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ARTICLE VIII.

SCHOTT'S TREATISE ON THE STRUCTURE OF A SERMON.

By Edwards A. Park, Professor at Andover.

[In the Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. II. pp. 12 seq. was given an Abstract of the First Part of Schott's Theorie der Beredsamkeit. In the Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. III. pp. 461 seq. was given an Abstract of the Second Part of the same work. The First Division of the Third Part is condensed into the present Article. Its German title is: Theorie der rednerischen Anordnung, mit besonderer Anwendung auf die geistliche Rede. It occupies 254 pages of the third volume of Schott's entire treatise.]

1. *Importance of a regular Plan for a Sermon.*

The constructing of a good plan for a discourse requires not merely a general, but also a minute, thorough, profound acquaintance with the subject to which the discourse is devoted. Hence the want of a complete mastery over the theme is a frequent cause of the failure in the plan of presenting it, (and the search for an apposite *order* of the thoughts is a valuable means of suggesting the right thoughts themselves). As the sermon is designed to bring the hearers into entire sympathy with the preacher, it must exhibit that arrangement of ideas which can be most easily followed. As the preacher is engaged in an important colloquy with his hearers, he must follow it up on his part in a direct and an intelligible method. This method is useful, first to him in preparing his address, and secondly to them in understanding it. He must pursue a business-like course, going straightforward to his object; and this is *method*. He must adopt the order of *progress*, of advancement from the less to the greater; for it is a rule in aesthetics as well as morals, that there should be a uniform improvement, and that the last should be the best. He must also adhere constantly and perseveringly to this progressive plan; for it is equally a rule both of rhetoric and of morals, that there be no deviation from the right course, no averting of the aim from the best object of pursuit. The instant that a hearer fails to see the design of a remark, he fails of the requisite union between himself and the speaker. The demand

made upon the orator is, that he first enlighten and convince his audience; and he cannot fulfil this demand by barely presenting ideas; he must present them in the fitting relation to one another. He must next enkindle the imagination, arouse the feelings, and persuade the will; and must exercise no little sagacity in determining the order in which he shall address these different parts of our constitution. He is not exclusively to pursue the method of logic, but also that of an enlarged psychology. He is to consult all the principles of our nature, and to adapt his discourse to them according to the plan which is suggested by an extensive acquaintance with mental and moral science, and with the peculiar characteristics of his own auditory.

2. *Remarks on the different Kinds of the Introduction.*

A discourse may be divided into three general parts; the Introduction, the Prosecution of the subject and the Conclusion, (beginning, middle and end). By the old writers on homiletics the introduction was distinguished into three kinds: the *Exordium generale*, which preceded the reading of the text; the *Exordium speciale*, which exhibited the transition from the text to the theme; and the *Exordium specialissimum*, which followed the announcement of the subject and prepared the way for the body of the discourse. According to the Greek and Latin rhetoricians, the introduction is that part of a discourse which is designed *auditorem attentum, docilem, benevolum reddere.* All that part of the sermon, then, which is intended to prepare the hearers for the body of the sermon, by bringing them into the same circle of ideas, and into sympathy of feeling with the speaker, is the introduction. The ancient distinction between the exordium and the narratio facti, however appropriate to the Greek and Latin oration, is less proper for the sermon; but here the narration or explanation, instead of being a part distinct by itself, is involved in one of the other parts, the exordium, or the prosecution of the subject, or in a subordinate part, the transition from the text to the theme. Equally improper for the sermon is another distinction of the ancient rhetoricians, between the exordium in the restricted sense or the direct exordium (*principium*), and the indirect or the insinuating exordium (*insinuatio*, ἔφοδος). The latter is the style of introduction which an orator adopts when he fears to present his subject directly to his hearers because they are prejudiced against it, and he therefore conceals for a time his real design, assumes the appearance of intending to speak on a different theme, and after having thus secured their attention and engaged their interest in himself, he comes in a circuit unforeseen by

them to the real subject of the oration. In the process of this insinuating exordium he adopts the various arts of the *captatio benevolentiæ*, to disarm his hearers of their hostile prepossessions and to ingratiate his subject into their favor. Thus Cicero, in his second Oration on the Agrarian Law, designed to oppose the division of lands among the people, but in order to preclude the selfish prejudices of those who were hoping to gain something by this distribution of the public property, he began by acknowledging his obligations to the Roman people, declaring his hearty love for them and his resolution to remain a *consul popularis;* and having thus prepared the way, he at length avowed that because he was determined to protect the interests of the people, he would not approve the Agrarian Law. In deliberative orations, where the spirit of party, where strong personal predilections and selfish passions are to be made subservient to the orator, he may avail himself of these circuitous and insinuating introductions. But in the calm sphere of pulpit eloquence, the noble object of which is to merge all individual interests into the common good, and persuade the will to virtue by the elevating and purifying motives of Christianity, all these artifices are needless and inappropriate. They are dissonant from the simple and honest spirit of the religion of Jesus. The preacher should indeed employ a manly wisdom in regulating the prepossessions and caprices which may obstruct the influence of his address, but he should take a direct and straight-forward way to this desirable end, and have no fellowship with works of darkness.

