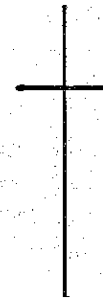


"HOW ARE THEY TO HEAR
WITHOUT A PREACHER?"



by

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Father Graf has surrendered all rights to the manuscripts and it is the hope of the Parish Press that those who never knew Dr. Nutter will profit from his great talent.

The Parish Press of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin is grateful to Father Graf for permission to publish this manuscript. We are also grateful to the Right Reverend William H. Brady, Bishop of Fond du Lac, for his foreword.

FOREWORD

I never knew Dean Nutter, but I have heard from many Nashotah graduates of the great leadership he gave Nashotah House in every respect during his twenty years as its president and Dean.

His preaching and his emphasis on the importance of preaching, became known throughout the Church. This little book contains seven lectures he gave on preaching. Each one is a gem. The most compelling is the first one entitled, "The Reason for Preaching". Here Dean Nutter calls our attention to the fact that we as priests are ordained to be dispensers of the Word and Sacraments — the Word first. Preaching prepares the way for grace! And, as Dean Nutter so rightly points out, bad preaching has always been the companion of decadence in religion, morals, and civil life. These are challenging lectures. They tell us clergy of the importance of preaching to our Lord and of how important it should be to us. They tell us also of what happens through lack of preparation and carelessness with our sermons. They also tell us of the glory that can come through careful planning, preparing and giving of sermons.

It is a privilege to commend this little book to all clergy and most especially would I urge every seminarian "to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" its contents.

✠ WILLIAM H. BRADY
Bishop of Fond du Lac

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Bishop of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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THE REASON FOR PREACHING

You may perhaps have noticed in your examination of the ordination rites of your Church that the ministry to which you expect to be commissioned is a double one: you are to be a dispenser of the Word, and of the Sacraments. You will also observe that the Word comes first. This is good New Testament teaching. By His ministry of the word of God, our Lord gathered His Apostles around Him. By the Word they were converted, instructed, edified. The ministry of the Sacraments came later, after the ministry of the Word had had its opportunities for preparation.

The same order is visible throughout the Apostolic Age. First the Word, then the Sacraments. First preaching, teaching, healing; then the sacramental admission to the Body of Christ. After this admission had taken place, still the preaching and teaching went on, for the purpose of edifying and encouraging the faithful and recovering the backsliding and the lapsed. I find no indication in the New Testament or in Church History that sacramental grace is sufficient for the salvation of a soul without the ministry of the Word along with it. Theologically, no doubt; but practically, no. The ages in the history of the Church when preaching was poor and thin, and scanty, were also ages of Christian decadence. The astounding success of the first friars was due to the fact that they revived the ministry of the Word. They had a message and a gospel, the common people heard them gladly, and religion and morality began once more to flourish.

This is an age of Christian decadence, and it happens also to be an age of bad preaching. There is an ancient problem concerning the priority of hen or egg. Another problem: is the present decadence in religion and morals the result of bad preaching, or is the bad preaching the result of the decadence of religion and morals? The sermon has fallen on evil days. The art of oratory is suspect. Both from political platform and pulpit, spellbinders have vanished. The great preachers of a generation ago are no more. Here and there, some able Protestant has a following, but one looks in vain for a similar phenomenon in the Anglican Church. I do not know of a Roman Catholic, but there may be a few. What was colloquially known only twenty years ago as "the hot gospel" has disappeared. Billy Sunday was the last serious exponent of that type of preaching. And along with the collapse of homiletic power has come the advance of agnostic hedonism, that is to say worldliness.

To try to decide which came first, bad sermons or worldliness, would be futile. What we have to do is to strive our best to alter present conditions, and an aid to this consummation is good preaching. It is fashionable among certain so called Catholics to pretend to despise sermons. We all know churches where the acolytes sneak out during the sermon and play in the sacristy. Priests declare that

the sermon is a Protestant device, and it is the Mass that matters. Such priests and such acolytes usually belong to the same parishes, and the priests are as a rule bad preachers. Further, they are bad preachers because they are lazy at it. They give their boys nothing to listen to, so the boys creep out. Their congregations do not creep out, true, but they begin to stay at home, which is worse. You cannot get the congregation to realize that the Mass is the big thing in their religion and spiritual development unless you tell them so from the pulpit in a forceful, persuasive, convincing, instructive manner. The Mass does not work by magic. God's grace is not magic — it needs cooperation on the part of the recipient, and there is no way to obtain cooperation half so useful as by good preaching.

You hear it said that the sermon has lost its power. That is not true. It is only the poor, sophomoric sermon which does not attract. A sermon need not be a literary masterpiece; but if it is sincere, fervent, timely, modern, and has some relation to human life and its problems, it will succeed, and the preacher will keep his congregation. Yet with all this, he will often feel that preaching is a waste of time and effort. He will preach as well as he knows how for four or five years to an apparently faithful flock, and at the end wonder how much he has accomplished. Over and over I have been tempted to think that my ministry of the Word has been practically fruitless, and that the sermons I have preached, whether in parish or seminary, have fallen on barren ground. Over and over I have felt sadly that for all the good they have done they might as well have never been uttered, that my congregations have not only not realized what their Christian profession demands from them but have had no wish to learn. This of course is a temptation of the devil, just as is the contrary temptation to imagine that you have preached a whale of a sermon which will convert your hearers. For sermons do do good, though immediate effects may seem negligible, and years afterwards you will find again the bread which you have cast on the waters. But remember, it is bread you cast on the waters and which you shall find after many days. Bread. Food. Your congregations ask for bread. They need food for their spiritual life. "What man is there of you, who if his son asks bread, will he give him a stone?" There are several antithesis between bread and stones in the New Testament, and this is one of them. You will note that it is of no use to cast stones on the waters. You do not find them after many days. Like many, many sermons, stones sink. They are lost.

Yet, in spite of discouragements, we preach. We do it in obedience to our Blessed Lord's command — the gospel is to be preached, and you are to be the accredited heralds of the gospel in a broken world. You are to be the continuation of the voice of Jesus Christ. Such

a thought as that should make the most rattle-brained juvenile pause when he is tempted to make light of this appalling responsibility. Christian preaching goes back directly to Our Lord, who himself preached, and sent forth others to do the same. That succession of prophets has never been broken. Even in the darkest of the Dark Ages the ministry of the Word continued. You are all well aware of what lies ahead of you in the companion ministry — that of the Sacraments. You know what a great and solemn privilege it will be to stand before the altar and offer the Holy Sacrifice for the living and the dead, to heal sick souls in the confessional, to comfort the afflicted and to prepare the dying for their departure from this world. You recognize that these duties are to be the main work of your life, and that your fidelity to them will be your consolation and your reward. All well and good. But by most of you, I think, your other ministry, that of the Word, is perhaps looked on as a task rather than as a privilege. You know you will have to preach, and you hope to do so acceptably. But it does not move you as does the ministry of the Sacraments. The prophet is not solemnly clothed with the mantle as the priest is with the chasuble. There is no sacramental rite by which he is raised to his high office, unless the delivery of the Bible at his ordination to the priesthood be so understood. Yet it will be well for you to realize that the prophetic ministry has quite as long and honorable a history as that of the priest, that the portions of Holy Scripture which retain their power today are prophetic and not priestly, and that in the New Testament particularly it is the prophetic ministry which fills the pages. No true servant of Jesus Christ, no ordained and commissioned steward of the Household of the Apostles can possibly have the presumption to despise his pulpit. Speaking generally, your ministry of the Sacraments will stand or fall by your ministry of the Word. I cannot stress this too strongly. They are not even like two strands in a rope, but rather like a couple of scrambled eggs.

What is to be the aim of your prophetic ministry. I quote Fr. Bull: "So in word and deed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to preach the love of God, revealed by his gift of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world, that men will accept Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, their Lord and their God, and will meet God's majestic self-sacrifice by their own entire self-surrender, a self-surrender which will enable the Holy Spirit to take entire possession of them and bind them together into one in the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, the Communion of Saints, the Holy Catholic Church." There is your aim and your program.

You might sum up your message in the word "salvation." The preacher has a gospel which he believes is based on transcendental revelation, and is equipped with power to save the individual and

society. There are many other factors today which influence human beings in a spiritual way, radio, television, news, books, magazines, the novel, the drama, and there are those who maintain that these supply all the spiritual help the race needs and that the pulpit is an outworn institution; but none of these things speak as the representative of Christ or with a claim to a divine revelation. That is the peculiar right of the Christian preacher. Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Galsworthy know much about the natural man; but for appreciation of the spiritual man one goes elsewhere, to Holy Scripture and the life of our Lord. This is the message that can transform the world, and it puts the Christian prophet in a category by himself. This is his task, this alone. If he does not do it, it remains undone. And if you should be obsessed by the knowledge that the few remarks you make on Sundays are not in the least likely to transform your congregation, much less the world, well, you must leave that to the Holy Ghost. You have been sent to preach the gospel and preach you must.

It is needless to say, however, that it should be a gospel which you have experienced yourself. The vital power of a sermon must come out of the preacher's heart. It is not the ideas set forth in it or the literary grace with which they are displayed, which counts, so much as the power behind it. There is an elusive, indefinable something which we can call personality, which breathes in a good sermon, and it is this which makes it alive and convincing. It is easy to recognize the man who is not merely giving you good advice, but is striving to put God himself into you because he has felt and experienced his love and goodness and reforming grace in his own life. You can never mistake it, gentlemen. The prophet who gives of himself is never without hearers. One reason for bad sermons and empty churches is that a large number of the clergy have never been converted to any vital type of Christianity. Such a man may deliver a sermon, but can never be said to preach the gospel.

That is why so much preaching today leaves the hearers cold, and slowly but surely empties churches, especially of the young. Such preachers have no spiritual vision and have no comprehension of the times. Many of them live entirely in a romantic past. Their religion is static, not dynamic, and Christianity certainly must be dynamic if it is the universal and everlasting religion which we claim it is. Mankind is passing through the greatest upheaval of thought against a barren traditionalism which the world has ever seen. Religion is one of man's deepest, most real needs, and therefore in this sphere change is slowest. It is always in conflict with the dull inertia of human nature. But modern youth will not tolerate a mere mouldy conservatism. They have broken definitely with the past so dear to older folk, and they are deserting our churches. Preachers do not seem to have anything to say to them which helps them to

understand modern life and its moral and spiritual problems. To young people, a lot of our services and our sermons just seem spectral survivals. But aside your own preferences and predilections, try to get outside your ecclesiastical environment, view the church services from without, and ask yourself, "What is there in this that would attract my friend? Would it attract me if I were unconverted? And to what do I wish to convert my friend? Just to this? Or should it not be possible to turn this dynamic, which I claim is here but which seems to be so readily overlooked, into new channels? What am I, after all? A horse in a stable eating his head off? Why should I try to get my friend into the stable merely to eat his head off?" You will find, gentlemen, that whereas the force of tradition still draws many older folk to church, the mass of people for whom that tradition has lost its meaning and its power is turning away in complete indifference. This is true of all Christian bodies, including the Roman Catholics. Certainly it is pathetically true of Episcopalians. One way of stopping the rot is by showing your people, from the pulpit, that Our Blessed Lord has a message for today just as useful, powerful, transforming, and energizing as in any other century. It means good, timely, modern preaching on modern problems, personal, social, and spiritual; in short, the connecting of religion with life as it is lived. To connect a man's religion with his life is to "save" him. To "save" a great mass of people is to "save" society.

