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A table of contents for *Review & Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_rande\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_rande_01.php)

## A STUDY OF HOMILETICAL THEORY.

THE ORIGINS OF HOMILETICAL THEORY BEFORE A. D. 400

BY EDWIN CHARLES DARGAN, D.D., LL.D.

## ARTICLE II.

If the former article has shown that homiletical theory has a scientific value of its own, it may be assumed that a study of its origin and historical development will not be devoid of worth and interest. And interest is quickened by the fact that we are not left to conjecture and inference for a clear tracing of the rise and progress of homiletical theory. Of course many details are unknown, and the inevitable penumbra of obscurity and doubt envelops even the central certainties; but on the whole we have reason to congratulate ourselves that the main principles and general outlines of our subject rest upon well known or easily discoverable facts, and we may, therefore, have a feeling of security in reaching our results rather beyond what may be cherished in regard to many similar historic researches. Our task is further simplified by the consideration that doctrinal and critical prepossessions need not disturb the serenity of our pursuit. Happy we! Our only concern is to find and tell, as well as we can, how a theory or art of preaching arose and grew.\*

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\*NOTE.—To dispense with the multiplication of foot notes I give here the chief authorities used, quoted or referred to in the body of the article. To all I wish to make the fullest acknowledgment of indebtedness without surrendering any proper claim to personal labors and independent thought. The list follows, as nearly as practicable, the order of discussion in the article. Grote's History of Greece; Mommsen's History of Rome; Sears' History of Oratory; Jebb's Attic Orators; Davidson's Aristotle and the Ancient Educational Ideals; Bekker's Charicles; articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica on Rhetoric and on Aristotle; Cope's Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric; Aristotle's Rhetoric, both the Bohn translation and the far better one of Welldon, with the notes to each; Cicero's *Brutus* and *De Oratore*, the Bohn translations; Quintilian's *Institute of Oratory*; Watson's translation in the Bohn Library (translations preferred for convenience; there was consultation of originals when thought necessary); article in *Revue des Deux Mondes* for March 15th, 1884, by M. Gaston Boisier on *L'Instruction Publique dans l'Empire Romain*; Hatch's Hibbert Lectures for 1888; articles in *Hastings Bible Dictionary* on Jewish Education by A. R. S.

In this article we are concerned with those fundamental facts and forces out of which homiletical theory came in time to be developed. Our thesis is: That before the formulation of a distinct theory of Christian discourse by Augustine, at the turn of the fourth into the fifth century, such a theory was germinating all through the patristic age, and that the formative forces of this germination were two widely different but very effective influences which came together within that epoch and have never been discarded, namely, the classical and the Biblical. So we may describe this vast originative period as deploying three great forces toward the development of homiletical theory: (1) The Classical Impulse, or the development of the Graeco-Roman rhetoric; (2) The Biblical Impulse, or the unfolding of the principles of religious discourse in the Old and New Testaments; (3) The Patristic Impulse, or the germination of a theory of preaching during the second, third and fourth Christian centuries.

#### THE CLASSICAL IMPULSE.

The splendid oratory of the Greek and Roman peoples during the flourishing periods of their history is too well known to need more than this passing reference. Along with the practice a theory was also developed, and the Graeco-Roman rhetoric has been a rich storehouse of principles for all subsequent times. Indeed, there has been little of real value or original thought added to the ancient treatises. What has followed has been mostly in the way of necessary development

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Kennedy on Prophecy, by A. B. Davidson; in the Jewish Encyclopaedia on the appropriate subjects; Mabaum's *Judische Homiletik* (Einleit) and Dr. Phillipson's article in the Jewish Encyclopaedia on Homiletics; Stalker's Preacher and his Models, and Imago Christi; G. A. Smith's Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Test.; Schurer's History of the Jewish People in the time of Christ; Edersheim's and other Lives of Christ; various commentaries, the works on early Church History; Broadus' Lectures on the History of Preaching, and on Jesus of Nazareth; Paniel's *Geschichte der Christlichen Beredsamkeit*; Rothe's *Geschichte der Predigt*; Nebe's *Zur Geschichte der Predigt*; articles by Christlieb on *Homiletik* and *Geschichte der Prestigt*, in the Herzog-Plitt (second edition) *Real-Encyclopadie*; and on *Homiletik* by Keppler in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexicon*; works of Origen, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Ambrose and other Fathers so far as needed, usually in the translations of the Apostolic, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, but in the originals when desirable, as given in Migne's *Patrology* or other editions.

and of adaptation to later times, languages and conditions. The Greek theory of oratory received its most scientific and enduring expression in Aristotle's work on rhetoric. Aristotle died in 322 B. C. The Roman rhetoric found its best and completest treatment in the works of Cicero and Quintilian, the former of whom died B. C. 43, and the latter about A. D. 120, possibly earlier. The Roman rhetoric was very largely dependent on the Greek—as was the case in other departments of literature—though Quintilian's work is a far more finished and complete performance than Aristotle's. We thus see that at the time when the ancient rhetoric came in contact with the post-biblical preaching the theory of public speaking had reached a high state of development and needed only adaptation to Christian discourse. And homiletical theory, both in its origin and in its development, is the application of accepted principles of public speaking to the particular ends and demands of the Christian gospel. Our business now is to trace briefly the rise and perfecting of this ancient classical rhetoric up to its impact upon the even more ancient though partly parallel development of Biblical prophecy, preaching and hermeneutics.

