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## ARTICLE II.

PREACHING TO THE CHURCH OF OUR TIMES.<sup>1</sup>

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THE crowning glory of a theological seminary is to send forth timely preachers; men who are not only godly and learned but well acquainted with the life of the age, in full sympathy with its needs and able to bring to their contemporaries a message that is interesting, plain, and effective. Toward such an end every department of Seminary work — biblical, historical, systematic, ethical, social, and practical — should consciously tend. And from the beginning to the end of his course every student of theology should keep this goal before him; as every preacher of the gospel should behold it as a vision in his heaven through all the course of his ministry.

This is an old problem; but it is ever new. Jesus dealt with it; so did Paul and Origen and Chrysostom and Augustine and Berthold of Regensburg and Tauler and Luther and Knox and Goodwin and Jonathan Edwards and Spurgeon. Just because it is so important and so central it is so much discussed, and every man feels free to offer advice respecting it. As long as public speech retains its power, and oratory its charms; as long as the voice of the living teacher in school or conference

<sup>1</sup>An address delivered at the opening of Chicago Theological Seminary, October 1, 1908. The subject of address and many ideas in it were suggested by the perusal of the following recent publications: A. W. Hunzinger, *Die Bedeutung der Weltanschauung für Volksnöte und Nothelfer* (*Der Alte Glaube*, 1907, No. 11); J. Pentzlin, *Inwiefern ist die Forderung einer modernen Predigt berechtigt* (*Ibid.*, Nos. 40, 41); Hunzinger, *Die Gegenwärtige Krisis der Kirche* (*Ibid.*, Nos. 45, 46); O. Baumgarten, *Predigt-Probleme* (1905); F.

or great congregation attracts young and old by the recital of noble truths and the story of heroic lives; as long as Sunday is observed as a season of rest, worship, and religious activity, so long will the Apostle of God, the evangelist, the preacher with a message, have abundant space for the exercise of his many-sided ministry; and so long must he seek to transmute the clouds and fogs about the people who hear him into showers of blessing for their thirsty souls. Jesus told his followers to take heed *what* they heard and to take heed *how* they heard. That must mean for the preacher, take heed *what* you preach and take heed *how* you preach it. He must ever ask himself: Am I preaching the gospel? Am I presenting it so as to win men to it? Do I show it in its fullness, fruitfulness, and power? Am I indeed a wise fisher of men, a faithful shepherd, a diligent reaper, as Jesus called his followers to be?

It appears almost trifling with a great subject to say such things; yet it seems necessary. A prominent German pastor (Wolff) has recently said: "No class of men should be less subject to illusions than ministers; and yet none is so much subject to them." That is doubtless less true in practical America than in theoretical and traditional Germany. But how is it possible that a preacher of the gospel anywhere can live in a fool's paradise and play with shadows, when the awful concerns of men's souls for time and eternity may depend upon his clear vision and timely counsel?

Some of the beguiling influences that may lead him away Niebergall, *Wie predigen wir dem modernen Menschen* (Part I., 1905; Part II., 1906); Paul Drews, *Die Predigt im 19 Jahrhundert* (1903); Walther Wolff, *Wie predigen wir der Gemeinde der Gegenwart* (1904); Th. Häring, *Zeitgemässe Predigt* (1902); Martin Schian, *Die Evangelische Gemeinde* (1907); Hermann, *Unsere Relig. Erzieher* (Bd. II., 1908); Hilty, *Kranke Seelen* (1907); and E. Förster, *Die Möglichkeit des Christenthums in der modernen Welt* (1900).

from life and its immediate needs are a love of literary ease, luxury of study for its own sake, belief in the magical power of the word of God to carry its own message, false reliance upon the Holy Spirit, echoes of Paul's words that one may plant and another water but God gives the increase, a sort of optimism that leads him to see even in lack of success an exercise of faith, fear of modern methods as being worldly in spirit, lack of open criticism when he preaches, the sacredness of church tradition and the conservatism of the most pious people; also an indolent spirit in himself, making him disinclined to undertake new study, new methods, and new labor for all kinds of people.