You must not forget "society". "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Outside the United States, the Catholic Movement in our Church is busily occupying itself with social problems and is thus justifying its existence in the eyes of the world. Here, however, the Movement seems to be immured in its sacristies, and to be more interested in questions of deportment than in living issues. Needless to say, unless we can find our way out from our ecclesiastical hot-houses into the bracing air of the sidewalk, we are doomed. Sacristy sermons move modern men, especially the young, to derision. If you wish to hold the thoughtful young people, you must preach the Kingdom of God, and link the Kingdom on to its King. As Bishop Weston finally said, "You cannot seek Jesus in the tabernacle unless you also seek Jesus in the slums." Unfortunately, long neglect has made our Church a stranger in the slums, and I doubt if we shall ever be able to break into them. But at least we can let our respectable people know that there are slums and that they are inhabited by human beings just as dear to God as we; that Christ, if he were incarnate today, could not help but condemn our present social organization, under which ninety-nine people live in insecurity that one may flourish; and that Christianity has a good deal to say about monetary problems, about the little habits of financiers and indus-

trial barons, about the idle and useless lives of prominent social butterflies, about political parties and their unpleasant methods, about war, about nationalism, about poverty, and about the scores of other questions which touch ordinary folk where they live and which matter more than questions of sanctimonial deportment. As far as the mass of our clergy is concerned, their congregations might as well be living on Jupiter, for all the guidance they give them on these terrific topics. We all know and repeat ad nauseam that Our Blessed Lord walked homeless and barefoot over the hills of Galilee 1900 years ago. That he is walking today homeless and barefoot in North Water Street, Milwaukee, never seems to trouble our Episcopal heads.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SERMON

The reason for preaching is the salvation of souls, both as individuals and as forming a united Christian society. The moral implication of self-surrender to Our Blessed Lord must be carried out in the soul and in the community. The Christian must not only be pure, truthful, honest, sober, generous, sympathetic, and prayerful; he is also barred by his profession from making his living by underpaying or exploiting others, by usury, by investing in questionable enterprises such as armaments, liquor traffic, slum property, excess profits, selling bad securities and so forth. Comparatively few of the wealthy members of our flocks would fail to earn the rebuke of Our Lord for the sources from which their incomes are derived. To refrain from such practices for the love of Christ and the brethren (i.e. the Church) is to be saved. Here are topics for many sermons.

The purposes of the sermon are threefold: (1) to instruct, (2) to please, and (3) to move. To instruct the mind, that it may see the truth; to please the heart, that it may love the truth; to move the will, that it may obey the truth; this is the purpose of your preaching. Cicero says, "to prove, to delight, to persuade" are the three purposes of oratory. St. Augustine, quoting Cicero, agrees with him. The first and essential qualification of a preacher is to be skilful in giving instruction, the second is the ability to make the instruction palatable, the third is the power to energize the instruction into positive action. Of these three purposes one only will be the main object of the sermon; the other two will be brought in to help, or not, as required.

The first purpose, and foundation, is instruction in Christian truth. In the primitive Church, preaching was mainly an exposition of Holy Scripture. In St. Augustine's treatise, Holy Scripture is assumed to be the first source of the preacher's topics and language.

The preacher must be clear or he cannot teach. Intelligibility is the groundwork of every other good homiletic quality. Sublimity, elegance, even a correct vocabulary must be sacrificed to it. When the preacher meets difficult doctrine which he cannot make clear, he had better not try to expound it. He must take account of the simple and uneducated in his congregation. He must take account of his own limitations and not attempt too much. But every single sermon preached must be judged by this criterion: "What speck of truth did the congregation take home with them afterwards?" If none, then the sermon was a failure. You have all heard sermons which seemed to make a tremendous impression on the hearers, who went away bubbling with congratulations and cries of appreciation, and which were completely forgotten in 15 minutes. "What did the rector say?" "Well, I don't know, but it was a whizz!" Such a sermon evidently abounded in elegance and in vehemence, but no instruction was given, no truth taught, no light shed: hence, no result.

Every pulpit discourse must have its core of instruction whether theological, historical, liturgical, sacramental, or moral, round which the preacher may wrap his flowing periods of oratorical orotundity if he wishes. But the foundation must be there, or you are merely a windy pulpiteer. We all know them, lots of them.

Secondly, the preacher tries to please; not of course with the purpose of entertaining his congregation and giving them a delightful twenty minutes such as he might get out of the Three Little Pigs. No, he tries to please, in order to make that dose of instruction palatable and attractive. He provides jam with his powder, or the powder might be rejected. The average member of a Christian congregation is not so enamored of divine wisdom as to prefer it in its naked austerity. As a concession to this imperfection of human nature, truth should be embellished with elegant diction, "just as the food by which we live has to be made tasty to tempt the palate." Besides being instructive, the sermon should be pleasing enough to arouse interest and sustain attention. But a mere hunting after flowery and ornate verbiage which will merely tickle the ears of the shallow is a prostitution of the Christian pulpit.

Thirdly, the preacher strives to move his hearers to some sort of resolution. Neither truth in its stark simplicity, nor truth beautifully adorned with all the lovely devices of diction and vocabulary, is sufficient to overcome the inertia or beat down the stubbornness of the human will. We all know people who accept all the articles of the Christian Faith, and take a keen artistic delight in abstract ethics, who simply care nothing about plain ordinary Christian morals. To men of this kind, something more than clear ideas and well-chosen phrases is needed: fire, vehemence, passion.

The supreme and final purpose of the sermon is to move men to action, to convert them. This will not be done all at once, of course. It may take years. But this third purpose must be in the background of every sermon you preach. Knowledge of the Christian Creeds and moral codes is vain, aesthetic appreciation of the beauties of religion is vain, unless the heart is stirred and the will is moved to action. The seat of religion is in the will. Only when the will is conquered has your preaching achieved its purpose.

THE REMOTE PREPARATION

Somebody or other once said that if a man wished to be healthy in mind and body it was well for him to choose his grandparents wisely. If you wish to preach fruitfully and acceptably you must similarly begin your preparation a long long time before you first climb into your pulpit. It is of no use for you to expect to succeed as a preacher unless you have the proper background. True, a man of unusual oratorical abilities can get by for a time, but unless there is something more there besides what is commonly called "the gift of gab" your people will soon find you out and penetrate the secret of your hollowness.

I said earlier that a good sermon must always come from your own experience. You can, for a time, preach from other men's experience, but not for long. If you have not felt the things you say, if God has not revealed himself to you in his power, his pardon and his love, you cannot reach your people. That is why reading other men's sermons from the pulpit will not do. Your personality can never illuminate another man's thought, unless by some fortunate chance you happen on a sermon which exactly expresses yourself. Remember, I am speaking to you as to future preachers, realizing quite well as I do that there are some among us who are so inarticulate by nature that fruitful, original sermons will always be beyond their powers, though such men may make most worthy and blessed pastors and spiritual directors. No one can blame a man like that for flying for help to the printed sermons of some more successful prophet; but the great majority of the clergy, including yourselves, have no excuse whatever for any such course.

The first part of your remote and preliminary preparation to which I wish to call your attention is your daily life, which is at once the symptom and the support of your character. If you live the life of a layman, and a frivolous one at that (which some of you do), no one will give you any credit for sincerity when you get up into your pulpit and hand out your advice. "Do as I say, not as I do", is one of the frequent gibes thrown at preachers. Practice what you preach or at least try to do so. To begin with, your congregation must have no doubt of your entire consecration. Your inner life of thought, even before it becomes outwardly clothed in words and deeds, will communicate itself to some at least who attend your ministrations. If you intend your ministry of the Word to be in deed and in truth the continuation of the voice of Our Lord, you will exercise a most watchful discipline over your daily life. You will strive to oust unworthy thoughts from your mind, unclean visions from your imaginations, and low motives from your wills. Sinner though you are, you must at least try to be worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. You may not have great brains, or mighty gifts of eloquence — God knows how little you have to offer — but what you have

must be consecrated to his service unsullied and unsmudged. You will not get drunk, or near drunk, on Saturday night, and then presume to preach Christ crucified Sunday morning. You will not bitterly assail the sins which, through lack of inclination, you do not commit, while ignoring the perhaps more dangerous ones to which you are prone. It is not that your congregation will necessarily find out about your little Saturday night escapades — they will probably be buried in oblivion. But what they will find out is the note of unreality and insincerity in your sermons which is the symptom of a weak and fundamentally unconsecrated character.

The preacher who in his daily life contradicts the teaching of his sermons is betraying the teaching of Christ. I sometimes have thought, too, that St. Paul would have made a better point if he had written Roman 2:21 and 22 rather differently. He says: "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that preachest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" Now read it like this, which it might just as well have been: "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that preachest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou steal? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit adultery."

It is unfortunately true that no matter how hard we try, our practice is bound to fall short of our preaching. From the beginning, we are one and all doomed to failure. But there are two kinds of failure: the complaisant failure of the man who, knowing the highest is unattainable, is content to aim low; and the noble failure of one who gallantly attempts the forlorn hope. The first fails in intention and in will. His inadequacy lies in the centre of his soul, in the springs of his character. It is a symptom of what he really is. He is guilty of the prostitution of his prophetic ministry, and in the sight of Our Blessed Lord is a hypocrite. The lie is not merely on his lips but it is in his soul. But the second man fails neither in intention nor in will. His inadequacy is not sin, but the inevitable defect of human imperfection. Neither God nor man will be extreme to mark what is done amiss if the preacher does his best, with penitence and humility, to live the word he proclaims in virtue and consistency.

I say with penitence and humility. Both qualities are most necessary to the preacher. Humility is the grace which enables you to see yourself as you are in God's sight. It saves you from the self-assertion and self-satisfaction of one who is unconscious of his limitations. There is no more pitiable sight in the pulpit than the cocky young man lambasting his congregation for their faults while blissfully unconscious of the fact that all the time he is but drawing public attention to his own spiritual arrogance. You will not forget, I trust, that in every congregation there are at least a few members whose true piety and essential godliness will put almost any priest to

shame. And as for penitence, it must be the undertone of a preacher's life. No man can really look God in the face without echoing the cry of Isaiah, "Woe is me, because I am a man of unclean lips." This state of abiding penitence and humility will come to you if you really have a desire to know yourself. If you will permit the light of the Holy Spirit to shine down the long walk of your past and to show up the secrets of your heart, to expose the many inconsistencies of your life which have lowered your sacred aspirations in the sight of the world; if you will acknowledge that your present limitations and inadequacies are not mainly due to lack of brains, but to hours of sloth in high school, in college, and in seminary, to acquiescence in faults of temperament and character, to willingness to listen to those who tell you you are a fool not to take chances of sin that fall in your way, to carelessness in preparation for your calling which has led to the loss of many opportunities, to the refusal of the grace of the Holy Spirit shown in formal confessions with no serious purpose of amendment, in incomplete and untruthful confessions which but increase your damnation, in compromises with conscience whereby you persuade yourself that that is no sin at all or is merely venial and therefore no matter for confession which you really know quite well is the contrary; you should not find it hard to win a habit of abiding penitence and humility which is the only appropriate state of mind for a man who is called to speak in the Name of Christ.

