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hollow wind. Men of far distant lands, recognizing in his laws and maxims the immutable principles of justice, have caught up his words, and borne them on from age to age. Thus the dead survive, and the authority of greatness passes round the globe, transmitted by

"Airy tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses."

ARTICLE VI.

THE DISTINCTIVE IDEA OF PREACHING.

By Calvin Pease, Professor in the University of Vermont.

ALL powerful and convincing utterance of religious truth is marked by these *three* things, viz. *it comes from the heart and personal experience of him who utters it; it is fresh and new like water from the spring; it is, moreover, that old and "sure word of prophecy," which has been tested and confirmed in the experience of all Christians in all ages of the church.* There is, therefore, equal accuracy and beauty in our Saviour's comparison of the well-instructed scribe to "a house-holder who bringeth forth out of *his own*¹ treasure things *new and old.*" Matt. 13: 52. The most effective and stirring thing which any man can utter, is that which he knows most clearly and feels most deeply. All laborious straining and painful reaching after something more and better and deeper, than one's own proper thoughts and sentiments, must always, inevitably, defeat itself, and bring out only that which is far weaker and far poorer than those familiar sentiments, which lie on the very surface of the mind. These, as far as they go, are real. But the strain to produce more than one has, and to do more and better than one can, will bring forth nothing but wind; mere resemblances to some pattern, which it would fain imitate; shadow without substance; form without life. And so nature and truth get their revenge upon the mind, by justifying its poor opinion of itself. The depths of human thought and

¹ αὐτοῦ.

feeling find their outlet, only through the channels of our most familiar thoughts and most habitual feelings. These must first be set in motion, before the pent-up waters beneath can get vent, and come up to the surface, and flow forth in a full and gushing stream. Let a man be true to his own mind; and set a generous value upon his own sentiments and affections, and he will soon find his confidence justified, and his generosity rewarded. They will soon furnish him with the finest and richest products of which his nature is capable. And we actually find that the very greatest productions of literature are characterized, more than by any other thing, by a simple, natural, fresh and appropriate utterance of truth, so seemingly familiar, that we are surprised less at their magnitude and weight, than that they should never have occurred to us in the same light before. Thus, too, it often happens, when men have been diving as deep as they can, that they find the pearls which they bring up, to be nothing more than thoughts and convictions which had escaped their notice, only because they were so familiar. It is, therefore, from no far-sought foreign region, that we are to bring the best and liveliest products of the mind, but from our own domestic treasure; out of our own living experience; out of our own practical convictions; out of our own familiar thoughts. It is from this fountain alone, that there can be any genuine issue of *the old* and *the new*.

The phrase, "new and old," is not to be regarded as referring to two different classes of things, but to the same things in different relations. Truth, contemplated in its principles, is old; contemplated in its practical application, it is ever new; developing a new phase in all the variations of circumstances and conditions. It is new also to each discoverer, but still the old truth. Every individual must apprehend it for himself afresh; he must make a fresh application of it to his own life and conduct; and when so apprehended and applied, it will often seem to him as something known to himself alone; and, as such, he will often proclaim it to others — his first experiences of it are so vivid and joyous.

I. The phrase, "old and new," suggests *the true idea of preaching*.

1. Preaching is distinguished from the religious essay, and the hortatory effusion, on the one hand; and from the theological treatise, on the other, by being, at the same time, *spiritual* and *practical*. These terms, therefore, are not so much descriptive of a particular kind of preaching, as a sort of *epexegetis* of the term *preaching* itself. That is, preaching is the methodical and clear presentation of the principles of Christianity, with direct reference to their bear-

ing on the practical conduct of men, and for the immediate object of the salvation of their souls. In so far as it touches on the vital principle of Christianity, as substantiated and discerned by faith, it is spiritual, i. e. it is *the old*; in so far as it concerns the conduct of men, it is practical, i. e. *the new*. In order, moreover, to its being truly either, it must be, at the same time, both; for no preaching is in reality practical, which is not thoroughly spiritual; and no preaching is in reality spiritual, which is not thoroughly practical. We may hence perceive the erroneousness of the common opinion, that all kinds of practical teaching, and practical preaching especially, are contradistinguished from that which is grounded in principles. The proper opposite to spiritual or *doctrinal* is not *practical*, but *empirical*. The proper meaning of the term *practical* is the reduction of principles to practice. It is the utterance and enforcement of truths which concern our spiritual being, our spiritual wants, our spiritual relations, and the spiritual world, as bearing directly upon, and involved in, our daily life and conduct; thus furnishing the interior life, out of whose silent but constant energy, all right moral conduct must spring and derive its character. Whatever is designed merely to influence the conduct at the moment, and which contains no element proper to influence it under all circumstances, is, of all things, the most unpractical. It is, by its own express terms, an expedient for the time and is not intended for *practice*. It is a mere make-shift, whereby a man may evade a duty, or *seem* to perform it, by changing his apparent relations to it. The true idea of the practical, therefore, contemplates that which may be applied in life, not in a single instance only, or under a given set of circumstances — for so one would be ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth — but everywhere, and always, as a principle of life, as the spirit of the conduct, as the habitual practice, in distinction from a mere expedient, an isolated act, with no more solid ground than the convenience of the hour. And this affords one test of true spirituality of doctrine, viz. that it reaches a man in all his moods and states, in all his circumstances and occasions; both pointing out the line of duty, and communicating the vigor and constancy which shall urge him onward and sustain him in the discharge of it.

2. On the other hand, the spiritual in preaching is the reference of the outward conduct and the moods of mind, to the internal principle in which they have their root and spring; and this internal principle itself, to the Spirit of God, by whose direct and immediate agency it was begotten in the heart. Thus, while the practical is

the reduction of principles to practice, the spiritual is the reference of practice back to principles. It inquires directly after the motive which prompts the act; after the volition which nerves the arm; after the state of heart which determines the volition. The spiritual, therefore, is the central principle of life and activity. Its existence in the soul necessitates activity; and the preaching of it, is but the inculcation of that spirit of faith and obedience and life which, from the essential nature of it, must prompt to a good life and exemplary conduct. Such life and conduct are only its evidence and manifestation. This is but the shining of the spiritual light which has been kindled in the soul; it is the pure water from the pure fountain; it is the good fruit of the good tree; it is the city that crowns the hill, which cannot be hid. Hence the spiritual creates and compels the practical, just as, on the other hand, the practical presupposes and evidences the spiritual.