The origin of the Greek people and their language cannot be traced, but their history and literature reveal them as a speaking people. In the Homeric poems the heroes are orators as well as warriors. Herodotus and Thucydides, as well as other historians, make record of speeches, and even report or invent them. Thucydides devotes especial attention to the noble oratory of Pericles. The drama also indicates the sway which oratory held in the popular esteem and customs. Lastly, oratory itself extended from practice into literature and theory. Published orations and treatises on the art of speaking are the latest development of Greek letters. Grote accounts for this oratorical element of Grecian culture as lying in the genius and language of the Hellenic peoples, in their love of liberty and their forms of government, in the parallel and sympathetic development among them of philosophy and art, in their popular assemblies, and especially in the nature of their law courts and systems of pleading. Jebb points out two

forces in the origin and development of technical studies of oratory: (1) The impulse given to Greek thought and culture by the dialectic philosophy of the Ionian schools; and (2) The technical rhetoric of the Sicilian teachers. Neither of these movements originated at Athens, but both found early lodgment and careful attention in the chief seat of Hellenic culture. The dialectic impulse came chiefly from Protagoras (who taught how to make the weaker cause appear the stronger), Prodicus (who taught how to distinguish synonyms), and Empedocles, the philosopher-poet of Sicily. The strictly rhetorical impulse came from Gorgias (a pupil of Empedocles), Korax, and Tisias (a pupil of Korax), all of Sicily. Grote was inclined to recognize Empedocles and Gorgias as the beginners of properly rhetorical instruction among the Greeks, but Jebb, with apparently better reason, considers Korax of Syracuse (B. C. 466) as the founder and father of Greek rhetoric, so far as that distinction may be given to any one man. At any rate it was he that published the first treatise which professed to give rules for the art of public speaking.

In B. C. 466, Thrasybulus, tyrant of Syracuse, was overthrown and a democracy established. By him and his predecessors much land had been, from time to time, confiscated and bestowed on different ones, so that on the fall of the tyrant numerous claimants for these lands arose, and there was great confusion as to titles. The causes had to be tried before the popular courts, and the claimants were required to present their arguments in person. Many were timid and unskilled in speaking. So Korax drew up a system of rules and taught the pleaders how to present their claims. Cope, in his Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric (p. 28), speaks very slightly of this famous treatise, saying that it was occupied wholly with the argument from probability which was nothing more nor less than to make the worse appear the better reason, "in other words, to subvert truth and justice". I have never seen the treatise nor any analysis of it and cannot therefore uphold or dispute the fairness of Cope's criticism; but it seems a little onesided and severe though no doubt well founded. Tisias was a pupil of Korax and carried on the work of his master.

Gorgias, a contemporary of these and a pupil of Empedocles, came to Athens on a political errand and so captivated the Athenians by his florid style of eloquence that he was (no doubt easily!) induced to remain and become a teacher of the art of speaking. After him the orator Antiphon combined theory and practice by being both a pleader in the courts and an instructor of others. Lysias, as is well known, wrote speeches for his clients; and Isaeus, the teacher of Demosthenes, did likewise, besides giving instruction in oratory.

The method of these earliest teachers has perpetuated itself. There was study of treatises, like that of Korax, which was speedily followed by many others; there was lecture or conversational discussion with the pupils; there was critical study, under the teacher's guidance, both of the poets and orators; and there were models furnished by the teacher, and exercises submitted by the pupils. Thus, as often, are we reminded of the famous saying of Sydney Smith, that "the ancients have stolen all of our best ideas".

Greek oratory and rhetoric—practice and theory—came to their culmination in the same age; the one in Demosthenes and the other in Aristotle, both of whom died in the year 322 B. C. The immortal treatise of Aristotle was the fruit of his reflections and teachings during the years of his great career as a teacher at Athens of all the elements of knowledge current in his day. The limits of this article forbid any study of this marvelous man and his manysided and lasting influence upon thought and culture. We have here in view only his rhetorical theory. Quintilian somewhere states that Aristotle was accustomed to talk on rhetoric with his pupils as he walked, on the covered ways (*peripatoi*, hence Peripatetic) of his famous Lyceum, in the afternoons. We might infer from the wretched style and arrangement in which the famous treatise reaches us that postprandial dullness and jog-trot conversation both figure somewhat in its preparation. Perhaps it is more charitable to assume that the work was not written by Aristotle at all, but is only the conglomerate notes of his pupils—and taken in afternoon walks! At any rate some sort of apology is due to posterity for the form in which this most

interesting and valuable production has come down to us. A brief synopsis of its contents is all that can be here presented.

After preliminary definitions and explanations the three main topics treated as essential to rhetorical theory are Arguments (*πίστεις*), Diction (*λέξις*), and Order (*τάξις*); and it might be assumed that the treatment would adhere to this lucid and comprehensive division, but it does so only in a general way. There are three books and the outline of them is this:

Book I. The Nature of Oratory and Rhetoric. (Aristotle himself gives no such indication of his matter. This heading is inferred from the contents.) In chapters 1-3 there are introductory definitions and explanations:—The relation of logic to rhetoric is stated, the utility of rhetoric defended, and rhetoric is defined as “the faculty of considering in any subject that which will induce belief.” It is the art of persuasion and therefore deals mostly with argument. Arguments are classified as (1) Technical (those which lie in the scope of rhetoric itself, *i. e.*, may be produced or discovered by the speaker); and (2) Untechnical (those which lie outside of the speaker’s mind, external, legal, documentary, etc.). The Technical or Rhetorical Arguments are further explained as being derived (1) from the character of the speaker, (2) from the disposition of the hearer, and (3) from the speech itself—*i. e.*, the form its argument takes, whether (a) enthymeme (rhetorical deduction) or example (rhetorical induction). The three kinds of oratory are then distinguished: (1) Deliberative (political, legislative); (2) Epideictic (no good English equivalent; show oratory, declamatory, platform, belonging to some occasion, memorial, invective, etc., in other words “the big speech”); (3) Judicial, or Forensic (pertaining to law courts). In chapters 4-15 there follows a more detailed discussion of these, with suggestion of the topics appropriate to each. As an appendix to the treatment of judicial oratory Aristotle mentions and dismisses the untechnical arguments, such as testimony, oaths, deeds, etc.