Another quality which your congregation will demand from you in addition to moral sincerity, is conviction, intellectual sincerity. You will preach what you firmly believe is truth, and you will do it in a manner which will show your people that you believe it. Please note what this implies. It does not mean that you will just get up into the pulpit and say "This is so". The days are past when you could do that and get away with it. You cannot do it any more on the Church's authority, certainly not on your own. To a mere dogmatic presentation of a position, whether credal or ethical, the world is cold. You must be ready not only to state what is true, but tell them why. One reason why the churches are steadily emptying is because the people at large have got hold of an idea that modern scientific and critical discoveries have disproved the Christian religion. You will need simple apologetics for simple congregations, and a more advanced apologetic for more advanced congregations.

This will need work. Study. This will be, next to Holy Scripture, the most necessary type of reading which you will have to engage. You will need to be conversant with the progress of present day science, especially physics. Men are discovering that the universe is a big thing, and a big universe means a big God who can never-the less condescend to the incredible tininess of the submicroscopic parts of an atom. Half your people, perhaps you too, have an anthropomorphic conception of an aged Deity enthroned somewhere

in the clouds, and a pre-Copernican geocentric theory of astronomy. It is astonishing how slowly such things die, and to know how many people think that Christianity depends on them.

You must also know something about modern psychology, even though the new theories are rapidly superseded by still newer and just as ephemeral ones. In any study of character or conduct, some knowledge of how men are likely to react to circumstances is essential, and you must not show yourself a complete amateur. Remember, I am talking about your remote preparation and not about your Saturday night preparation for the following day.

I have already spoken about social and economic preaching which, of course, will demand a good deal of study. There is, fortunately, an enormous amount of Catholic interest in such studies today, and the books of such men as Reckitt and Demant and Peck will provide you with a thoroughly Christian and Catholic sociology. Remember: this is remote preparation, not immediate. It is background, not primary homiletic material.

In addition to these branches of study, there is always your regular reading in theology, both dogmatic and moral, and in apologetics, none of which must be neglected. Your more or less formal acquaintance with these departments will take place here in the seminary where your foundation is laid; but when you get out you will welcome all modern contributions to these subjects, striving to build on the foundations which have been laid. The time will not come when you can lay down your books and cease to learn.

May I also call to your attention the necessity on your part to study life. This cannot be learned from books, though you will be helped by biographies of statesmen, churchmen, and other famous men, by real lives of the saints, by modern reviews, and the newspapers. But your main source of information will be your people — their troubles, their worries, their news, their joys, their sorrows, their means of livelihood, their conditions of work, their living conditions, their health, their raising of families, their politics if any, and so on. It is this constant contact with the plain, ordinary humble folk of the sidewalk which will teach you what you need to preach about. As long as you keep in touch with your people, and with other similar people through the daily newspapers, knowing what the average man is doing and thinking and likely to be wishing to do next month, so long you will be able to tell them something each Sunday which will perhaps help them with their problems. The study of life is, in a sense, the continuation of the study of history which you have more or less mastered in your school, college, and seminary days: and your formal studies should assist you to understand the problems of today.

Another branch of your study of life is the reading of fiction. This may be read from a variety of motives, but the one we are now considering is the provision of a homiletic background. How much use modern fiction is, except to show clearly how most people do not act, I am not so sure. A great deal of it seems to have been conceived in a latrine. This sort of psychopathic stuff will of course be worse than useless for your purpose, for you will find that the people to whom you preach are not freaks and oddities, but plain, simple folk who act fairly normally for the most part. Sinners, yes; but psychopaths, no. You can, however, gain a good deal of insight into human nature and the modern viewpoint by reading the more respectable modern fiction, which I need not particularize. There remain the great classics which will never die, American, English, and European. The *Scarlet Letter*, which displays the sadness of sin and the transforming grace of penitence; Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, probing the mystery of atonement; Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, relating the saving of a soul by pity and forgiveness. There are many others which ought to be read: Dickens, David Copperfield and *Great Expectations*; Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*; perhaps Charlotte Brontë's, *Jane Eyre*; Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale* and *Riceyman Steps*; J. B. Priestley's *Good Companions* and *Angel Pavement*; Thomas Hardy's, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*; Tolstoy's *War and Peace*; a good deal more of Tolstoy, a lot of Balzac, more of Hardy, more of Dickens, and so on and so on. You will have your preferences and your prejudices; but the great novelists of today and yesterday all have something to teach you about life.

Under the head of fiction, I suppose, one may put the drama. This, of course, will mean Shakespeare, rather than Eugene O'Neill. When you know Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and Othello, you have a complete library of character study right there at your finger's end. You will also find the plays a mine of illustration and quotation. And while I consider Shakespeare compared with O'Neill to be something like the Lindbergh beacon compared with the parking light on a one-eyed taxicab, I do not mean that you cannot get meat also out of *Strange Interlude* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*. I said meat, not light. You can get both out of Shakespeare, but only one out of O'Neill. I do not think the moderns give much light. Like so many novelists, they portray extraordinary people, oddities, not the kind of folk you meet in daily life. I can imagine nothing more disconcerting to the average parish than for its rector to imagine that it is peopled by characters who ought to be in the sanitarium. This kind of thing is supposed to portray life as it is. It does nothing of the sort. You will not find your congregation mentally unbalanced, so do not try to treat them so. Consequently, I recommend the great classics, both in fiction and the drama, together with a

cautious selection of moderns. And don't believe everything you read.

I ought to say something about poetry. There should be poetry in a preacher's cultural background, but all of us are not alike in our tastes in respect of this branch of literature. Consequently, I do not feel that I can make any recommendations or give you much advice. Some men simply cannot read poetry, can scarcely stomach even verse e.g. Edgar Guest. But to the poetically minded, good poetry is a great homiletic help. I shall have more to say about this when I come to the enrichment of the sermon and the rhythm of language.

I have left the Bible to the last, because it is probably the most important of all. When you are ordained, you will make a public vow to be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture. Many, if not most of us, take that vow lightly. It is just as blameworthy to make and break an ordination vow as to make and break a marriage vow. Yet from all quarters of the Church, Roman and Anglican, England and America, goes up the same complaint from canonical examiners: ordinands know little or nothing about the text of Holy Scripture, and have little spiritual apprehension of the Word of God. They have a great deal of erudite and academic knowledge of the background of the two Testaments, of the composition of the sacred text, of the authorship of the various books, of the probable dates and circumstances of the writing; but of the Word of God they know nothing. Then they kneel before the Bishop and undertake to remedy this defect. This you will do in your turn. See to it that you keep your vow.

There are many ways in which to study. It is a good thing to study each New Testament book separately, with the assistance of a good commentary. The background and history, and some critical knowledge, probably supplied in seminary or at least clues given there which you can follow up if you wish, will be needed. What you require for your sermons is the study of the real meat of the text — not J.E.P.D.Q. but "Thus saith the Lord". I make bold to say that while thorough acquaintance with critical problems is necessary to every priest for apologetic purposes, yet the gospel can be preached without the preacher knowing anything whatever of them. It is the moral and spiritual soul of the Bible which counts, and which you must reach and dig out if you are to preach. Whether it is deutero or trito Isaiah does not matter a particle as far as "Thus saith the Lord" is concerned, nor whether the writer of the 4th Gospel is the disciple whom Jesus loved or the shadowy John the Elder so dearly beloved of the critics or an entirely unknown John, or indeed no John at all. And here I might interpolate a suggestion that you be not afraid of the conclusions of modern criticism—these conclusions usually last ten years or so and then give way to other

conclusions equally transitory. But "the Word of our God shall stand forever".

Another method is to trace subjects endwise from Genesis to Revelation, such as sin, penitence, redemption, the kingdom, the Church, the Holy Ghost, etc. Or biographically — the career of David, of Jeremiah, of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mark, St. Barnabas, and so on and on. Remember, too, that the value of the Holy Bible is not lessened in this case by the possibility that Abraham, or Moses, or Jonadab the son of Rechab may not have existed but may be folk-lore. The Holy Ghost has still something to teach us through the folk-lore — that is why it's there.

The contrast between ancient sermons and modern ones in regard to the use of Holy Scripture is striking. So is the contrast between the effects produced. The great Fathers and preachers of Christianity in a heathen world preached with Scripture at their finger's ends. In fact one of the sources of critical material is quotations from ancient writers, as you know. Their sermons are packed with such quotations, and still were composed without commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, historical backgrounds, critical introductions and so on and so on, so much so that we marvel. The whole text of Holy Scripture was present to their memory, and its thoughts and expressions simply gush out. Their sermons are mosaics of Holy Scripture. **AND THEY WORKED** — they converted souls — which is more than modern sermons seem to do. Our preaching has lost enormously owing to our disinclination to study the Word of God.

It is advisable, while reading or studying Holy Scripture, to have a pencil and notebook at hand. Frequently a text or a passage will leap out at you and suggest a meaning or a line of thought which will be suitable for a sermon. Unless you make a note, the idea will be lost. If you school yourself to this constant note-taking, you will have a storehouse of ideas which will lead to your never being at a loss for a subject or for its treatment. This is true not only with regard to your Bible reading and study, but to every kind of reading, sacred or profane. If you add a simple filing system, your reputation is made.

PREPARING A SERMON

"A man needs three things in the preaching of the Gospel — gifts, and grace, and gumption. If he lacks gifts, we may be able to help him to some extent. If he lacks grace, God can help him. But if he lacks gumption, neither God nor man can help him." . . . John Wesley

The time to begin your preparation for your next sermon is a few hours after the completion of your last one. You will find it impossible to get any kind of a message across to your congregation if, on Saturday night, it becomes a question whether you will begin your sermon or take your bath. Preaching is an important duty and there is a more or less regular process of preparation, lasting several days, through which you must go, if your pulpit offering is to secure the effect which you are hoping for it.

First — Realize your congregation. Ask yourself: who is going to be in church? Many preachers preach to the absent; for instance, it is of little use to rail to a present congregation about the sin of staying away from public worship. The proper place for a sermon on that subject is the street corner and not the pulpit. Many preach to themselves. They are interested in some study and inflict it interminably on people.

Take care to preach to those before you. Realize the life they live: their rising in the morning, their duties of the day, their recreation, their families, the books or papers they read, their aims in life, their ideals, temptations, hopes, and fears. What does Christ mean to them? What does religion mean to them? What do terms such as Incarnate, Atonement, the Church, mean to them? Ask yourself what they need. They may all look alike but they are quite different underneath — there are tragedies, heroism, joys, comforts, sorrows, sins facing you. Think of the individuals — the discouraged, the disappointed, the bereaved, or the happy and the successful. Think of the homes in which they live — are they the abodes of happy families or are they falling apart? Is there matrimonial agreement or a growing alienation? Think of business: its ups and downs, its prosperity or adversity. Is there plenty, or is it a struggle to make both ends meet?

To realize your congregation will prevent you from speaking a language which they do not understand or from choosing a subject which cannot fail to bore or bewilder them.

Secondly — Choose your subject, preferably on Monday.

What subject will be spiritually or mentally useful to those to whom you are to speak? Remember again you are to preach to those present, not to the absent.

The subject must be religious, that is to say it must be something with which God has to do primarily. It is your duty to teach a super-

natural religion. God's love and his almighty will must be the dominant thought.

Consider your own capacity and incapacity. Don't choose subjects about which in the nature of things you must know less than your people. To talk about thrift to those on county relief is foolish; to talk about child bearing to a congregation of mothers is silly.

Consider your people's capacity and incapacity. Do not select a subject which is above their heads or one which is below their intellect.

Thirdly: Gather your material.

First put down what you know yourself. This is naturally what led you to choose your subject. Then go to your notes, clippings, books, etc. Study your material and ponder it through the week. Your subconsciousness will be working when you are not consciously thinking of the subject.