When the preacher dwells upon this spiritual element, he is bringing out of his treasure the things which are *old*; the eternal principles which reside at the heart and fountain-head of all moral activity, of all religious life. And it is when he insists on the application of these, in all the vast diversity of condition and character, and sets forth their progressive unfolding and growth, whether in the history of the church, or in the life of the individual, that he brings out the things which are *new*. The common remark, therefore, that "religion is not a doctrine but a life," is in part, and only in part, true. It is not merely a doctrine without a life, neither is it merely a life without a doctrine. The whole truth is, that it is *both*; a doctrine and a life; i. e. not the abstract conception of a doctrine, but its concrete development and working, with an individual life, varying, in its special form, with the character and circumstances of the individual. The business of the preacher is, to hold up this life, both in its principle and in its concrete development, as it is manifested in the conduct of men, and especially in the teaching and examples of the Bible. Hence, as has been already remarked, preaching is to be distinguished from the *hortatory* effusion on the one hand, and from the theological treatise on the other, — not as opposed to either, but as the union or synthesis of the two, with the modifications of both, which such a synthesis requires.

II. The vitality and truthfulness of this idea of preaching may be further seen, from its combining *unity* and *simplicity* with *variety*.

1. The Scriptures furnish one great principle, one central idea, out of which all its other ideas and principles spring, and to which

they all point back. This central idea is that of the cross, whereby "in the dispensation of the fullness of times all things might be gathered together in one in Christ." Here is the point from which the preacher must always start, and towards this point, as a centre, all his thoughts must converge. The right and legitimate relation of the matter he proposes to handle, to this vitalizing centre, is the great secret of his method; and furnishes the key, at whose cunning touch, fly open the ample doors of the treasury of the "new and old," and make subject to his use its exhaustless wealth. In this also he finds his principle of selection and exclusion. In the wide domain of human knowledge, in the large field of human interests, where the mind is tempted to linger, and the imagination to disport itself, it writes the sentence of stern prohibition: "Touch not," upon everything which does not bear upon the one main purpose, which does not stand in close relations with the great central truth. In this way, many a fervid feeling, and many a deep speculation are relentlessly barred out. In the light which shines from the cross, it will often become manifest, that it is not every glowing rapture with which the heart may burn, that is suited to add anything to that ever-swelling, ever-advancing stream of powers and agencies by which "the fullness of the times" is to be ushered in, and God's "elect gathered from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." Much, that, contemplated from some less central position, may seem, even to the Christian, weighty and important and full of solemn interest for the human mind, will be set aside as idle or irrelevant, in clear view of God's great purpose of "gathering together in one all things in Christ; both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Here, themes which the mind would gladly dilate and embellish, are dismissed with a bare touch; and here again, the pen must pause and dwell for the minutest details and the most searching analysis, on what the first impulse would be to pass slightly and cursorily over. In one place, the preacher would delight to tarry in theological disquisition, or descend to the office of delectation and entertainment, where the true line of his method would lead into strains of rebuke and terror. In another place, where his own excited and indignant feelings would impel him to indulge in the terrible fulminations of the law, and in frightful pictures of destruction and perdition, he is reminded, by a vision of the cross, that he must "exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." It is only through the simplicity and unity derived from the great central idea, that truth and propriety can be secured.

2. This simplicity and unity will exclude from the sermon all *strictly scientific or theological presentation of religious truth*. Theology, technically so called, and preaching, belong to entirely distinct spheres. The end of theology is science; the end of preaching is practice. The attempt to mix them results in loss on both sides. It is joining a *new* thing to an *old* thing; it is putting "new cloth into an old garment," instead of doing what is required, viz. to bring forth *one* thing, which shall itself be both "new and old." Regarded in the light of science, such a production cannot be, after all, a thorough, profound and comprehensive handling of a doctrine of theology; it cannot attain either to the vigor, or the range, or the minuteness or the accuracy of high, scientific speculation; while, in view of the proper ends of preaching, it will be sure to eliminate every element of impassioned fervor and persuasive force. It does not furnish "scope and verge" for the former; its course cannot be run in the short curriole of the sermon; and yet the domain of faith and experience has been abandoned, by the entrance into that of speculation and logic. The solid realities of the heart have been passed by, without securing a firm hold upon the logical subtleties of the brain; what God has planted, and his grace has developed are spurned, with the view of bringing forth, as the treasures of true wisdom and knowledge, that which, from the nature of the case, can only be the lifeless beings of one's own creation; the cobwebs of one's own speculation. For the propositions of science have no objective truth, except as they are seen in their relation to the whole system of which they form a part.

A production which originates in the head is, as such, artificial and arbitrary; while one which originates in the heart, is spontaneous and vital. The motive force, therefore, must be in the heart; the head can only furnish the logical forms, the outward channels of communication. When the two functions act in this way, they proceed in the order of nature. The brain is supplied with the conditions of exerting its best energies, and of producing its best results, because it works in a legitimate manner, and in its true relation, as the instrumental function to the heart. The brain is never first; the fountain-head, the impelling force, resides in the affections and the will. Thus theology must look for its materials to the Word of God as apprehended in the Christian experience; and preaching must derive its solidity and accuracy from theology. In theology, however, the heart has become absorbed and hardened into the abstract propositions and general formulas which suit the purposes

of science. In preaching, the brain is less conspicuous, only because it is held in "solution" by the heart, and thus made strictly subordinate and tributary to the end of influencing the conduct and controlling the will. Efficient and sound practical preaching, therefore, presupposes thorough and profound theological knowledge; much more, indeed, than is required for a mere theological essay; for the latter necessarily limits itself to a narrow range, and may have no other truth than what is involved in the logical relations of its propositions. To give it anything more than a merely *hypothetical* truth, it must be grounded in a genuine religious experience, or must be a section of a whole body of theology; in the first instance, it becomes a sermon; and in the second, a fragment. But the sermon requires the metes and bounds of profound science, to limit the excursions of fancy and feeling, and to prescribe the "thus far and no farther," to the career of even genuine religious emotion. The blood of experience must flow in the veins of science. This is needed, to guide the development, even when its growth in the mind is, in the sight of the great central truth of Christianity, under the influence of its great constitutive idea. For the heart of even the regenerate man cannot be left, for a moment, to its own unchecked impulses. "To the law and to the testimony," it is necessary continually to resort. The rule and measure of Bible truth must evermore be the test of the individual experience in every one; and in the preacher, as it has been organized in the harmonious relations of a sound Scriptural theology.