Book II. Discussion of the Technical Arguments—*πίστεις*. The threefold distinction is reduced to two by merging the

first two (those relating to speaker and hearer) into one, which are called *ethical* arguments, and are treated at length in chapters 1-18. In this section (2-11) there is an acute discussion of the feelings and how they are to be reached, such as anger and placability, love and hatred, confidence and fear, benevolence, pity, etc. Varieties of character and condition (age and fortune) are also brought under penetrating review, and the way to deal with them. Then the *logical* arguments, *i. e.*, those inhering in the speech itself, are taken up and discussed in chapters 19-26. First he briefly notices the common topics (*c.* 19), *i. e.*, those belonging to all kinds of oratory, such as possibility, fact (past or future), and degree. Then there is a strong study of the rhetorical induction and deduction (example and enthymeme). Of the latter there is an ill-arranged enumeration of twenty-eight varieties. Then comes a discussion of fallacies and of refutation.

Book III. Diction (Style *λέξις*) and Order (Arrangement, *τάξις*).

By way of preliminary in chapter 1 the threefold division into argument, style and arrangement is noted. Then the matter of delivery and voice is taken up. The subject is dismissed in a very brief but luminous and suggestive way. Then follows a disjointed and repetitious discussion of diction or style. It is full of good things, but does not readily lend itself to brief analysis, and to enumerate all the points would take too much space. Such matters as faults of diction and construction, use of words, figures of speech, purity, dignity, rhythm, etc., are presented with great good sense and spirit. The four chief "virtues" of style are held to be: clearness, fitness, impressiveness, and beauty. Lastly and briefly, chapters 13-19, arrangement is considered. The necessary parts of a speech are only two: Proposition and Proof; but Introduction and Conclusion may be added, making four. The introduction may be derived from the speaker, the subject (or occasion), the audience, or the opponent. The Statement, or Narration varies according to the kind of oratory—Epidictic, Forensic, or Deliberative. The Proof may be either direct (arguments appropriate to the kind of oratory again) or indirect, as interrogation, reply,

ridicule. The Conclusion has one or more of four aims: (1) To incline the hearer favorably; (2) To amplify or diminish for effect; (3) To appeal to feeling; or (4) To recall the line of thought.

It is a remarkable fact that this, the most suggestive and scientific treatise on rhetoric which appeared in ancient times, and almost in any time, came not from a professional rhetorician nor from an orator, but from a great all-round philosopher who was chiefly intent on other subjects but took this in as an important element of his teaching. This goes far to explain both the merits and the glaring defects of the work. It is easy to criticise its faulty arrangement, its inadequate definition, its dry and difficult style, its vexatious obscurities, and many other details here and there. But on the whole criticism is lost in admiration when we consider the ample knowledge, the wealth of illustration, the penetrating judgment and discrimination, the broad and firm grasp of fundamental and universal principles, the depth and acuteness of thought, and the exhaustiveness of suggestion displayed in this brief and vigorous treatise. How much Aristotle may have owed to his predecessors we may not say, but probably not much; for he commonly speaks very slightly of other works. As it stands Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is the supreme achievement of the Hellenic mind on the subject of which it treats. Besides the *Rhetoric* Aristotle wrote a less valuable work, to which he sometimes refers—the *Topics*, or helps to invention.

In the early Roman times there was a developing native oratory, but the later influence of the Greek practice and theory gave both to speaking and writing a Grecian method and bent. The lack of originality in the Latin literary product is notorious. Yet there was some slight theoretical instruction in public speaking in the early republican days of Rome. The Senate and Forum taught by example. Cato the Censor spoke contemptuously of rhetorical studies, and Crassus (himself an orator) when consul warned the people against the encroachment of Greek studies in this art. But Crassus had himself studied the Greek rhetoric, and Cato in spite of his growling had drawn up a set of rules for speaking derived

mainly from his studies in Greek literature. One of his short rules is worth remembering: *Rem tene, verba sequentur*. About B. C. 100 formal instruction in both Greek and Latin literature and rhetoric is said to have begun at Rome. Mommsen (Vol. III., p. 565) mentions an ancient Latin treatise on rhetoric dating from the time of Sulla as being "remarkable not merely for its close, clear and firm handling of the subject, but above all for its comparative independence as respects Greek models." Julius Caesar wrote a treatise on the art of speaking correctly, and dedicated it to Cicero—a fact which the orator mentions with pride (*Brutus*, chap. lxxii), and proceeds to say that Caesar "laid it down as an axiom that an accurate choice of words is the foundation of eloquence." Cicero's own rhetorical works are well known—the treatise on Invention (derived almost entirely from Aristotle's *Topics* and claiming no originality), the famous dialogue on the *Orator*, and the *Brutus*, or dialogue on the *Celebrated Orators*. These were not manuals of instruction, but literary treatises, very pleasant reading and giving careful discussion from many points of view of the accepted principles of oratory traditional and prevalent in Cicero's time.

But the great Latin treatise on rhetoric is the truly admirable and exhaustive work of Quintilian, the *Education of an Orator*, or, as sometimes called, the *Institutes of Oratory*. In passing from Aristotle to Quintilian we make a great leap: in time it is nearly four hundred years; in culture it is from the Greek at its culmination to the Roman in its early decline; in men it is from a great all-round thinker and genius to a cultivated specialist of excellent talent but no great depth of thought; in works it is from the original and suggestive but incomplete and unpolished production of a master mind chiefly intent and notably great in other departments, to the highly elaborated single achievement of a sound judgment and well-read intelligence directed through a long life to this one task. Little is known of the life of Quintilian. Born, it seems, in Spain he came to Rome in the brief reign of the emperor Galba, and remained there a teacher of rhetoric all his long life, dying probably in A. D., 118, or thereabout. He was highly es-

teemed both in character and as a highly successful teacher. He was one of the first of those who received at Vespasian's order a salary from the public revenues of the city; and Domitian committed to him the education of his great-nephews, presumable heirs to the purple. By the same emperor he was invested with the insignia of the consulship—an event which is thought to have occasioned Juvenal's sneer: *Si fortuna volet fies de rhetore consul*. Quintilian was incidentally a pleader in the courts, but with all his heart a teacher of oratory. And the practice and teaching of a lifetime are condensed in his famous book.