Fourthly: Decide on your object, i.e. what you wish to accomplish by the sermon. You must have a definite goal. Sift your material with this in mind. Do not scatter your effort. Any one subject can have perhaps a dozen objects. It is of no use to try to preach about them all. Keep your object in mind and do not stray from it. Father Bull recommends you to write your object in red ink at the top of every sheet of paper which you are going to use in writing your sermon to as to keep it continually in your mind and to prevent you from going off down some attractive by-path.

Fifthly: Write your outline, preferably on Wednesday or Thursday. An outline should consist of the following headings: —

1. The Text.
2. The Introduction or Theme
3. The First Point: its proof and its application
4. A Link
5. The Second Point: its proof and its application
6. A Link
7. The Third Point: its proof and its application
8. A. Link
9. The Conclusion or peroration.

There may be more or fewer points than three, in fact three adequately treated may prove too long. One may be sufficient.

Sixthly: Write your sermon, preferably on Thursday or Friday.

A. The Text

This should be carefully chosen, usually from the New Testament. It should cover the whole subject of the sermon. It should contain

the theme in miniature just as the bud contains the full blown flower. It should not be so abstruse that you have to spend time elucidating before getting to grips with the sermon.

B. Introduction, or Theme

This should be short and snappy, announcing the subject and explaining its importance. This stating of the theme is really necessary if you are to rouse the interest of the congregation at the start. You can also pad your introduction with a story or a rather short recapitulation of the parable or Biblical circumstance from which your text comes, if you wish, thus making it longer and more elaborate. Beware of spinning out an anecdotal introduction to an inordinate degree in order to lengthen the sermon. This practice will merely make people wonder when on earth you are going to get started.

C. The Points

The Points should be carefully and clearly introduced as each is reached, so that hearers will have no doubt about what you are trying to do. You should state the proposition you intend to establish, show that it is true, and that it is therefore of spiritual use to Christians; and then apply it to the lives and circumstances of your congregation.

D. The Links or Transition

The links or transitions from one part to the next are vitally necessary. Each consists of a short sentence or paragraph bidding farewell to the last point and looking forward to the new one. This informs your congregation that you are beginning a new section of your sermon. May be "First", "Secondly", "Thirdly", etc.

E. The Conclusion

The conclusion is the most important part of the sermon. It is intended to produce final conviction. It might contain a very short recapitulation of the sermon in different words — not preaching it of course — which is thus for the third time brought to the hearer's attention. It should have some reference to practical results or resolutions which the sermon has been intended to produce, and a brief exhortation that for their souls' welfare the congregation should adopt the spiritual counsels to which the sermon has pointed.

Now for a few words of general amplification. The first thing to be noticed is, write every word of your sermons for the first ten years of your ministry. Extemporaneous speech is the acme of the oratorical art. There are few young priests who can speak well in public without having chosen, not the topics and arrangement only of their discourse; but the very phrases too. Without a thorough grasp of the subject, a copious vocabulary, and a ready and even instinctive skill in using it, without alertness of mind and prompt imagination, you have no chance of success as an extemporaneous speaker. What

is sometimes called a good flow of language is often nothing more than a certain facility in continuous talk. This is not preaching. "The emptiness, barrenness, and commonness of sermons, come almost wholly from a refusal to take the trouble to write. Without writing, practice in preaching is merely the growing more and more confirmed in weak and irritating trivialities." There are some who claim that writing a sermon cramps them. There are some who certainly are heavier and more ponderous with the pen than with the tongue. But even with them, the benefits so outweigh the disadvantages that there is simply no room to doubt that writing your sermons is the safest way to success. Writing stimulates the mental faculties, helps originality and orderliness. I might say that all the authorities I have consulted have the same advice to give. No matter what your facility of utterance may be, unless you write you will degenerate into a mere windy pulpiteer, and in the end even your wind may desert you.

Having written your sermon, say on Thursday, lay it aside till Saturday. Then go over it again. Prune. Add. Relieve it of superfluous adjectives. If necessary, write again. I would write my sermons three or four times or even six times years ago before I got them to suit me. I would leave blank spaces if I could not get the right word, and going about the streets I would ponder and scratch for the word, which would sooner or later pop into my mind and be set down in the blank space. Apt and telling quotations can only be introduced if you write your sermon, and though I have long since discarded the habit I would never preach a sermon twenty years ago which did not have a poetical quotation in it. If your sermons are to have any literary merit at all, you must write them and rewrite them. It is of no use to plead lack of time. Most of you will go to little missions where time will lie heavy on your hands, and the first two years of your ministry will give you such an opportunity for laying the foundation of a fine homiletic style as will never come to you later in life. Write your sermons for the first ten years. Every single authority I have consulted says that.

A few words on the choice of texts. Sometimes the text chooses itself, and the sermon flows naturally from it. You will probably find, when you have to preach every Sunday, that the sermon will often come first and you will have to pin a text on to it later. An appropriate text may occur to you half way through. It will then be necessary for you to go back and weave the text into the body of the discourse, by reference to it here and there, or by quoting it. It is not hard to do.

You may even complete your sermon without a text at all, and may be hard put to it to find one, but if you have a filing system you will be able to manage. George W. Pepper suggests that texts are not always necessary and that many sermons would be just as

good without one, which is true; but I would not recommend you to do it too often. If you should preach a textless sermon, you should make up for the lack of it by frequent Scriptural illustrations and quotations.

It will often be necessary for you, on the other hand, to select a text first and develop your sermon from it without having had any preliminary touch of inspiration. You will frequently feel entirely barren of ideas and still be compelled to preach the following Sunday. You will then select some promising looking verse, preferably from the Scriptures for the day and, so to speak, ask it questions: Who said you? When? Why? In what circumstances? What did he mean by you? What did his hearers understand by you? What do you mean to me now? What are you likely to mean to my congregation now? What good can you do to them at this moment? If you have worried your text in this manner, you ought to find some kind of a fruitful sermon beginning to take shape. As before, you will take care of your exegesis. Further, you will examine the context, and it is not legitimate to drag a text out of its context if by that means you distort its meaning. What travesties of sermons for instance could be preached on the words: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people", if you drag that text away from its context. Let your text be honest and straightforward: freak texts are to be deprecated, but can occasionally be used perhaps, such as "Eat this roll", "Ivory, apes, and peacocks". Dr. Barry recommended startling texts, so they cannot be entirely wrong. Three of my own occur to me, all Easter ones: "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken", "Shishak took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made, instead of which King Rehoboam made shields of brass". "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea". The Old Testament lends itself to this kind of thing, but be sparing. There are plenty of texts, both Old and New Testament, which contain sound doctrine and good morals without any need of fanciful interpretation. Barry's argument was that a congregation sat up and took notice when you announced a curious text. That may have been true twenty five years ago, but today no text is hackneyed in the ears of your congregation — all are equally unfamiliar. There is therefore less need of the bizarre.

Lastly: be sure of your exegesis. Look it up. Do not make mistakes in the meaning of your texts which will make your sermon a grotesque misapplication of the words.

Coming now to your introduction. If you have failed to attract attention by a startling text, you must do it now. The old-fashioned rhetorical and picturesque exordium has vanished along with many other oratorical tricks, and many authorities recommend you to state your proposition and start right in with your first point. I am not inclined to agree, nor do I do what Fr. Bull and others suggest,

which is write my introduction last of all. I find if I spread myself slightly over my introduction my sermon begins to take shape there and then (for I seldom sketch formal outlines nowadays, though you must). Dr. Black says that he met a famous preacher once who used to announce his text and then go on to say: "I propose to show from this text, first this, then that, and lastly the other. Now for the first point". But there is no doubt that in writing your introduction you must hold your horses in. Sketch your preamble quickly, vividly, graphically, and if possible pictorially; a terse word-picture of the circumstances of the text is good. Let the congregation see the situation in a few nervous phrases, like the strokes of an artist's brush. No obvious padding. No long over-detailed descriptions. Then get to work. To attempt to stretch your sermon by piling up the introduction defeats its purpose — you get a discourse all head and no body. I admit that I have at least one sermon which has an introduction comprising one-third of the whole, but that was done deliberately with a particular end in view.

With the points I cannot help you much. Their development depends on your ability to write good English and to express yourself clearly and logically. If you have not learned to do this, only the grace of God can make you a preacher — you are beyond human help. Incidentally, the writing of good English is not a seminary subject; it is something which should have been taught in academic institutions.

The links are simple, but they must be there. There is a distinct jar in the sermon when they are omitted.

The conclusion is perhaps the most important part of the sermon. It is the culmination of your work. If you go wrong here you have failed to accomplish the purpose for which you entered the pulpit. The form of your conclusion should not be stereotyped. Various methods of drawing to a close should be studied and used. You can end acceptably with an inference, an appeal, a suggestion, an illustration, an aspiration, a practical direction, a few pungent searching questions. But whatever the method, be sure to know the thought and the language of which it is composed; otherwise when you want to finish, you find you cannot, and you weary your hearers by your abortive efforts to find a way of escape until at last in despair you utter a string of commonplace platitudes and totter out of the pulpit, thus ruining what may have been a fine sermon. Some people cannot get out of a room, others out of a pulpit. Consequently, write your conclusion, and I recommend you to memorize it (as also the introduction). And when you have got to the end of it, stop. Do not be tempted to add a few words, or you will unfailingly walk into an anticlimax. If you can, end your sermon with a few monosyllables. It is effective. Say them slowly and distinctly, with a certain thump about them.

CHOICE OF SUBJECTS

A good plan, but one seldom followed even by the best of us, is to arrange your subject some weeks in advance. Some heroes do it a year in advance. My old vicar used literally to write his sermons six months ahead of preaching time; e.g. his Christmas sermon would be written about Whitsuntide, and his Whitsuntide sermon about New Year's Day. For 999 out of 1000 of us this is impossible. However, for six months out of twelve the Christian Year provides you with a scheme of preaching to which you must give some sort of support and assent. From Advent Sunday to Trinity, you have a ready-made, authoritative framework into which to fit your sermons. During this period your preaching should be on Christian Faith and Doctrine. From Trinity to Advent there is not the rigidity of the first half of the year and this time is usually devoted to Christian Life and Practice. The occasional holy days which break in you can use for bringing to your people's notice examples of Christian life, work, and example.

There are four Sundays in Advent as you know — so you will preach four Advent sermons. The note of Advent is preparation for Christmas, i.e. for God's coming into human life (1) by the Incarnation, (2) by common events, (3) at the end of the world. The supernatural interference of God in human affairs and destinies, the kingdom of God on earth, the exaltation of Christ over all States, Nations, Parties is a note of this sermon. "Patriotism is not enough", conscience comes first.

Advent is a suitable time for preaching a course, i.e. four linked sermons on the same subject. The Four Last Things were once a common Advent subject but they are hardly suitable. "Prophet, Priest, King, and Judge" might provide good material.

Remember in all your preaching the reply of the multitude to St. Peter's sermon in Acts, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Where your congregation does not ask itself this question during your sermon, you have failed. When you do not let them see what they must do, you have failed. You may have entertained them successfully, but you have not moved them towards God.

Christmas subjects are obvious. The Bethlehem story for Christmas Day, not a long argumentative or theological discussion of the Incarnation, which can come the Sunday after if at all. The benefits accruing to man through the Incarnation, by which he becomes partaker in the Divine, the humility and love of God in the Incarnation, care of children, family life, childlikeness, all these are good Christmas subjects.