3. In order that the *unity* of the sermon may be anything more than *oneness*, it must also have *variety*. The sermon should contain the whole Gospel in little; now dwelling more on *this* truth, now more on *that*; here developing more in detail *one* doctrine, there *another*; but each clearly containing, by implication, all the rest. As the god-artist of old is said to have made the shield of Achilles the type of the universe, compressing within its narrow orb, earth, sea and sky, so the sermon should lay open before the eye of the conscience and the heart, the grand and awful realities which belong to life, death and eternity; the fundamental truths relative to God and man; heaven and hell; holiness and sin; redemption and immortality, in a limited, indeed, but fully rounded circle; not according to the rules and measures of the intellect, nor according to the fictions of the imagination, but according to the analogy of faith;¹

¹ κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. Rom. 12: 6.

a rule and a measure which, in reality, best satisfies the intellect also, because it completely fills the heart, and perfectly soothes and pacifies the conscience. Its quality of manifoldness in unity is evinced, not only in the great variety of truths and doctrines which are everywhere involved, but also in the perfect adaptation of each truth for every mind. Like the "five barley loaves," it may seem, to those who know not the Divine virtue that resides in and opposes it, but a scanty supply for the thronging multitudes, and but a meagre provision for so many varying tastes and appetites. But let them sit down, by fifties and by hundreds. The bread shall not fail, and they shall *all* be filled. Strong men, and delicate women, and young children shall all be fed. It is milk for babes; it is meat for men. The wise shall find their questions answered; the ignorant shall find their doubts resolved; the Christian shall find his faith quickened and his love renewed; the sinner shall have his conscience aroused, and be self-condemned; the backslider shall feel the arrow pierce his heart, and return with weeping. And yet it is only the simple barley loaf of which all have eaten; it is only the plain sermon by which the thoughts of so many hearts have been revealed.

The scientific treatise, however able it may be, or however just, can have no such power as this, because it has no such origin as the sermon. It does not spring up spontaneously out of the central idea of the cross, filled with its life, containing it all in every part. It is, therefore, in relation to the ends of preaching, as powerless, as it is inadequate in relation to the ends of theology. As we have already seen, it impairs the vastness and grandeur of theology, at the same time that it withdraws from the sermon its impulse and its power. This result follows, inevitably, from the necessary character of theological disquisition, attempted under such circumstances. On the one hand, the mode of treatment cannot rise to the philosophical; it must limit itself to the range of verbal criticism: Whatever else may be attempted, it must in the end descend to this. And, on the other hand, any attempt at the practical and devotional will be forced and hollow. By such an attempt, therefore, to bring science into a sphere where it does not belong, it loses its own character, and gains nothing positive for its loss. Like other eclectic schemes, it remains afloat between two opposite spheres, its whole power neutralized by their contrary attractions.

4. Discourse of this kind *fails also to become instructive*. Its apparent aim is to indoctrinate the people. But in this aim it cannot but fail. The well-instructed scribe brings out of his treasure things

"new and old." Truth, in its concrete manifestations, is the truth which he is to handle; truth in its practical illustrations; in its bearings upon the every-day life of men. The abstract, logical relations of truth, even granting they could be presented in this way, can effect nothing in the pulpit. This is the ore in the mountain, which the preacher is to dig and melt and forge and purify and refine and shape into that sharp, two-edged sword, which shall pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and shall be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is the treasury of the old, out of whose vaults the preacher must bring forth, for each, his portion in due season, suited to his grade of cultivation, adapted to his tone of feeling, in such a way as at once to stimulate and satisfy the mind. To do this, requires a more mature, profound and comprehensive theological training than is required in any other department of religious teaching. Such knowledge is required as a security against fanaticism on the one hand, and empiricism on the other; a knowledge extending itself, with a commanding freedom, into every sphere of man's moral and mental activity, adapting itself readily to all the vast variety of circumstances and condition, and providing, by anticipation, for every change and every stage of advance in human character. This is not the business of the theologian, but of the preacher; and, in this way, the people acquire a far more adequate and profound kind of religious knowledge than can be communicated by any other means. The technicalities of theology, and the dry logic of science, are purely professional matters, and it is sheer pedantry to obtrude them into practical life; while the attempt to relax the severity of science, and to bring it down to the easy apprehension of minds untrained in the more abstract and rigid forms of thought, will result in no elevation of the general mind, corresponding to its own descent. For moral and intellectual engineering bears no analogy to the mathematical and physical. In the latter, the general surface is elevated by the bringing down of eminences; but in the former, the heights can be brought down only by the sinking of the foundations on which the whole is supported; and therefore when the heights of science humble themselves to reach the popular level, the movement will be accompanied by a corresponding descent in the common mind until both have reached the zero-point. The preacher, therefore, must drop his character of theologian in the pulpit, by a necessity as imperative as that by which the theologian throws off the robe of the preacher in his study.