This elaborate and satisfying production is wrought out in twelve books. It was actually written in about two years, though the studies, labors and reflections of many years lay back of its publication. It covers a wide range—as the course of education was in that age chiefly rhetorical—discussing many subjects which would now be classed in other departments of culture. It is complete in topics, thorough and discriminating in treatment, and attractive in style. The first book treats of the primary education of youth preparatory to oratorical training; the second book discusses the nature and principles of rhetoric; from the third to the seventh inclusive, the topics of invention and arrangement are considered; from the eighth to the eleventh, style and delivery are handled; and in the twelfth there is discussion of some important practical matters such as the orator's morals, principles, choice of work, retirement, etc. The work has always been recognized by competent judges as a masterpiece. It has, of course, greatly colored and influenced all subsequent teaching and treatment of rhetoric. It is far superior to Aristotle's work as a manual, as well as in the completeness and orderliness of its treatment, though falling below in originality and power of thought. The two treatises taken together represent the consummation of the Graeco-Roman rhetoric.

A word must be said in regard to the place of rhetoric in the ancient systems of education. It was a leading place. The so-called Seven Liberal Arts, as later developed and correlated, were: Grammar, Dialectic (Logic), Rhetoric—the *Trivium*—;

and Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music—the *Quadrivium*. The post of honor belonged to the first three; and as both grammar and logic were closely connected with rhetoric, they were considered as necessary parts of the instruction of the orator. For teaching rhetoric, with grammar (or literature) and dialectic, teachers and schools abounded in all the ages of the Graeco-Roman education. During the first five centuries of the Christian era rhetoric held the chief place in school education. Vespasian is said by Suetonius to have ordered that the salaries of rhetorical teachers at Rome should be paid out of the municipal treasury, and this is held to be the beginning of state education. But Julius Caesar is said to have had a similar scheme in mind; and he actually did establish schools in Gaul. After Vespasian various emperors added to the dignities and emoluments of rhetorical teachers, in some cases making their salaries a charge upon the municipal revenues of the chief provincial cities. Marcus Aurelius endowed chairs of rhetorical instruction at Athens. In A. D. 425 Theodosius II, established a grand imperial school at Constantinople, directly under state control and supported by the government. It had thirty-one professors, most of whom taught rhetoric and the related subjects. Thus at the time that Christianity ceased to be persecuted and became a care of government, a great system of education in which the theory of speaking was a central, and perhaps the leading element, had come to be thoroughly wrought out and established. Not only was education in this way chiefly rhetorical in tone, but a fondness for popular eloquence had also been developed and maintained, and in some sort a critical (though often vitiated) taste had been cultivated. It was into a society thus educated and trained that the longer, though part of the time parallel, stream of Biblical prophecy and preaching poured its new volume of power. And thus the preaching and homiletics of patristic and mediaeval times received their classic impulse. But we must now trace the other great line of descent.

#### THE BIBLICAL IMPULSE

Ancient oratory as described by Aristotle and others, lacks the religious and profoundly moral element. This we find in

the prophets and preachers of the Bible. Had Aristotle been as well acquainted with the prophets of Israel as with the Greek orators, and had Quintilian made an appreciative acquaintance with these prophets and the early Christian preachers, there would have, no doubt, been added to their division into Forensic, Deliberative, and Epideictic oratory the Didactic or Hortatory genus. After the arrival of the Christian discourse or sermon it is no longer possible to frame a complete theory of public speaking which does not include homiletics. We are ready to ask then, Do we find any traces of rhetorical, or as we may now say, homiletical, theory in the Scriptures? Preaching there is, and of the noblest sort; but along with the practice is there anything which may fairly be called theory or art? If the question means any set of definite rules for the composing and delivering of religious discourses we shall have to answer in the negative; but if it means that certain principles to guide in the practice of preaching may be found in the Bible, we shall have to say that at least hints and suggestions are given in both the Old and the New Testaments.

As to the Old Testament, granting that the prophets represent the proclamatory and the scribes the didactic, and both classes the hortatory, elements of preaching as a practice, are there any indications of a corresponding theory of religious discourse? Were there any accepted canons and any definite instruction as to the manner of giving religious discourses? It must be confessed that the data for forming an opinion on this point are somewhat scanty; but they are not wholly wanting. A slight indication is given in the provision for general education among the Hebrews. Three stages are recognized in the progress of Hebrew education: (1) the early period when home was the place and parents the teachers; (2) a later period, after the exile, when to the preceding there were added the scribes and the synagogue; (3) the last period, that of the rabbis and their schools. In all these it was incumbent on the learners to read and copy and repeat passages of the Scriptures. In the later times the public reading and exposition of Scripture seem to presuppose at least some instruction for the better performance of the duty. In all periods we know

that careful attention was paid to the very words of the sacred text.