He observes, also, new departures of which he may not approve, new views of the Bible offered as the true basis for timely preaching, certain theories of social reform presented as the gospel for the age, an ethical culture with no religious support held up as the only pillar of cloud and fire needed to guide men through the wilderness of this world, or a Jesus cult preached which by making him the supreme religious hero of history, it is held, will attract all men unto him — in all of which the preacher thinks he sees such a mixture of true and false, that he is fearful to enter upon any new course lest he lose principles and practices which have edified good men for centuries. But, however the preacher be aroused from real or apparent illusions, he is brought at once face to face with the inquiry: How far is the demand for modern preaching justifiable? Do we need a new gospel, in spite of St. Paul's testimony to the contrary? Is there not a gospel of eternal life, eternal value, and of ever-abiding truth, of which only the presentation and apprehension can be new and temporal? Or must we have a gospel new in contents as well as in form to meet modern requirements? The young preacher may well go slowly in

deciding such questions; and as they must be solved largely in the light of experience, of which he has had little, and of the actual work of the pastor, of which he knows less, he should be steadied at the outset by certain general considerations. He should be familiar with the history of gospel doctrines and know how they have been preached from age to age; he should consider what effect different interpretations of the gospel have produced upon individuals and a community; he should incline especially toward constructive and positive preaching, which has shown itself even in its dogmatic form much more fruitful than negative and critical sermons, even when most undogmatic; and he should above all learn what preaching converts sinners, edifies Christians, makes men active in every form of religious and beneficent work at home, and inspires them with fervent zeal to send the gospel to the ends of the earth. To gain such a general impression, he should look into the sermons of great contemporary preachers, such as Spurgeon, Parker, Maclaren, William M. Taylor, Phillips Brooks, and evangelists who address mixed multitudes, such as Chapman and Gipsy Smith. He should also put himself into sympathetic but not exclusive relations with the earnest, godly, and active workers of his congregation, so that, in vital connection with all that is good in traditional ideas and methods, he may the more wisely feel his way toward a more timely gospel and better modes of addressing the modern man. It is in the name of this modern man that a gospel new in both contents and form is frequently demanded; for he is said to have lost all understanding for the gospel of Jesus and Paul; and must be offered something that agrees with his sense of things, if he is to be saved for religion. Kaftan calls it a "new dogma," though he adds it must have behind it also a "Thus saith the Lord." The young preacher is here called upon to omit many

of the doctrines of the New Testament while adhering to its general aim; and to the doctrines that remain a general outlook is given, which puts them much in the same relations as deism and rationalism placed them, with this striking exception that Jesus Christ is everywhere given by the liberal theology of our day a central and dominant position.

The omissions of radical theologians include the preëxistence of Christ, his birth of a virgin, his miracles, his atonement by dying on the cross, his resurrection, his teachings about the future, which Niebergall says are laughed at by the modern man, and nearly all his definite utterances respecting "the Kingdom of God, communion with Christ, and most of the blessings and good things connected with this Kingdom," "as well as Paul's whole plan of salvation." In place of these doctrines, we are told, New Testament conceptions are "to be filled with thoughts which the Ethical Christian development itself has given us." Here is a very radical point of departure. Thirty years ago liberal theologians insisted that their views were but a historical and scientific exposition of New Testament teaching; now, however, they freely proclaim that no interpretation of the Bible can produce a gospel that will satisfy the modern man; the great bulk of its teachings when found by historical research are declared to be obsolete; and only certain general principles connected with them are of authority and use for the preacher of our times. The question, Baumgarten says, now is: "Which shall we preach, biblical views of doctrine or Christian experience"; in which it is held that Christian experience has left even the New Testament doctrine far behind. The great difference Harnack says is between a gospel of redemption and a religious-ethical gospel. The modern man will have nothing to do with the former; but may be led toward God and Christ by the latter.

Here a wide gulf seems opened before the feet of the young preacher of our day; and many are asking for guidance and light. In Germany, the different sides are sometimes said to be represented by the professors and the preachers; and not a few students of theology, after hearing the liberal views at the University, go forth to preach what they call the old gospel. At nearly all German synods, where the matter has come up for discussion, the "new dogma" has been rejected. At the conference of two hundred and fifty Anglican bishops from all parts of the world, just held in London, the whole question of accepting the goal at which Jesus and the apostles aimed while rejecting the doctrinal road which they set forth as the way thither, was discussed, and the conclusion reached unanimously that the historical facts and doctrines of the New Testament and the creeds of the church belong to the contents of the gospel and as such are ever to be preached.