It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the logical consistency of a doctrine, and its spirituality, its true rationality. It may have a logical validity, in view of the hypothesis on which it rests, and yet be destitute of practical truth. It may be true, as science, and yet gain no hold upon a man's practical convictions. The instructions of the Bible, systematized under the guidance of the intellect, are therefore very different from the same truths, developed and applied in the light of experience, and under the genial and warm guidance of the heart. Out of the treasury of God's Word, the reasoning mind can, doubtless, draw, in the form of doctrines, the things which are "old;" but it is only the vitality of the loving heart, that can elicit them in the forms of that which is "new." The analytical processes of a strictly scientific method, must, from their very nature, in the first place, destroy the life of the thing which they handle. Here, as well as in anatomy, "we murder to dissect." The life returns again, only with a redintegration into the whole organized body of divinity. In this there is, indeed, a mighty and an awful life; but it is not the life of the intellect. The living soul is first breathed into it by the heart, by the conscious experience of the practical Christian. Who does not know, that, in every kind of literature, this is the true secret of influence and power? Where lies the charm of the Byronic muse, but in her fidelity to the gloomy and bitter life of the poet's own heart; to the restless, fiery hell of his own experience, imparting to these, often, an enchanting beauty or a terrible grandeur, like that of a city in flames? What is it, that gives such a poet as Wordsworth, his hold upon the meditative imagination? Not his theories, certainly; not his metaphysical system; but the earnest sincerity with which he gives utterance to his real feeling, in view of the manifold forms and aspects of nature and of life, and the simple emotions of his own mind amid the changes and chances of earth and sky; of man and society. Of course, this is all brought out under the guidance of rigid science. But this is the poet's private rule and test, and does not concern the reader. The successful and finished product is what addresses itself to him. The more absolute the art which has governed its creation, the more perfect will be its adaptation to its end; and the less shall we see of the processes and formulae, hanging, like scaffoldings, about the finished structure. In literature, the expounding and analysis of these processes constitute the science of criticism; in religion, they constitute the science of theology. The one is no more fit for a sermon, than the other is for a poem. The poet might as well dogmatize on

the doctrine of the "unitas," as the preacher wander away into theological disquisitions; as, for example, about the "origin of evil;" or the "nature of the Trinity." Discussions of this kind are indispensable in their place, but are good for nothing out of their place.

5. The *variety* and *unity* which characterize the legitimate and spontaneous issues of the mind, are entirely wanting in such theological essays. Sameness takes the place of simplicity; monotony appears where should be found variety. The fundamental conditions have not been observed, which require the preacher to bring forth "out of *his own* treasure things *new* and *old*;" for it is no genuine treasure of his own; it is no proper growth, no actual experience of his own mind; it has not his proper heart's blood in it, and hence not peculiarly his. It is all "old," and from its entire disconnection with the "new," it is shown to be all *dead*. It is mere abstraction, a tissue of arbitrary speculation. As theology, it is necessarily superficial; for none but a superficial theology would undertake the handling of an isolated truth, far off on the dim circumference of theology, in the hazy outskirts of speculation, where, with a little ingenuity, any view may be maintained of any doctrine; and where the establishment of either side will involve positions, which would cut up, by the roots, the central truth of religion itself. For the great cardinal truths of theology first assume their validity for the intellect, when looked at in relation to others which modify and counterbalance them. The independent and isolated proof of either is, therefore, an absurdity. A sound theological argument must be a section cut out of the whole body of divinity, with *ligatures* or *processes* reaching out on every side to indicate the relations from which it has been sundered; a product utterly unmeaning to any but the practised theologian, who, like a Cuvier, can make out the whole organization by the discovery of a single bone. Speculations of this kind are not the matter which engages the preacher's thoughts, whenever the exigencies of his flock, or his own personal wants, compel him to speak that which *he doth know*, and to testify that which *he hath seen*.

This position, namely, the *practical* position, is a central one. Starting here, the separate doctrines, which, like buds, contain the whole tree wrapped up in their folds, first assume their just *unity* and *variety*, and receive their satisfactory demonstration. From this central point, the eye runs up the several radii of the vast circle, and sees, in their true relations, all the great doctrines which go to round out the harmonious sphere of religious truth. It is only from their

relations to the great vital centre, that we can determine their relations to each other. What, seen in any other light, would appear contradictory, is, in this, reduced to harmony. Does a doctrine meet the wants of the human heart? does a doctrine find a response in the human conscience? does the admission of the truth of a doctrine reconcile what would otherwise be in conflict? does it justify the ways of God to men, and thus tend to make intelligible the Providence of God? then that doctrine is true, and is recognized as true by every Christian, whatever logical puzzles may be involved in its statement, or however many *non-sequiturs* may attend the attempt to prove it to the satisfaction of the mere intellect. For example: such facts as that man is a *sinner by nature*, and yet a *sinner by his own will*, are seen to be in harmony, notwithstanding the contradiction of statement which they involve. In this way, also, we may see *God's absolute sovereignty* reconciled with *man's perfect freedom*; so too the doctrine that *salvation is wholly by grace*, and yet *wholly on the ground of the radical character*; that *justification is wholly by faith* and yet *by works*, are propositions which involve no contradiction in the Christian's actual experience; nay, they necessarily involve one another, although it is not easy to express either of them in terms which are not palpably exclusive of the other. The whole body of a sermon, therefore, must be *possessed* by this practical element, as if by a Spirit; it must be informed by it, as by a soul; a practical element, deriving its whole vitality and power from the great central fact of CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED; "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together IN ONE all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*" Eph. 1: 7—10.

III. The truthfulness and vitality of the method suggested by the phrase "new and old," is evinced also from its uniting *advance* with *permanency*.