There is a more definite indication in the literature of the Old Testament. Its general character, especially in the prophetic writings, gives evidence of more or less of training in the art of expression, both oral and literary. There is unmistakable indication of care and presumably, therefore, of previous instruction in oratorical composition. Of course natural ability must be presupposed, and the divine call and empowering must not be forgotten; but along with all this one cannot read the remains of Joel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, and others of the minor prophets, and still less the immortal utterances of Isaiah and Jeremiah, without feeling sure that these men had studied to good effect the best ways of making their messages impressive to their hearers. They were not only great orators but trained orators. They not only knew, but knew how. The case of Amos is of special interest because in a well-known passage (7:14, 15) he disclaims being a prophet or a son of a prophet. But this disclaimer seems to refer to his occupation prior to his call and authorization rather than to lack of technical preparation for his work. On the contrary Dr. Davidson (in *Hastings' B. D.*, IV. p. 109) speaks of Amos as the "oldest literary prophet", and as having "the prophetic mannerism and technique". In the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes there are a few striking traces of rhetorical care, implying at least some rhetorical culture. Wisdom, instruction, and propriety of speech are noted in Prov. 1:1-4; and in Prov. 25:11 we have a rhetorical principle of perennial importance: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in network of silver". In the classic passage of Eccl. 12:9-12 we find a "preacher", or master of assembly, who was himself "wise" and "taught the people knowledge", who "pondered", "gave ear", "sought out proverbs", sought "acceptable words", or "words of delight"; there is praise of "the words of the wise" which are as "goads", or incitements to action, and as "nails" which hold a structure together; there is mention of "many books" and of "much study", with cautionary advices. Certainly from hints such as these we may infer that

in the preparation of men for public duty as religious teachers, attention was duly paid to the study and selection of the language and form of discourse.

Further inference as to the existence of rhetorical instruction among the Hebrews may be drawn from their institutions: the order of Prophets, the order of Scribes, and the Synagogue. The long continued activity of an order of men whose chief duty was public religious speech certainly implies not only a body of traditional principles for the better performance of that duty, but also some instruction in those principles. The fact that so-called "schools of the prophets" are known to have existed adds force to this deduction, but too much force must not be allowed to it. For the term "school", as applied to these communities or bands of prophets, is not itself found in the accounts of them; and we have no means of knowing how much attention was paid in these guilds or communities to study and disciplinary training for the exercise of the prophetic function. We may not, however, resist the conclusion that there was likely to have been some such instruction; but it would be a violent assumption to discover in the notices of these "sons of the prophets" a description of a modern theological seminary with its course in homiletics! (See 1 Sam. 10:5, 10, 12; 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 15; 4:1, 38, 6:1.) It is not important for our present inquiries to determine the time when the order of scribes arose. We find them well established in New Testament times, and they certainly existed long before then. Their main business was the interpretation and teaching of the law, but this was enlarged to mean the whole body of Scripture. So that theirs was primarily a teaching function. While thus the content of their teaching is the main thing, yet it is reasonable to infer some attention to the form also of their discourses. The hortatory or applicatory part of their teaching—called *haggada*—was really preaching. Prof. Robertson Smith, as quoted in Hastings' Bible Dictionary, says it was "doctrinal and practical admonition, mingled with parable and legend . . . . It was recognized as a rule of faith and life, and embraced doctrinal topics, practical exhortation, embellishments and fabulous developments of Bible narratives."

It is scarcely to be denied that for instruction in this kind of teaching there must have been something more than example, though as to the amount and details of such technical training we are left to conjecture. The public worship of the synagogue—which most probably originated after the exile, in Ezra's time, or from impulses started by him—carried with it the teaching and exhortation based on Scripture. There are well known instances in the New Testament of the use made by our Lord and Paul of this custom. And it is not unlikely that in the schools connected with the later synagogues some instruction was given in regard to the suitable performance of the function of public speaking from the Scriptures. But here again there is only conjecture. Yet it is surely not an unreasonable inference, in view of the culminative evidence which has been presented that there was some kind and degree of rhetorical or homiletical instruction among the ancient Hebrews.

Can we find any traces of homiletical teaching in the New Testament? The historic basis of Christian preaching as such, both in its proclamatory and didactic forms, is of course to be found in the work of Jesus and his apostles. They preached both in the synagogues and in the open air, in private houses and other more retired places, as occasion offered or required. The content of their message is also well understood and need not here be considered. Among their teachings did they include any instructions which may fairly be called homiletical? Did Jesus and his apostles teach others *how* as well as *what* to preach?

First, let us inquire whether the teaching of Jesus shows any attention, either in his own practice or in his instructions to others, to rhetorical, or homiletical, principles? Let us waive the curious question of any instruction, general or homiletical, which in his human development our Lord may have received. It is not improbable that he attended the synagogue school at Nazareth; but that he owed much if anything, humanly speaking, to the schools, either as to the contents or the manner of his teaching is exceedingly doubtful. The astonishment produced by his teaching, its marked contrast to that of the

scribes, and especially the wondering question (John 7:15), "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"—all go to show that the traditional lore and methods of the schools were little or nothing to him. But does his teaching show any care of form and method, as well as of content? Did he have and practice—we ask with all reverence—a homiletical method of his own? In his addresses as we have them there is wealth and variety of what may be called homiletical material. Scripture fills an eminent place, being employed as authority, quoted frequently, often expounded, habitually assumed as revelation, and revered as the word of God. Authoritative assertion, based on his glorious consciousness of truth, gave power to his speech and impressed his hearers as one of his most marked qualities. Yet also he frequently used argument with powerful effect, and that both in its direct and indirect forms; his refutative logic was often crushing. And what is to be said of his wonderful illustrations? From the more elaborate parables down to brief mention and passing allusion there was mastery of this method of preaching.\* Thus in the Master's own practice we find the indispensable and perennial homiletical categories of Scripture, Experience, Argument, Illustration, all used with marvelous skill to the crown of them all; Application. But what of order and language, or in rhetorical phrase, Arrangement and Style? While we discover no prominence of logical order or distinctly marked analysis in the recorded discourses of Jesus, there is yet in most of the longer ones an evident order and progress of thought, showing that he was not indifferent to this element of power in public discourse. The fadeless charm of his language scarcely needs comment; at times sweet simplicity, then suggestive obscurity, poetic grace, logical strength, fitness to thought and occasion, moving eloquence—all were at his command. We do not find in our Lord's sayings or teachings any definite instructions which could be called homiletical; but his own example of careful speech, his remarks (Matt. 12:36, 37) about the value of words, his teachings on many other points of de-

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\*His application of truth to his hearers, both individual and general, is thorough, appropriate; often final.

tail in regard to hearing and preaching, his instructions in regard to prayer, and the general command to preach, may be taken as giving some hint at least that in his unrecorded teachings he may have sometimes touched upon matters regarding the forms and methods of presenting truth. It may be worth while to remark that the language of Matt 10:19, 20, cannot be interpreted as forbidding preparation for preaching; for it distinctly refers to over-anxiety on the part of the disciples in regard to their defence when they should be brought before rulers for the gospel's sake. (See also Luke 12:12, 21:15.)