The Epiphany for some reason or other not very obvious is liturgically very important. Theologically it is entirely unimportant.

It is a missionary festival, a manifestation to the Gentiles. The gospels for the Sundays deal with boyhood and adolescence, Christian education, manifestation of Christ's power over inanimate nature, over disease, and the power of evil, etc.

Sermons on St. Paul and the Blessed Virgin Mary may happen to come in this sermon. The lessons from the former are obvious. Not so from the Blessed Virgin: you must leave a lesson in the minds of the congregation, for if they are to reverence her they must know why and how. Many enthusiastic devotees will tell their people how, without giving them the ghost of a practical reason why: "What good will this do me?"

Courses can be preached through the season: the spread of the Church in all lands; incidents in the life of St. Paul, the great missionary; careers of mission heroes, ancient and modern. In all missionary sermons you must stress the uplifting of submerged populations by the power of the gospel, rather than by social service. Show them "why" first, and then "how".

For the pre-Lenten Sundays, the propers provide a mine of subjects. These are the days on which to speak of Lenten observance, not after Lent has begun. A course might perhaps be "Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving." Note again "why" then "how", and in this case also "when", i.e. Lent. Point out too that our Lenten life should be our normal Christian life, the rule, not the exception.

Lent gives you first the general subject of penitence, proceeding afterwards to the Cross. Contrition, confession, satisfaction, amendment, the suffering of Christ, the death of Christ are . . . inevitable subjects. It is, with Advent, the ideal season for a course. You can expound a short psalm during the season, such as the first, or the one hundred thirtieth. You can preach a course on the faith of a churchman or the duties of a churchman. The opportunities are endless. You will probably have a mid-week sermon too, a more informal one, perhaps a teaching course on the Sacraments, Creed, or what not. Remember in all cases your "why" and "how". The sermons of this season should be the best of your year, should be most carefully prepared, and should aim at conviction, conversion, and edification. You will have bigger congregations than usual, including many who seldom come to church, and some strangers. Your Palm Sunday sermon should be devoted to the Cross, and not to palms: it is perhaps the only Sunday in the year when you will get a chance of preaching the Cross of Christ, as your three hour service on Good Friday will miss most of your people. It need not necessarily be on the Seven Last Words.

For Easter Day a short sermon on the Risen Lord will be enough. It should be full of joy and color, rather than an intellectual discourse on the Resurrection. Keep that later for Low Sunday, if at all. At

Christmas and Easter, I am sure people want to come to church to make a joyful noise and to go home. Your music too will unfortunately be so elaborate that a long sermon will weary your congregation. Above all, do not select this opportunity to rebuke "once-a-year-men".

The Sundays of the first part of the season can be devoted to Resurrection apologetic: the empty tomb, the resurrection body, immortality, life after death, etc. The second part of the season you can set apart for the consequences of the Resurrection: hope, here and hereafter, the glorious future of the sons of God, etc. Remember your "why": "why can I believe this?" and "why should I believe this?" i.e. first, is it credible? and second, is it useful?

On Rogation Sunday (Easter 5) you can perhaps preach on the Ascension, in order to stress the coming Thursday. (I have always found it is a good thing to preach before an event like this instead of or as well as afterwards.) You can also choose some national subject, or God's blessing on our mother earth, or on industry, or on any type of human daily effort. There is also the general subject of prayer for this Sunday.

The Sunday after Ascension. Probably on the Ascension, as it might be your only chance. If you preach on the feast itself, there will only be a small handful of faithful and busy women present who will not wish to stay long in church. You might have a sung evensong on the first or second vespers of the feast with sermon, but even then you will reach only a few. It is best to turn the late Mass on this Sunday into an Ascension festival and preach on it, or on Christ seated at the right hand of God, or on the Exaltation of the King of Kings over all human rulers etc. etc. Until constituted authority orders otherwise, this is our festival of Christ the King. Again remember your whys:

Why did Christ ascend?

Why can I believe it?

Why is it useful to believe it?

Why must I change my life on account of it?

If you do not preach on an Ascension subject, the alternative is the expectation of the Holy Spirit — not the Apostles' expectation, yours and the congregation's.

Whitsunday. Subject, the Holy Spirit. His coming. His work, in the Church, in the soul. His seven-fold gifts perhaps. The nine-fold fruits of his work etc. etc.

Trinity. There is no subject appropriate for this day except Trinitarian apologetic — don't bite off more than you can chew and remember on this day above all things that you must give some

practical reason why Trinitarian belief is morally more energizing than Unitarian. You can also preach on the value of dogmatic religion in general (not merely of this one dogma) its unavoidableness (there are none so dogmatic as those who do not believe in dogmas) etc. etc.

The Sundays after Trinity do not lend themselves to any such rigid scheme, and you will have a wide range of choice. This part of the year should be devoted to Christian life and practice in general.

The early part of November should be devoted to the departed, and consequently the month is a good time to preach on the four last things instead of in Advent.

The Sunday next before Advent is a good occasion for a pre-Advent sermon, or even one on the Second Coming. In these days many people no longer believe in hell, and are not interested in heaven: it might do good to refer to both of them once a year. Our people are too sophisticated, or else the clergy themselves have lost their belief in a future life even remotely resembling the old-fashioned conventional eternity so that the laity have got the impression that nothing much matters. It will be one of your tasks to dispel that illusion by your preaching.

Further, preach living sermons. By that I mean sermons for today. The Children of Israel are dead and buried — let them stay there — they should be used for illustrative purposes only. It is not much use preaching about New Testament days either unless you transfer the problems (such as St. Paul faces, for example in Corinthians) to the present time. The Old Testament prophets are magnificent for today. So are the gospels. You can find a timely sermon in the newspaper every week, using the story as an introduction and a moral and transferring it back to some similar Biblical situation for text and scriptural authority. It is of no use to talk of the homeless Carpenter of 1000 years ago without bringing in homeless carpenters of today.

Book Sermons: A type of sermon which can make a big hit for a time is the book sermon, which can certainly be made quite up to date, and might be particularly useful in the case of some modern decadent best sellers. Take a book for your subject and pull it to pieces. Point out the underlying fallacies of modern materialism as portrayed by the author and show where the characters are departing from Christian ethics and morals. Let the congregation see how these paper folk ought to have acted, how they brought their troubles on themselves by a false philosophy of life, and how their problems could have been solved by the application of the principles of Our Lord. This is not an easy kind of sermon to preach, and it needs a critical and cultivated literary taste. More, it is only useful occasion-

ally — you cannot leave the Bible for long and hope to get people to church. I have never done this kind of thing from the pulpit, but have used the methods for Guild addresses. Your book sermon need have no text — in fact I don't see how it could — but by sheer good luck you might manage to link a current best-seller up with the epistle for the day, or with the gospel. Needless to say, the book must be red hot in timeliness. It is no use to drag out a forgotten novel of last year — it must be the one everyone is reading at that very moment.

The Homily or Expository Sermon: It will be noticed that your book sermon will be of the expository type. It might be a good place to say a few words about this type now. This kind of sermon used to be popular and frequent, but was killed by the advance of higher criticism and the laziness of the expositors. In it, the preacher would take a whole passage of the Bible and expound it verse by verse. Thus there was no particular introduction or conclusion. Each verse or part of the passage had its own message, and the one link of coherence in the sermon was the background of the writer's plan. This exposition used to be done with great skill and profit; but it has to be done well or not at all, and it got so that clergy thought that it was quite possible for them to get up into the pulpit entirely unprepared and give an exposition of the gospel for the day. Of course, it was thin, pale, shallow stuff, and eventually the method died out. The homily is nothing but an expository sermon. The word is not a mere synonym. It has a meaning of its own.

Sometimes you find you have written an expository sermon without knowing it. Your verse is divided into differing sections so obviously that you cannot help it. Some of you may remember one of my Opening Day sermons. "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise", was the original text, but when the sermon was complete, I found I had gone further and had also covered "He that was dead sat up and began to speak", and also "He delivered him to his mother". The result was an expository sermon on one and one-half verses of St. Luke. I expanded the formal text to fit the sermon, and so you got it! Needless to say, I am not giving you this particular example as one especially remarkable, but just to show that the method can be revived if anyone wishes to try it. You will find your meditations a great help to your expository preaching, for in order to do it you must chew and chew and chew on the sacred text in order to extract all the nourishment out of it that you possibly can. Mere prayerless formal and mechanical Bible reading will not unlock the secret.

The Prone: As a matter of curiosity, we might here consider the prone as it is called. This is a short form of sermon without the rhetorical arrangement of the sermon proper. In fact, most of the sermons we hear are really prone. The formal divisions are the

introduction, the body, and the conclusion. A text is not necessary. You merely state your subject in a short introduction and get at it. The subject is often suggested by notices at Mass, which preceeds the "sermon". The Prone will not last more than fifteen minutes if you keep to the point. I fancy most of you will start your preaching career by giving your people prones rather than homilies, postils, or sermons, though you will call all your pulpit utterances sermons whether they are so or not. As a matter of fact, the prone is to all intent and purpose a one-point sermon such as I told you you could preach when I gave you the skeleton of the formal three-point sermon earlier.

The Postil: A Postil is a short discourse in which the epistle or gospel for the day is reduced to one subject and treated in two or three divisions. It is a sermon in an elementary stage, differing from the sermon proper in lacking a formal introduction, an elaborate peroration, and the closely-knit and lengthy treatment of the divisions or points.

To insist on the difference in the nomenclature of prone, postil, homily, and sermon is rather pedantic. Nowadays they are all called sermons.

IN THE PULPIT

The first suggestion is, **Be At Ease**. I suppose you think that it is easier to say than to be so. No doubt this is true. You say your few words to the Holy Spirit during the creed or hymn, go quickly to the pulpit, don your stole if it has not already been assumed, turn and wait for the time to start. Until you get experience, this may be a frightful ordeal. Some places are very bad to preach in, for instance Nashotah House Chapel, but ordinary pulpits ought not to be such terrifying places. If you have something to say (not merely to say something, and there is a world of difference between the two things) and if you have your manuscript handily before you, and if you have thoroughly mastered your sermon, you have no reason to tremble.

I said, "if you have something to say". This depends on the solidity of your convictions, the depth of your conversion, the sincerity of your prayers and meditations, the reality of your penitence, and the transparency of your life. If you are merely a professional earning your living by doing this, it will be a matter of having to say something instead of having something to say: your convictions will be fluid, your conversion will not have taken at all, your prayers will have been formal recitations, your meditations will have been non-existent, your penitence if any will have been superficial, and your hidden life may not even be decent — in which case nothing will issue from your mouth but dead words, powerless to kindle in others the fire which they lack themselves.

"If you have your manuscript handily before you". To begin with, take your manuscript into the pulpit with you. See that the desk is at the right slope, if movable at all, and that it is conveniently lighted. Have your sheets of such a size that they will not obtrude on the sight of the congregation: if you manage it well, they need not realize you have your manuscript there at all. As you finish each sheet, do not turn it over, but slide it from the top of the pile over to the other side of the desk, keeping it flat down and not lifting it; e.g. like dealing from a pack of cards. This will keep it out of sight.