Appeals are also being made to the history of preaching. The elaborate German work "The Preaching of the Church," now grown to thirty-two volumes, and extending from Origen to Tholuck, and such works among us as Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit" and Fish's "Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence" show, it is held, that "one and the same gospel was preached" and preached with power because in every generation leading preachers "understood their time" (Pentzlin).

On the other hand, liberal teachers are seeking, as never before, to coöperate with their conservative brethren in finding the best way to preach to the men of our times. They are insisting upon timeliness in all religious matters. They are denouncing the ecclesiasticism, formalism, sacramentarianism, and obscurantism that cripple many ministers of state churches in Europe. They are seeking in every way to preach in an age of heredity, environment, personal choice, evolution, and social-

ism, such a gospel as will lead men by wise pedagogical ways into the fellowship of Christ. In their sermons they are often more orthodox and devout than in their theological writings; and, in not a few cases, like that of Dr. Rade, editor of the *Christian World*, they insist on praying to Jesus Christ, and praising him as their Lord, no matter what relation such devotion may assume to their religious or theological theories. In their preaching, they give first place to the heart, the disposition, the experience of the believer, and declare that whatever gospel of Christ is revealed in such experience must be proclaimed from the pulpit. They insist everywhere and in all things upon reality; and do not hesitate to sift, test, and question liberal views where they fail to meet the demand of Christian life and experience. Nay they exhort again and again to seek first, not correct doctrines but a living fellowship with God through Christ Jesus. In this line Dr. P. F. Sutphen, a liberal theologian, writes: "A new theology, although indispensable to the Church, will not do the work of saving either the Church or society from the present drift towards practical atheism." The church is "starving for religion, the apprehension of a living God," and "men need as much now as in Jonathan Edwards' time to feel the overwhelming calamity of sin in their own lives."<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul taught that preachers are ambassadors for Christ, by whom God entreated men to accept his gospel of reconciliation through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. v. 20). Like the prophets, they had a message from God, a "Thus saith the Lord"; and this gospel they were to preach as a Jew to Jews and as a Greek to Greeks, becoming all things to all men that they might win some to accept it.

From this point of view the preacher will ever best study

<sup>1</sup> *Bible Student and Teacher*, vol. ix. p. 190 (Sept. 1906).

timely preaching. His two great themes are the gospel of God and the needs of men, the shepherd and the sheep, the seed of the Kingdom, and the field which is the world. He must know above all else the teachings of the New Testament, with Jesus Christ as the heart of them; and must acquaint himself with the psychology of the men of his time and all the ideas and influences of modern life which make them what they are. Professor Häring in his suggestive essay on "Timely Preaching" sets out from the leading thought, that only an eternal gospel can be timely, for as only the greater can overcome the less, so only "a gospel which in all its claims is eternal and has no time element in its substance" can overcome things that are seen and temporal. Jesus knew that heaven and earth might pass away, but his words would not pass away. Paul knew that in the fullness of time (Gal. iv. 4) the gospel was revealed, and herein was its timeliness. In like manner the first conviction in every preacher of power must be that he has an eternal, unshakable, God-given message to men. Unless he has such a gospel he will utter only his own opinions, which will sound to many a burdened soul as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. "Preaching is bearing witness to eternal truth"; it pleads in God's name with men; it proclaims a revealed way of reconciliation through Christ; and unless it has this salt in it, the savor is gone. Herrmann says what was creative and new in all prophets and apostles was their experience of a power that freed them from the distractions of the world; and unless that power is revealed in preaching, the personality of man, of which he is conscious now as never before, will not respond. No temporary message will rouse conscience and make men hungry for the peace of God. No question of our age is more burning than that of the relation of the eternal and temporal, the divine immanence; hence the thought of "God in Christ"

