mind is not only interesting but is practical. And there is no field of activity that lends itself more readily to psychological treatment than preaching which is a highly specialized form of interplay between mind and minds. In the last few years the science of psychology has made marked progress, and it seems fitting that the result of its research should be used to practical advantage. Consequently, in considering the value of psychology in preaching an effort will be made to distinguish

between the popular and more scientific use of the term.

One does not have to know how to compose a piece of music or even to be able to reproduce a simple selection in order to appreciate music. It is also possible for one who is not a musician, to judge between good playing and poor playing, or good music and vulgar music. Likewise, with preaching, one may not be able to write a good sermon or preach one, and yet, may be able to tell some of the reasons why preaching is good, mediocre, or poor, and how it may be made more effective. Thus with a practical end in view, the treatment of this theme will necessarily be theoretical. And with our own age more particularly in mind, I am willing to announce at the outset, that the results and conclusions of this thesis are offered as "working hypothesis."

B. The first step then, to be taken will be a definition of preaching, (1) past; (2) present; and (3) more particularly in relation to the limit and scope that this thesis will attempt to cover.

1. Past. Preaching is a fusion of three elements historically considered--of Hebrew prophecy, classical oratory and the Christian gospel. Preaching as we have come to know it is essentially a product of Christian propaganda. The spread of Christianity is largely due to preaching. Preaching has taken the form of allegory, homily, formal and informal discussions and discourse etc., while preaching in the recent past has been largely to expound the meaning and implied truth confined in the Christian Scriptures. A

passage is taken from the Scriptures as a text and the preaching is based upon that. Prof. Herrick Johnson, D. D., in his book "The Ideal Ministry" says, - "To be like Christ, to stand in His stead and speak in His behalf, sensible of a divine commission, persuaded that we are His Ambassadors, not by infallible sacerdotal selection, not by the market law of demand and supply, but by immediate, internal, and effectual call of God; and thus persuaded, to take the truths of Holy Scripture and unfold, illustrate, amplify them for enlightenment and persuasion, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to have them intensified by profound personal conviction, fused in the fires of one's own soul, poured upon waiting ears and hearts from lips touched with God's altar-fire, and accompanied by every possible adjunct of effective posture and gesture and voice -- this is preaching."

Broadus has this to say, - "Preaching is characteristic of Christianity. The great appointed means of spreading the good tidings of salvation through Christ is preaching -- words spoken, whether to the individual, or to the assembly."

It is also possible to quote from other writers upon this subject who are also considered as authority in what I choose to call the Evangelical Orthodox School, but further definition would throw no more light upon this phase of the subject.

Suffice it is to say that much that passes for modern preaching is simply echoings from the past and a passing view.

However, because of its background, a system of ritual, authority, theology, sacramentalism, salvation, tradition, institutionalism, ecclesiastical organization etc., this

form of preaching lends itself admirably to the psychological aspects of treatment and finds its logical expression in the evangelist and evangelistic method of revival.

2. Present. Only in very recent times have subjects, extra-biblical in character, been used commonly as themes for preaching. Today, preaching has invaded almost every field of thought and activity to which religious import can be given. Preaching is no longer thought of as depending upon tradition, special authority, on the fact that it is delivered in any special place in any special way or any lingering superstition that it is "sacred" discourse. Preaching now depends upon the ability, integrity, intellectuality, wisdom and personality of the preacher and his power to reach people with his message. Preaching still holds its distinctive place in the field of public speaking and the sermon maintains its individuality in the field of literature. According to J. Spencer Kennard, D. D., in his book on the "Psychic Power in Preaching," preaching is defined as "divine truth plus a man, --the energy of the preacher's soul in contact with that of his hearers." This represents a modern view of preaching which makes it depend upon the subject and the man. According to Brastow "The place of the preacher is not as highly respected in America as it is in almost any other country. -- Personal manhood always commands the respect of the American people.-- A free state and a free church rely upon the power of a free pulpit and a free ministry to perpetuate the moral and religious life of the people. " Thus we see that preaching must be efficient and of a high order to maintain its

place in our social life. Preaching today must show, ability leadership, insight into history, life and the trend of the times. "The living force of the living soul upon living souls for the sake of their transformation is the fundamental idea of preaching," is the verdict of Henry Ward Beecher. And taken in the large sense in which it was spoken it defines preaching today. A fact which is more far reaching in its effect upon modern preaching is that, with its old psychological background swept away, it must seek to rest upon a real and natural background. The collective mind is no longer under the sway and spell of supernaturalism, the mind is no longer awed by the superstition that the preacher is "inspired," "infallible" or that his utterance is the dictation of the ruler of a super-nundane or other worldly sphere. It is not necessary to go back very far in time to find an entirely different world of preaching, a strange world; and it is just as likely that the preaching of today will seem as strange tomorrow.

3. For the purpose of this paper we shall confine our definition of preaching by treating preaching as a method in the sphere of religion of moving men to higher planes of thought and action. This broadens the meaning of preaching and places it in a general light that it may be treated in an universal manner. Thus as preaching is one of the functions of a minister of a particular church and interpretation of religion, a psychological treatment of this aspect of preaching will be attemptible. Also the

psychology of preaching as universal.

## 11. THE SERMON.

### THE INSTRUMENT OF PREACHING.

In dealing with any kind of study of preaching, the sermon holds a position of primary importance. An attempt will be made to examine the nature of the limit and scope of the sermon, (A) as to its subject matter, and (B) as it lends itself to psychological treatment.

A. Any topic, idea, event, experience or phase of these that lends itself to or can be adapted to moral or religious treatment may be used as subject matter for a sermon. This may be thought a too broad and generous limit for a sermon. For we have no less an authority than Broadus who would limit the sermon to a range of five different classes--

1. Doctrinal subjects; 2; Subjects of morality; 3; Historical subjects; 4; Experimental subjects; 5; Occasional sermons.

This classification was made a little over forty years ago and I quote it to point out two very obvious facts. First, that it is too narrow to meet the demands of present day preaching and secondly, that it indicates the rapidity with which the conditions of our times are undergoing change. Books, periodicals, newspapers, rapid means of communication and transportation have given every person access to facts, events and current opinion as far as the latter is molded by the contemporary press. Brastow tells us that we are living in "a cosmopolitan age in which a spirit of compensation is very manifest. Men affect broader and freer ranges

of thought and action, and cherish larger and more generous estimates that are grounded in a fuller consciousness of unity of life." "American preaching is much more distinctive in its characteristics, bearing more fully the marks of local and temporal conditions than the earlier period, and takes the impress of a rapidly developing and changing life." The sermon must then contain elements of power, must deal with conditions and interests of our time and must meet the needs of the people who are living. The sermon's range is, one might say, encyclopaedic. The preacher through his sermon still has power to teach and lead the people.

B. The reason that the sermon must treat all subjects that effect all kinds and conditions of men, is because of the fact that there is a new psychological outlook upon life. The rapid progress and development in industrial and social life has made this necessary. "Speeding up," specialization, efficiency, system, are the characteristic slogans of our age. Life is becoming more complex and difficult and to live it means that it must be "fast" and intense. What does that mean? Simply, to accomplish its mission in the world preaching must meet the need of the times. The sermon must be short in length, clear cut in style, concentrated in essence, direct to the point at issue, uplifting in character and intensely religious. The sermon must be aimed to reach more than the ears of a congregation. Extemporaneous sermons are often taken verbatim by stenographers and published for wide reading. The written sermon is frequently treated in the same way, for it is not uncommon for a sermon, or

extracts from it, to be published in periodicals and even in the daily papers. Thus the modern preacher has an almost unlimited congregation. The preacher must consider the ways and means whereby his sermon will best reach his hearers; to do this he must know his powers and his limitations, he must know life and men's attitude toward it, have a knowledge of how to gain the attention of a congregation, appeal to its imagination, meet the law of association, arouse the emotions, inspire men to action, in other words have psychological insight. Then with the larger reading congregation in mind it is well to cultivate an "eloquence of thought," an English style that appeals, impresses, convinces and persuades. The "sensational" type of sermons which appeal to the feelings alone will draw a "crowd." Such sermons may become the "vogue" for a "season," but as soon as the full range of the senses and emotions has been played upon and the seekers after some new sensation fail to get a "thrill" or to be amused then a fatal reaction sets in and unless the field is large enough to refill the pews, they will soon be empty. The sermon to be effective must convey to the mind of the hearer a religious plan of living and the timber out of which to build a stable and upright character. The average mind is only capable of grasping and retaining a very little at a time and with this fact established the great implication is that "the more one narrows the subject the more one is able to find thoughts about the subject."

Under the main heading of the psychological treatment of the sermon the following will be considered in their order,

order. (1) Psychology of its form, (2) Psychology of its thought and (3) Psychology of its time.