As the ancient rhetoricians distinguished between the exordium and the narration, they did not regard the former as an essential or even an important part of every discourse, but allowed it to be dispensed with frequently. The subject of the deliberative or judicial oration having been previously known to the hearers, and their minds having been prepared for it before they listened to the orator, he might often with perfect safety proceed at once *in mediam rem;* see Cicero pro Cluentio. Neither the ancient nor the modern preachers have uniformly adhered to the practice of beginning their discourses with the technical exordium. Where their themes are previously and favorably known to the hearer, there is the less need of technically *introducing* them. The homily, much more frequently than the regular sermon, may dispense with the exordium, for it is a loose composition, and does not require the artistic method. Still the homily should have one prominent train of thought, and the audience may sometimes need to be prepared for it by remarks adapted to win their attention. So, too, where the general subject of the discourse is antecedently known to the hearers (as on feast-days, at funerals, etc.), they may

sometimes need to be prepared for the specific view of it which the preacher intends to present. The rule, then, is that ordinarily a sermon should begin with a train of thought fitted and designed to secure the hearer's continued interest in the theme; and this exordium may be more or less abridged, according to the degree in which the audience may require a stimulus to their attention. The services which precede the sermon may sometimes be a sufficient introduction to it. They may suggest its theme, and predispose the auditory to regard it with favor. Even the hymn sung immediately before the discourse may be a proper exordium, to which the discussion may be attached. Dräseke has a sermon on Night viewed as proclaiming the Divine character. The last stanza of the hymn sung immediately before the sermon is:

> As with the morning's glimmering ray
> Flows thy mild blessing from above,
> With deepened feeling may we say
> "Now and ever thou art Love."

Then the preacher breaks out in the first sentence of his discourse:—"That with such feelings toward the love of God we should once more come forth from the night which has covered us with its wings—what a gift is this, thou Dearest One!—what a rich enjoyment!"

3. *Subject-matter of the Introduction.*

The preceding remarks on the general design of the exordium suggest at once its subject-matter. First, it may detail such particular experiences and facts as are involved in, and thus suggest the general truth to be discussed. The mind is aroused by the process from the concrete to the abstract, from the near to the remote, from the premise to the consequence. Especial interest is imparted to the subject, when certain passing events which illustrate it are described in the exordium. Secondly, it may state the reasons which induce the preacher to select his particular theme, or to treat it in the particular manner which he intends. Cicero's oration for Archias has an exordium which illustrates this, and also the following remark. Thirdly, the introduction may contain personal references to the speaker, the hearers, the relation of the former to the latter, or to his theme. In adopting this *locus ex personis* there is indeed a danger of exhibiting the Ciceronian vanity, but if the preacher is a good man, he will accustom himself to separate his own personality from that of his hearers as little as possible, and to hold out his subject and not himself foremost to their view. He may therefore be trusted to make an

allusion to his own circumstances, whenever his good judgment decides that such an allusion is required by the necessities or expectations of his audience. In the first sermon which he preaches after his ordination, or after the confinement of a protracted sickness, or in his valedictory discourse, he may prudently introduce such allusions. Fourthly, the exordium may contain those general principles under which the particular doctrine of the discourse may be reduced, on which it is founded, or to which it has a near relation or resemblance. A view of the *connections* of a subject gives it additional distinctness and prominence, and thus elicits new regard. Fifthly, interest is not only excited by a comparison of the subject with similar themes, but also by a contrast of it with subjects dissimilar and opposed. A clear view of the opposition between one doctrine and others, removes many doubts and misconceptions with regard to it, and imparts that vividness of idea which is essential to an excitement of feeling. Sixthly, the exordium may be devoted to an exhibition of the meaning of the text, and of its relations to the theme of the discourse. This is especially proper when the text is read *before* the introduction. If the reading of the text be deferred to the close of the exordium, (as is customary in the German pulpit), then the development of the subject from the text constitutes a subordinate but distinct part of the sermon, and is called the *Transitus*. When the *Transitus* and the exordium both follow the text, they may be considered as forming a single part of the discourse, as uniting in a compound exordium. When these two parts are separated by the intervening text, they may still have the same influence on the sermon, but they have each a distinct designation. The preacher's own judgment must determine on the relative position of these different parts of the discourse. On festival-days, the exordium may be devoted to a description of the object of the solemnity.

4. *General Rules for the Introduction.*

Its style may be either enlivening, as when the preacher aims directly to awaken an interest in his theme; or didactic, as when he aims to secure attention by a distinct and accurate statement of the nature and relations of his subject. Often in order to enlist the feelings of an audience in favor of a doctrine, it is simply requisite to give them clear ideas of it.