is recognized as "the most solid, immutable element of faith" (Häring). The stirring of an endless life in us welcomes nothing but the voice of the Eternal; and only such a gospel of glory to God, and peace among men through Jesus Christ, was fit to be preached to all the earth, or would have power to gather all nations and tongues into the Kingdom of God. Such a conception of the gospel will save the preacher from many mistakes. It will keep him from trying to make up his own gospel, from giving ethical theories undue prominence, from making social reforms roots instead of fruits, from confusing the church and the world, from subordinating the gospel to temporary measures, thus leading back towards the external and legal methods of the Catholic middle ages, from preaching to men what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear, and from losing hold upon the great verities of God — conscience, sin, grace, faith, holiness and victory over the world. This apprehension of one's self as a servant of God, proclaiming his gospel, will preserve the preacher, also, from laying undue stress upon the church, its sacraments, traditions, and ministry. The Archbishop of Canterbury pathetically remarked in a recent address, that probably some of his clergy rejected one or another of all evangelical doctrines, but he knew of none who did not believe in himself as priest.

Häring remarks further about timely preaching of an eternal gospel, that it will even come into *conflict* with what is temporal. Paul said it would seem foolishness to the wisdom of the world. Häring says: "To cover up the goads that wound in the gospel, to smooth away the sharp points, is to make some hearers inattentive, or to deceive those who are attentive. World and Kingdom of God are brought into false nearness; the gate appears wide and the way broad; and so far as the person is concerned and the appeal to personal decision, all this

is felt to be only incidental, something that can easily be attended to in social life."

It is a great mistake for preachers to seek by oratory or natural gifts to conceal the absence of this eternal gospel. He continues: "We dare not and we do not wish to conceal from ourselves the fact that without this secret of the Lord entrusted to us we cut a sorry figure and deserve the ridicule of our contemporaries; we are but remnants of a past time. The reason of this is not because our preaching is too little in accordance with the times, but because it is too little in accordance with eternal realities. However alive our generation appears to be it is dead, sentenced to death by history, unless our preaching manifests itself as a witness unto eternal life."

The most spiritually minded men who felt most the presence of the eternal God have ever been the most timely preachers. They have ever been most in harmony with the changing external circumstances which time brought to their hearers; and such harmony is the heart of timely preaching.

It would be a hopeless task in a few paragraphs to describe the modern man of whom we hear so much and to whom we are to preach. Lamprecht the historian says ours is the age of "the subjective life of the soul." All is a matter of inward impulse with the modern man, and the word *Reizsamkeit*, or 'nervousness,' he says, best describes our times. This nervousness appears in all domains of life, in art, business, society, politics, religion. E. Förster describes the life of our day as "surging, foaming desire after development of its powers, after originality and liberty, claims made upon wide, rich, abundant happiness, disgust with everyday life and old-fashioned ideas, sentimental lamentations about mechanical limitations to intellectual life, over-sensitiveness to all external pressure, disintegrating self-observation, regarding the present

as lost, fantastic expectation of a new coming era, a passive swinging to and fro between changing motives, above all a stubborn fear lest through recognition of some rule, its theory of the world, its moral maxims and duty should be bound or limited. It has further, a great love of the mysterious, the original. In a word, there prevails despair of ever gaining a harmonious state of mind and a binding view of the world. For this reason the modern world has no sense for Christianity, altho it may esteem its spirit and share its relation to culture." That is doubtless an exaggerated description, but it illustrates in general how the idealism of the first half of the nineteenth century was followed by a realism largely of a materialistic-evolutionary character in our day, which largely dominates modern thought.

But parallel with this tendency, there runs a more reverent current of scientific thought, which is recognizing the place of religion; socialistic movements are in some places taking an outlook towards the Kingdom of God among men; while in the chaos of things called "modern ideas of culture" or "the modern view of the world" we find all kinds of conflicting tendencies—pessimistic, optimistic, idealistic, materialistic—the outcome being a grouping of men in parties of belief or unbelief, all using the supposed results of modern thought to defend their own peculiar doctrines. Such confusion cannot be a legitimate result of science and its methods; it is rather the appearance of preconceived beliefs building creeds out of supposed scientific material. This is encouraging to the preacher; because he is found not to be setting up his creed against science; it is rather his creed against the creed of the so-called modern man; and the field of controversy is not the world of matter and law, but of man's soul, with its sense of duty, responsibility to God, and a life of virtue to overcome the world.