### 1. Psychology of its Form.

The many examples of oratory and public discourse extant, clearly indicate that throughout the history of public speech a well defined form or model has been proven by experience to be successful. A radical departure from the tried experience of the past will be a hazardous experiment. Then the sermon which is prepared for public utterance must conform to certain general laws that govern the large field of public speaking. A sermon then should be (a) simple and direct in style, (b) oratorical in tone, (c) homiletical in method and (d) logical in development.

a. The style of one's writing and speaking usually depends upon the temperament, intellectual ability and personality of the individual. Each great preacher had an inimitable style peculiar to his own powers. But the majority of preachers who can rise above the level of mediocrity only by great effort and persistency, must develop an easy, winning and effective style. The psychological value of clearness of style cannot be too highly emphasized. The "average" mind is not a logical affair, and it seldom exerts itself to the extent of following a process of reasoning much less to reason itself. Anything but clear language would only confuse the mind and not be effective. A style should be clear in the sense of being bright and constant like

a candle flame in the dark. Another effective aid to style is directness. A vigorous, direct to the point style has the advantage of being forceful. The listening mind enjoys the flattery of being recognized and dealt directly with. Directness and energy of style in a sermon eliminates "distance" between preacher and congregation. Other elements of style such as purity, elegance, variety, naturalness, etc., are worthy of cultivating, for to acquire these and incorporate them in the sermon makes it more attractive to all listeners and especially to the aesthetic type of mind.

b. A sermon, oratorical in tone has its effect upon the mind. Oratorical in tone implies a dignity of thought, the absence of the mean and trivial, a sincerity of purpose and a masterly grasp of the subject. The true oratorical tone inspires confidence in the hearer. True oratory moves men to action, inspires men with a sense that they are being lifted to a higher plane of life, thought and morality. The oratorical tone engenders respect, commands attention and invites consideration and sympathy for the subject that is treated or being presented. The writer of the sermon should never lose sight of the fact that it is to be "delivered" or preached in public.

c. That a sermon should be Homiletical in method cannot be overlooked. Nothing should be omitted either of method or form in constructing a sermon. Here, again we are confronted with about as many methods as we find preachers, when we examine the sermons of eminent preachers. Argumentation, where a proposition is logically expounded;

Association of ideas, where the theme is worked out by allowing one idea to suggest another; Contrast of thought, where the subject is presented in two lights, brilliant and dim, the corollary of this is comparison; Description; Narration; Exposition, matter of fact or hortatory and other methods may be used to advantage and success. But there are three fundamental factors that cannot be overlooked for effective sermon structure and they are the principles of (1) Unity, (2) Coherence, (3) Emphasis. These three principles are the only principles that adequately meet the demand of the listening mind. Every writer of a sermon should have indelibly inscribed upon the guide-posts of his mind these three, for they never lead astray, and always point to the goal.

1) The mind is ever seeking unity. Thinkers, metaphysicians, philosophers and scientists have ever been seeking this principle in their thought and theories. Unity is the psychological imperative of the mind. In the sermon this principle should be observed. The subject matter of the sermon is most effectively employed where it is grouped around a single thought or issue to enhance its purport and value. The principle of unity in composition is one of the greatest safeguards against confusion of thought and uncertainty of result.

2) The principle of coherence in a sermon is the cement of thought. It is a great aid to the mind in pointing out the connection, trend and development of the various phases of thought in the main and central theme. The use of

coherence avoids diversion of mental progress, needles digressions, or confusion and aids in giving momentum and acceleration to the development and treatment of the sermon's subject matter. Coherence adds a sense of security and stability to the execution of the sermon plan, and helps round out its form in technique and finish.

3) A sermon without emphasis is like the bosom of a dress-shirt without starch, it lacks character and is unfit for any occasion. A sermon should only be written or delivered when it has something important to say and likewise the important points in its development should have their proper emphasis. An effective method of emphasis is to lead up by a series of emphatic points or steps to a climax. There should be no question in the minds of the readers or hearers as to what they are going to take away as the dominant note. The climax of a sermon should be clearly indicated in the language of its composition and in the expression of its delivery. A shell is essential to a nut but it is the kernel that is the important thing. Likewise the mind is non-plussed unless it feels satisfied that it has grasped the essence of a sermon.

d. As a supplement to the psychology of the form of the sermon a logical or mechanical aid to effectiveness is attained by the use of the three divisions; (1) introduction, (2) Body, and (3) Conclusion. In general this structure has stood the test of time and experience.

1) The Introduction should arouse interest in the subject, and arrest the attention. The length of the intro-

duction should be determined by the nature of the theme. Some subjects uppermost in the minds of people do not need an introduction.

2) The body of the sermon should be given up to the development of the subject. The subject should determine the method to be employed in its treatment.

3) The conclusion should epitomize in summary the essence of the thought embodied in the sermon; state the issue at stake; and point out clearly the application. The sermon should have back-bone and a skeleton but it should be covered and quickened, as Phillips Brooks says, "with living flesh."

## 2. Psychology of its Thought.

Under this caption the following factors will be dealt with in their order:- a. Attention; b. Association; c; Suggestion, d; Memory. These of course do not cover the entire range of the activities of the mind, by any means, but are the principle ones brought into play in public speaking.

### a. Attention.

Attention will be considered from two angles; (1) Technical; (2) Practical in so far as they are related to the sermon in particular and to preaching in general. The irresistible tendency that one has in considering the different parts of subject is toward using the superlative. As an old saying goes "a chain is no stronger than its weakest link" seems to apply in this case. The fact is we never know the strongest link, but a strenuous test always reveals the weakest link. The factor of attention is one of vital

importance, and the success of preaching depends largely upon its power to gain attention and command it. The attention is a fleeting thing, it is ever rising and falling, ever becoming intense and slack. The thing that holds attention is that which interests us. The attention is easily diverted and turned from one thing to another. A speaker may have his hearers, "spellbound" or "hanging on his words" as it were, on a warm summer day with the doors and windows open, and should there suddenly appear a frightened cat with a yelping dog at its heels, well, people who make up an audience are as a rule human and have a common sense of humor - the result would be too obvious. Let us inquire into the reasons and attempted explanations that account for the behaviour of attention to a certain degree.

1) In dealing with Attention from a technical point of view, we will consider; (a) The nature of attention; (b) The kinds of attention and (c) the means of gaining attention.

a) In respect to the nature of attention there are a few things upon which the psychologists agree. James says that "no one can possibly attend continuously to an object that does not change." "The natural tendency of attention," says Helmholtz, "when left to itself, is to wander to new things" Titchener says, "When I am keenly attending, I am also keenly interested." Attention is regarded as one of the most common characteristics of consciousness, which Angell especially refers to "as an attitude of expectancy." "In

attending," observes Stout, "we successively focus various features, aspects and phases to our total object." Scott in his *Psychology of Public Speaking* indicates the accepted fact that attention is constantly undergoing recurrent periods of activity and rest.

One reason that the moving picture has such a firm hold on the peoples patronage is the rapid change of the object of attention. The subject is usually interesting and the attention is constantly revived and held by the expectation of some unusual or sensational situation or event. The subjects of the "movies" are for the most part emotional, to produce a laugh, a cry, or a "thrill." Then to satisfy the deathless curiosity in people "to know" educational films are provided. The picturesque and beautiful is not overlooked, as the most aesthetic in taste must be pleased. These fundamental elements that are found in the nature of attention and are recognized by the man who furnishes amusement, should be understood by the preacher and used to enhance his power. The sermon is his film. The sentence or clause as a unit of thought is, as it were, an exposure on the film that goes to make up the complete picture or impression on the mind. The preacher as well as the psychologist should know that the attention does not remain fixed on a single object more than from one to eight seconds determined by the simplicity or complexity of the object. In preaching the object is a thought in a sermon. The preacher must bear in mind, however, that his mission is not to amuse or entertain but to stimulate men to higher thinking and higher living. His

is a real task.

The general idea of the sermon has been handed to the preacher or the candidate for preaching as an effective instrument for his work. He accepts it usually with a vague assurance that it has "worked" in the past and without questioning further the reasons why it has succeeded, adopts it. The psychological aspect of the sermon is too often overlooked. The idea of the sermon like everything else in this age has freed itself from the tradition that it has to conform to any ancient form or method in order to be effective. Reverence for a thing because it is old is fast losing its hold on modern people. Today the religious center of interest is rapidly changing. The appeal to authority is being replaced by the appeal to experience. And as attention is largely dependent upon interest we must recognize this psychological fact in constructing the sermon. The preacher of the sermon in the course of preparation, should have in mind the kind of people he is to speak to, the methods and devices of structure and thought that arouse interest, the cause of attention, and also a sense of the proper use and not abuse of the instruments at his command. As it is to the preacher's advantage to make attention his friend it is well that he know the kinds of attention that the psychologists have classified.

b) Again we find that Psychologists agree, in the main, as to the kinds of attention. I shall take James' classification as it is comprehensive and is supported by others. He points out that Attention may be divided into kinds in various ways:-

- a. Objects of sense. (Sensorial attention.)
- b. Ideal or represented objects. (Intellectual attention.)
- c. Immediate (Interest in the thing itself.)
- d. Derived (where the thing is associated with something that interests us.)
- e. Passive, reflex, non-voluntary effortless.
- f. Active, voluntary.