In the Acts and Epistles there are some data from which we may infer at least a measure of attention to homiletical theory. The reported addresses of Peter in the early chapters of Acts show excellent homiletical skill. The narrative manner of Stephen's speech (Acts 7) suggests the synagogue method, as does also that of Paul in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13). There is clear evidence in Paul's addresses of rhetorical training, both Jewish and classical. The short report (which most probably was given by himself) of the notable address on the Areopagus at Athens reveals not only a rare degree of oratorical skill, but the sure traits of culture. And the same may be said of the defence before Festus and Agrippa. In the Epistles there are a few data of interest. In 1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1-5, 13, we have the passages in which Paul depreciates as a medium of communicating the gospel "the words which man's wisdom teacheth", stating that on coming to Corinth he determined to "know nothing among them but Christ and him crucified." These utterances have been unwarrantably pressed in the interest of discarding proper study, and also in support of the unfounded hypothesis that Paul was conscious of having made a failure at Athens when he attempted to use oratory in its home, and came to Corinth chastened and determined to discard in the future any attention to rhetoric. All this seems to me utterly wrong. It is far more likely that Paul would have taken his speech at Athens as an illustration of the principle here laid down. For when we remember that the style of popular speaking in that sub-classical age was degenerate and tawdry, bombastic and extravagant, we must

see that the noble restraint, the sincere dignity, the faultless style of the Athenian address is as far as possible removed from the prevailing rhetorical fashion. It is good homiletics at any time and place to discard the meretricious aids of false taste and exaggerated conceits, and deliver a plain, chaste, straightforward message. This Paul did and commended. In the Epistles to Timothy there are several passages which contain excellent homiletical hints, though of course nothing like formal homiletical instruction. Among the qualifications of the bishop (1 Tim. 3:2) is that he shall be "apt to teach", implying skill as well as character and knowledge. In 1 Tim. 4:13-16 Paul urges that Timothy "give attention to the reading, the exhorting, the teaching"; that he should not neglect his gift, that he should "meditate on these things, and that he should "take heed to himself and his teaching". In 1 Tim. 5:17 he speaks of the elders "who labor in discourse and teaching". In 2 Tim. 1:13 he mentions a "form of sound words"—and though this refers probably to the body of doctrine, yet the phrase is significant. In 2 Tim. 2:2 he exhorts that what Timothy had received he should commit to "faithful men who should be able to teach others also"; in verses 15, 16 he urges that Timothy be diligent to be a good workman, shunning "profane and vain babblings"; and in verse 24 again insists on aptness to teach as an indispensable qualification for the minister. We cannot be wrong in inferring from these hints that a previous and continued training for the preacher's task would, in Paul's view, include attention to the manner as well as the content of his message. And on the whole we may say that while nothing like formal homiletical instruction in the modern sense may be found in the New Testament, yet there are clear indications that the ability to present the truth of God effectively in human speech is both exemplified and enjoined by the highest authority. And this surely is the essence and justification of homiletical theory. We come now to study the third and last of the ancient originative forces which resulted in the formation of a theory of preaching, or art of Christian discourse.

## THE PATRISTIC IMPULSE

After the Scriptures the Fathers. The period embraced in the scope of this article extends from the Apostolic Fathers to Augustine. We must keep in mind that Augustine's epoch-making little book *On Christian Teaching* contains the first attempt to formulate and teach homiletical principles. With it, therefore, homiletical theory properly begins. The first three books were published in A. D., 397, the fourth in 426. So that for convenience we may take A. D., 400 as the dividing line from the ancient development, and let our present discussion fall between A. D. 100 and 400.

Within this important and fruitful epoch the two lines of development which we have already traced worked together side by side to produce a real theory of preaching at its end. The old illustration of two streams coming together is apposite here. After the junction each in a measure keeps its place till at last there is fusion. The classical rhetoric and the biblical principles of preaching for a time flowed parallel in the same channel and finally mingled. The dominance of rhetoric in the school education of the time must ever be borne in mind. This had a double effect on homiletical theory: (1) It secured to the educated by actual culture, and to the uneducated by imitation and custom, the application of the common principles of rhetoric to preaching. An educated man entering the Christian ministry in that age could be safely assumed to know how to construct and deliver a discourse. We know that this was true of the great preachers; and what was the case with them was true of others to some degree. (2) But on the other hand the exaggeration, bombast, unreality, and sophistry which marked and marred the oratory and rhetoric of the age put many of the Fathers into a critical and cautionary attitude toward the rhetorical teaching then current. We have seen already that Paul probably alludes to these perversions in his remarks to the Corinthians about the "persuasive words of man's wisdom". We find a good deal of this caution in the allusions of the Fathers, and it was far from unnecessary. So that the attitude of the Christian teacher toward current rhetorical theory as applied to preaching was eminently a correc-

tive one. Theory did not so much need to be learned as chastened and applied to Christian uses.