Among the people who attend our churches there will be found not only more or less of this modern thought; there will be found in addition a variety of religious views, conservative and liberal; to some the Bible is familiar, to others it is a strange book; some attend from habit, for social opportunities, for the sake of their families, servants, and business associates, others come seeking help for their own daily life and its burdens. And these various classes take on new peculiarities as the church is in town or country, manufacturing center, mining village, or seaside parish. Still it should be noticed that as ministers of varying views are coming closer together in the things they preach, so through the daily press, the common school, and rapid transit, congregations everywhere are becoming more alike. Both pastors and people are feeling more and more that the apologetic, defensive preaching of the nineteenth century must be followed in the twentieth by that which is more positive, constructive, and edifying. Science, medicine, philanthropy, do not write defensive essays; they invent, they discover, they *do* things — and no further apologetics is necessary. It is so also with religion. The Salvation Army, the work of Spurgeon, the preaching of Gipsy Smith and “Billy” Sunday create a thousand defenders for every critic. This note of reality, actuality, fruits as the test of creeds and methods is very characteristic of the life of our day. It calls the preacher to act in vital, organic harmony with the people to whom he preaches. Schleiermacher said every sermon should have three factors, the text, the preacher, and the congregation; the text must be chosen in view of the needs of the people, and expounded and applied so as to meet these needs. “When the course of thought of the minister springs from the knowledge of the needs of his people,” he writes, “it comes to him in the most systematic and direct way; it proceeds from the common

life." Such unity of aim will help the preacher of our day to pour a volume of help through the two great channels of preaching that are well known among us, that of Christian doctrine — too much followed by historical evangelical preachers, and that of ethical instruction — too much monopolized by liberal ministers. How rarely do we hear orthodox pastors preach on such themes as "the Command of Christ to hate for His sake," (Schleiermacher) the rich man in the church, or the series of sermons by Washington Gladden on: "Where are we in Industry, Education, Democracy, Social Morality, and Religion?" And how rarely do liberal preachers discuss such topics as Justification by Faith, Sanctification, How to be Crucified with Christ, or Answers to Prayer. In every case this closer fellowship of pastors and people will lead the preacher to have a definite aim in all his discourses, and, like Luther, Calvin, Knox, and other Reformers, both lay foundations for teaching and build upon them the structure of individual and social righteousness. Such definite preaching will save the minister from superficiality and from repeating himself; and enable him to do broader and more original work.

The timely preacher must, as already remarked, learn how to present the teachings of the Bible to men immersed in the modern ideas and business life of our day. But how is he to preach from the Bible when it is so much criticized, and opposing schools fight over it? That is a very wide subject; but on the following points we can all agree, and in their direction the young preacher may begin his work:—

1. First of all, he should seek to enter into the revelation in the Scriptures by means of the spiritual experience of prophets, psalmists, and evangelists, through whom they were first given. We need but think what the experience of the psalmist has been for the devotion of the church, and the life

of St. Paul for all Christian teaching and edification, to realize what a sure foundation is here laid for the preacher. "The whole effort and thought of Paul rest upon his generalization of his personal experience" for the benefit of others. And this is true of all other apostolic men.

2. These considerations are true in a preëminent degree when we come to the life and work of Jesus Christ, who was the Word of God incarnate. If ever the mind of God was perfectly revealed through human life it was here; and no analysis of documents, no historical criticism, no doubts of skeptics ever have taken or will take away the irresistible drawing power and convincing personality of Jesus as we meet them in the Gospels, any more than quarrelling scientists looking at the sun could make us doubt its light and heat. "No," said Luther as he thus beheld his Lord; "we have no painted sins, neither have we a painted Saviour." Harnack teaches that within apostolic times all that could be said of Christ as divine Redeemer was already spoken; and that the only doctrine awaiting settlement in our day is that of the marvelous personality of Jesus Christ. "He sent forth from Himself like a stream a spiritual power, which turned upside down all standards of natural methods, attesting itself to the heart and conscience as the truth. . . . He communicated His life with its powers to others" (Niebergall). That is the confession of what is called the new theology; and its leaders join with all others in singing

"Jesus, lover of my soul!  
Let me to thy bosom fly."