It is obvious from this classification what kinds of attention the preacher should have in mind in the preparation of his sermon. The sermon deals with "ideas and represented objects" and is for that reason interested in arousing intellectual attention. Let the thought of the sermon always be cast in form that is ever within the grasp of the listener. And whether one can maintain an "immediate" or "derived" attention will depend upon the ability of the speaker to present ideas that are new and absorb the interest or whether the ideas call up objects of the mind that review former experiences which thus cause a digression of the attention. Others have classified these as "primary " and "secondary" attention.

Passive or spontaneous attention depends upon or is commanded by strong sensations owing to their intensity, quality, repetition, suddenness, movement, novelty, or congruity with the present contents of consciousness. "These strenuous sensational methods may be justified in arresting the attention of a congregation or focalizing it, but for a sermon to be effective it must enlist the "action" or voluntary attention. It takes effort to maintain voluntary attention.

The preacher should aim to reduce the effort of the hearer to pay attention to a minimum by all the technical and practical aids of expression. If ideas and thoughts are in a form that is readily grasped by the mind, an interest is aroused that more than compensates for the effort that is necessary for attention. James makes clear this point when he says that, "there is no such thing as voluntary attention sustained for more than a few seconds at a time. What is called sustained voluntary attention is the repetition of successive efforts which bring back the topic to the mind. The topic once brought back, if a congenial one, develops." But if a sermon presents ideas that rouse question, debate or conflict of interest in the mind, the attention fags and is diverted by a conscious feeling of effort. A negative attention is thereby generated as the mind cannot attend to but one thing at a time. The conflict aroused in the mind must be settled before the attention may be focused upon the thought of the sermon and theirs in a period of what might be called inattention the hearer perhaps loses the main thread of development or principle point. "The immediate effects of attention," according to James, "are to make us, (a) perceive; (b) conceive; (c) distinguish, (d) remember - better than otherwise we would - both more successive things and each thing more clearly. It also shortens (e) time reactions." From this we see the importance of attention, and we shall now consider a few of the means that are or may be used in gaining the attention.

c) Kennard in his book "Psychic Power in Preaching.," says that "He who possesses the art of awakening and holding the attention is a 'master of Assemblies.'" In speaking the direct avenue to the mind is through the ears, the speakers must make the hearer's five senses fairly tingle. Mark Antony said, "Lend me your ears," and when we think of awakening the attention we can almost see a picture of "rubbing the mind's eye." And according to the James-Lange theory of the emotions the stimulus, the instinctive muscular reaction to the stimulus, and the emotional feeling follows in proportion to the size and numbers of the muscles brought into play. The emotion is a by-product or an accompaniment of the kinesthetic sensational response. But in preaching there is one more thing needed, the mind must not only be made to see that there be simply an emotional response of feeling, there must be practical results; the will must be quickened into action. Consequently in considering the means of gaining and maintaining attention we shall consider, (1) the intellectual stimuli and (2) the emotional stimuli and (3) the volitional stimuli.

(1) Intellectual stimuli are the expository and argumentative methods. In order to establish a new position or a new opinion in the thought centers usually a pure setting forth of facts, implications, and theories answers. Some things can not be proved. These excursions of the mind, philosophical subjects that are too complex, intellectual speculations arouse interest, stimulate the mind and gain attention. This form of stimuli is only effective with certain

types of mind which form a very small minority of those who are interested in religion.

A common method of gaining intellectual attention and changing opinions as a result is by stating a proposition and setting about to prove it in a logical or popular manner. Men enjoy argument; it arouses the feelings and holds the attention. The preacher may not always prove his case to the satisfaction of his listener but his use of argument is a great provoker of thought. Then to refute the errors of the position that stands in the way of your truth oftentimes establishes the truth. Another very effective intellectual stimulus is that of indirect refutation; this includes the use of irony, sophistry, sarcasm and ridicule. This method is dangerous to your cause unless you have your hearers with you, but when your hearers are with you it is an invincible and formidable weapon. But to make ones case clear the will must be won over else that old saw holds - "man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." It is easier to prove the value of something and persuade a person to adopt it than it is to disprove an old accepted opinion and persuade one to give it up. And besides the novelty of the new is an object of interest and for that reason of the attention. There is ever engendered within the idiation centers an expectancy of the novelty, which is the health of intellectual attention. "Men have no eyes," says James, "but for those aspects of things which they have already been taught to discern -- Any one of us can notice a phenomenon after it has once been pointed out, which not one in ten

thousand could ever have discovered for himself. To keep the mind on the alert is to maintain attention.

(2) The greatest means of getting attention is through the feeling by the use of emotional stimuli. The three means we shall consider will be (a) Anticipation; (b) Rhythm; (c) Illustration.

(a) To engender anticipation in the minds of the hearers is half attention. To choose a subject is not a difficult matter but to work it in attractive and interesting form takes great skill. Here again there is danger. The temptation is to use sensationalism. There is a difference between producing an emotional response and a sensation. For instance one might take for his subject, "Evolution." It is barely possible that this would cause many to respond. If it was worded, "Can a man be religious and believe in Evolution?" it would have meaning for a few more. But if the subject was announced as, "Were we created in the image of God or did we descend from the monkeys?" the mob would respond and on every hand one would hear the remark, "I wonder what he'll say on that subject?" Another possibility comes to my mind; "Salvation." A title that would appeal to the feelings might be, "What must we do to be saved?" while a sensational, mob attracting title might be, "Is it possible that John D. Rockefeller's wealth can buy him a seat in Heaven?" The only motive that could attract a person to hear a sermon with a sensational title would be curiosity which is a low form of interest. A Chicago Unitarian minister once announced his subject as "Hogs and Men." Much to his surprise

his church was crowded. It did not occur to him that his subject as announced had created a sensation until one of his parishoners informed him of the fact. The subject dealt with the general subject, "were the packing interests of the city of more value to Chicago than righteous men?" or something to that effect. It is useless to say what this minister avoided thereafter.

Other elements in the Title or working of the subject are to keep in mind the things that minister to men's "needs, inclinations, appetites and desires." The subject should be "big" enough to suggest to the mind its adequacy to meet his need, etc.,. Such elements as attractiveness, brilliancy, expectancy, suspense, surprise and variety are effective in generating a feeling of anticipation which is only a generated interest in the preachers personality or what thought the sermon contains.

(b) Rhythm plays a great part in gaining the attention. Rhythm is universal. The round of years, the seasons, the lunar month and the moon's phases, the week, the day the night; our breathing, heart beat, walking, dancing, singing, and talking are all expressions of rhythm. Then in our work and play we allow our imagination to create a rhythm. Where there are repeated strokes or blows our sense of rhythm will have a tendency to divide the beats or strokes into measures of time and accent the second, third and fourth etc. The savage works himself up into an excited state by the war song, war dance that is accompanied by beating on a tom-tom. Music and dance have ever been handmaids of primitive religions

and priesthoods. Among children, music tingling rhymes and rhythm of movement produces pleasant emotional states. The modern evangelist knows the value of rhythm. The use of "revival" hymns the repetition of "catchy" phrases, the shouting of "Amen," the encouragement of all to sway their bodies to the swing of the music are among the devices employed by the evangelist. But I shall have more to say about the evangelist under a different topic. People take a keen aesthetic delight in rhythm of such a nature as music, dancing and poetry. Colors, forms, tones and similar sense stimuli are a source of pleasure and delight. Rhythm assists thinking in that "every accent of a rhythm is a spur to attention," which seems to act in a rhythmic manner, corresponding to the ebb and flow of a tide. And like the waves of the sea the attention may ripple or may be lashed into a storm by a rhythmic tempest of emotional speech. The literature that embodies the loftiest thoughts which we called "inspired" is more often in the form of poetry or if it is prose there is more or less of swing to it. Thus in creative efforts of thought rhythm aids the attention to deal with a topic to any great length. And if this is the case in "creative" thinking, how much more so is it valuable in gaining the attention of a hearer. Among some of the aids that rhythm contributes to enhance attention in preaching are Tonality and flexibility of voice; the use of Anglo-Saxon and descriptive words; and the rhetorical use of language. "A too constant tax upon the attention exhausts it and produces inattention." Thus avoid monotony of tone and accent. Strive

for a pleasing tone in the voice, also a range in pitch, and variety and color to tone. Even in prose the use of sentence rhythm is an aid to attention. But it is well to keep in mind that, "In prose or poetry, thought is the most important, form of expression secondary."