In regard to the working out of biblical principles of public speech in the practice and teaching of the Fathers there are four matters of importance to be remembered: (1) The influence of the noble content of the gospel message and the Bible morality upon those who would set them before others must not be forgotten. This was a note which ancient oratory and the teaching of it never had. (2) More particularly the actual use of the prophets and apostles as models of effective religious speech, especially as they were regarded as immediately inspired of God, must not be overlooked. (3) But along with these considerations a most powerful influence in shaping homiletical theory was the very nature of preaching itself, as being primarily an interpretation and application of Scripture. As oral tradition declined and the canon of Scripture was formed and closed, and as the body of disciples grew and became diversified, the preaching became more and more an exposition and turning of Scripture to the spiritual and moral profit of the hearers. Thus arose the "homily", or talk, and the basis of it was a careful interpretation of the Bible. And so in all the after history of preaching and its theory the relation of homiletics to hermeneutics has been close and vital. (4) Nor must we forget that along with the authority of the word that of the teacher was an important matter. Paul had already recognized this, and with the development of the episcopate in the patristic age the appointment and authorization of the presbyters as teachers and preachers become highly important. This tended to increase the dignity of the preacher and render more needful his attention to the form of his discourses. And with this the leadership and care of the congregation had influence in determining the theory of pastoral duty in general and hence of preaching also. In the writings of even such great preachers as Gregory, Chrysostom and Ambrose pastoral care receives more attention than homiletical theory.

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers, so far as I have noticed, do not contain anything of value as to the progress of a theory of preaching. The discussion of teachers and

prophets in the *Didache* says nothing on the point; and the *Ancient Homily*, formerly known as the *Second Epistle of Clement*, is not a production of special merit as a sermon, nor does it mention or suggest anything of force as to rhetorical training. With the rise of the Apologists in the second century we come upon evidences of a more liberal culture in the Christian writers, and this naturally carried with it more attention to rhetoric. Tertullian—who on some accounts may be classed with the Apologists—was trained as a rhetorician and lawyer, and his writings show the influence of his training as well as the natural traits of the orator. It is not, however, till we come to Origen in the third century that we can feel at all sure-footed in dealing with our subject. In the preaching, teaching and enduring influence of that great scholar and teacher we begin to discover more distinct traces of a real art of preaching, and of instruction in its principles. There is no formal treatise on preaching among his works; but both Paniel and Nebe have collected passages from his homilies which enable us to present his homiletical teachings in a somewhat orderly way. It is a pleasure to acknowledge indebtedness to these scholars and to follow their leadership.

Origen's example and teachings encouraged a higher appreciation of the homily as a studied discourse. Before his time it had been only a loosely connected string of comments on the passage of Scripture selected. Nor does it in fact become much more than that in his hands; yet there is progress both in preparation and in form. But he is careful to warn against the abuse of rhetoric. He compares the prevalent rhetoric, dialectic and grammar to the leaven of the Pharisees, which the disciple of Christ should avoid, yet says: "But a lucid discourse, the splendor of eloquence, and the art of arguing are with propriety admitted to the service of the word of God." Thus we see that it was the abuse and not the use of rhetorical principles that he condemned. In this connection it is to be remembered that Origen insists upon the preacher's character as essential. Indeed both Aristotle and Quintilian urge with all emphasis that the orator must be a good man; and the Christian teacher could surely do no less. The preacher,

according to Origen, must not be an artificial and ambitious orator, but a pure and spiritual man, a fit channel and instrument for communicating the word of God to his hearers. But the main element of Origen's homiletics was hermeneutical. He insists that the preacher must get his message from the word of God; and to this end, of course, study and interpretation are necessary. Origen did not invent but he did elaborate and practice what is known as the allegorical method of interpretation. In his time and in his hands there were three modes of interpreting any given passage of Scripture: (1) the grammatical and historical, by which the exact meaning of the text was sought and set forth; (2) the moral or hortatory, whereby the ethical doctrine of the text was applied to the hearers; and (3) the allegorical, or spiritual, whereby some mystical or hidden sense beyond the literal meaning and especially suited to minister to the spiritual life was wrought out and applied to the purpose of edification. Later the methods were increased to four by dividing the last into the tropological and the allegorical, or the figurative and the spiritual. The example and teaching of Origen did much to establish the allegorical interpretation as particularly appropriate to preaching, and it is due to him more than to any other individual, perhaps, that this abuse has been so persistent in all preaching since his time. The fathers of the Western Church, notably Ambrose and Augustine, adopted it with enthusiasm and practiced it with amazing ingenuity and power. But we must do Origen the justice to say that his motive in adopting and defending this spiritualizing of Scripture was primarily devotional and practical. He was earnestly intent on making every word of Scripture count to the "deepening of the spiritual life"—to use a modern phrase. And this purpose, in his mind, was of the utmost importance in preaching. Four points, then, will summarize Origen's homiletical theory: (1) The preacher's character must be sound and devout; (2) He must get his message from Scripture by a careful study of all its possible meaning, literal and figurative; (3) He must faithfully apply this meaning to life; (4) He must take thought for the form and method

of his discourse, using but not abusing the accepted principles of the art of public speaking.

In the earlier Latin fathers not much of importance for our study is found. As already remarked, Tertullian was a trained rhetorician, and the gifts of the orator were his also, but nothing is quoted from him—nor have I myself observed anything in such of his writings as I have read—in the way of a theory of preaching. Yet his practice and style were potent. Cyprian was an ardent admirer and follower of Tertullian, and his writings likewise show the training and practice of a rhetorician. In his letter to Donatus Cyprian speaks as follows of the relations of secular and sacred speech: “In the courts, in platform addresses let voluble ambition boast a wealth of eloquence. But when it is speech concerning the Lord God, then pure sincerity of speech rests for persuasives to faith, not upon the powers of eloquence, but upon things (*i. e.*, reality). In fine, use not eloquent but forcible words, not those polished to attract a popular audience by artificial speech, but simple enough to proclaim with plain truth the divine love”. Surely this is good enough homiletical theory for any time. Paniel quotes similar language from Arnobius, who among other good things says: “When things far removed from show are under discussion, *what* may be said is rather to be considered than *how pleasingly* it may be said.”