1. There is no permanent advance except by a process analogous to growth. And there is no true instruction, *in building* (edification), which does not combine these two elements of solidity and progress. Edification, therefore, is growth. Hence we see why increase in the knowledge of God, and growth in grace, are made to go hand in hand. It is this work on the heart of the Christian, which preaching

is designed to stimulate and support. Nay more, it is often the "good seed" itself, which the Spirit shall quicken in the soul. It has, therefore, a double function, viz. that of scattering the seed and nourishing its growth, when it has once taken root in the heart. The sermon, therefore, like the kingdom of heaven, may be likened to a seed. As the seed contains the life of the *old* tree, so the sermon has in it the vital principle of the Gospel; as the seed contains, folded up in its germ, the rudiments of the *new* tree, so the sermon is that living word, which, when it has sprung up and taken root in the good ground of the prepared heart, shall grow and spread and become a tree, so that the fowls may come and lodge in its branches. And the Christian life shall thus be but an epitome of the Gospel, according as it is written: "Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;" "Ye are our epistle known and read of all men." Nothing can, in reality, be at the same time new and old, unless it have in itself a true vitality. The sermon, therefore, must be alive and ready to grow. It must have in it the germ of the Gospel, warmed into life by the preacher's own heart.

The growth, the advance, the freshness of the preacher's own mind, as well as the edification of his people, are, in an important sense, dependent on this vital, practical character of his preaching. Its depth and richness, also, originate in the same source. The body of truth thus gets its throbbing heart and beating pulse. That which in its abstract and bare logical forms is, to the awakened and inquiring soul, a frigid mockery, becomes, when once presented in the concrete, in its practical illustrations, the true bread and wine of spiritual life, imparting, at once, nourishment, impulse, energy and firmness. Thus all true growth and advance is from within. It proceeds outward from a living centre. This is what distinguishes, radically, a living process from mechanical accumulation; this furnishes the impetus, the perennial spring, which keeps the fountain ever flowing; with ever augmenting volume and ever increasing power. All arbitrary and mechanical action wastes and wears out by its own motion; but an activity that is spontaneous and vital, still grows more intense in its energy the further it proceeds. The more it is exerted, under the laws of its peculiar life, the stronger and fresher it becomes. The buoyancy of its spirit is proportioned to the amount of its legitimate production; the more varied and multiplied the materials which it uses up in the work it performs, the more do fresh materials crowd upon it. For thought is the nurse of thought, and life is intensified by the heat of its own pro-

cesses; just as fire becomes more ravenous the more it is fed. There is no danger, therefore, that the preacher will get short of fresh matter; his material *cannot* run out; it is impossible for him to preach up his own experience, if he *has* a genuine experience; and if he has not such an experience, he has mistaken his vocation; for it is out of *his own* treasures that he is to derive "things new and old." This overflowing fountain of the heart, in which the truth of God has taken firm root, is the genuine river of Eden, which, rising out of one spring-head, soon divides itself into many heads and flows on through the whole earth, traversing fields of rich and rare productions, amid mines of exhaustless wealth, "emcompassing the whole land of Havilah where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone."

2. This spontaneous and vital action, however, does not exclude the most rigid and severe reasoning; it is, on the contrary, its natural introduction. It is in this way, that a genuine interest is first awakened in the reasoning. This is what makes the reasoning itself *rational*, by making it all subservient to the wants of the heart and obedient to the calls of the moral nature. This hearty, practical interest arouses every faculty of the soul to attend to the reasoning, and subjects its rigid forms to a heat which fuses them, and makes them flow as freely and as gracefully as the richest streams of poetic fancy, and bearing in their bosom, or disclosing in their crystal depths, more gorgeous gems and more substantial wealth than poet's eye hath ever seen. The severity of logic is thus supplied with elements that are ever *new*; elements which communicate a fresh and supple life to its stiff forms, enter with their vivifying light and warmth its caverns of darkness and gloom, making them glow and sparkle as erst in Paradise, when the intellect and the heart were yet joined in holy wedlock.

The purely analytical processes of the mind are, by their nature, exhaustive of the subjects which they handle. This is the very *purpose* of the analysis, and its only value. Processes of this kind, too, exhaust themselves *with* their objects. The labor itself is arbitrary and more or less forced. It is, therefore, a limited and narrow process, and, as such, has no power to fill the mind, cannot strike it with reverent awe, nor kindle it into rapturous admiration. The mind encompasses the subject; the mind, therefore, is greater than it; the mere intellect is conscious of a power to sway and control and measure it. How can that life which we live by "admiration, love and hope," find any nourishment in such an object? an object

which the intellect has itself created; created it too, not in the course of its natural spontaneous working, where labor is refreshment, and production a delight; but under the pressure of an arbitrary resolve; and, it may be, counter to the vital currents of the soul, or cutting rudely across its natural channels. The process, moreover, is purely subjective. It has no proper interest for any other mind than that in which it originated, except that factitious and conventional interest, which may be created by an accidental coincidence of circumstances. It does not belong to the heart of man, *as man*, and can have, therefore, but an imperfect and feeble influence, even on those whom it affects most. It is conventional, constructive, hypothetical in its essence. Its range is narrow; its movement heavy and difficult; its value temporary and instrumental; good for nothing in itself; to be estimated only by its use as a medium to something else; itself passionless and dead, it is destitute of power to give impulse or arouse to a vigorous energy.

3. A true and permanent advance awakens and is accompanied by *enthusiasm*. In the bare logical processes of which I have been speaking, there is nothing fitting to awaken enthusiastic sentiments. Whatever interest may be developed in their course, is one derived from the processes themselves, in distinction from the truth at which they would arrive, or which it is their aim to develop. It is the *argument*, not the *truth*, which is made prominent. It is the writer's dialectic skill, and not the mysteriously constraining and convincing force of the truth, on which the main reliance is placed. It is logic and the wisdom of words, instead of Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. The preacher's speech and his preaching is with enticing words of man's wisdom, and not in demonstration of the spirit and of power. This state of things destroys the very conditions of any such profound and stirring emotion as is properly denominated *enthusiasm*. It confines the thoughts to the narrow circle of self; and the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain. The inspiration is derived from the wind that moans drearily through the cold chambers of logic, instead of that Divine breath which breathes with a refreshing and vitalizing warmth upon the heart out of the "oracles of God." These merely volitional exercises, moreover, have no steady *tendency*. For it is not the intellect that prescribes the *ends* of conduct. It is conversant only with the means. The soul, therefore, that is stable, the purposes that are fixed and abiding, are so by virtue of a more solid foundation than the intellectual nature can supply. It is the truth, as apprehended and em-

braced in the heart and the affections, which can only supply steadiness and solidity. It is this alone, which by virtue of the spontaneity and vitality of its processes, can give a steady and determined tendency.

