

Delivering Sermons.

This Essay was written by Elder J. N. Smith of West Liberty, Iowa, for the Preachers' Institute, recently held at Brighton, Iowa. Bro. S. was not present, and it was read by the reviewer, S. H. Hedrix; the review will appear next week.

The object of every sermon should be the highest possible good of those whom we address. Any motive other than this is unworthy of a man who stands before his fellow men as a proclaimer and an exponent of God's great plan of redemption.

The delivery of a sermon, the manner of its delivery, has much to do with gaining the desired object. It is one of the most important things connected with the sermon. A sermon may be elaborately prepared and may contain much truth and develop many thoughts, but if it is poorly or indifferently delivered, the object in view cannot be reached. Delivering sermons is therefore a matter worthy of the careful consideration of every preacher. To ascertain what things are necessary to the proper and effective delivering of a sermon is the object of this brief address. It is not expected that everything touching this matter will be produced, but simply the principal things which have to do with this question.

And first. There must be previous preparation. I mean not the preparation of the sermon. This is another subject and will not be considered here. I mean that there must be preparation of the heart to render the sermon effective. A sermon may be fully prepared. It may be written on paper or on the memory, but it should not be delivered without first preparing the heart to speak what it contains. In order to reach the heart we must speak from the heart. We cannot speak from the heart without preparing the heart by meditation on the greatness and preciousness of the Gospel and man's absolute need of its provisions. Added to this there must be such communion with God as will lead to the feeling that he is our strength. The preacher must feel that he is a co-worker with God and that God is in full sympathy with him in his work.

Second. Upon arising to deliver a sermon the first thing necessary is to obtain the proper pitch of the voice. This is as necessary in speaking as in singing. As no musician is indifferent to the pitch of voice, so no speaker can regard this as a matter of indifference. If the pitch of voice is too high, the delivery will be labored and unsatisfactory. If it is too low, much of the sermon will be lost because of its not being heard. Many preachers of good thought and chaste and expressive language have little power with their hearers because they do not pay attention to the pitch of their voice. This is not a difficult matter to determine. The tone of voice with which we begin speaking should be easy and natural, and yet loud enough to be heard in any part of the room in which we may be speaking.

Third. Having determined the pitch of voice, one should proceed with calmness and deliberation to the delivery of his sermon. No preacher should commence in a hurry. To be calm, to keep cool and to start slow are three things which every man must learn in order to be a successful preacher. Should we begin in a hurry, we will be certain to move too rapidly before the middle of the sermon is reached, and the latter part will be rapid and incoherent. Or if we should become weary with the first half and tone down the second half, the effectiveness of the sermon will be destroyed. It is on the "home stretch" that we should travel most rapidly; and so on the "home stretch" of the sermon we should speak the most rapidly. This can only be done however where there is perfect deliberation at the start. All preachers do not need to guard this point. Some are naturally deliberate and some are slow because it requires less exertion to be so than it requires to speak rapidly. But all who are naturally

quick, nervous and excitable need to put on the brakes at the outset of their sermons.

Fourth. The delivery of a sermon should be characterized by earnestness. No thought, however important can be impressed without deep earnestness. In order to succeed a preacher must impress all with his own faith in what he preaches, and this he cannot do without earnestness. Earnestness, born of the conviction that he has a message of transcendent importance to mankind, will atone for many defects of rhetoric and logic; and will secure to a preacher an honorable respect even from those who may not accept his message. One man will proclaim a fiction as though it were a stupendous fact, and thereby move men at his pleasure. Another man will proclaim the most interesting and important fact known to the world as though it were a fable, and men will sleep under the sound of his voice. Who that realizes the sinfulness, the weakness, the wretchedness of mankind and believes in the overabounding goodness of God can fail to be earnest in declaring these things to his fellow men. The world will judge, harshly it may be, that we do not believe these things if we proclaim them in a proxy, languid, monotonous manner. Earnestness does not imply loudness. The most intense earnestness is often expressed in the low tone of voice, it may be the solemn whisper which startles and thrills the hearer. Whatever your style may be, let it be earnest. Let your words come free and burning from the heart and you cannot fail to impress men with the truth which you declare.