(c) And now we come to the most important aid to gain attention and that is the use of illustration. Under illustration we shall consider (1) the kinds of illustrations; (2) the sources of illustration and (3) the value of illustration.

I) A sermon devoid of illustrations would indeed be a lifeless thing. It would be the same as a brick house set up without mortar. In the first place it is doubtful whether such a sermon could ever maintain sufficient interest to arouse the attention. Let us examine a few of the kinds of illustration that would aid the effectiveness of thought and attention. For the sake of convenience we shall call them (i) the kinds that appeal to the intellectual emotions; (ii) the kinds that appeal to the aesthetic emotions; and (iii) the kinds that appeal to the "heart" emotions.

1. The illustrations that appeal to the intellectual emotions are those drawn from history, invention and science. The facts of history, the products of invention and the findings of science seem to fortify the mind with a sense of satisfaction because of their tangible and concrete character. These furnish the mind a fund of irrefutable knowledge that acts as a secure background and basis for holding certain opinions and theories. The use of this kind of illustration in the sermon

serves as a firm ground or anchorage for its thought and inspires in the hearers or readers of the sermon the conviction that it rests on "authority".

ii. The illustrations that appeal to the aesthetic emotions are those based on Art and Literature, especially "inspired" literature such as poetry and the Scriptures. The sense of beauty, harmony, proportion, rhythm, balance and the like is pleased and satisfied.

I have separated the intellectual and aesthetic emotions from the deeper and heart emotions on a ground that is suggested by the James-Lange theory of emotions. The emotions that I have called the intellectual and aesthetic are not preceded by as violent organic or muscular activity as is the fact in the case of the heart or deeper emotions. This, however, does not in the least diminish their importance, and the sermon to be complete and effective should recognize and use materials that appeal to the intellectual and aesthetic sense as well as the pure feeling.

iii. The greatest results are obtained by reaching the deeper and heart emotions. The attention is best secured and maintained by recognizing and appealing to the "feelings", for anything that gives pleasure or pain is ever a seat of interest. The means whereby one may gain access to the deeper feelings is through the imagination. In our everyday experience we come into contact with persons, objects, situations and events that ever rouse the emotions and cause us to take certain courses of action. If a preacher is able to create imaginative situations, objects, personalities and the like and present

them to the mind in the form of mental images or "imagery" the result is better, for it is in his power to select the material with which to stimulate and stir the feelings of his hearers. "Emotions roused by the imagination call up situations to the mind." To satisfy the senses, whether they be deceived or not, is more effective in obtaining results than to satisfy the reason. The reason may give assent while the emotions must have an outlet in action; one deals in abstractions the other deals more with the concrete objects of sense. Emotion is a byproduct of activity and if the thought of the sermon can sufficiently appeal to the imagination to point out the emotional satisfaction that results from a definite course of action, then the hearer will adopt that course of action.

Persons are constituted differently as to the keenness of their senses and the extent that their imaginations are affected. According to W. D. Scott in his "Psychology of Public Speaking", "Descriptions reflect mental imagery and we appreciate the mental image that is most vivid to us. Certain forms of mental imagery give us pleasure." But it is more than likely that we derive the greatest pleasure from the imagery that corresponds to the object of our keenest sense. It would be useless to enlarge upon the beauty of a landscape to a blind person or to speak about the quality of a singers' voice to a deaf person. Seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting etc., are largely the work of the imagination. We see a pillow or a bit of fur and we say it "looks" soft; we smell the cooking steak and our mouth "waters" in anticipation of the taste and the delight it will give. The emotion has an object and that object may be

mental or physical. The preacher is concerned with the mental object or imagery as it is called. The psychologist has classified imagery into several classes. I shall state them in what seems to be their rank in importance: Visual imagery, Auditory imagery, Motor imagery, Olfactory imagery, Thermal imagery, Tactile imagery, and Gustatory imagery. The skill with which the preacher incorporates the various kinds of imagery into the thought of his sermon, just to that extent will he be successful in producing or getting results.

Among the heart or deeper emotions are; dread, anger, hatred, love, sympathy, pity, expectation, disappointment, joy, and sorrow. These are all preceded by muscular attitudes or bodily symptoms which are the direct cause of the emotion and which are likewise preceded by a physical or mental object. Herbert Spencer observed that "The violence of the physical expression is in proportion to the intensity of the emotion." Fear or dread is one of the most common and universal of emotions. I recall an experience that may throw light upon this point. It was the experience of an earthquake. Four or five friends and myself were having a social time together and had spread out some pie and fruit in order to end up the evening. Just as we had seated ourselves quietly, the building began to rock violently and creak and groan audibly. As the building we were in was rather a "rickety" affair, the thought occurred to me that it was some of my acquaintances springing a little joke on us, and I made a remark to that effect. A brief silence followed, during which my heart began to beat faster; I held my breath, the muscles of my scalp began to become tense. By

this time we were all upon our feet making for the door. The fact that we realized that it was an earthquake added an intensity to the sensation. Across the street we heard screams of women and we were just in time to see a dance party make a hasty, exciting exit and descend from the second story. By this time, we were all so "Excited" (perhaps frightened) that we completely forgot all about what we were doing and went out to calm ourselves down, satisfy our curiosity and also have the satisfaction of knowing that someone else was in the same state of mind. It was over two hours before our minds turned to the "feed" we had prepared earlier in the evening. The psychologist analyzes this as follows:- perception of the earthquake (an intellectual and not an emotional act); instinctive changes in the action of the heart, lungs, and the glands and muscles generally; finally the mental state known as emotion - fear. People are often heard to say, after escaping some very imminent danger, such as fleeing from a burning building, or being relieved of the strain of gazing down the muzzles of a pair of "six-shooters", "I didn't feel afraid until it was all over." "Upon the sudden appearance of danger", says Darwin. Darwin, "our primitive ancestors would have been destroyed unless they had closed their eyes suddenly to keep out hurtful objects; held their breath preparatory to sudden exertion; crouched to avoid the attack, and unless they had made necessary movements of escape." A corollary to this theory is that the emotion depends upon the size and number of muscles affected. When small muscles are set in motion, a light emotion follows. A smile gives us pleasure. A heavy or deep emotion is the

result of the play of the larger muscles of the body, when the whole frame seems to writhe and become tense.

There is a limit to the extent that these "emotional states" can endure in one. Suppressed sorrow is oftentimes very disastrous, ending in drink or insanity. The emotion must have its outlet in some form of activity. For some it is to have a "good cry"; others to write a poem; and still others to lose themselves in their work. These activities bring to an end bodily actions that might endure indefinitely, even to disaster. At the expense of seeming too personal I shall illustrate again from my own experience. On receiving the telegram informing me of the sudden death of my brother; the nervous and bodily reaction quite overwhelmed me. So set were my jaws that I could scarcely speak, and my knees were so "weak", I could hardly walk. I withdrew to my room and had a "good cry". But this was not sufficient: I took long walks in the woods; applied myself vigorously to various activities, and wrote many letters. Thus a strain that seemed unendurable was relaxed and there came a reaction of relief.

"The majority of the great orators, preachers, and actors", W. D. Scott observes, "owe their greatness to the fact that they felt their emotions." It is not always true that they must be felt in order to be imparted to others, but they must at least be intellectually understood and "acted" out truly. The preacher's expression of emotion is in his expression of imagery, his gesture and his tone of voice. It is well to bear in mind in the preparation of the thought and the delivery of the sermon that the quality, quantity, and intensity of

gesture, facial, bodily, and vocal, and thought expression be in proportion to the degree of emotional response that is desired. In dealing with the emotions, whether by written or spoken word, there is a tendency to overdo; this is disastrous. It shifts the attention from the topic at hand to the pleasure and amusement afforded by the obvious violation of the sense of proportion that accompanies "tearing a passion to tatters." "To fake a deep emotion," says W. D. Scott, "is ridiculous. A tremulo for instance is not in proportion to a light emotion.- Tremulo attends only the emotion caused by the greatest muscular or organic disturbance or activity.- To gesture with the whole body should only accompany a feeling that moves the whole body - which gives rise to a high and great emotional state."