4. *Permanence*, therefore, rests on the same basis as advance. That basis is vital practical truth; because it is only an active, a vital principle that can reduce the varied and manifold objects and agencies and operations of the soul to the unity of one all-comprehending life; can assimilate them all into the substance of a single organized existence. Unless under the guidance of the heart, the motions of the mind are necessarily fitful and vacillating. God and his truth are the only beings, and the only things, which change not. "Knowledge shall vanish away." "The heavens shall perish; but God remaineth." "The elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever." The *intellect* of man is not the faculty by which these abiding objects are to be perceived. It is with the heart, that man believeth unto righteousness; and it is no less with the heart, that man perceiveth unto true and abiding knowledge. It is in his heart, that the fool hath said there is no God; and it is no less in his heart, that the wise man saith there is a God. The knowledge that is grounded in a practical living apprehension of God and his truth, is knowledge that will abide. This is the fountain of living waters; *old*, as the first dawn of reason; *new* as the last, fresh affection of the heart.

The conviction and the knowledge in this spiritual sphere are not, as some seem to suppose, *less* absolute and clear, but *far more* absolute and clear, than in the sphere of nature. The faculty addressed in spiritual things, in the domain of faith is *reason*. Spiritual things are the most rational of all objects of thought and knowledge. And hence the mind acts here as freely and as truly exercises its natural powers in all their vigor and in all their freshness as in the realm of natural knowledge or in the kindred realm of the imagination. Nothing is arbitrarily imposed on the mind in the one case, more than in the other. Different faculties of the mind, it is true, are primarily addressed in the two spheres. The objects in the one, are discerned by a spiritual eye, the eye of faith, in the highest act of reason; the objects in the other, are discerned by a natural eye, the eye of the intellect and the sense. But in the realm of nature, we see but fragments, and these in false relations; the natural eye is not located in the centre but on the surface, and the relations of

things as seen from these change every instant; "the things which are seen are temporal." But in the world of faith, the communications, so far as they go, present things to us as they are. We are in the centre; as we run the eye along the radii of the vast circle, every truth which we discern, is seen in its right position, and, therefore, in its true relations, subject to no change or alteration; "the things which are not seen" (by the natural eye, but discerned by the eye of faith) "are eternal."

5. Hence we see how it is that the Christian pulpit combines the two elements of *conservatism* and *progress*, without running into the extremes of either. Its motto is ever: *the old and the new*. It is conservative without bigotry, and it is progressive without radicalism. It clings not to the old *without the new*. It comes not on a mission of *death*, but of *life*. It holds not up as the object of its devout regard a brainless, eyeless skull, the ghastly symbol of decay and dissolution. Nor, on the other hand, does it chase the *new*, distrusting and abandoning the old. Its mission is not to pursue its own shadow westward in the morning, and then eastward in the evening, whirling about continually-like the wind. It worships not Jack o'the lantern, alluring benighted travellers into swamps and pit-falls; neither does it place any confidence, nor expend any admiration upon those ill-boding phosphorescent exhalations which are sometimes seen to crown corrupt and putrifying matter with a halo of light; and the symbolic device, which it wears on its forehead, is illuminated by no rays gathered from these noisome dens and caves of death which send out their imps to mimic the light and glow of life; but its symbol is a star, or the day-spring, or the sun. The star may set, but it is not lost; it shall reappear; the day may fade into evening shadows, but the darkness hath not devoured it; there shall be another dawn; the sun may go down, but tarry not mournfully amid the western shades; behold, it is already "purpling the east" with a new rising.

Thus the Christian pulpit pursues no new thing, which is in any other wise new, than as reappearing; a new dawn of the old. The object of its pursuit must have within it the whole life and the whole power of the original, the central principle, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God;" this is the old fountain. From this every new thing with which the preacher is to meddle must spring, and to this it must ever point back. Whatever is beyond this, or behind it, or aside from it, to whomsoever else it may belong, certainly it belongs not to him. Whatever claim to philanthropy, or liberality or piety it may prefer, if it is not full in every part of the one

sole and single idea of the cross, it is a false light, a hollow pretence, the offspring and the parent of delusion. It is true, that the widening and multiplying relations of society; the thickening and intensifying interests of human life are constantly opening new channels for the diffusion of religious truth and furnishing new modes for its application; but it is the old truth of the old Gospel with which these channels must be filled; it is the original and central principle which these new modes must apply. This alone is true progress; this alone is true reform. So far as concerns the pulpit, and the religious interests of men, this alone

—— “is solid ground,
All else is sea beside.”

If the mind wanders away at times in the regions of speculation, and takes counsel of the head how it shall bless mankind, and enters into conference with the world as to the way in which it may most acceptably and most effectually divert it from its worldliness or wrest from its grasp the wicked prize which it pursues; still it must ever, in the end, return to the Word and Spirit of God; and take counsel of faith, and embrace anew the cross, forming no more alliances with the enemy, but marching steadily forward in the whole armor of God, under the blood-stained banner of Christ, who alone is “mighty to the pulling down of strong-holds.” But this is a truth which no merely human reasoning can make us apprehend. It is apprehensible only by the heart; it is seen only by the eye of faith. Here, as everywhere, in the sphere of the religious life, the affections hold the helm of the soul, and it is borne with all its priceless freight to the port which they prescribe.