Fifth. The delivery of a sermon should be characterized by great simplicity. This should extend to the language, the manner of speaking, the illustrations and the arguments which may be presented. Long words, great, high-sounding words should be discarded. A preacher, above all other public speakers, should cultivate the use of plain, simple language, because he of all others should be understood. To be able to roll great swelling words from the tongue, though it may astonish the ignorant, is no indication of learning or greatness. The greatest men use the simplest language. When I was a boy, I read the inaugural message of L. P. Chase, who had then for the first time been elected governor of Ohio, and there was not a word in it the meaning of which I did not know. That taught me a lesson I have ever remembered. We want to be understood. We must therefore adapt ourselves to the comprehension of those who hear us. After having preached about two years in a given place, it was remarked concerning me, by one of the thoughtful brethren, "He has not preached a single sermon since he has been here which a ten year old child could not understand." I felt that I could receive no higher compliment than this. I have listened to many sermons. I have heard many different preachers, and I have observed that the most profound, the most thoughtful are the most simple in their delivery. While making no claim to being profound I yet have striven to make myself always understood. That I have sometimes failed, I have no doubt.

Sixth. A sermon should be characterized by directness. In delivering sermons, many preachers make their introduction to consist in apologies and excuses. These, unless the circumstances are very remarkable, should never be permitted a place in the pulpit. If you must apologize or make excuses, do so after you have done preaching.

Again, many preachers consume much time in preliminaries. They approach the subject of the sermon cautiously. They reconnoiter although there might be a hidden foe somewhere near. Instead of this, a preacher

should go directly to his subject. Let there be as few preliminary remarks as possible. Let there be no cautions beating about. This takes time, and time with a preacher, in the pulpit, is precious. His sermon must not be tedious. But if his introduction is long, his sermon must be tedious unless the body of it is much too small for the head, in which case it does not look nor sound very well. A man should plunge right into his subject in the shortest and most direct way, and throughout his sermon he should employ the same directness in reaching all his points and conclusions. People do not want, in these times, to be led around in the wilderness. They prefer to go directly to the promised land. If a sermon is extemporaneous, and I do not, as a rule, favor any other kind, a preacher should be careful not to acquire the habit of repeating. Many have fallen into this habit, and thus have become irksome and dreary. I have never heard but one man who could indulge in frequent repetitions with increased effect. That man is Prof. C. L. Loos. One object of preaching is to awaken thought in the minds of the hearers. It is not expected that a sermon will be exhaustive. If it is addressed to the church especially, it should not be more than suggestive. The church should be furnished with food for thought. If they are babes in Christ, the food should be carefully masticated; but there are those who are not babes, they would prefer, and it is much better for them, to do their own masticating. Give them the thoughts, but do not weary them with continued repetitions.

Finally. A sermon should end when it is completed. One of the most important things connected with delivering a sermon is to quit when the sermon is done. It would seem that it would be easy to do this. It would seem to be one of the most natural things to do. And yet with many men it is one of the most difficult things. It is something which some men have never succeeded in learning. There should be but one finally to a sermon. I have heard preachers who had in each sermon from six to ten finalities. As a matter of course the patience of their hearers would be exhausted and the good impressions previously made would be destroyed. A sermon should be concluded with a few words of warning, of entreaty and encouragement. The manner should be earnest, affectionate and sympathetic.

In preaching, always preach the truth. Preach it plainly, preach it earnestly, preach it as though you knew it to be truth. Having done this, make a brief and tender appeal, founded upon the truth presented, and then sit down, leaving the results with God and the people.

Fruit in the Garden.