3. A third step in the use of the New Testament is to put its practical aims, commands, and exhortations in the first place; get into its line of march. This is in harmony with what we have urged from the outset; to regard Bible and man from the point of view of life. The preacher must ask accordingly:

What was the aim of Jesus and the apostles? What were they trying to do? After we have learned that, we will come to the second line of inquiry: What were the means employed to reach that end? Such inquiries run parallel with the questions of a man's own life. He asks naturally first: What is the ideal life of man? What must I do to be saved? How can I enter the Kingdom of God? And when these inquiries are answered he comes to the further question: How shall I live in this new relation? How shall I take possession of the good things to which I am admitted through Jesus Christ? The first is a religious quest; the second is more a theological and ethical study. Now it is plain what was the great aim of Jesus; he came to establish the Kingdom of God our Father upon the earth, bring men into it by repentance and faith, make them holy like their Father in heaven, and receive them at last into the eternal glory of that Kingdom. His blessed imperatives were, Repent ye, and believe in the gospel, Come unto me, Thy sins be forgiven thee, Go in peace, Sin no more, As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Here surely is solid ground beneath the feet of the preacher, which no kind of theologian, and no class of hearers, will question. Here is the place of the herald of glad tidings and the exhorter to follow Jesus into the blessed service of love to God, and helpfulness towards men. Consistency in following this great aim is the principal thing; it is even more important than consistency in doctrine, which is only a means to this end. Finally here is the place where the message and person of Jesus are inseparable. No man comes to the Father but through him. Men must give up all for him. He alone can give them power to serve God and overcome the world. By his cross he redeemed us; hence from the cross as King he

rules over us; and it is the crucified who will one day be our final judge.

Förster, a liberal theologian, puts this very forcibly, and says the essence of Christianity consists in this, "that a man Jesus Christ in the totality of his religious-ethical life occupies the all-ruling place, which in other religions is taken by God himself, and from such a position proclaims the true estimate of God, the world and human life, and man's right attitude toward them." All this self-testimony of Jesus is repeated and expounded by his apostles, who were filled with his promised spirit, so that no conflict can be found between the gospel of Christ and that of Peter and Paul and John.

4. A further general consideration which the timely preacher should bear in mind is, that the historical conditions reflected in the New Testament, its political life, intellectual peculiarities, business views, and social systems, are not to be regarded as a rule for the life of our times; nor can guidance be found for every part of our secular activity in New Testament teachings. Such questions as these: Can a Bible Christian be a modern merchant? Can the poverty of Jesus, the community of goods of the church in Jerusalem, laws against interest on money among Jews, exhortations to bear one another's burdens, the right of a lord to pay the same wages for an hour or a day, the woes against rich men, the prohibition against traveling about to make money, and against laying up for to-morrow, be applied to our modern life? Baumgarten holds that "Neither Old Testament nor New offers any positive labor ideal" (S. 86). How then can this teaching be applied to our banking systems, to competition in trade, to capital and labor problems among us?

We all believe that man's earthly calling has a religious value, and we are fond of denying any sharp distinction be-

tween the sacred and the secular; but this does not solve the problem wholly. We must fall back rather upon the position that, excepting in very general principles, the New Testament teaches nothing about business that can direct us in the highly elaborated systems of our day. These subjects have a long history, so long that Baumgarten raises the further question whether "the treasuring up of money by means of far-planning speculation may not be regarded as part of man's service in the Kingdom of God" (S. 88). The preacher must have sympathetic knowledge of these questions and preach in relation to them, but he is not called upon to apply New Testament teachings to details of daily business, neither does any well-informed man within or without the church regard such subjects as part of the work of the preacher. They belong to the economist, the social reformer, the business man himself, to all whose lives are especially affected by them.