It is through the emotions that we are able to produce our greatest practical results, and it is by the avenue of the imagination that we gain access to the mind and its emotional tendency. Imagery is a great aid in gaining the attention because it touches those interests that are most vital. The preacher should make friends with the emotional side of man's nature and should both be familiar with all the roads that lead to it, and know the proper pace to drive over these roads. There is one thing to be said about an audience that is neither made to laugh nor cry, and that is that one may create in the people a feeling of emotion that is not agreeable enough to make them laugh, and not sad enough to make them cry, and yet strong enough to make them seek an emotional outlet in some more wholesome form of activity. And if the thought of the sermon outlines a program of activity

that is constructive, results are inevitable. To laugh or cry is in themselves frequently a sufficient outlet for the emotions. An audience that is moved to laughter and tears usually finds sufficient satisfaction in these that the persons making up the audience are not moved to do anything more substantial.

II). The sources of illustration are books, (which cover the fields of art, science, history, romance, poetry, etc., both religious and secular); observation of nature and human life; experience, and the creative imagination. The use of book illustration lends an authoritative air to the sermon and is perhaps the most available source. Illustrations from nature and human life add vigor to a sermon. Those taken from actual experience are highly effective and add vitality to thought. They contain an element of the personal which always interests and holds the attention. The creative imagination is probably the most desirable source to draw from. Not all are in possession of this source. The creative imagination takes the materials at hand and weaves them into a new form. The high colored incidents of several events are appropriated by the creative imagination and are combined or fused into one event that is richer and more interesting and on that account enlists the attention. The imitative imagination can call to mind the images that are of common experience but it takes the creative imagination to take the common elements of experience and sensation and work them over into new sensations, thoughts, or experiences. While the creative imagination is a possession of genius, it is also the possession of the poet, inventor, prophet, scientist, philosopher, artist, orator, and preacher.

The great poems, dramas, statues, monuments of architecture, inventions, theories of science, philosophies, religions, orations, etc., are the product of the creative imagination. The creative imagination may be made one of the preacher's great sources of power. With this, he has the "open sesame" to the inner life, feelings, and interests of men.

III) As the little candle that is spoken of in the Merchant of Venice throws its beam far and wide so also does a simple illustration throw a great deal of light upon what might otherwise be a dark subject. A simple illustration often has power to explain more in one breath than could be expressed in a river of ink poured out in a technical book. Another use of illustration is that of a short-cut to a conclusion. An illustration will point out the way for the mind where a line of argument will weigh it down. The illustration renders the subject more impressive. Most illustrations because of their psychological and emotional appeal serve as a new hook in one's mental wardrobe upon which to hang the new thoughts as they are developed.

(3). The volitional stimuli of attention are more subjective and therefore more difficult to set forth in concrete form. To engender the "ought" in a man's conscience is one of the great tasks of a sermon. The moral ought in man is one of the greatest powers for righteous action. The volitional stimulus is usually the culmination of the thought of the sermon. After the subject or topic of the sermon has been clearly set forth, and while the attention is at the crest of the wave at high tide that is the time to launch the craft

of your thought. The most effective forms of thought that appeal to the will and stimulate it to action are the exhortation in the case where conviction is wanted; persuasion in the case of change of opinion; challenge in the case of a difficult task to be undertaken; and command in the case where immediate action is needed. To enlist the will as part of a sermon's achievement is as it were placing the key-stone in the arch. If the preacher is successful in quickening the minds of his hearers into taking an imaginative panorama of the actual task to be performed, the will is already half won over; it only needs a final call to action.

(2). A practical consideration will be simply to mention the names of a few of the most successful speakers and preachers with a short quotation from the more recent ones to point out a few of the elements of their power. I am compelled to say at the outset that the power of the men who have impressed their thought upon the ears of the world was due to the fact that they drew the essence of what they had to say out of their own experience and inner life. Their sermons or discourses reflected the keen intellect, the deep feelings, or the dominant will of a great personality.

Among those who typify these qualities, I shall mention only a few. It is only necessary to name such men as Demosthenese, Cicero, Jesus, Paul, Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, Theodore Parker, William Ellery Channing, in order to suggest the power that thought reflected from the lives of great souls has in commanding the attention not only of the people of their own time but also those of succeeding generations.

Among the eminent preachers of the last hundred years, I have chosen F. W. Robertson, Phillips Brooks, Henry Ward Beecher, Samuel M. Crothers, and John Haynes Holmes, each an artist and each a master of preaching, in order to get a glimpse at close range of their method of gaining attention in their introductory sentences.

#### Frederick W. Robertson.

Great preaching is the reflection of noble manhood. Robertson was a great preacher. While he suffered from the ecclesiastical ostracism at the hands of his co-ministers, we are sure that such was not the case with his congregation. There is every evidence from the generous spirit of his sermons and the clearness and simplicity of his style that rich and poor, learned and untutored heard him with sympathy and attention. At the outset of his sermon, *The Message of the Church to Men of Wealth*, with Samuel XXV. 10, 11, as his text, he says, "I have selected this passage for our subject this evening, because it is one of the earliest cases recorded in the Bible in which the interests of the employer and the employed, the man of wealth and the man of work, stood or seemed to stand, in antagonism to each other." Textual preaching was in vogue in his time, of which he was a master.

#### Phillips Brooks.

In Phillips Brooks we have an example of a man on this side of the Atlantic who was not dominated and dwarfed by the ecclesiastical side of religion, such as we found in the person of Robertson in England. Both were interested in ministering to the human heart and needs. In his sermon on

"The Nearness of God" with Acts xvii, 27 as the text, he says at the outset, "The surprise of life always comes in finding how we have missed the things which have lain nearest to us; how we have gone far away to seek that which was close by our side all the time." The simplicity directness, clearness, truth and wisdom voiced in the thought of these few words; the whomesomeness and vitality of his physical and mental being; supplemented by his richness of voice and grace of gesture could not help but inspire confidence, interest and attention.

Henry Ward Beecher.

That he is recognized as "one of the most remarkable pulpit orators of the 19th century" can not be far from the fact. I shall quote here a portion of what he has to say on "Oratory." "In regard to the training of the orator, it should begin in boyhood, and should be part and parcel of the lessons of the school. Grace; posture, force of manner, the training of the eye, that it may look at men and pierce them, and smile upon them, and bring summer to them, and call down storms and winters upon them; the development of the hand, that it may wield the septer, or beckon with sweet persuasions; these things do not come artificially; they belong to man. -- To make men patriots, to make men Christians, to make men the sons of God, let all the doors of heaven be opened, and let God drop down charmed gifts, --winged imagination, all-perceiving reason, and all-guiding reason. Whatever there is that can make man wiser and better -- let it descend upon the head of him who has consecrated himself to the work of mankind and who has made himself an orator for man's sake and for God's sake."

Samuel M. Crothers.

In Dr. Crothers we have the embodiment of the scholar, keen intellect, a remarkable sense of humor and proportion, a sympathetic wisdom and a catholicity of spirit. He is a master of the "unusual" which inevitably arouses interest and attention. His sermon on Optimism, Pessimism and Courage is prefaced by a lengthy quotation from the Old and New Testament and opens his sermon as follows.-- "From the beginning the optimist and pessimist have confronted one another. If two men were cast upon an island, the first question would be; What kind of land is this, and how is it fitted for habitation? Our knowledge of human nature would hardly lead us to expect that the two men would agree in their judgments. Their actual experience might be the same, but their temperaments would lead them to different and perhaps contradictory interpretations of the facts." Only a man of wood or stone would fail to be interested in what was said or what is to follow.

John Haynes Holmes.

I must admit that in the person of John Haynes Holmes, I behold a modern prophet, a vigorous thinker and a man of deep-seated convictions. I have chosen his sermon on Social Salvation: A New Gospel for a new Age; Text 1 Corinthians, xii, 26; which he opens as follows,-- "Last Sunday morning I spoke to you from this pulpit upon the present condition of Catholicism and Protestantism, declaring that the Catholic Church is already dead, and the Protestant Church is rapidly dying, and that we are <sup>to face</sup> face in this age with the

dawning of a new religion, which is destined to supercede them both." Here is thought that quivers with vitality, grips in interest, and mastery of this preacher's delivery makes attention a task of minimum effort.

There are many other examples of men who have displayed genius and power in oratory and preaching that I might draw from to good purpose but my aim of οὐ πολλά ἀλλὰ πολύ, I think has been adequately met.

#### b. Association.

James says in his Psychology that "It is things, not ideas which are associated in the mind. We ought to talk of the association of objects, not the association of ideas." If this is true, it is obvious that the proper use of imagery is the most effective means of association. The value of observing this psychological fact is that by recognizing certain thoughts and conceptions as being dominant in the mind, one can better adapt his thought to meet this condition. The thought that is presented to the mind tends to awaken its most recent as well as its most habitual associations. The mind does not act logically, but more by habit and content. If a thought is presented pictorially and has a pleasing emotional tone it will very likely find its counter-part in the mind of the hearer, because of its similarity or it may call up the opposite because of the novelty of contrast. The psychologist tells us that mental operations consist of images of sensation associated together. One might present the concept "Our Father," what does that call up in the mind? For one there might come before his

mind a mental picture of the Lord's prayer, to another who perhaps never heard the Lord's prayer might think of a drunken sot who stumbled into an ill-kept household, another the picture of a warm affectionate parent who would soon return to cheer the fireside, another would perhaps picture the casket that bore away one who was once very dear, and countless other possibilities are within the range of probability and fact.