Many people of small means, or with only small investments in real estate, desire to grow what fruit they can in the garden, supposing that almost anything can be grown there which does not take much surface space. Large trees, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, &c., all may be crowded together (they suppose), provided the owner or his employes can get between them for culture or gathering. Some observations as to the habits or nature of different fruits will show that this is a mistaken idea.

The roots of most fruit trees in a congenial soil run a long distance—much farther, indeed, than their branches extend,—and the myriads of fibrous or feeding roots sent out at a near the extremities drain the soil both of moisture and fertility. It is not the shade of a tree so much as its roots that exhausts the soil, although quite often lack of growth near a tree is attributed to shade. Sunshine is important, of course, but sometimes partial shade is an advan-

tage, particularly during a drouth. Black raspberries succeed well in good ground when partially shaded, and for this reason they may be planted in a well cultivated orchard with a good prospect of success.

The garden is not a good place for blackberries, unless the owner or manager is able and willing to do a great deal of the work by hand, which is necessary to success. The roots of blackberries are great ramblers, and not only absorb a great deal of the soil's fertility in this way, robbing everything else within ten or a dozen feet, but from their roots hundreds of suckers are sent up, which, if not treated as weeds nearly as soon as they appear, will transform the ground all around into an impenetrable thicket. In field culture, planted in long rows, these are mainly kept down by the plough and cultivator; but in the little enclosures commonly known as garden horses are usually out of place. A man planting blackberries in a small garden, then should make up his mind in advance that he has work before him if he expects to continue in possession of the premises. If he is not watchful and lively, the blackberries will soon drive him out.

Strawberry plants are not so bad to contend with, as they never scratch; but if they are kept in hills (which, on some accounts is best), plenty of work may be expected on their account. They do not travel under ground, like blackberries and raspberries, but over it, sending out runners in every direction, which take root at every joint. If allowed to root, the whole adjacent ground becomes matted with them; and if left there to fruit, then all the weeds which spring up must be got out by hand. If the ground is very rich, one or two good crops of very fair berries may be expected from such a bed; then it "runs out." But if kept in hills, as originally planted, hoed occasionally, with some manure and mulching during the winter and spring, the hills will grow to an enormous size, an equal quantity of fruit will be obtained, the quality will average much better, and the ground need not be replanted under four years at least, and may last much longer. But to make this system a success, the runners must be cut off or broken off before they root; and to do this requires watchfulness, perseverance, and possibly some back-ache. If the other system is chosen under the impression that it "will save work," it should be remembered that when re-planted, a year must elapse before a crop can be obtained from it; and to do without strawberries every second or third year, because a new bed is not in bearing, is not agreeable.

Fruit trees of almost every kind and grape-vines are undesirable in a garden where vegetables are grown, because their roots travel too far. Peach trees in particular are bad. Dwarf pear trees are better adapted to such a place, and quinces, because the dwarf pear is grown on the quince root. But everything we plant needs room—room adapted to its habits. There is no gain in evercrowding, because Nature cannot be cheated or imposed upon. Each root planted will thrive exactly in proportion to the opportunities and advantages given it. No ambitious gardener need expect to grow great crops of fruits and vegetables on the same ground at the same time. Heavy manuring, with excellent culture, will increase the capacity of the soil, but even with this, there is an inexorable limit somewhere.—N. Y. Observer.

—Mrs. Lewis, the English lady who has recently come to this country to regulate its domesticity, wants to introduce thirteen-year-old boys as house servants. How the boys would enjoy playing pitch and toss with the crockery, "pass ball" with the biscuits and squirting water from the kitchen faucet over the maids. And then the well-known tendency of thirteen-year-old boys to keep their hands absolutely clean would add a relish to everything that might come on the table.

Literary Notices.

THE GARDENER'S MONTHLY in its familiar cover we find full of hints for Springtime gardening that should be put in practice. 814 Chestnut St., Phila.

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE.—The May number of this excellent periodical contains as usual, abundance of interesting and edifying reading-matter.