"If you have thoroughly mastered your manuscript". How are you to do this? Some say **Memorize**. In the old days we had to preach here without notes. As a result, we memorized. It was a bad policy. If you memorize you find yourself groping after forgotten words instead of proceeding with the idea, and if you do forget a word your roof falls in on you. Memorizing is too risky. You can, however, get the same result by reading your sermon to yourself a dozen times, slowly and distinctly, forming words with your lips if you are reading silently, and declaiming the sermon if you are

reading aloud so that the words fall on your ears and you employ hearing as well as sight. You should always read the sermon aloud several times, perhaps even before a mirror so that you can see your own facial expression while speaking. (If you are inclined to narcissism, the mirror will not be good for you). This sermon, remember, is your own work, the result of your own thought processes. You are its creator. Consequently you are well acquainted with its points and its development. Reading it in this way ten or a dozen times should give it to you almost memorized, and there should be no reason why you cannot preach it acceptably unless you suffer from plain ordinary stage fright, to overcome which I cannot help you with ordinary advice. You will find with practice that it will be necessary to read your sermon fewer and fewer times — three or four is now enough for me, but I still continue to whisper it aloud once or twice — and that your eye will fall on the right spot on the paper almost automatically when you feel at a loss for a word, and you will even know when you are at the foot of a page and move the top sheet over without having to look.

You may perhaps have an outline instead of the full manuscript. If you are particularly fluent, with a good memory, it might pay you to write your sermon in full, and get it as above; then boil it down into a skeleton-outline, with quite copious division headings and sub-divisions indented so that the eye catches them easily, jotting down in the proper places in the outline any telling phrase or epigram which you wish to introduce and which you will forget if not noted. I have adopted this plan for after-dinner speeches, and addresses to clubs and so on, but have seldom if ever done it for formal sermons. (Incidentally, I make my skeleton outline for after-dinner speeches on the tablecloth while predecessors are talking. You pick up many points from them.) As your experience grows and you gain confidence on your feet, you may reduce the copiousness of your outline until you can preach without anything like Bishop Brown, a thing which I would never be able to do if I were to live 100 years. Unfortunately, however, I fear that none of you is a Bishop Brown.

You should obtain some sort of training in the use of the voice. This really needs the assistance of a professional. What matters is your breathing and your voice production. You must talk from your nose and teeth and not from the throat. Talking from the throat will ruin the stoutest larynx in a year or two and is absolutely fatal. Beware of elocutionists — they are the last people to be of any help, for their style has gone out of the pulpit; our tradition of delivery has always been one of quietness and restraint, as against tub thumping and ballyhoo. Also, as I told you before, ranting has gone out of fashion everywhere, both in pulpit and on platform, except perhaps among the revivalists. If you should be lucky enough to know an

actor, get him to help you with voice and gesture. (It is a fact, too, that the stage also is a good deal less histrionic than it used to be.)

Enunciate clearly. This is perhaps the most important of all. It is a matter in which the American pulpit is greatly at fault. Rule: take care of the consonants and the vowels will usually look after themselves. If you enunciate clearly, you can be heard distinctly in large churches and halls where shouting would produce echoes and make you unintelligible. Watch your dentals — T. D. Th. Such words as enter, winter, cents, independent, our people pronounce with alophs instead of T's or D's. The difference between the definite and indefinite articles is sometimes almost undistinguishable. R is not only extinct in England but sometimes in America: though, on the other hand, the mid-west R is appalling in its harshness. Final consonants tend to disappear in American as in French, e.g. *visi'* for *visit*, *fi' cen's* for 5 cents. If you wish to be understood in the pulpit, you must learn to talk your language clearly. Word-murderers are not appreciated in the Episcopal Church whether the assassin does his foul deed through faulty enunciation or incorrect pronunciation.

Pronunciation. If you should have the slightest doubt about the pronunciation of a word look it up in the dictionary, not a stenographer's guide to orthography. You may find that you have been pronouncing a word wrongly all your life, and more, that all your family and friends are doing so. I have raved for ten years in this House about the pronunciation of baptism and baptise, to little effect. Also about seminarist. There is no such word as inquiry in the language. Nor is there such a word as lawndry — nor does the word which you pronounce in that way mean a bundle of linen, but a place where washing is done. And so on and so on. If you are going to use a foreign phrase, or a French or a German word in your sermon, which one does sometimes (though usually unnecessarily) see that you know how to pronounce it or use the English equivalent. Do not say "cart blank" for "carte blonsh", as for example, a certain graduate of the House once did, he being acquainted with French all the time; and when I asked him why, he said he did not wish to assume a superior attitude. This was the same excuse given me by another graduate who wrote a good article for the American Church Monthly in which he made frequent use of the so-called word seminarian, which dictionaries do not admit. In reply I said to each that no doubt he would, in order to be consistent, always prefer *ain't* to *is not*, which is also a custom of the plain people, but which grammarians do not yet tolerate. In short, gentlemen, you must take care of your language. The clergy of the Episcopal Church must not be barbarians.

Avoid Monotony. See that you vary appropriately both your pitch and your pace. When you speed up you will more or less naturally raise your pitch and when you slow down you will similar-

ly lower your pitch as a rule. But a dead level, even of interesting and perhaps exciting material, will send people to sleep. Do not get caught in a long sentence with empty lungs or your pitch will drop against your will, just as in similar case the organ will utter a dismal falling groan. Cultivate a rising inflection: wooden rules inculcated by school-ma'ams that one drops one's voice at a period simply will not do: you drop your voice when the sense demands it, not otherwise. The occasional pause is effective if it is voluntary: it gives time for your hearers to get set for the next outburst: if it be involuntary due to a sudden loss of ability to think what should come next, do not fill the gap with er-er-er: say something. Incidentally, if you should get caught by this sudden stoppage of memory, spar for time by summarizing your last point. By the time you get to the end of it you ought to be ready to proceed. If the situation still seems hopeless, and you are getting rattled, plunge into your peroration, and conclude. However, if your manuscript is handy this will not happen.

Reading the sermon. The question is sometimes asked whether it is ever advisable frankly and openly to read one's sermon. In ordinary circumstances, no; you will destroy the effect and the discourse will be a dud. For the ordinary type of a sermon preached to the ordinary type of congregation, the less obtrusive your manuscript is the better. I heard one of our graduates read a quite ordinary sermon to a local congregation last winter, and it certainly failed. But there are sermons of other types, preached to congregations of other types, which I think ought to be read, which lose nothing in the delivery by being read, and which would not stand being preached in the usual manner. Such a congregation would need to be one of highly educated and well read people, capable of keen attention, and able to follow a logical argument without needing any-rabble-rousing oratorical tricks. A sermon suitable for reading should be a coldly reasoned intellectual presentation of some theological dogma, or a philosophical apologetic for some aspect of the Christian position. Whether it will be your misfortune to come face to face with such a congregation, or to be able to address them on their own level, I do not know: I am thankful to say I have never been in such a predicament. But if you should ever need to read a sermon, at least sweep the congregation with your eyes at every pause, and do not keep your nose in your manuscript all the time. The great danger of the read sermon is that it will seem cold and lukewarm, consequently it should be shunned like a plague unless you are dealing with subjects which must of themselves be cold and lukewarm. There are such subjects: I have, for instance, never been able to wax hot on the doctrine of concomitance, or of prevenient grace, or on the distinction between supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism, etc.; but I cannot imagine you finding it either

necessary or desirable to exhort your congregation on these or other similar themes.

Avoid jargon. Preachers in our church are inclined to credit their congregations with more theological knowledge than they possess. We are prone to talk about the Incarnation, grace, the Catholic Church, this, that, and the other doctrine, without realizing that our people have only the most shadowy ideas of what the terms mean and that often they are not merely ignorant but positively in error. Avoid technical theological jargon. Use the simple terms which can readily be understood by the congregation. I once said in class in this House, "the future is with the Catholic Church", whereupon one of my hearers turned Papist. If a thing like that can take place in this House, what effect can such a remark have on an ordinary congregation? If there is one place in the Episcopal Church where one would have thought that that phrase would be clearly understood, this is it — but was not. You owe it to your congregation not to spray them with the jargon of your profession without stopping to think whether what you say conveys the right impression to them or even any impression at all. In your own careers, you have no doubt been brought face to face with other jargons, the legal perhaps, or the medical, certainly with the trade jargons of the electrician and the automotive engineer, and you have wondered what on earth those fellows meant. Their language was certainly English, but an English to which you had no key. Do not make the same mistake in your pulpit. Your people are not theologians, so do not address them as such.

Preach positively not negatively. Father Bull in his book, tells you that in preaching dogmatic sermons you ought to state the historic objections in your pulpit and demolish them. I consider it most unwise to do anything of the sort. You might not do your demolishing as skilfully as it could be done, and thus leave behind you the impression that if that is all that can be said in favor of the Deity of Christ or the Apostolic Succession we might as well quit bothering about it. In short, there is always the risk of converting some of your flock to the heretical position instead of to the orthodox viewpoint. So I say, preach positively. Say nothing in paragraph one which you will have to set to work to unsay in paragraph two.

Your opportunity to confute heresies will come in conference, or at interviews, where you will be dealing with one person who already has these erroneous views, rather than in the pulpit, where you will be speaking to a crowd of which ninety per-cent are sufficiently orthodox already.

And while I am about it, I might say that I consider it bad taste and poor policy to slam other religious bodies, whether Christian sects or non-Christian religions, from your pulpit. You gain nothing

whatever by doing so, and you do not thereby please the better end of your congregation. I would recommend you never mention them at all unless you are going to compliment them for some reason. It is so easy for instance to get funny about Christian Science, a cult which lends itself to caricature. A moments thought should tell you that there must be more to Eddyism than orthodox humorists admit, or it would hardly have reached the position in the community which it enjoys. No man can judge a religion 100% fairly unless he is inside it and knows it by experience. For instance: think of what the Romans say about us! Don't be silly enough to get into that boat. Remember also that St. Augustine said that no heresy could possibly survive if it were not for the truth in it — all heresies contain truth. When you are tempted to wax witty about a Holy Roller service, try to imagine what impression a Solemn High Mass would leave with an ignorant and uninstructed Southern Baptist: one might seem just as comic as the other.

Scolding. While on the subject of pulpit courtesy, I might suggest that you do not scold. If it does no good to scold your competitors, neither do you accomplish anything by scolding your flock. Every congregation of course has its faults and sins, to which you must sometimes draw attention. It may be lazy, indifferent, cliquey, slanderous, snobbish, or what not, and you must delicately manage somehow or other to let them see themselves as they are; but you will always do better by trying to inculcate the contrary virtue than by roasting them for their failings. Sometimes a situation arises which has to be handled without gloves, but such occasions should be rare. Too much denunciation will defeat its object. You cannot convert people with a club.

Never be tempted to say something like this: "A man said to me last week," "I had a letter yesterday which complained," "I was in a certain house last Tuesday and found", and so on, if there is any chance at all of the delinquent being recognized by the congregation at large. Any illustration drawn from your pastoral work must be used in the most impersonal way possible; even if it be complimentary it might cause embarrassment, and if uncomplimentary there will be trouble. A certain priest was appointed to a parish which had a bad reputation for civil war, and on his first Sunday preached a sermon on brotherly love. A woman came into the sacristy afterwards and said, "Sir, you were preaching to me, at me, and about me". He answered, "Madam, I do not know who you are, I know neither your name nor your address, I know nothing whatever about you, I have not seen you before or ever heard of you. To me you are as yet nothing but a face. So I cannot have been preaching about you. But if I happen to have said something which has pricked your conscience, we ought both to thank God." I suppose if he was going to preach that sermon, his first Sunday was

the day to do it; but even then personalities got injected into it. Someone will get nipped by every sermon you preach, or ought to; so see that you do it as gently as you can. Remember again: it is far better to tell your people what to do, than to tell them what they should leave undone.