IV. The phrase *new and old* suggests also the *inexhaustibleness* of the preacher's resources.

1. When a man reaches the point where the “new and the old” are seen to be identical, he has arrived at the centre of the universe of truth, and has now within his grasp the key and the clue which can introduce him to a free range throughout the measureless domain. Starting from this point, every step leads him into broader fields, disclosing a wider horizon, and landscapes variegated and filled up with the most rich and rare objects. Under the view of truth which he here gains, all his own Christian experience becomes the means of disclosing to the spiritual eye new treasures of truth, new fountains of life and blessedness. Is he suffering under the Divine chastisement? every stroke of affliction with which he is visited, by means

of the very darkness which it casts over his worldly joys, brings out to view new stars in his spiritual sky, which, with all their brilliancy, remained undiscerned in the garish sunlight of prosperity. Dangers, temptations, alarms; all outward incidents and inward states, become instructive to him; become the interpreters of the heretofore mysterious or obscure Providence of God; they lift the veil from many a dark chapter in his experience, remove the curtain which had hidden from his view many a beauty in the sacred volume, which afterwards became revealed, and open depths of instruction and consolation, where before all was flat and barren; thus revealing to him, often, a profound and blessed harmony, in what before had seemed self-contradictory and out of tune. So too in prosperity, every new joy that warms the heart gives meaning to many an accident, which before had seemed indifferent, and fills with rich instruction many an utterance of holy souls, which, hitherto, had seemed to him but an idle sound; disclosing springs of joy and hope, fresh and sparkling in many a text of Scripture which heretofore had fallen as a dead letter on his ear.

2. The true logical faculty has properly no auxiliaries. It stands alone, and works upon the materials given it, in the severe and passionless manner, indifferent to results, aloof from all influences, a stern judicial process. It sees by a dry and cold light. Its action, therefore, is not vital and genial, but mechanical and necessary. Its advance is not growth, but accumulation. Hence it does not acquire strength by progress; it gains no impetus, gathers no interest, awakens no enthusiasm. But when the method has its start in the practical convictions, in the living heart, the reverse is true. Here the process cannot be isolated; it stands in vital union with the whole universe of living truth. The farther it advances, with the longer line of associated truth does it come in contact. The wider the sphere in which it ranges, the broader the horizon which is opened to view, filled with kindred objects. Thus it finds auxiliaries every where. But most of all will it turn to the source of Divine illumination and Divine influence which is opened to the soul by faith, exhaustless, incessant, ever-augmenting, resistless; the very life of God in the soul; the very light of God in the intellect; the very love of God in the heart; the infinite fullness and infinite might of God its ever-ready and everlasting fountain!

There can be no clearer conception or statement of the quality of inexhaustibleness, than is afforded in the expression "new and old," implying the old is the new, and the new is the old; a principle

ever manifesting itself in results, and the results ever filled and made solid by the principle; truth and life ever bursting forth in new forms of truth and life, while each of these new forms becomes a fresh head and fountain, whence issue forth again the same living, generating vigor, which resided in the original spring:

3. One of the most wonderful and important channels in which the mind gains access to the inexhaustible fountain, is *prayer*. In this way, access is gained, directly, to the Divine Being himself. It brings a man in contact with the original and the constant source of his whole spiritual life, and of all his spiritual knowledge. Its influence, too, on the natural powers and faculties of the soul, is vast and important. It tends to elevate and strengthen what is pure and good, and to check and destroy what is sinful and corrupt; it cherishes every holy desire, and gives still greater elevation and energy to all the better and loftier powers of the soul. It enlarges the capacity of thought, quickens and amplifies the springs of sentiment, gives a stronger and bolder wing to the imagination, while it affords the true light of wisdom to the reason, and truly god-like emotions to the heart. So that it is as true to the reason as to the imagination, that

“Prayer fervent opens Heaven.”

It is important to notice here that the views of truth, thus obtained, are wholly practical. It is truth in its life; in its concrete forms in the experience of the individual soul. The duties and exercises it contemplates are direct and personal. It is concerned with special and definite states of heart, and has nothing to do with abstractions. Think of those seasons of solemn preparation, in which the soul seeks to fit itself for holy communion with its Maker. How it retires, as it were, into a mountain apart; how it goes forth into the desert to spend a season of solemn meditation and fasting, that the bodily senses, the animal passions, and the merely intellectual faculties being placed in abeyance, the inmost heart and spirit of the man may come face to face with God. In this sinking of the natural man, what an elevation of the spirit is there! what an adorning of it in robes of beauty and glory as a bride is adorned for her husband; what pluming of its wings as for an eagle-flight; what purging of its vision as for glorious sights; what cleansing of the heart as for sacred and holy services! And when the man comes down from this high communion, there is a glory on his brow as on the face of Moses. He has been in contact with the very source of light; he feels

fresh within him the streams of heavenly knowledge and Divine life derived from the true fountain-head. He is conscious of a new life, of a new power of vision and of knowledge. With these renewed and reinvigorated powers, and under this light from above, what a new world is opened before him! things before without life have suddenly become animate; all silent things have received a tongue; the solitary place is made glad; the deserts rejoice and blossom as the rose!

In the possession of this higher consciousness; in the exercise of his natural powers in this state of exaltation, and with the super-addition of others higher and more spiritual; and under the Divine light and influence which descend upon him continually and penetrate his whole being, what new discoveries is he enabled to make of the nature of man; what a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; of the amazing infatuation and guilt of the sinner; with what a terrible meaning do the threatenings of Scripture now come home to him; how is he seized by the terrors of the Lord and the power of the world to come! And what views, too, he gains of the character of God; what conceptions of his holiness and of his awful justice; and yet what comforting assurances of his goodness and his love; what rapturous apprehensions of his promise of grace, and of free and full justification by the faith of Christ! Thoughts and experiences derived from no human speculations, disclosed by no light of reason, which entered at none of the "gates of the flesh;" but were communicated and developed by the Spirit of God.

To the understanding, the statement of the great truths which he now apprehends, may seem self-contradictory or absurd; but they are *facts* in his real life; they are obvious truths to the eye of his now unveiled moral reason. Under the light in which he now walks, contradictions become reconciled; discords vanish or are transformed into harmonies. He now finds, that things which before seemed irreconcilable, seemed so because beheld from false positions, out of their true relations; seen from the right point, they all sweetly harmonize, in subordination to a higher harmony than he had before perceived. The ear has become purged, and many tones which once fell harshly on it, now swell the symphony of universal praise which rises from the whole creation to the God of *order* as well as of grace. In all this there is nothing new. The soul is only awakened to a perception of the old; things old as the soul of man; old as the existence of the universe; old as the being of God! and yet new as the fresh blush of morning; new as the first sense of

pardon to a penitent spirit ; new as the young joys of a regenerated soul !