The essays are by Parsonous, Rev. Alexander McLeod, J. M. Whitton, D.D., Hattie Morris, T. L. Chase, LL. D., etc. The poems are numerous, and generally of great merit. Besides large amount of entertaining miscellany are the following interesting features: "The Home Pulpit," sermon by Joseph Parker, D.D.; "Hard Places in the Bible," by Rev. Dr. Deems; "Temperance Talk," "The Invalid's Portion and Thoughts for the Afflicted," "International Sunday School Lessons," etc., etc. There are 128 quarto pages in each number, and nearly 100 illustrations. Price of single copy 25 cents annual subscription \$3 postpaid. Address, Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 53, 55 and 57 Park Place, New York.

A LITERARY REVOLUTION CHALLENGE.—The old-line publishers have, very naturally, not been well pleased with the new famous enterprise, "The Literary Revolution;" and in depreciation of its character have laid special stress upon the claim that in cheapening books so vastly it is against the interests of American authors. The Revolution boldly meets the assertion by statements as follows: 1st. That they are already paying to American authors more money than any other publishing house that is less than twenty-five years established. 2d. That American authors rarely receive from publishers a copyright exceeding 10 per cent. upon the retail price of their books actually sold. 3d. That at least one-half, and probably more nearly three-fourths, of the books published by American authors have been published at the author's expense, the publishers furnishing no money, and paying no copyright, but themselves receiving a large percentage upon sales made. 4th. That they propose hereafter to pay to American authors for acceptable manuscripts a copyright of 15 per cent. instead of 10 per cent. and they claim that their low prices, and immense sales resulting therefrom, are far more in the interest of authors than much larger copyright on the commonly limited number of sales—"One thousand books, profit \$1.00 each, or \$1,000. One million books, profit one cent each, or \$10,000."

As an example of an American copyright book, they issue, in an exceedingly handsome form the famous poetical, historical and satirical American classic, "M'Fingal, an Epic Poem," by John Trumbull, with very full annotations by the celebrated historian Benson J. Lossing, LL. D. This poem is almost as much a part of American history as the battle of Bunker Hill itself, and Dr. Lossing has greatly increased both its interest and its intrinsic value by his historical comments and illustrations. The book was published a few years ago by one of the old publishing houses at the price of \$2.00 per copy, and had only a very limited sale. The publishers claim that the reception of their new edition guarantees a sale of at least 50,000, or even more probably 100,000 copies; and Mr. Lossing will, of course, reap a handsome reward, even from the small royalty upon the low price. American Book Exchange, New York City.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE for May might with some propriety be distinguished as the George Eliot Number, since it contains the first portrait ever published of George Eliot that would be recognized by her friends. The paper on George Eliot is contributed by C. Kegan Paul, and is very interesting as giving a true portrait of the woman as well as a just estimate of her place in literature. Among the illustrations of the paper are pictures of the interior of the drawing-room at the Priory where George Eliot held her receptions, and of her grave. Moncure D. Conway contributes a remarkably interesting article on Thomas Carlyle, with eight illustrations.

This Number opens with a novelty in the shape of a frontispiece—one of Abbey's full-page illustrations of Herrick's poems. The opening article of the number is devoted to "Music and Musicians in New York," by Frederik Nast, with fourteen excellent portraits—including those of the most distinguished orchestral leaders, operatic singers, violinists, and pianists who have taken a prominent part in the performances of the last two seasons in New York.

One of the notable features of this Number is the shortest love story ever contributed to any magazine. It is written by Edward Everett Hale, and is less than a page in length. R. M. Johnson contributes another of his inimitable Georgia sketches, entitled, "The Unexpected Parted of the Beazley Twins," illustrated by Frost.

George Ticknor Curtis contributes an important paper on the recent ruling by the Speaker of the British House of Commons. T. H. Robertson contributes a beautiful little poem, "Aprille," and Margaret E. Sangster one of striking merit, entitled "The Market Bell." Other poems are contributed by Nora Perry and Rose Terry Cooke.