We come now to the last point to be noticed; viz. how to lead men into the Kingdom of God by means of the gospel and the church, and when in the Kingdom how to build them up in faith and good living. We must not forget the drawing power of the word of God and the aid of the Spirit in preaching. We may recall the advice of Matthew Henry to the preacher, to study himself dead and pray himself alive again before entering the pulpit. We may remember what has been already referred to, that we must preach in full, intelligent sympathy with the men of our day; finally we recognize what all effective preachers have felt, that we must approach men according to the laws of their nature, presenting reasons to the intellect, appealing to the will, touching the heart, and especially using what Coleridge called the fundamental law of psychology, the principle of association of ideas, by which some allusion to childhood may soften the hardest heart, or reference to

an example of sin may bid the transgressor pause. But past these considerations, we reach the responsibility of the preacher himself as a fisher of men, and the skill by which he may sweetly constrain them to accept Christ and his gospel, and then cheer them on in the divine life. We have here the evangelistic appeal to convert sinners, and the discourse of edification for disciples of Christ. Niebergall says that for the first class the preacher must marshal motives; while for the second he must offer encouragement, or as he terms it *quietives*. The non-Christian man is careless, indifferent, preoccupied, and must be roused to follow Christ; the follower of Christ is often worried, perplexed, beset by adversaries of the soul, and needs the consolations of gospel instructions. Here, above all else, the preacher, face to face with life, must seek after perfect sincerity and the touch of reality. Not words but deeds; not simply exhortation but clear-cut appeals; not pious phrases and quotation of texts, but thunder of Sinai and the still small voice, each in its place.

1. The motives to which the preacher appeals should begin where men are found, and rise from lower considerations to the eternal concerns of the soul. And every motive should lead to Christ. To the indifferent hearer the summons to enter the Kingdom of God arouses first of all the thought of rewards and penalties. He asks: What profit will it be to me to follow Christ, and what loss will I incur if I do not? The preacher may begin here on Old Testament ground, where property in houses and lands formed a prominent part of the rewards of Israel; but will soon find the same thoughts in the New Testament. Men who come to Christ may have one hundred fold of earthly prosperity, and in the world to come life everlasting. Godliness is profitable here and now. Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, received the outcast, taught the ignorant, de-

livered men from demons; so will men in his fellowship now be more healthy, better educated, have happier homes, move in purer society, prosper more in business, and gain wider esteem among their fellows. A wise appeal to this circle of motives will lead many a man to consider the claims of Christ.

2. Then will follow motives drawn from the spiritual blessings that flow from Christ. Here the preacher moves into the great group of reasons that show the reasonableness of a good life, of a "mind conscious to itself of right," and may show that the call to Christ is in full harmony with the call of the soul heard by all noble spirits from Moses to Plato, from Seneca and Marcus Aurelius to Dante and Milton and Goethe. The body will appear as more than meat and the soul as more than raiment. The poor wise man will appear far higher than the rich fool. Here are offered the blessings of pardon of sin, peace of conscience, assurance of God's love, and growth in spiritual living. All the teachings of Jesus about being rich towards God, and having meat to eat of which the world knows nothing, will shine with new splendor as the preacher shows how universal experience proclaims the value of the good and the harm of evil. It is reasonable to do good, and Jesus calls to a most reasonable service, to a labor not only for the meat that perishes but for that which will endure unto everlasting life. No congregation of our day with the tragedy of sin before its eyes, and the misery of worldliness more and more confessed, will fail to respond to an appeal to follow Jesus into these higher things.

3. Beyond such inducements of material and spiritual blessing in the service of Christ rises the third great group of motives, the eschatological — the reward of heaven, the punishment of hell. Men may not think so much now as formerly about the rewards of heaven; but they believe more than ever

in the fixedness of character, the joy of doing good, the obligation of ability, the claims of the poor, ignorant, criminal, and outcast upon those able to help, the dignity of personality, and the close connection between worthiness and immortality. The way to prepare for heaven beyond is to lead the heavenly life here. Jesus' conditions for entering heaven, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the prisons were never more honored by all men than now; and the timely preacher need never fear to apply them. Perhaps still less do men now believe in a literal hell; but they do believe in penalties here and hereafter. With a reign of law and a theory of evolution in the air all about us, those who hear us know that fear is a part of life and religion. The outcast man, the dogs and sorcerers, the worm that dies not and the fire unquenchable, men reaping what they sow under laws of heredity, environment and choice — all these are familiar thoughts to students of modern society, with its chaos of opinions, its pagan self-indulgence, and its imitation of Sodom and Gomorrah in unnatural wickedness.