It is an important rule, that the introduction should be studiously and precisely accommodated to the mental state in which a congregation may be supposed to be at the commencement of the discourse.

Hence it should be written in an interesting style; should be free from common, trite remarks; it should contain such pithy, racy sayings, such questions or antitheses as will fasten the hearers' attention upon the main theme, and excite an earnest desire to investigate it. Hence the preacher should avoid, in his exordium, any train of remark which would be as appropriate to other subjects as to that which he is to discuss. Thoughts which may be perfectly fitting for the body of the discourse, may be too lifeless for the exordium, not sufficiently original or uncommon. Vague, undiscriminating and monotonous introductions, the *loci communes* of the ancients, deaden rather than enliven the mind of the audience. This striking character of the exordium, however, should be carefully distinguished from an affected, paradoxical, strained, pompous style. The expressions, though original, should be natural, suggested spontaneously by an earnest meditation on the theme, and approved by a calm judgment. The preacher should remember that his own interest in his subject was not sudden and instantaneous, but rose by degrees; therefore he should not expect that his hearers will *enter* into the consideration of his subject with the same zeal which he has acquired by having *passed through* a prolonged study of it. They must observe the same law of gradation which he followed; and when he produces his discourse *anew* before them, it should be a *fac-simile* of the discourse as he produced it *originally* in his study. He should not attempt to make them leap up at once to the very summit of his excitement. *Neque est dubium*, says Cicero, de Orat., *quin exordium dicendi vehemens et pugnax non esse debeat.* There are exceptions, however. Sometimes the occasion itself may have so animated the auditory, that the orator may break the silence by an impassioned appeal. Thus did Tully introduce his first oration against Catiline. Thus too may preachers, though less frequently than secular orators, begin their discourses with expressions of excited feelings. Particularly on festival days and other special occasions, may the preacher burst forth in a highly animated exordium; for then the audience are more ready to sympathise with him, their own religious feelings being more actively aroused, than on the ordinary services of the Sabbath. But these vivid exordia must not be protracted, and especial heed should be given to the easy and timely descent from their lofty sentiment to the calm spirit of the discussion. They cannot be long sustained by an audience; much less can they admit that law of gradation which should in general pervade the sermon, that regular increase of vivacity from the beginning to the end, which constitutes the climax of a discourse.

From the very nature of the exordium, we see at once that its com-

nection with the subject of the sermon should be plain and easy, not obscure or forced (exordium a causa separatum); that it should never suggest the question, how did the preacher find a passage from his first to his following remarks; that it should not anticipate the succeeding portions of the discourse, so as to diminish at length the feeling of progress and to require a repulsive repetition; that it should point so decidedly toward the real theme to be discussed as to raise no apprehension of a different one, and thus stimulate the audience on a false chase; that it should not always begin or end in the same style, but should be made attractive by its variety; that it should not be too long, and thus repress the zeal of the hearer to hasten toward the discussion. There is a just proportion to be exhibited between the different parts of a sermon; and the undue length of any part mars its beauty. If the lengthened exordium be interesting, it operates upon the hearer's mind as a counter force, diverting it from the discussion. It is like shedding a bright light on the back ground of a picture, and bringing the wrong objects into relief. Besides, a frequent result of a too long introduction is, too long a sermon. The shorter the exordium the better, if it omit nothing important for enlisting the feelings of the audience in favor of what is to follow.

For the observance of the above named rules it is requisite, that the introduction be not written until the whole discourse be minutely planned and its contents thoroughly understood. It is peculiarly important to begin the discourse correctly, because the hearers, not being then occupied with its main subject, are uncommonly sensitive to the faults which they then easily discover, and will be prejudiced by these foibles against the ensuing parts of the sermon.

5. *The Proposition.*

[In the German pulpit, the preacher frequently announces his text after he has closed his exordium, and then offers a short prayer, which constitutes part of the discourse itself. This prayer is occasionally offered in some other part of the sermon, and sometimes precedes the exordium.] After the prayer, the preacher should proceed as directly as possible to the proposition. This may be defined, the announcement of the subject of the discourse; or the sentence which definitely expresses the subject of the sermon. (Propositio, *πρόθεσις, πρότασις, προκατασκευή*. The same technical term is also sometimes used to denote the expression of the leading idea of some subordinate part of the sermon.) In secular oratory, the formal proposition may be occasionally dispensed with. Quinctilian recom-