Illustrations. Use plenty of illustrations. Many people can only grasp ideas when they are put before them in concrete form. "He is the best speaker who can turn the ear into an eye" (Arab proverb). This does not mean that a sermon should be a string of anecdotes, though some are little else. But abuse of a thing does not condemn its proper use. Think of Our Lord's use of illustrations, and remember the appeal which this method of teaching made to his hearers: the disciples could remember a parable while forgetting its moral.

However, take care: an illustration is intended to illustrate, that is to say, "to light up" the sermon, let light in, make clear. So an illustration which is not apt is worse than useless: it darkens instead of lighting. The true purpose of an illustration is to show the thought in action. If it does not do that well, you are better off without it. The illustrations may be of common things, the commoner the better, but must not be commonplace, vulgar, or common in a bad sense. Also, let them be terse and to the point. Don't pile on the agony, avoid useless and irrelevant detail. You are after an impressionist sketch rather than an etching.

Where are you to get your illustrations? From your reading — and read you must. From newspapers, magazines, novels. From life as you meet it. From history. From biography. From good literature. And read, so to speak, with your pencil in hand.

Quotations: Quotations need care. At one time, I would not write a sermon that did not have a poetical quotation in it. Gradually the thing became an obsession, so I quit. It is a good policy not to overdo quotations and, like illustrations, they must be apt. Your object in quoting is to say something in memorable words, something which has been said once for all in perfect language; or to summon to your assistance some well-known, competent, and recognized authority on your subject. Note that I say "some recognized authority on your subject"; that is to say, see to it that you do not try to dazzle your people with the views of some well-known person who is not an authority on your subject. Lots of people took spiritism seriously because Conan Doyle had made a reputation with Sherlock Holmes. His mystery story reputation did not make him a spiritual authority. Again, there is Tennyson's famous and much-quoted passage about Prayer:

"If thou shouldst not see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Wherefore let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats that nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer both for themselves and those who call them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Excellent, desirable, beautiful, quotable; but still remember that you must not produce Tennyson as a spiritual authority, but only as a decoration. Dr. Black warns against what he calls "the fallacy of the big name". Preachers say "as Shakespeare remarks", as though that settled the matter. It does not; first because Shakespeare's characters can be fools, knaves, rascals, and rogues, as well as decent people, and your moral aphorism or piece of good advice may have been said by a villain; and secondly because after all Shakespeare was no expert in the spiritual life, and no authority on morals, and he may have been wrong. See therefore that your quotations are (1) few (2) apt (3) that they will bear inspection. Don't jam things into your sermon which do not fit there, even though they may be clever and bright; and don't drag in authorities which "ain't so". Henry Ford's remarks about religion, if any, would be quite valueless, just as much as the Archbishop of Canterbury's on the internal combustion engine. I remember a very bright boy in Chicago bringing Thomas Edison's views on immortality to me: "What's he know about it?" I said; "you don't think he knows as much about that kind of thing as Jesus Christ, do you?" Finally, verify your Biblical quotations, and use the authorized version unless the revised should happen to be necessary for your purpose.

Be Direct. There is no reason why you should not hit hard from the pulpit, so long as you are not cruel or vindictive. A general vagueness never touches anyone — your hearers always think of the man in the next pew, not of themselves. The gentleness and impersonalness in public correction which I urged on you does not imply flabbiness and weakness. Nathan told a charming little parable to David and the King was furiously angry with the unnamed villain; so much so that when Nathan pointed his finger and said "Thou art the man", the king had no come-back. I do not see why you should always have to say "we" in a sermon and why "you" is not far more sincere, straightforward and convincing, so long as proper discretion is used. Such expressions as "Let us try to" . . . whatever it may be, have simply neither punch nor virility about them. Who in all history ever responded to a "let us try to"? A fairly good working rule, which of course is neither infallible nor invariable, is to use "we" and "our" in describing sins and failings,

and "you" and "your" in exhorting to the practice of virtue and the performance of duties. For instance, on prayer difficulties: "How often does the world burst in upon us when we are on our knees! How often do thoughts of the flesh assail us at the holiest moments!" There you are sharing with your congregation the common weakness of human nature. But: "There is still no better advice to give you than this — to come to church, to kneel on your knees in the presence of God, to cover your eyes with your hands, to shut your ears as far as you can to the noises of the street, and having done so to say to yourself, very slowly, several times, letting the sense of the words sink into your consciousness, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" The phrase "Let us" is weak. Avoid it. I don't care which classical sermon you find it in: it is weak. For example, "Let us then come to church, let us kneel down in the presence of God and covering our eyes with our hands and shutting out the noises of the street, let us say to ourselves." If you can't see that that is weaker than the direct advice, I can't help you. But of course in using direct advice rather than amiable suggestion, you must see that you are free from an arbitrary and domineering tone: nothing rouses opposition more than a "you do as I say" presentation of your message. So I recommend you to speak directly to your congregation without permitting yourself to be dictatorial.

Choice of Words. Be careful in your choice of words. To begin with, avoid slang or colloquialisms. Do not refer in your pulpit to "back numbers" or "weak sisters" or "live wires". If you require an emphatic denial, do not say (as we did twenty years ago) "not on your tintype", (or ten years ago) "not by a jugful". It will cheapen your sermon to load it with expressions, bright and snappy though they may be in ordinary conversation. About once a year it may be permissible for you to use a lurid slang expression for the purpose of waking your congregation up and making them remember some point in particular. Such an expression will hammer home an illustration most powerfully — but it must be done forcefully, not weakly and apologetically, and very seldom; if you try it too often it will become merely illiterate and bad taste and your folks will think you know no better.

Normally you will be most careful in your choice of words, and for this purpose you will, if necessary, consult the dictionary, and perhaps a book of synonyms. English is a beautiful language, probably the richest and most flexible form of speech ever known. It has a vocabulary not less than five or six times as large as that of the French. How it compares with other tongues I am not sure. The reason for this abundant vocabulary is the vast number of synonyms which the language contains. Where in French one word expresses one idea, in English the same idea may have from five to fifteen synonyms. Note this however, many of these synonyms

express subtle shades of difference in meaning, the ability to distinguish which marks the educated man. Synonyms are not interchangeable at will. And though we are told that it is possible to make yourself understood in English with a vocabulary of 800 words, you must not expect to be able to preach with such a meager supply of ammunition. Consequently use all the means in your power to acquire a full and expressive vocabulary. I will give you a few words of advice on how to enrich your sermons in this way and how to acquire a good style. Style means the right word in the right place.

First, read steadily; and for stylistic purposes newspapers, magazines, and best sellers will not do. You will have to read these things to keep up with the world of course, but they will ruin your style and your vocabulary unless you provide an antidote and a corrective. Read the English and American classics of all ages, prose and poetry, drama and literature. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall", Carlyle's "French Revolution", Pater's "Marius the Epicurean", for contrast in styles and vocabularies. Robert Louis Stevenson, John Buchan, the speeches of John Bright or some great American orator, Gilbert Murray's translations of the great Greek tragedies, Shakespeare of course, Milton's "Paradise Lost", Butcher and Lang's translation of the "Odyssey", Thackeray's "Henry Esmond", Shorthouse's "John Inglesant", "The Essays of Elia", Hardy, Conrad, A. Quiller Couch. Note always the right word in the right place and remember, you are reading for style and vocabulary, not for entertainment, though you should also be entertained if you have any taste. And may I once more urge on you the Authorized Version. There are things you should know by heart: I Cor. 13, Is. 40, Mt. 2, Judges 5, Rv. 22, Eccles. 12, Psalm 23, Job 38, Lk. 15, and so forth. Moreover there is such a thing as reading the Dictionary. You probably smile but it is amazing how much you can find in one page to improve your vocabulary. If you have access to Skeat, study the history and derivation of words, not for usable information, but to make you love them — it gives your words personality, so to speak, if you know how they have grown up, and it makes you wish not to misuse them. It also makes you dissatisfied with anything but the best.

Another way to improve your vocabulary and make you at home with your language is the way of translation. The translation of a foreign language into English is excellent practice. This is true of all tongues. If you have an acquaintance with French, German, or Spanish, do not let it drop, for wrestling with them helps your English. Particularly is this true with Latin. I am a convinced Latinist, and will almost go so far as to say that unless a man is a natural orator he cannot handle English unless he has worked his way through to a certain facility with Latin. This is not only with regard to the great help a knowledge of Latin is to your vocabulary, but to the

assistance you get from it in the art of composition and arrangement. Latin is an architectural language. It leaves no untidy ends. Its sentences are built up layer upon layer, stone upon stone, just as the architect draws his plans. Presumably you did not appreciate this during your struggles with it in the classroom, and the impatience of youth made you ask yourselves many times what use this stuff could ever be to you. But an art is with most of us an acquired taste, and I doubt if any of you ever got so far as to be able to see the magnificence of a Ciceronian sentence, growing with perfect symmetry step by step, like an arch, until the verb at the end drops into its waiting space like the keystone binding everything together into one whole. Cicero's style, of course, is not ours, though it is not unlike that of Gibbon or Dr. Johnson. Nowadays we go in for something shorter, sharper, more staccato so to speak. But a man who has learned how a Roman literary architect built his sentences will never fail in ability to build an English one. Greek is of less use for this purpose, but translating it into English helps you to handle your mother tongue just as French, German, and Spanish do. The point is that while translating you have to spend time and effort in scratching round for the right word, and style is the right word in the right place.

Slang. Another way to improve your style is by being careful in your ordinary daily conversation. Here we are all at fault. There are two forms of every language, the written and the spoken, the literary and the colloquial. A man never speaks, outside of formal oratory, as he would write. But that is no excuse for permitting yourself to get into slovenly habits of diction. We are all slangy, even when grammatical. It is true that slang has its place in the language, and some of its expressions have a graphic vigor which more proper English lacks: e.g. "up against" for "face to face with" — you can almost hear the impact of the body against the stone wall. But you had better not write "up against" in a sermon, and it would help if you could persuade yourself to be careful about admitting too many such phrases too frequently into your conversation. The language spoken from the pulpit must not be that of the sidewalk, and the more you can keep the sidewalk out of your informal speech of the day the easier you will find the task of keeping it out of your sermons.

Rhythm. Still another point in which you can improve your style is by taking care of the rhythm of your English. Here I fear I cannot help you much, important though it is. If you haven't the ear and the instinct, they cannot be supplied. Rhythm in English prose is comparable to harmony in music. One reason why the Authorized Version is so superior to the Revised Version, and the old book of Common Prayer to all modern imitations, including the later revisions, is because the Elizabethans were masters of rhythm: they knew where the beats

ought to fall in a sentence to make it melodious to the ear. Remember that you are speaking to hearers, not writing for readers. For example, in the Litany, "all who travel by land or by water", has been hacked to pieces by being revised to "by land or by water or by air", when "by land, air or water" would have preserved the rhythm. The collect for the early mass for Whitsunday could have sounded much more beautiful: "We may be enlightened and strengthened for thy service", might better have been "strengthened and enlightened" the rhythm is far preferable, and the harsh juxtaposition of five consonants in a row would have been avoided. Over and over again, especially in the New Testament, the revisers have pedantically altered the rhythm of the Authorized Version in the interests of a wooden uniformity of translation — the same Greek word must always be translated by the same English word — the result being a not very satisfactory book for public reading, even though (as is no doubt true) the accuracy of the version is more reliable. I recommend to you again, as I have done before, that you use the Authorized Version on your lecterns, and the Revised Version on your study table. What you gain in meticulous accuracy you will lose in beauty, and where no principle is at stake the beauty of the language and the rhythm should be the deciding factor in public reading.