There can be no doubt but that thought aimed to call up pleasing associations is an aid to attention and even volitional activity. One may present a picture of the past and rouse the memory; or stimulate expectation by prophecy. The easiest method of association is simply to catalog pictures with no reference to time which is in a sense the free play of fancy. This cannot be indulged in profitably by the preacher because it has a tendency to entertain rather than stimulate one to serious activity. In presenting images of things alient that bear upon the present situation in the use of epigram and the flush statement of old opinions, one has ample means of modifying other men's beliefs, opinions and process of reasoning. To make reference in one's thought to those high qualities of character that are found in most men's personality or to awaken the emotions, the associations these call up usually produce sensations that are pleasant and "a reward in themselves." "Volition is the association of ideas of muscular motion with the ideas of those pleasures which the motion produces." To be able to connote the association that is desired a preacher has a tremendous lever whereby

he can produce practical results.

### c. Suggestion.

The nature of suggestion and its value as an aid to public speaking has only recently come to light. And it seems eminently fitting that in dealing with the general theme of the "Psychology of Preaching" reference should be made to this new development. We shall then consider, 1) the kinds of suggestion that the preacher may use; and 2) How to render a congregation suggestible.

1) We are not concerned why the mind acts as it does or just what a suggestion is so much as we are with how it acts. The mind may accept new ideas or change its opinions by a process of reasoning, logic, proof, or examination of evidence but a suggestion is, according to William Walker Atkinson, where an "impression is made upon, or an idea is induced in the mind by other methods."

A suggestion is made up of either (a) an idea that is true to be impressed or imposed upon the mind; or (b) a course of action to be adopted, something to be done. In order for the suggestion to be effective the mind must be freed from all diverting opinions or ideas or thoughts and present itself as a photographic negative; the attention must be focused and centered; then the suggestion acts as an exposure. If another idea happens to "bob up" then there is a "double exposure" and one cancels the other with a negative result. Another method is to catch the mind when it is "unoccupied" or off its guard; then being blank it is ready for an exposure. But the suggestion must be of

such a nature that it does not bring into play the "instinctive resistance if the will" or involve an opinion, idea or command a course of action that would move one contrary to the "dictates of conscience."

There are three kinds of suggestion that a speaker may use very effectively. Suggestion of (a) Authority; (b) Association; and (c) Repitition.

a) Suggestion of authority is one of the most effective kinds. If a person is thought of as learned or well informed and reliable, it gives him a certain prestage. The hearer will accept most that he has to say without careful criticism. Oftimes one may inspire this by certain references to those who are recognized as reliable authorities and, thus fortified, launch their suggestion with success. A suggestion to the mind is like a pill to the body, it is taken without tasting or examination and washed down with the waters of uncritical faith.

b) Suggestion by association is very common. A person has a stock of mental images and certain courses of action mapped out in his mind and it is very easy to call these up by a simple word or suggestion. This is a dangerous kind to use as the image called up may absorb the hearers attention and perhaps cancel the suggestion that has been offered. We speak of a person's "habit of mind" and that is one of the things that is meant by it. A certain suggestion starts the mind off on a different course.

c) Suggestion by repitition is very effective. Perhaps it is an idea or thought or course of action the preacher

wishes adopted by his hearers. It may be that the first presentation of it will cause a volitional resistance in the mind -- but amplification of the thought and a constant repetition of it in different form will sooner or later break down the resistance of the will and it will be taken up in place of the former thought, opinion, etc., held by the mind. Constant repetition has a rhythmic effect and will invite imitation. Once this is attained the suggestion will go on automatically till it completes its work.

2) There are several ways of making hearers suggestible. But the congregation which is a special group of hearers is only open to limited methods. For instance, one of the methods that is very successful in accomplishing this but for obvious reasons cannot be used by the preacher is applause. Among those methods that he may use are (a) Introduction; (b) the use of common terms; and (c) Ritual.

a) A congregation is usually a very conservative group and a stranger would have difficulty of even gaining a hearing much less making an impression by his words. But let him be preceded by letters of introduction or be introduced by some influential member of the group, then the congregation will immediately assume a "welcome frame of mind." This reference or introduction gives one an added sense of authority that has its "psychological" effect.

b) Another very effective means of making a group suggestible is the use of common and familiar terms. The use of religious and moral terms such as, truth, righteous-

ness, liberal, free-spirit, justice, love with truthfulness and skill will gain the common ear and prepare it for the new thoughts and ideas it is to hear. The names of national heroes and world characters and especially the names of those who are well known in the "household of faith," prove worthy means in gaining the desired attention for introducing new suggestions.

c) A very practical means of unifying a congregation is the use of the ritual service. Hymns, responsive reading, prayer, symbolic observances and other common acts are powerful instruments in crystalizing a congregation into a sympathetic unity. The evangelist knows this and uses this means to the best advantage.

#### d. Memory.

Our mind and senses are continually bombarded by new thoughts, ideas, sensations and experiences.. We think of memory as the ability to retain what we see, hear, feel and experience and to recall what has been sensed at a future occasion. Some minds have concrete memories, the recalling of a face, thought, event or any previous experience there comes with the recollection its relation in time and space. Other minds seem to retain much that enters them but upon recalling experiences there comes with them a sense of uncertainty that recognizes what has been recalled as something that happened in the past but more than that is clouded in a mist or fog. Another type of memory that is not uncommon is the kind that mingles with memory the activity of a fanciful imagination that does not discriminate sharply between what

has been experienced and what has been imagined. Sooner or later persons with this type of memory will adopt what they acquire in retold experiences or what comes as "second-handed" experience and by constant recalling and relating they become unable to distinguish between their own actual experience and these that they have appropriated.

Now, there seem to be two very essential things that a preacher should "remember" when he is preparing his sermon and they are (1) The rate of forgetting; and (2) The necessity of aiding the memory of different kinds of minds.

1) A discouraging fact that a preacher must face is that his hearers will have forgotten over half of what he was saying within ten minutes after his concluding remarks. It is well to make friends with this fact and turn it to some purpose. We are indebted to Prof. Ebbinghaus, of Germany, for his careful research in this field and the results he has given. "According to Prof. Ebbinghaus figures, after twenty minutes I shall forget 40% of my present experience; after thirty minutes, 50% of it; after two days, 72% of it and after thirty days, 80% of it. The figures are not to be taken as absolute in so far as they express the fact of an initial rapid fading, followed by a progressively slower fading of memory." With this in mind we can readily see the great importance of repetition and clear statement of thought as an aid to the memory. For a thought or idea that is imperfectly or vaguely expressed only causes a "blur" on the mind and is already half-forgotten as soon as it is expressed.

2) A very important factor to be taken into consideration in reference to memory is the fact that thought must be cast in certain form, images or illustrated in such a way that it will fit into the different types of minds. Persons who are "visually minded" must have thought presented to their "mind's eye" in the form of a visual image in order for it to be related in their mind and retained. One's thought must suggest color, sound and movement, it must be expressed in a variety of ways and images to find its welcome in the many different minds. The use of epigram, figure, Anglo-Saxon words are great aids to the memory.

### 3. Psychology of its Time.

We shall consider the psychology of time in the light of value (a) and conservation. (b)

a. Anyone who is sensitive to the pulse-beat of our modern life realizes the high rate of speed and the nervous tension which it maintains. We cannot go into the question of its moral expediency but we must recognize the fact and meet it. We are impressed more and more that it is quality and not quantity that is the spirit of the age, especially when it comes to religious matters. On every hand the "speeding-up" process is going on, a premium is put on the man that can produce the greatest amount in the least time in the industrial world; so in the religious realm that man who is able to "boil down" his thought into a concentrated essence may expect to be justified with hearers. To meet the need of today I would say that a preacher's thought should be cast in a mould of twenty minutes of gold rather

than be thinned with a questionable alloy of an added forty minutes of brass.

b. Because time is valuable it should be economized and, in this case especially, for a psychological reason. The mind cannot maintain an effective attitude of attention for more than thirty minutes without lagging or fatigue. While we admit that most people are very patient and have more or less endurance, still we know that energy consumed for one thing cannot be expended for another. Listening to sermons, while it is very commendable, is not the highest form of religious action. It is the action that the sermon aims to stimulate that is the main thing. If this is so, then it is well to conserve the energy of one's hearers that they may heed the call to higher activity and life and go forth with the feeling that they have something to remember and do. To have one's pews filled is no sign that a preacher is succeeding. One may entertain a crowd with brilliant speech for an hour or so but with their sense of novelty satisfied, all the conditions of their mind and soul met, degeneration of moral and religious powers set in. Too often the emotions are made to run along the nerve fibers and "explode" in the muscles thus furnishing the mind a pseudo sense of satisfaction instead of a real satisfaction that the actual performance of such acts would give. The aim is to make people "doers" of the word and not merely "hearers." The Liberal Christians spend perhaps as little time in churches listening to sermons as any other set of religious persons one might mention, and while they are few in number their religion is so

Expressed in the action of their lives that the fruit of their efforts often outweighs the combined effort of the church bodies whose emphasis is laid upon the "emotional" side. Unless the congregation is moved to do something worthy as a result of the sermon, its effect will be degenerating. A distinction should be made between "holding" opinions and doing something to apply them. The man who "does things" in the world is willing to listen to a preacher if he has something to say and "says" it.