mends this omission. Demosthenes sanctions it in his first Philippic. So in "occasional" sermons, and in homilies, the preacher may omit the regular proposition, and may indicate his main theme by his modes of transition to it. But in his ordinary discourses, he should retain the formal proposition. The use of it gives definiteness and precision to the ideas of the audience; it excites their curiosity and stimulates them to attention. It is, moreover, so uniformly expected, that the want of it is thought to proceed from an immethodical spirit in the preacher, and thus prejudices the audience against his whole discourse. The rules for the proposition are, that it present the theme of the sermon in its requisite unity; that it be precise, perspicuous, and brief. It should be so expressed as to give no needless offence, but on the contrary to be as attractive as possible. Some pulpit orators possess the happy faculty of presenting condensed, sententious, suggestive propositions, which surprise the hearer and rivet his attention to the theme. Several of Dräseke's propositions are: "beware of a dry heart," from Ps. 32: 4; "the art of accomplishing much in life," from Mark 1: 32—39; "every church-day is a family-day of God," from Eph. 2: 19. Sometimes a stanza in a hymn is used for the proposition of the discourse. It suggests a definite idea to the mind, is associated with pleasant reminiscences, and is withal easily remembered. If, however, the stanza present the subject of the discourse in a figurative style, or if it present an outline of the whole sermon, it is not suitable for a proposition. In the latter case, it is better fitted for the partition. There is great danger that the search for striking expressions of a theme will lead to the selection of paradoxical statements, having the appearance without the reality of depth and compressed wisdom. In the use, too, of figurative propositions, there is danger of extending the figure too far. It may be judicious, for example, to draw a parallel between Christ and a shepherd, in a sermon from John 10: 1—12; but care must be taken not to run the parallel into the regions of the fanciful. Not every biblical comparison can be extended into an allegory in a modern sermon. The taste of the present age forbids it. The original comparison was not designed to be, and cannot with propriety be applied to more than one or two points; and the attempt to multiply the resemblances leads to visionary and perhaps disgusting remarks. Even Dräseke has a sermon on Matt. 23: 37, in which he dilates on the similitude between the Saviour and a brooding hen! It is easy to see that a minute comparison between the last day and a thief in the night, would introduce many irrelevant, puerile remarks. Allegorical discourses are apt to be finical, undignified, unintelligible, even revolting.

One class of propositions consists in the mere name of the subject, either particular or general, simple or compound; either without a predicate, as, The conscience, or with a predicate, as, The reproving conscience; either without a precise designation of the train of thought to be pursued, as, The necessity of Solitude, or with such a designation, as, The necessity of solitude for acquiring self-knowledge. In proportion to the definiteness with which a particular train of thought is proposed at first, must be the limitation of the subsequent remarks to that specific train. A second class of propositions is expressed in a perfect sentence, and that either *categorical*, which must be afterwards proved, as, Faith without works is like a body without a soul; or *hypothetical*, which summons the hearers to answer a question, to investigate a subject or solve a problem, as, Does not the religion of Jesus demand too much of its followers? or, How significant of our moral state is our treatment of the Lord's supper. A third class consists in a combination of the first two classes, the proposition being the mere name of the theme, but containing all the parts of a perfect sentence, as, The experience that great improvement results from painful effort and harassing fears.

6. *The Transition.*

The *transitus* is ordinarily defined, as that part of the discourse which develops the connection between the theme and the text. It corresponds in some degree with the "narratio" of the ancient rhetoricians. It is not, however, the explanation of the text as such, but is that part of the explanation which is necessary for showing the pertinency of the proposition to the text, or the fact that the former is involved in the latter. If the proposition be derived directly and obviously from the text, it demands only a brief *transitus* which shall unfold the intermediate idea uniting the two; but if it be derived indirectly and by inference, it requires a more extended illustration of the process by which it is deduced from, and of its precise relevancy to the text. The shorter the transition so much the better, if it fully demonstrate the fitness of the theme to the words by which it was ostensibly suggested. If the transition be long, it has the appearance of a second exordium, [and this fault is somewhat common in those German discourses, in which the transition immediately follows, and the introduction directly precedes the text].

The term transition has often a more extended meaning than that above given, and includes every part of the discourse which develops the connection between two prominent trains of remark; the passage