When we come to the Fathers of the fourth century it is necessary to bear constantly in mind two most important considerations: (1) The great prevalence of rhetorical instruction in the schools of the empire; and (2) the toleration and patronage of Christianity by the state. The educational and social advantages thus given to preaching profoundly affected both its practice and its theory. We find toward the middle and end of the fourth century one of the great historic culminations of preaching; and the five most famous pulpit orators of the age were, without exception, rhetorically trained. These were Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, in the East; and Ambrose and Augustine in the West—all of whom enjoyed in marked degree all that the best rhetorical instruction of the times could bestow. So also was it with others.

I have not found in my little reading of Basil anything at all upon the theory of preaching, but the more exhaustive research of Paniel brings out the following. He speaks in one of his homilies of the necessity of varying the style of discourse according to the subject and audience, and says: "For as a man whose business is war and another who pursues farming do not use the same implements. . . . so also the preacher cannot use the same mode of speech when he exhorts to the acceptance of the faith and when he opposes adversaries." In another homily he urges that the discourse should be as concise and pointed as is consistent with clearness, "so as to show many things in few words, and on account of its brevity to be easy for the memory to carry away". These excerpts can only make us wish that we had more of Basil's theory.

There is not much from Gregory Nazianzen, but that little is worth while. In one of his songs (quoted by Paniel) he stoutly takes issue with the notion (its age is no recommendation to it!) that it is more pious to be unprepared so as to give free scope to the Holy Spirit. In one of his homilies also he speaks similarly and says it is better in an assembly to speak and hear five intelligible words than to pour forth an inexhaustible speech like a drum, but without edification. It is evident that this great master of sacred eloquence—no matter what his practice—at least in theory had no great respect for the sky-lark method of preaching—"profuse strains of unpremeditated art". We should look to find some homiletics in Gregory's famous oration at Nazianzus on his return from his retirement to Pontus, in which he discusses with eloquence and power his conception of the pastoral life and work. But it is mostly devoted to the practical and ethical side of the preacher's life, with little that even remotely bears on the theory of preaching. Teaching and preaching are named among the elder's duties, and adequate and studious preparation are insisted on, but character and wisdom rather than rhetoric are the main topics of this eloquent and thoughtful discourse. One sentence at least I must quote, where in speaking long and acutely of the folly of putting unprepared men into the ministry, he says: "And we may rightly, in my opin-

ion, apply to them the saying of Solomon, 'There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, a man wise in his own conceit'; and a still greater evil is it to charge with the instruction of others a man who is not even aware of his own ignorance." Chrysostom, Ambrose, and especially Gregory the Great, were all deeply indebted to this vigorous oration of the Nazianzen for their more elaborate treatises on the Pastoral Office. In his practice of eloquence Gregory was often betrayed into soaring and prolixity. Perhaps his theory was better.

The world-famous preacher, John Chrysostom (347-407) of Antioch and Constantinople, was carefully educated by Libanius, the best teacher of rhetoric of the age. His sermons and homilies, of which a great number remain, give constant evidence both of his native powers and of his excellent training and practice. The three parts of the typical preacher's work are well illustrated in this ancient prince of the pulpit. He was an admirable pastor, shrewd in his knowledge of human nature and faithful and loving in service of his flock. He was a careful and untiring student, especially of the Bible; his principle of interpretation being that of Antioch rather than of Alexandria; that is, he paid chief attention to the liberal and moral teaching of the word, with little or no allegorizing. And to crown it all he was a pulpit orator of the first rank. His practice is everything, and but little theory is to be found in his works. Scholars have culled from his sermons here and there passages in which he speaks of preaching. These set forth his homiletical principles. The preacher must found his discourse on the word of God, discard ambition for oratorical display and applause, and seek first of all the spiritual edification of his hearers. Over and over again these principles are insisted on. More technically, he says somewhere that an introduction is necessary to a well ordered discourse, for a number of reasons. And to this his practice agrees; his introductions are usually excellent. More than in the homilies we might expect to find Chrysostom's theory of preaching set forth in his famous and delightful treatise *On the Priesthood*; but he is here chiefly occupied with the pastoral side of the work, and does not say much about preaching. But that little is well worth remembering. (Reference is here made to the

translation of B. H. Cowper.) In Book IV., 3, Chrysostom asserts that ability to speak well is necessary for a presbyter, and adduces Paul as an example. In the following chapters he elaborates this and gives illustrations from Paul's writings in support of his argument. In Book V. he urges (c. 1) that to speak well requires much labor and study (c. 5) that the learned preacher must labor even more than the unlearned, and (c. 7) that he should compose his addresses with a view solely to pleasing God and not man. It is worth quoting what this eminent preacher says as to the need of work: "For since speaking comes not by nature but by learning, although one may attain to perfection in it, he who did not cultivate the faculty with constant zeal and practice would at last turn out destitute of it." That he conscientiously took pains himself is beyond all doubt.

It remains to mention the two great Latin fathers—Ambrose and Augustine. But as our next article will deal with Augustine's work on preaching our attention is here restricted to Ambrose, the eloquent and celebrated bishop of Milan toward the end of the fourth century. Ambrose had the conventional rhetorical education, and had been trained for the civil service. His practice was formed on that of the Greek preachers of the Alexandrian method of interpretation, and his allegorizing is excessive. I have found little if anything of homiletical value in his writings. In his treatise on the duties of the ministry he owes much (by way of adaptation) to Cicero's *De Officiis*, and much (by way of borrowing) to Gregory Nazianzen, but there is nothing of special interest on the theory of preaching. In his epistle to Constantius (Migne. Pat. Lat. tom. 16, col. 918, seq.) Ambrose says that a preacher's sermons should be flowing, pure and clear, that by his gentle arguing he may pour sweetness into the ears of the people, and by the graciousness of his language soften down the crowd that they may willingly follow him.

We see then that in the Fathers there are only scattered hints and traces of a homiletical theory, but that it was forming on the combined principles of the classic rhetoric and of Scripture. It was getting ready to find formal and enduring expression through the great mind of Augustine.