### III. THE CONGREGATION.

The congregation is one of the primary things that a preacher must take into consideration. He should know how it is constituted psychologically. We shall, therefore, consider the congregation from the two angles of A. the Psychology of it's kind, and B, the Psychology of its size.

A. We shall deal (1) In general; and (2) in particular with the kinds of Congregations. A congregation is to be understood in this general treatment, as a group of individuals who form a highly organized and specialized "crowd." The term "crowd" will be used in the psychological sense. A crowd, as a group of people, is made up of individuals who may neither have the same interests or opinions and may therefore be said to be an unconscious body. At the presence of a recognized "leader" the heterogeneous group of individuals begin to unify itself into a ~~heterogeneous~~ "crowd," and in the

case of the church, we have the congregation. A congregation, as a body of listeners, does not reason; but can be moved to concerted action and even immediate action. A common crowd usually acts upon the suggestion that conforms to the lowest common denominator of the opinions held by the individuals making up the crowd and whatever action results is justified in the minds of the individuals as being from a lofty moral motive. The shortest road to the heart of a congregation is not by expressing opinions that appeal to the intellect, for too often they find no common ground. Persons differ and vary greatly in intellectual power and in their range of opinions, but their feelings are much the same; thus an appeal to the emotions always produces results.

2. In particular I would say that a congregation is more receptive than an average gathering, in that the individuals that make up the group come to church with a favorable attitude. There are two types of congregations that form a contrast and they are the Orthodox Evangelical revival crowd and the congregation of a Liberal Church. In the former we have the "emotional" excess, and the people are moved to immediate action. "It is easy to yield in a crowd." But in the latter there is a marked presence of the rational and intellectual factors and the result here obtained is more the permanent effect of reflective action.

There are certain elements in a congregation that are not present in the ordinary audience. It is easier to maintain "ones" individuality in a church. The members of a

congregation grow to feel that they are a permanent fixture, because of the habit of regular attendance and occupying regular seats. Then the congregation is a trained crowd. It does not show any outward sign of response. In speaking to the ordinary audience the speaker is immediately aware of the effect that his words are producing; but the preacher oftentimes has to labor against unseen odds and has no visible means of knowing whether his words are meeting favor or disapproval. In the average public gathering, known as a popular audience, there is manifestly a greater freedom displayed by both speaker and hearer than in a congregation. The elements of applause, laughter, and other signs of approval and even of objection are present in most assemblies, but the congregation is very undemonstrative. The preacher has a more subtle check upon what he has to say than the "freelance," but this does not necessarily make his message less effective. For a congregation is more critical than an audience and is more inclined to heed the thoughts of a preacher than the manner or means whereby he presents them. Of course, a congregation responds to effective delivery, for under favorable circumstances a congregation's attention endurance is not so heavily strained and thus less subject to fatigue.

There is a feeling among the majority of those who make up the congregation that the effort to meet the Sunday morning appointment of church going should be rewarded by the able delivery of a good sermon. In this sense the congregation differs from most assemblies, in that it expects

something good. It is very degenerating for a congregation to sit in silence Sunday after Sunday, and listen to poor preaching, out of a pure sense of duty, but slowly and surely its members drop out one by one. And owing to the fact that it is hard to break a habit, it is very doubtful whether or not the one who has made the break and had the enjoyment of the sense of freedom, that attends the lightening of responsibility, will ever assume the church-going habit again.

B. Size has a great deal to do with a congregation where "size" counts for so much as it seems to in America. There are other psychological reasons why size counts for so much. Let us examine how size affects the congregation in relation to (1) its sense of power and activity; (2) its influence upon the individual, and (3) its efficiency that comes with its sense of "smallness."

1. When a congregation becomes welded into a homogenous group there is an added strength given to it by the sense of cooperation of a number of groups that are organized for the same purposes and ideals. Every congregation has, as it were, a sense of power and strength coming from concerted action. "United we stand, divided we fall" seems to be the common principle that pervades all assemblies for the propagation of a common ideal.

2. A person feels differently when he is sitting in a church among the member of his own congregation and the strangers who chance in. He not only feels differently, but he thinks differently; he acts differently; and his manner is different from his usual week-day customs. Psychologically

persons are at their best at a church service, usually a person is attired in his or her "new" or "Sunday" suit; this has its effect. If the person is a leader in the community, his actions are governed in a degree by the fact that many eyes are looking his way, and hence he must conduct himself as an example. Others by the instinct of imitation fall into an attitude of good behaviour and strive to put on genial appearances. The church itself by the very nature of what it stands for in the estimation of the church members and of the community at large has its effect upon the person. An individual in a congregation will sanction more and less from a preacher than he would in private conversation; more in the sense that the preacher may resort to almost extravagant expression in an effort to exalt and inspire his hearers to nobility of character and praiseworthy deeds; but less when the preacher invades the realm of the private opinions of his hearers. If this latter procedure is resorted to by a preacher, it not only has a tendency to alienate his hearers but also to divert their attention from the main purpose of his thought and sermon.

3. A small congregation has its advantages and disadvantages. There is a certain enthusiasm that comes with mere numbers. But it takes more than numbers to accomplish results. Gideon with his three hundred picked men did that which he would not have dared to attempt with his great army. So, today in the modern Liberal church, with a congregation of "picked" men and women, the preacher must play the part of a modern Gideon. A mutual respect, regard and a

closer fellowship is possible between the small congregation and preacher. There is a certain spiritual heroism in the small congregation that the preacher may appeal to; what it lacks in "size" and numbers it makes up for in its sterling character and the work that justifies its great faith. The small congregation lends itself to "team-work," cooperation, harmony and "familiness" that is so essential to the accomplishment of real religious work.

#### 1111. THE PREACHER.

The preacher is a very important factor in preaching for it is about him that all its action is centered. We shall glance at him through our psychological spectacles in the light of his (A) Equipment; and (B) Personality.

A. Psychology of His equipment. A preacher should be preeminently equipped with (1) Natural gifts; (2) Spiritual power; (3) Mental power; and (4) Skill.

1. A preacher fills a very important place in society, and if he is to make that the most important place depends upon the possession of certain natural gifts. A man may be schooled, and trained in technic but unless he is endowed with certain natural gifts he will be merely a doer of ecclesiastical chores instead of an inspirer and leader of men; A preacher should have a healthy mind and body, a passion for truth and righteousness and a natural desire to serve in the highest and most religious sense.

2. A preacher should have spiritual power, for

his concern is with those vital and dynamic realities that fortify the soul of man and endow him with priceless treasures that cannot be measured by space and time. A preacher with spiritual power knows the value of the unseen realities and if he has this, he will be sought out by men and women hungry for the "bread of life."

3. Mental power is the preacher's handmaid.

Cicero said that the orator ought to know everything. This should be as nearly true of the modern preacher knowledge enhances mental power. Experience, travel, reading observation and meeting people in all walks of life furnish a fund of useful material to equip one's mental faculties. But mental power is more than the ability to find and know facts; it is that finer faculty of fusing knowledge into wisdom. Mental power is the ability to turn knowledge into food for daily living. Men seek the fountain of wisdom for advice.

4. A preacher should have skill. Skill in (a) preparation and (b) delivery.

a. When a preacher selects a subject or a subject selects him, he has a task on his hands. The preacher should be sensitive to life, its needs and the food of valuable material that may flow into his mind through his experience, but the effectiveness of his subject will depend upon his skill to choose the appropriate material and arrange it in proper order. Broadus says that "There must be a knowledge of religious truth, and of such things as throw light upon it; knowledge of human nature in its relations to religious ideals, and of human life in its actual conditions around us."

Thus a preacher must have the skill to relate his thought to the mental needs of his congregation.

b. Not only should a preacher have skill to prepare his thought but also the skill to deliver it. Gesture is a great psychological aid to delivery for it speaks a universal language of signs. We shall consider the gesture of (1) body; (2) eye; (3) hand; and (4) voice.