Those of you who can enjoy it will find the reading of poetry an assistance in cultivating the sense of rhythm. This should be done aloud. Curiously, my preference in this connection is for the minor poets, such as Swinburne, Chesterton, Ernest Dowson, Rupert Brooke, John Davidson, Oscar Wilde, etc. I have often found text, sermon, and conclusion in Swinburne. I do not mean, of course, that I have ever written a sermon with a verse from the poet as a text, but that reading to myself, perhaps aloud, from one of his more colorful poems, has brought to my mind some similar imagery from Holy Scripture which in turn has suggested my text and subject. A great deal of Swinburne's work is shallow and empty, his hedonistic philosophy is unchristian, and his attitude towards religion is preposterous. But you should not read him for these things, but to improve your vocabulary and your sense of rhythm. There is no writer in English who can approach him for sheer beauty of language and for matchless rhythm, even when he means only trivialities or perhaps even nothing at all.

On the other hand, Chesterton is thoroughly Christian, a man who brings religion into every day things, can see the Incarnate Christ in a dope fiend and the coming of God in the most hopeless social and political muddles. If you want a good start off for a virile and explosive sermon on some subject which makes your blood boil, and if you feel languid and indifferent at the moment, pick up

Lepanto or the March of the Black Mountain. They ought to get you going if you are at all susceptible to the swing of marching words.

If you have any kind of an ear, then, you will find attention to the rhythm of your prose worthwhile for the purpose of adorning your sermon. Further, you will notice that these poets make use of alliteration. This literary trick will serve you in good stead if you use it sparingly, and in those passages only where you wish to emphasize something. More than this would be mere affectation.

Sound. Another way in which you can enrich your prose is by choosing words by their sound, as well as by their meaning. Select harsh words if you are intending to leave with your congregation an impression of harshness; for example, "Grate on their scannell pipes of wretched straw", (Milton). For other purposes, if you have a choice of vocabulary, select the beautiful rather than the ungainly, for words can be either beautiful or clumsy apart altogether from their meaning. If you are trying to create an atmosphere of splendour, use the ornate word, and if of simplicity, the plain one. Note that the beautiful need not be ornate: it can be severely plain, for example "A Shropshire Lad", "The Ballad of Reading Gaol". The use of ornate, pompous and sesquipedalian words to describe ordinary situations is greatly to be deprecated. You will also note how modern taste has veered completely towards simplicity, whether it be in architecture, interior decoration, furniture, art, or what not. Sermons should follow the fashion (and ceremonial too if you wish it to attract moderns). The note of the day is starkness, not a cluttered pomposity of over-decoration.

Still, and bear this in mind, there is yet room for magnificence. There are words which sound like trumpets and ring like bells in the ear: names which conjure up before the mind whole pictures in a syllable — names of flowers, fruits, perfumes, archangels, cities, countries, colours, metals, jewels, heroes, constellations, the signs of the zodiac, ancient gods and goddesses. When you feel that you need a procession, bring such into your sermon — not all at once, of course, but a judicious sprinkling of them where it can be done will impart richness and picturesqueness.

The Close of the Sermon. I have got you up into the pulpit, and told you just about everything I can think of, it is time to draw to the end of the sermon. I have told you about monosyllables. A succession of them at the close makes a good emphatic ending: in fact, to end any sermon on an accented monosyllable if you can do it naturally (that is to say genuinely) is excellent. I might add that masculine endings are a fine thing throughout a sermon as long as you have no more than fifty per-cent of them.

You can close with the sign of the cross or with the ascription. The latter is a dignified and conventional method, and I know no reason why it should not be employed, but a repetition of it by the choir is dreadful.

The Sermon should not be less than 15 minutes in length or more than 25, though I believe that some old-fashioned congregations in the South like to go on much longer. If you have a fruitful text, you should be able to expand or contract according to the number of points you wish to make; and points not made on one Sunday can be readily taken care of some other time. You need not say everything you can think of on one occasion.

SPECIAL SERMONS

To Children:

Take notice: preaching to children is five times as hard as to adults. Many clergy seem to think that any old twaddle will do for children. Never think for one moment that you can talk to them with less preparation unless you are one of those unusual men who have a natural ability for the task.

Children do not reason much. General and abstract ideas, such as are common even among more or less illiterate adults have no appeal to the child mind, which moves naturally though perhaps erratically in the tangible and concrete. It is not enough merely to use words comprehensible to them, but you must also draw your illustrations from their world, and plenty of them, with plenty of stories. Note, too, that their world can be, and often is, one of fantastic imagination, containing pirates, cowboys, princes and princesses, magicians, knights and ladies, in their early teens heroes and heroines and so forth. It is from this world that you will have to draw some of your illustrations for your youngsters. This is why Dean Clarke has Peter Pan in his Children's Corner. I think he probably could have found some nice boy or girl saint if he had looked, except that the gory deaths which some of these kids had to suffer certainly are not good for children, nor is the terrible mawkishness with which their pious biographers have endowed them. You can't expect a boy to get starry-eyed over St. Aloysius I fear. I presume this is why Dean Clarke fell back on Peter Pan. He might have found something in the legendary acts of Our Lord in the apocryphal gospels just as true as the immortal Peter's acts. Sunday School lessons supply some material. Further, your illustrations from daily life must not be obviously false.

Children can't endure monotony. You must change pitch, pace, and gesture more than with adults. Act your stories if you can. Preach from the floor if convenient, rather than from the pulpit. And be brief. Ten minutes will be ample.

Sermons to children must especially lead to action. Religion grows out of acts, rather than acts out of religion. They should learn what to do before they learn why they must do it.

Finally, I point out again that preaching to children is hard. Do not ever let yourself think that it is easy. It is harder by far than your regular Sunday discourse to your adult congregation.

To Young People.

This is harder still, in fact the hardest homiletic job you will have to face. You will have left the region of Peter Pan and the apocryphal gospels and good little boys and girls, and you will not yet have

reached St. Andrew and St. Paul. Your illustrations will still have to be concrete, and certainly true, or at least likely. The athletic fields, the battlefield will supply some, though military illustrations are no longer considered appropriate to Christianity. The newspapers will give you others, and Holy Scripture still others: make them live: young people can be tremendously idealistic, and can be appealed to on very high and lofty grounds, where adults see only too clearly the impassable obstacles; so do not be afraid to hitch your wagon to a star.

Oratorical tricks will not be very successful. Be plain and straight forward. Use simple language, informal perhaps without being slangy. You will find young people harder to interest than children, so be brief. About 15 minutes — no more.

Money Appeals.

"Preaching the gospel and talking about money are two uses of the faculty of speech that are not easily united with propriety". (O'Dowd) Still, you will have to do it, though the people who need it most won't be there to hear you. Remember, however, that too much begging, dunning, and panhandling from the pulpit will have a bad effect on your more apostolic and pastoral appeals. The collapse of 281 is a case in point. Once a year is plenty, except in crises, which should be infrequent.

You may note that a financial appeal will be dignified and successful just as far as you have educated your people in the doctrine of Christian stewardship. Ask for money because giving is Christian, and because it is really and truly a blessed thing to give, far more so than to receive. Don't scold. Don't tell them how they have fallen down, how they don't seem to love their parish, and how little interest they seem to have in their starving priest. If you are really generous to their spiritual needs, they will be equally generous to your temporal ones. If you make their parish fill a gap in their lives they will support it.

Be encouraging rather than critical, positive rather than negative, practical rather than sentimental, confident rather than diffident. Stress present and future needs rather than past debts (everybody hates having to pay for a dead horse), though of course debts have to be paid too.

Good texts are Jonah 1:3, Romans 12:13, I Cor. 16:1, the story of the widow's mite (but don't get sentimental about it), the teaching from the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, etc.

At Funerals.

The funeral eulogy is usually in bad taste, nearly always insincere and sometimes untrue, and is therefore to be deprecated. But in the case of the prominent churchman or woman who has

devoted his life to the cause of Christ they are sometimes permissible. You will avoid all unreal and exaggerated language, realizing that though the soul is probably saved, it is saved not by its own merit but by the Atonement of Our Lord. Your diction should be dignified and elevated, and above all will be devoid of anything approaching hysteria or sentimentality. In speaking of the mourners you will take it for granted that they are Christians and therefore are not repining, but rather are proud and happy. You will devote most of your sermon to the Christian hope of immortality derived from Our Lord's resurrection.

The best time for a eulogy is not at the funeral itself but on the next Sunday. One of the strongest points about a liturgical funeral is that it is the same for rich and poor, statesman and peasants, and when you intrude a sermon into the obsequies you spoil the scheme. The eulogy is an opportunity for some good church teaching about the state of the departed and our cooperation and fellowship with them, rather than for a bemoaning of loss and the sadness of separation — these do not belong to Christianity at all.

Controversial Sermons.

Do not preach them at all, or you are likely to get into trouble. But if a time should come when you simply must defend the Faith from attack, do it in the fear of God and not in the intolerant arrogance of juvenility. Note these points:

- (1) Be courteous.
- (2) Know your subject thoroughly.
- (3) Get learned advice on the sermon before you preach it to see whether it is accurate and logical.
- (4) Your object will be to win your opponent rather than to destroy him.
- (5) Be courteous.
- (6) A good starting point is what you are agreed on in the subject, working from that to points of disagreement.
- (7) Be courteous.
- (8) Remember that opposition to Christian truth is usually due to a misunderstanding of it rather than to flat disbelief; you will therefore explain your position rather than try to demolish your opponent's.
- (9) Do not engage in controversy about trifles, but only about things generally necessary to salvation.
- (10-100) Be courteous.

Five Minute Sermons.

I almost hesitate to suggest the possibility of such things for fear you may think that a five-minute pulpit effort will suffice in

general, and that the preparation of such a discourse will only take one third of the time of a fifteen minute one and is therefore to be welcomed.

On the contrary, five minute sermons are harder to prepare than longer ones, for all padding is eliminated. They are all meat and no vegetables or dessert. Consequently they are not at all the kind of thing you can get off unprepared.

Congregations will not expect as much from you in five minutes as in fifteen, but what they do expect you should provide. One single principle treated thoroughly, one religious practice explained without frills, the meaning of one incident in the gospel, or one remark in the epistle laid bare; that's all you can do. Be not tempted to ramble or to digress or to enlarge. You have time for no introduction — jump right in off the deep end. There can be no hectic peroration. There is simply a beginning, a middle and an ending.

Suitable times for a five minute sermon are early Mass, Christmas midnight, afternoon even songs in Lent, Holy Day forenoon masses, guild and club meetings when you are asked to "say a few words", and so forth. At Masses, a five minute sermon should be on a verse in the proper Scriptures.

BOOKS

Father Bull's is the best. All in the library are usefull, some more some less. Read them, but you will find them not of much practical benefit.

You must have a concordance: Cruden's is supposed to be the best. You cannot preach without one.

You should have a thesaurus, that is to say a book of synonyms and antonyms. Rogets' is supposed to be the best.

You may find some uses for a homiletic concordance of which there are several from which you can choose.

Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations" is useful for ornamentation of your sermons.