4. From this point of view we may form some just conception of the *resources* of the preacher of the Gospel. As a scribe well-instructed, we see him combining in his intellect the culture of the scholar, the science of the theologian, the plain sense, directness and point of the practical man of the world, with the scope and profoundness of the philosopher ; and yet with a holy self-consecration, with an entire dedication of will, bringing all these accomplishments and fruits of study to bear on the great work to which his being is devoted, even the service of God in the Gospel of his Son. We see him evincing the purity of his heart, by the purity of his life ; manifesting, by the awful grandeur and solemn earnestness of his discourse, the sublime elevation and the heavenly simplicity of his aims ; life and learning, character and culture, all held tributary to the elucidation and interpretation of God's Word ; and from that Word receiving back into these treasures of the thinker and the Christian, a fresher life, a diviner beauty, a holier influence and a more prevailing power. Furnished with such acquisitions of study, and such fruits of culture, all interpenetrated and made "quick and powerful" by the Spirit of Divine grace, sought for and obtained by devout prayer and heavenly meditation, what else could be expected of him than that, like one inspired, and as if by a new revelation, he should reproduce the awful verities of the Gospel, as hitherto unknown, and yet well known ; familiar to the ear, and yet throbbing with a fresh life to the heart ; bringing forth out of his own treasure things new and old ; old in their utterance, new in their import ; old in their origin, new in their application ; filling us with a strange fear and a strange delight, as they seem to warn us, although we stand on soil familiar to our infancy, familiar to our childhood, familiar to our youth and manhood and even to our age, to take the shoes from off our feet, for the place on which we stand is holy ground !

5. For all this wealth of experience, of meditation and of Divine communication to the preacher's mind, the sermon becomes the depository. In this he supplies for his people instruction, warning, impulse. Here he gathers whatever of influence, of persuasion and of power, he deems himself commissioned and bound to exert upon the hearts of men. It is here, that he brings his hearers into nearest communion with his own highest and holiest thoughts, and into communication with his own richest and divinest experiences. It is here, that he brings out all the grand and moving doctrines of reli-

gion, to satisfy the eager longings of the human soul; to answer its deepest questionings; to hush its distressing doubts; and to shed over the darkened mind the Divine light, and pour into the dead affections the Divine life, which, under the Spirit, are God's appointed means for the recovery of men and the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the earth. In the communication of this, as it rises up fresh from the heart, he does not employ the stiff forms of an arbitrary arrangement, but the spontaneous order of life and growth. In such a method he finds a power and a reason, to which no arbitrary system can attain. The preacher's method is like that of nature. To the eye of the mere theologian it might seem a wilderness of confusion; but the loving heart perceives, in this seemingly wild luxuriance, a vital order, a higher method, adapted to a far different and far higher end; answering to its own thronging desires, meeting its own manifold and mysteriously combined passions and emotions, addressing its own endlessly varied thoughts, as they are all bound up in the unity of a common life; all distinct and separate, and yet all consciously present at the same moment in the soul, and making up that complex whole of sentiment, feeling, thought, which we call life. So a man, when in the higher moods of thought and sentiment, he would feel the freshness, and breathe the inspiration of living nature, does not seek the systematic order and the studied correctness of the garden, with its arbitrary limits, and its geometrical walks; nor the artificial arrangement and the trained, mechanical elegance of the green-house, with its walls and roof of glass, and the mournful music of its caged birds and artificial fountains; but he seeks a grander and a freer life, under a more majestic canopy. Free winds and unimprisoned birds afford him music; waters "winding at their own sweet will" sparkle before him; the awful forest, and the meek flower, harmoniously conspire at once to soothe and elevate him; the mingled luxuriance of corn-field and meadow, of orchard and thicket; of sailing cloud and fitting shadow, delight and charm his fancy, while they arouse and stimulate his mind. From the dead mechanism of man, he turns away to the living creation of God.

It is in an analogous spirit, that the preacher will turn away from the laborious systems of men, and seek a genuine inspiration and a true insight out of the living Word of God. He will strive to imbibe the spirit and apprehend the creative method of the Bible, in which doctrine and duty; truth and practice; great principles in their profoundest depths, and actual experience in its most familiar

forms; the daily uses of life and the living idea to whose perfect measures this daily life must refer for its rule and law, are all bound up in the same bundle of solemn and impassioned utterance; solving the problem and clearing the doubt for the thinker in his study, and affording to the humblest Christian, to cheer and strengthen him at his toil, his daily bread and wine. These Divine patterns should be the preacher's models. In proportion as he enters into the genius and spirit of the sacred writers themselves, will his discourses be filled with freshness, vitality and power, and be suited to the variety of minds which he is called upon to address; simple enough for the weakest, and deep enough for the profoundest mind. The word of Christ must dwell in him richly *in all wisdom*. The word of Christ in its indwelling and quickening power is the source of all his true knowledge and wisdom as a minister of the Gospel. Beginning here at the centre and germ, the life and the doctrine advance together hand in hand; the latter cannot outgo the former, but it is only its product and rational form. Hence the inexhaustible fountain from which the preacher may draw. It is no cistern that may be pumped dry; but a perennial spring, affluent as that which the grace of Christ opens in the heart, springing up into everlasting life. For the nearer he lives to Christ, the more he meditates upon his Divine work in the heart, the broader, the deeper, the clearer his experience becomes; the more he draws upon it, the more full it is, the more exuberant and gushing; throwing light over the dark things of God's Providence, and drawing aside the veil from one after another of the mysteries of Scripture; dispelling doubts, reconciling contradictions, and, in place of the fears and perplexities which disturb the mind, after human reason and human virtue have done their utmost, introduces the clear light of conscious experience and the full assurance of faith. With good reason did the Psalmist exclaim: "The entrance of thy words giveth light." Psalm 119: 130.