from one head to another, the exhibition of an intermediate thought embracing part of the preceding and part of the following. The perfection of this branch of the sermon consists in its introducing the new topic easily, naturally, and giving it the appearance of growing out of the preceding stock, as a branch from the trunk. The common fault of sermons is, that the different topics are introduced abruptly, like the parts of a scientific treatise, or else the transitions are made with apparent artifice, and attract attention to themselves. The former fault diminishes the unity of the discourse as a whole; the latter diminishes its ease, simplicity, and modesty. Reinhard exhibits often a great degree of ease in his transitions, and so connects together the different parts of a discourse as to save them from a fragmentary, disjointed appearance, and to preserve the unbroken evenness of the whole. In a Fast-day sermon on the duties to which we should be excited by viewing the dignity of Christ's church, he occupies his first division with remarks illustrating this dignity, and slides into his second division by the following gradual descent.* "And it is hard to tear ourselves away from this elevating view, but we must come down to our own characters, and compare them with the image now presented of the Christian communion, and see whether we be like it. Let us then inquire, what duties are urged upon us by this view of the church's dignity. And oh! I must have had but little success in attempting to portray it, if it do not excite in our breasts, as the first feeling required of us, a reverential gratitude towards Jesus." Having thus glided into his second division and its first subdivision, he is led to close the latter with a prayer expressing thankfulness to Christ for having delivered the church from death, and he ends the prayer with the words: "And we, even we, are among the beings whom thou hast delivered; among the members of the communion which thou lovest! And yet, my brethren, can we, dare we say this? Are we justified in regarding ourselves as a part of the church whose dignity has been now described? Oh! a thoughtful examination of our spiritual state is doubtless the second thing demanded of us, in contemplating this exalted dignity." He is thus led to propound various questions for conducting this examination, and then naturally exclaims: "What questions! my brethren, what themes for us to examine! Yet why should I not speak boldly (in propounding them)? The more impartial our scrutiny of the matter, so much the more must a view of the dignity of the church fill us with deep shame for our delinquencies," and this is the third duty which the subject enjoins upon us, after considering which we are told as a matter of course:

* These extracts are abridged from the original.

"But in vain are such emotions, unless our views of the dignity which the church should possess, inspire us with the firm purpose of striving for it with increased earnestness." This effort, being the fourth duty enjoined, easily and without a chasm suggests the fifth, "that we cling to the gospel of Jesus as the means of attaining the exaltation which we should strive for," and the prospect of which prompts to all the duties which have been considered.

7. *The Partition.*

The Greek and Roman rhetoricians set a high value not merely on the early announcement of the entire theme of the discourse, but also on the early announcement of the leading ideas and general course of thought in the treatment of that theme. Hence they prescribed that the proposition (in its narrow sense) should be followed by the partition. According to the phraseology of Aristotle, the proposition includes the partition; according to that of Cicero, the partition includes the proposition. Quinctilian says: Partitio est nostrarum aut adversarii propositionum, aut utrarumque ordine collata enumeratio.[1] The discourse may be divided into the part addressed to the intellect and that addressed to the feelings; or into descriptions of the various attributes of the subject, or of its specific branches, or its subordinate relations to duty, etc., or its efficient or final causes; or into various processes of proof or of explanation, or into contrasted exhibitions of two opposing sides of the same subject.

The advantages of stating at the outset the more prominent topics of the discourse are, that thereby the attention of the audience is more closely fastened on the most essential parts of the theme, and these parts are more distinctly and more easily understood and remembered, not only in themselves but also in their relation to each other and to the entire discourse. Recte habita in causa partitio illustrem et perspicuam totam efficit orationem, says Cicero.[2] This preparatory sketch serves also to recommend the speaker as one who thinks logically, and who has with particular care and thoroughness investigated his present theme. It also relieves the tedium of the discourse for the hearers, by giving them waymarks which apprise them of the speaker's progress, by visibly changing the scene before them and refreshing them with a near view of the peroration. This advantage, however, was greater for the secular orations of antiquity than for the modern sermon; for those were much longer than this, and more fatiguing. Al-

[1] Inst. Orat. L. IV. c. 5. [2] De Invent. L. I. c. 22.

though the abovenamed advantages are real, yet they do not require the uniform insertion of this preparatory outline. The sermon should, and often may be planned with such discrimination, written with such accuracy and distinctness, spoken with such variety of emphasis, that it shall not require the aid of a preparatory sketch, in order to make and keep an audience attentive to the thoughts, their reciprocal relation, the exact order of their arrangement. Moreover, it is not necessary that the hearers be able always to repeat the thoughts of the discourse consecutively. Few can remember their exact order, even if it be at the first distinctively announced. The design of the discourse is accomplished, if the audience fully understand its genius and main import, become interested in it, and inspirited by it to a virtuous life. Neither the ancient nor the modern pulpit orators have confined themselves to the use of the partition.

When it is employed, however, it should be free from all that is obscure, verbose, artificial or highly adorned. By its compressed, suggestive, nervous, energetic style it should stimulate the curiosity of the hearers. Harms has a sermon with this proposition: Do right and fear no man; and with the following partition: This proverb is, a word of instruction, a word full of power, a word of consolation; or a proverb for thought, strength and solace. He has another sermon on Death in life, with this easily remembered partition:

1. Ihr selber seid ein fallend Laub;
2. Und, was ihr thut, zerfällt in Staub;
3. Und, was ihr habt, wird Todes-raub.[1]

The partition should be conformed to the rules of logic. Thus do logic and rhetoric embrace in part the same sphere. The feelings cannot be aroused unless the judgment be first convinced, and the judgment cannot be convinced unless the arguments be presented to it in a manner consentaneous with the laws of mind, and this manner is first prescribed by logic for the discovery of truth, and then adopted by rhetoric for the communication of it. The discourse being a dialogue between the speaker and the minds of his audience, must go on in the straight line which the mental laws require, and any in-

