

## ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION REQUIRED

You were instructed in the last lesson to submit a preliminary copy of your Cumulative Summary and a preliminary copy of your Outline after taking the test for that section and before starting your official minimum attendance for Lesson XXXIX.

If you have completed that assignment and received notice that both submissions have been accepted, then you may begin your official attendance for this current lesson. - Dr. VBK

### LESSON XXXIX.

#### LECTURE XXXIX.

##### THE CONCLUSION: APPEALS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note some of the implications involved in an expectant hortation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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