The elements of Jesus' teachings about the future may have been drawn from the Old Testament and Jewish eschatology, but never elsewhere were they put together into such a marvelous mosaic of heaven and hell, which the timely preacher may still use to impel men into the Kingdom of God. Upon man's acceptance of Jesus proclaiming these things depend first of all our earthly welfare, second our inward peace, and finally our eternal state.

The second branch of this subject refers to the encouragements, the comforts, which the timely preacher is to offer those who are seeking to live as worthy citizens of God's Kingdom. Here naturally the doctrinal teachings which help men to realize the aims of the gospel should be given prominence. Paul's

letters to the churches show the great encouragements and comforts of our holy religion, presented in dramatic and systematic array, the incarnation, teaching, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of Jesus Christ our Lord, the outpouring of the Spirit; the dying and rising again with Christ, the inseparable union with him so that all things are ours for time and eternity

In applying such comfort the preacher should keep clearly in mind the needs of the people before him, and offer cheer and help from their point of view. The ordinary man when smitten by trouble of mind, body, or estate, usually seeks consolation by way of comparison — he is not as sorely afflicted as some others, by resignation — “what can’t be cured must be endured,” or by the idea of substitution — the trouble may be a blessing in disguise. From this point of substitution, Niebergall says the preacher may well seek to lead man from the unsatisfactory nature of his own consolations to the true spiritual blessedness reached through the self-denial of the gospel. The good lost is replaced by a greater good in the love and comfort of God.

As in the case of motives, so in that of encouragements, the preacher may naturally group his exhortations about (1) the needs of daily life, (2) the unrest of the soul, and (3) the fears that arise in view of death and eternity. For all of these the Bible offers the timely preacher a great abundance of material, from the prophets, the words of Christ, and the teaching of the apostles, which will ever be welcomed by sorrowing and discouraged men. The Holy Spirit as Comforter will be especially winning to afflicted souls.

Jesus appears everywhere relieving bodily need, and then passing on to speak pardon and peace to the soul. He makes every flower and harvest field and bird of heaven preach the

loving care of his Father and our Father; and by his miracles of raising the dead and his immortal words about the resurrection and the life, followed by his own resurrection and return to the Father, he opens the Kingdom of heaven as the glorious triumph over human sorrows to all believers. How Paul takes up these teachings of Jesus, and sings O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory — Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

We end where we began, with Jesus Christ the center and source of all timely preaching to the modern man. In him we will find the *summum bonum* longed for by all serious souls. He is the bringer of the Kingdom of God into which we are to enter. He is not so much its first citizen as he is its king. Apart from him the preacher can do nothing. All modern theologians are agreed that it is Christ alone, who by his spirit can make poverty blessed, turn toil into happiness, make riches a means of doing good, and power a way to learn the secrets of the Almighty. He is the way to God, and his hand alone can unlock the treasures of pardon, peace, and eternal life for the soul. To follow him men must surrender all else — father, mother, houses, lands; but to lose our all for him is to gain his all for ourselves. Here is the central, all-luminous, ruling, organizing thought of the New Testament, what is specifically new in it; and no preacher in selection of texts, or treatment of themes, should ever lose sight of the great aim of Jesus, which gave unity and power to his life and work. From this point of view every preacher should form a system of biblical theology of his own, by means of which he can set forth for the edification of his people the marvelous riches of Christ's gospel of the Kingdom. By such a method he will see how Christ's gospel, which has developed new riches in the growing life of the church, has an unshaken historical basis in the Scriptures; and

because of this sure foundation rises above all natural religion invented by men, "which has too little energy to cultivate its own devotion" (Wolff) and develops no missionary power, which is the mark of all real devotion. He will also see by a systematic statement of the New Testament thoughts of Christ's Kingdom and the character of its citizens, how all preaching is Christocentric, and with it we attain unto a Christian view of God, man, and the universe.

We have reached the limits of this address; but one thing may be added; that is the personal experience of the preacher himself. He must preach first to himself what he is to preach to others, approve it to his own will and conscience, and then out of the assent of his own soul to all its aims, motives, comforts, and assurances proclaim it as a testimony with such force of conviction as shall turn many from darkness unto light and build them up in their most holy faith.