1) The attitude of the body may inspire one with confidence or doubt, it furnishes the first general impression. Those in the audience always see the speaker before they hear him. It is necessary to animate the body with a commanding presence and cultivate a pleasing "pulpit" manner and a graceful movement of body. The aesthetic sense satisfied or quickened is a potential factor in enlisting the attention and sympathy of a congregation. The body at ease and moving in "curves" is more pleasing to the eye than awkward and angular movements. It is not necessary for a preacher to go through a series of gymnastic exercises in the pulpit, it not only weakens the purpose of gesture but causes a fatigue in the hearers owing to a suppressed imitative action in the muscles of the hearer which release a series corresponding or sympathetic sensations.

2) "The eye is the window of the soul." There is nothing that quickens an emotional or direct response from an audience more than the direct look of eye. A preacher's steady eye will add more force to delivery than any other means at his command. As it is not customary for a congregation to demonstrate its approval or dislike, the preacher

may read this in the expressions on the faces of his auditors. For when we say eye we also mean the facial expression that attends the emotion that causes it; for every "look out of the eye" is caused by the action and reaction of all the muscles of the face. A "look" oftentimes conveys more meaning than many words. This does not mean that one must "make faces" at his auditors, but it does mean that it is possible to reflect the intelligence and consciousness of one's thought in the facial expression. The "manuscript" preacher cuts the power of his delivery in half by "gluing" his eyes to the desk. It is through the medium of the eye, more than anything else that the members of the congregation are made to realize that the preacher is actually talking to them and not delivering a monologue or a soliloquy.

3) The hand makes two kinds of gesture, declamatory and descriptive. The tendency of most preachers is either to work their arm up and down as though it were a pump-handle or "fan the air" as though their arms were those of a windmill. A gesture should be used to emphasize the thought or suggest meaning and pictures to the imagination. It were better that one use no gesture at all with the hands than to disfigure beautiful thought with an awkward or angular movement of the hand. As the spoken word conveys the thought to the mind so a descriptive movement of the body or hand suggests meaning to the eye.

4) Effectiveness of delivery is greatly hindered or enhanced by the voice. There is a difference between the sound and tone of the voice. Some speakers speak on

one pitch and the only variety they have in fastness or slowness of speaking and loudness or softness of sound. Now the ear is an instrument that is strung by a series of nerve fibers of different length in order to catch the infinite variety of sound wave lengths ranging from the deep rumble of the earthquake and thunder to the delicate overtones of the violin. The range of the human voice and especially speaking voice is in most cases confined within the limits of a single octave. From this one can see the obvious effect of speaking on one pitch and the necessity of variety of tone. Change of tone is a spur to the attention. This does not mean that one should "sing" his sermon, but it is indicative of the added power that tonality and variety of pitch gives to speech. For the preacher who is confined to his manuscript there is practically only one effective recourse and that is that he may "gesture" with his voice. Tone "coloring" is very effective in intensifying emotional thought and states.

## B. Psychology of Personality.

J. Spencer Kinnard says "Psychic force is personal force." and there is no question but that is true. Personality displays itself in (1) Ability and (2) Character.

1. Many preachers are imprisoned personalities and only make their power felt in their action and ability. One of the greatest psychological levers a man has, is to know and approximate limit of his abilities and powers and use them to their best advantage. The president of my college once said that very few men ever possessed more than mediocre

ability and it were better to start with that humble estimate of oneself than to overestimate one's ability and taste the bitter gall of disappointment. Broadus says, that a "preacher needs the capacity for clear thinking, with strong feelings, and a vigorous imagination; also capacity for expression, and the power of forceful utterance." It is certain that unless a man possesses these he is greatly handicapped, for muddy thinking and imperfect expression will often put a man of worthy personality in a wrong light. Many a strong personality is locked in the narrow "cell" of lack of training and ability to express themselves. Our times demand a high standard of excellency in preaching. The American pulpit can only be filled with trained men of unimpeachable personality.

2. Character is the backbone of personality, and if it is sterling and has the true ring it will find a response in every heart with which it comes in contact. Often a congregation will forgive a man's poor preaching if they recognize the generous, liberal, sympathetic personality. Usually personality comes with years and it is not advisable for one starting on a preaching career to depend entirely upon his "force" of personality. Training, ability and insight into the thoughts and workings of people's minds are great assets to one who is about to undertake as great a task as the profession in which preaching plays such an important part demands. The greatest test of a great personality is the capacity for hard, consistent work. In our age when vigorous activity is the psychological trend of

the time, nothing impresses the mind as much as the actual achievement and practical realization of ideal plans.

## V. CONCLUSION.

The success of a preacher during the next generation, or any generation in which the spirit of democracy has the ascendancy will depend upon his power, skill, and integrity rather than upon the traditional standing of a church or institution. The fact that, in the American pulpit at least, preachers are being less and less hampered with dogmatic tradition and are enjoying more and more of intellectual freedom, indicates a favorable condition to call out the full powers of the modern preacher. The day of the priest in his sanctuary and the spell of their authority over superstition and ignorance is slowly fading away. The seat of authority has been transferred from external to internal; from institution to the human soul. This fundamental change of the religious attitude demands that preaching adapt itself to the new psychological point of view. Preaching is becoming more and more a personal thing, something that is related to the needs of our present day life. The American preacher of our day is a living example of this tendency. Brastow throws light upon this situation when he says, "In a certain mental manliness the typical American preacher rarely finds a successful competitor. But still the representative American preacher is a teacher and in some fair measure an intellectual leader of the people.-- Contrast any notable preacher of our day with the preachers of

the first quarter of the last century. In reading their products, we find ourselves in a somewhat different homiletic realm. So great are the changes that, when we step back three-quarters of a century, we seem to find ourselves in a somewhat foreign country. In thought, method, diction there is a suggestion of remoteness--The preaching of the eighteenth century, or the first part of the nineteenth cannot interest us as does the preaching of our own day, because it is somewhat remote from us. All this is what we might and should expect. We are dominated by the spirit of modern life.

"Broadus also points out in his book that the product of the American preacher "is emotionally more vivacious, more concrete and suggestive than that of a former period, has better literary form, speaks more copiously to the imagination; while it seeks to reach the mental and moral judgments and is less elaborate and logically coherent. Its public is less reflective, but not without a certain intellectual vivacity, and is responsive to pithy, pungent speech."

A man who is to take his place among the able and experienced preachers of our day should specialize to a marked degree on the fundamental psychological aspects of preaching.

In this Thesis I have considered some of the psychological factors that are related to the three divisions that are present in preaching--the sermon, the congregation and the preacher. It is assumed that the preacher has something to say. If one has a vital message or one that seems to himself to be vital, then it is right and proper that he present it in the best and most effective form that is

available. The sermon is a garment for one's message and thought and if thought is dressed the same from one year's end to another, people will tire of the style.

Our time demands that one should not only have something to say and say it well but it also demands that it be condensed and concentrated. A sermon should seldom be over one half hour long nor less than fifteen minutes. Between twenty and twenty five minutes seems to be the psychological length. For if all the energy is consumed in attention and the excitement of emotional "explosions," none will be left to produce results. Some sermons are an end in themselves. They are the kind that make new opinions, appeal to the intellect, and give immediate satisfaction to the hearer. But the kind of sermon that stimulates people to action is the sermon that leaves them with an unconscious uncomfortable feeling that is not relieved until they do something to justify the faith they profess. For according to the law of suggestion "every idea of an action will result in that action unless hindered by a competing idea or physical impediment. Every idea that is suggested to the mind is held as truth, unless inhibited by some contradictory idea."

A modern congregation differs from former congregations in that the units that go to make up the modern group have access to more information, to a more complex experience and are thus possessed with a different psychological outlook on life than those of a former generation. But in the main they are the same. A congregation is made up of "just" folks who form "a group of individuals in a heightened state

of suggestibility." These two facts about congregations should be observed. With this in mind the preacher should cast his thought in a modern mould; and should know that a congregation by its very nature will act and react according to certain definite psychological situations and "laws."

One may know all the "tricks of the trade," may have a splendid mental equipment and fund of knowledge and yet fail as a preacher by keeping back the best that he has to give to his hearers and that is himself. The prime factor in the effectiveness of a sermon lies in the "personal element" that is present in the mental, physical, emotional and sensual interplay of "selves."

In our age when activity and accomplishment reflect the psychological temper of the time, nothing impresses the modern mind as much as the actual achievement of practical results. For this reason it has been the aim of this Thesis to meet some of the demands that are made upon the general field of preaching and to throw light upon a few particular phases of the PSYCHOLOGY OF PREACHING.

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