

HINTS ON SERMONIZING.

Written for Young Preachers.

From Preachers' Journal.

II.

Work of Preparation.—Continued.

There is another difficulty, you may be caught sometime or other; and this, besides being rather embarrassing, will assuredly lower you in the estimation of those whose good opinion is worth having, and will lessen your influence. Some few years ago three clergymen preached at the opening services of a church, one of them, from a neighboring parish, being highly esteemed as a preacher. His sermon that day was admirable, and every one was delighted with it. But, unfortunately for his reputation, a gentleman who was present had already met with the discourse in a volume of sermons published by an English bishop. He showed it to one or two others; the piece of plagiarism soon became generally known, and the estimation in which the preacher had been held before was exchanged for contempt. It is related that a certain famous archbishop of Dublin used frequently to go to evening service, how here, now there, amongst the city churches—not as archbishop, but as one of their congregation—for the purpose of hearing what sort of sermons were preached by his clergy. On one occasion he waited after the service until the rector came out the vestry; and then, having congratulated him upon preaching such an excellent sermon, said: "It must have taken you a long time to prepare it, Mr A."—"O, no, your Grace," was the reply, "I got it ready inside of forty-eight hours."—"Very remarkable," said the archbishop, for I assure you it cost me a fortnight's hard work to prepare the same sermon!" It is hardly necessary to say that the clergyman would not have preached it had he known who was the author; but it had been published anonymously in a magazine which circulated chiefly amongst the clergy. If for any reason a man should find himself forced to preach another man's sermon, or if he even thinks it desirable to do so (and such occasions are quite conceivable), let him take it into the pulpit, and there and then tell his people who wrote it and why he is going to read it. One can respect such a man's honesty, but one can feel only con-

tempt for the man who takes the sermon of another and tries to palm it off as his own. Rather than be guilty of such an action as this one had better follow the example of the preacher who, finding it impossible to have a sermon ready for Sunday morning, went into the pulpit at the usual hour, and then said, "Brethren, I have not been able to prepare a sermon for you during the week; but I will read for you a couple of chapters out of the book of Job, which are better than any sermon I ever preached in my life".

Third caution. Never "cram" for the immediate purpose of preparing a sermon. It may be necessary to read up specially in order to give an address on some particular subject with which you are not familiar; but it will scarcely ever be necessary to do so in order to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, if you be only regular and systematic in your reading, as above recommended. An athlete, about to give an exhibition of his powers, will not prepare for the task by being careless of his exercises for a month or two, and then work hard in the gymnasium for a couple of days immediately preceding, but will depend upon the training to which he has subjected himself for years: nor will a man who has a hard day's manual labor to perform depend for the necessary strength upon the food which he eats that same day, but upon the muscle which is the product of the work he has been doing since he first began to labor. The preacher's course should be analogous. By regularly attending to his religious devotions and to such reading as is suitable to his calling, he will generally be ready at any time to prepare a sermon, and will never, under ordinary circumstances, have to read up specially for the purpose. This, however, does not mean that when preparing a sermon he must never consult any book on the shelves; for indeed he must often do so for some such purpose as, e. g., to find a date of which he is not quite certain, to get the exact words of some passage which he wishes to use as a quotation, or to ascertain if his exegesis of some particular text is warranted by standard authors. But he should be familiar with his subject long before preparing his sermon, as an accomplished architect is familiar with the style of architecture in accordance with which he has to pre-

pare plans and designs for some edifice, or as the skillful physician is able to diagnose a disease without looking up the authorities at the moment he visits the patient, and can write out the necessary prescription without having to consult the pharmacopœia.

But the young preacher should know what to do as well as what not to do in the work of sermonizing. Assuming, then, that he is ready both spiritually and mentally, he must first select a subject. Here he must be left to himself, for he knows (or ought to know) better than any one else what those religious topics are, whether doctrinal or practical, upon which his people most need instruction, exhortation or encouragement, and also what sins should be particularly denounced. It is usual to preach sermons from texts of Scripture, and such a text should be selected as contains the subject of the sermon. In the pulpit anything eccentric is properly regarded as being in very bad taste, and there a text which would be likely to excite people's risibilities should not be chosen. Thus, it would not be an evidence of the preacher's good breeding if shortly after a death in the neighborhood, he were to preach from the words, "Thou art but a dead man," or "Then I said I shall die in my nest," or "It came to pass that the beggar died," or "The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." So also, soon after a marriage, no man who has any sense of the fitness of things would think of preaching from such a text as, "It is not good to marry," or "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage," or "When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ they will marry," or "The last state of that man is worse than the first." It would not be difficult to give scores of examples showing how easy it is for the young preacher to fall into the "faux pas" against which he is here put on his guard. Again, it is decidedly "infra dignitatem" to select as text a few words which, by themselves, have a very different meaning from what they have legitimately when taken with the context; as, e. g., "Baptism doth also now save us," "I thank God that I baptized none of you," "Christ sent me not to baptize," "The flesh profiteth nothing," "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified." A text, then, should be simply a passage of

Scripture which fairly contains the subject of the sermon that is to be preached from it; and it will be none the worse if it consists of two or three words. Sometimes, however, a very brief text contains the subject more plainly and fully than a lengthy one. Thus, for a sermon on repentance, pure and simple, it would be difficult to select any text more suitable than the three words, "Repentance toward God," or "Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Either of these is certainly much more appropriate than "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish," or "Ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

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I have been selling Perfumes for the past six months. I make them myself at home and sell to friends and neighbors. Have made \$710. Everybody buys a bottle. For 50cts. worth of material I make Perfume that would cost \$2.00 in drug stores. I also sold 125 formulas for making perfume at \$1.00 each.

I first made it for my own use only, but the curiosity of friends as to where I procured such exquisite odors prompted me to sell it. I clear from \$25.00 to \$35.00 per week. I do not canvass; people come and send to me for the perfumes. Any intelligent person can do as well as I do. For 42cts in stamps I will send you the formula for making all kinds of perfumes and sample bottle prepaid. I will also help you to get started in the business.

MARTHA FRANCIS.

11 South Vandeventer Ave.,
St. Louis, Mo.

Sleeping Cars to Charleston.

The Southern railway announces the establishment of an additional sleeping car line to Charleston, S. C., from Cincinnati, Chattanooga and Atlanta, via Augusta, southbound leaving Cincinnati at 8:05 p. m., Chattanooga at 6:45 a. m., Atlanta 3:10 p. m., Augusta 11 p. m., arriving Charleston 7 a. m. Returning leave Charleston 11 p. m., arrive Augusta 7:15 a. m., Atlanta 12:45 p. m., Chattanooga 9:50 p. m., Cincinnati 8:10 a. m.

On this sleeping car line will be handled sleeping cars, and this completes the excellent service afforded by the Southern railway and its connections to Charleston on account of the exposition.

New York and Thomasville.

The Southern railway announces effective Thursday, January 9th, and continuing each Thursday thereafter, through sleeping car line will be inaugurated between New York and Thomasville, Ga., on train 33. The northbound train on this line will leave Thomasville on the Plant system train connecting with the Southern railway train No. 34 Tuesday, January 14, 1902, and each Tuesday thereafter during the winter tourist season.

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