[1] Many of the German preachers are fond of introducing the paronomasia into their divisions, for the purpose of aiding the memory of the hearers. Thus Tholuck in his 2nd volume of Sermons, p. 124, says, "The quickening thoughts to which this narration leads us, are the following:

1. Die Stätte seines *Scheidens*, die Stätte seines *Leidens;*
2. Verhüllet ist sein *Anfang*, verhüllet ist sein *Ausgang;*
3. Der *Schluss* von seinen *Wegen* ist für die seinen *Segen;*
4. Er ist von uns *geschieden* und ist uns doch *geblieben;*
5. Er bleibt *verhüllt* den Seinen, bis er wird *klar* erscheinen."

terruption of the train of thought breaks up the interest of the hearers in the dialogue. There are instances, however, in which the rules of rhetoric require an exception from the rules of logic. Thus, when a genus is the theme of the discourse, logic would require that all its species, however unimportant, be introduced as parts of the division, but rhetoric may simply require that the essential characteristics of the genus be introduced, and these constitute the partition, as technically distinct from the division. Again, it is a logical rule that no single branch of the partition shall be identical with the proposition itself, and that substantially the same sentence which constitutes a chief head of the discourse, shall not reäppear as one of the subordinate heads. The mind of the audience is interrupted in its progress from premises to results, by this appearance of repetition. The speaker is very apt to commit this fault by expressing his proposition too indefinitely, and by subsequently introducing heads of discourse which he had not at first designed to mention. Reinhard has a sermon with the theme, Warnings against a morbid Conscientiousness; and he first explains the nature of the fault; secondly, describes the signs and the workings of it; thirdly, states the reasons why we should guard against it. Now this third branch of the partition is the same in substance with the original theme, and the first two branches are not logically appropriate as parts of the proposition, but are presupposed by it. This reäppearance of the proposition, after other heads have been discussed, might have been avoided by giving it a more general form; as for instance, Morbid conscientiousness, under which the above-named partition would be logically appropriate. This general theme, however, would excite the expectation of a merely intellectual treatise, and Reinhard designs to give a practical character, and the appearance of it, to his sermon. The relation of his discourse to the will is indicated in his proposition, and thus do the laws of rhetoric allow, and in some cases even require this prominence of the persuasive influence over the logical exactness of the arrangement.

As the whole proposition should not be repeated in any one of the subordinate heads, so it should contain, in itself, all the ideas and none other than the identical ideas, which constitute the various branches of the partition. When the practical character of the discourse will not allow the preacher to treat thoroughly of his entire subject, he should either limit his proposition so as to cover no more ground than he designs to travel over, or else should inform his hearers that he intends to discuss a part only of the proposed theme. As the sentence announcing the subject of discourse should not be the same with any of the subordinate heads, so these subordinate heads, whether *partes* or *sub-*

partes, should never repeat but mutually exclude each other; and there should be no mingling of their various classes, no arranging of the species and proper subdivisions in the same rank with the genus and the proper divisions. This is the general rule; but when the proper subdivisions are of great practical importance, they may, by rhetorical license, be elevated to the same rank with the proper divisions. For example, The conscious effort to live a holy life benefits the soul; first, by revealing to it its moral imperfections and thus assuaging its restlessness; secondly, by comforting it amid the trials of life and at the hour of death; thirdly, by securing treasures for it in the life to come. Now the logical partition of this theme would be: The conscious effort for holiness benefits the soul, first in this life, secondly in the life to come. But the blessings of this life are divided, in the rhetorical arrangement, into two species, constituting the first and second heads, and these are arranged in the same class with the genus, comprising the blessings of the future state, and constituting the third head. The practical importance of considering, with marked attention, these two species, is a valid reason for giving them this illogical prominence.

In order to promote the perspicuity and strength of a discourse, it is necessary that its parts be so arranged as to make the preceding prepare the way for the succeeding, and the whole discourse rise in a gradation, from the less important to the more important. The topics which interest the intellect alone, should precede those which excite the imagination also and the feelings; and those which animate the lower sensibilities, should come before those which stimulate the higher. So the least cogent arguments should precede the more forcible, and thus allow the latter to exert an influence which no subsequent considerations will diminish. If the weaker arguments come last, they will efface somewhat of the impression produced by the stronger. It was recommended by the ancient rhetoricians, that one part of the arguments be placed at the beginning of the discourse, so as to make the first impression a strong one; that another part be placed at the close, so as to make the final impression strong also; and hence that the weaker arguments be placed in the middle, where they will be in some measure hidden from view. This arrangement was compared to the disposing of the forces of an army, so as to place the most inefficient troops in the centre, and to surround them with the bravest: Iliad, Book IV. v. 297 seq. But Quinctilian justly doubts the uniform propriety of this rule, and prefers that the arguments be arranged according to circumstances, but always *ne a potentissimis ad levissima decrescat oratio.* The secular eloquence of Greece and Rome allowed

the introduction of reasoning processes which were designed merely to deceive, and therefore were to be so placed as to elude the scrutiny of the judges. But sacred eloquence, excluding all proofs which are merely apparent and deceptive, requires that the thoughts which make the deepest impression on the mind of the speaker, and which will therefore be uttered with the greatest earnestness and listened to with the most profound attention, be so placed as to cause the hearers to rise, with the preacher, in a regular climax. Hence the arguments from reason should precede those from Scripture. On the same principle, the objections against the proposition are to be introduced before the direct proof of it. Else they will confuse the mind, diminish its interest in the discussion, and prevent the due influence of the positive argument. First, the hearers are to be convinced that the proposition *can* be true, and this is done by removing their previous objections; secondly, they are to be convinced that it *must* be true, and this is effected by the positive proof. In the arrangement of the objections, the strongest should be placed first, and the gradation should be regular from them to the weakest, and thus the way is prepared for the direct arguments. The same principle is to be observed in the arrangement of the explanatory heads. The most remote explanations should be placed first, and there should be a gradual progress, nearer and nearer to the full statement thus progressively explained. Hence negative heads are proper in a discourse, and should precede the positive.

It is an important rule that the partition be simple, that is, contain as few parts as the clearness of the investigation will allow. It can, however, be made too simple. Particulars may be reduced to such general propositions, that the whole discourse will be too abstract for the common mind; often, then, should the individual and concrete statement be preferred to a more comprehensive one, because it is better adapted to the imagination and the feelings. Reinhard has a sermon on the duty of those who are called to severe and mysterious afflictions. He might have adopted the simple division into the outward and inward duty, but he prefers a less general classification, and makes prominent the following obligations: first, such mourners should be earnest in thought; secondly, modest in their judgments; thirdly, submissive in their feelings; fourthly, conscientious in their actions; fifthly, cheerful in hope; and sixthly, holding fast upon him who, through the suffering of death, has been crowned of God with glory and honor. Such a plan is far more vivid, and leads to a more impassioned peroration than the simple and comprehensive one first mentioned.

In the search for the simplicity of a partition, writers are tempted to express their theme in a style so general as to require too great a number of subordinate heads. A sermon will not allow such a multiplicity of subdivisions as is proper for a scientific treatise. The evil of this extended dissection is not always removed by what is called the *symmetry* of a plan. This consists in making all the parts of the discourse equal to each other in length; each of the principal heads correspondent with every other in the number of its subordinate heads; and each class of the subordinate parts correspondent in its style and significancy with every other class. One partition, for example, may detail a certain number of the causes of a certain fault, and another partition the same number of the remedies for it, each remedy being applicable to the cause which numerically corresponds with it. This symmetry is made the more conspicuous by an exact resemblance or contrast in the phraseology of the partitions.[1] The pulpit affords far more license for such symmetrical arrangements, than was offered by the secular eloquence of antiquity, the latter being unequal to the former in subjecting the plan of the discourse to the choice of the orator. There is great danger, however, of making a sermon artificial by this search for evenly balanced partitions. The thought is often distorted for the sake of regularity in the style. The charm of variety is sacrificed to the uniform measure of the divisions and subdivisions. This measure may be allowed when and only when the true, harmonious presentation of the thought requires it. We should study the demands of the subject, and should comply with them rather than the stiff rules of rhetoricians. Quinctilian censures those, qui partitionem vetant ultra tres propositiones; and says, Hoc aut alio tamen numero velut lege non est alligandа (partitio), cum possit causa plures desiderare.[3]

8. *Conclusion.*

Cicero says of Pericles, "tantam in eo vim fuisse, ut in eorum mentibus qui audissent, quasi aculeos quosdam relinqueret."[2] True elo-

[1] Drăseke has a sermon with the following interrogative proposition: "Does not the religion of Jesus require too much of us?" and with the following responsive division: 1. It seems, indeed, to require too much, (a) when we consider its commands according to their letter and not according to their spirit; (b) when we make the conduct of the masses our standard of the capabilities of the race; (c) when our own failings cause us to distrust our moral faculties. 2. It does not seem to require too much, (a) when we consider the spirit of the commands; it cannot seem to require too much, for, (b) if so, it is not for man; and, (c) if so, it is not from God.

[2] Inst. Orat. L. IV. c. 5. [3] Cic. De Oratore, L. 3. c. 34.

qence has its triumph in the epilogue or peroration. The total impression of the discourse does not, indeed, exclusively depend on the manner of ending it; for the power of the conclusion must be derived, in great measure, from the substance of what has preceded. All parts of the discourse should converge to the final impression; all should conspire to the end. Still, the mode of collecting the means of this final impression, and of bringing them to their designed result, has been considered by all rhetoricians as preëminently important. A failure here is an essential evil to the whole. If the conclusion be not intimately connected with the parts which have gone before it, the discourse will be offensive through want of an unbending adherence to one purpose. If the conclusion be deficient in liveliness and strength, the discourse offends against the law of gradation, which requires the preacher to ascend; and, as far as he is able, to take his hearers with him from one stage to a higher, until he reach the most elevated point in the peroration.

There are different methods in which he may gather up the influences of his discourse, and combine them in one predominant impression. Among these methods, the ancient orators attached a high value to the recapitulation. The Greek rhetoricians termed it *ἀνακεφαλαίωσις* or *ἐπάνοδος*. Cicero calls it "enumeratio, per quam res dispersæ et diffusæ dictæ unum in locum coguntur, et reminiscendi causa unum sub adspectum subjiciuntur."[1] It is not to be denied that an animated, compressed, forcible repetition of the most important parts of the discourse, such a repetition as will give to the hearer an instantaneous, a comprehensive, and an affecting view of the entire theme, such as shall present this theme in its just proportions, and give the needed prominence to its most essential parts; such as shall combine in itself all the power which has pervaded the preceding divisions, and unite in one focus their enlightening and warming rays, is an essential aid to the hearer's intellect, in particular to his memory, and is also a persuasive appeal to his will. Nothing can be more appropriate as the *finale* of a sermon. But when the recapitulation is introduced abruptly, without seeming to grow out of the body of the sermon, when it is loose instead of precise, diffuse instead of condensed, when it is dry, stiff, lifeless, calmly didactic rather than energetically persuasive, a mere and a cold repetition of preceding topics rather than a vital concentration of them, when it is uniformly introduced in the same style and wants that variety and versatility which the excited minds of the hearers require, then it defeats its own end, and is more proper for any other part of the sermon than

[1] De Inventione, L. I. c. 52.

for the final part. When an orator aims to control the immediate action of his auditors, he may apply the most powerful stimulus by condensing all that he has said into a brief peroration, and thus bringing down his whole address suddenly and with its accumulated, compressed force upon their minds. What can exceed the effectiveness of Cicero's final summary in his orations for Archias, Cornelius Balbus, and Aulus Caecinas, and of the recapitulation of Demosthenes contra Leptinen.

Although the usages of the German pulpit make the recapitulation a regular, they do not make it a necessary mode of concluding a sermon. It is better fitted for the logical and systematic discourse than for the free homily, especially when this homily is upon an historical text or a parable. The more numerous and the more diversified are the topics of remark in a sermon, so much the more inappropriate is the recapitulation; for it becomes so much the more deficient in unity and in brevity. Often it is requisite that the conclusion spring from the last head in the body of the discourse; that the former be a fervid continuation of the latter, and of course that there be no part intervening like a recapitulation. The last topic in the body of such discourses is the result of all that has gone before, it renews and enlivens the impression of all, and renders any further repetition unnecessary. Sermons which pursue the *regressive* method,[1] often end their discussion with a topic which of itself involves the preceding heads, and cannot be wisely separated from the concluding appeal. It is a mistake to suppose that the main influence of a sermon as a whole, depends upon the final repeating of its leading ideas and the orderly arrangement of them in the hearer's memory. These ideas may have stamped their indelible impress on his mind, even if he cannot recollect them in their exact method. He may be affected by their substance, while he cannot recall them in their precise form. Their impression may have been already made upon his feelings, and his present state of emotion may be the whole result which the sermon was intended to produce. This result will not be increased, it may be diminished, by the formal recapitulation. Accordingly, the ancient orators do not uniformly repeat their leading ideas in their perorations: see Cicero, pro Ligario and pro Lege Manilia, and Demosthenes contra Midiam. Tzschirner has objected to Reinhard's sermons, because

[1] The *regressive* (analytic) method in a discourse, is that which goes backward from the sentiment of the text to the considerations which sustain or illustrate it; the *progressive* (synthetic) method is that which goes forward from the proofs or illustrations to the sentiment of the text; the *apagogic*, is that which proves the doctrine indirectly by showing the impossibility or absurdity of its opposite (reductio ad absurdum, or ad impossibile); the *ostensive*, is that which proves the doctrine directly by its appropriate arguments.

they too frequently terminate at the last head of the body of the discourse, without any regular peroration.

A tedious monotony, an abundance of idle, wearisome repetitions, and of artificial constructions, must result from an observance of the rule that every sermon shall close with a five-fold application—to instruct, to refute objections, to reprove or to warn, to exhort, and to console. The old writers of homiletics [English as well as German] insist on these five uses as essential to a profitable sermon: *usus didascalius* or *dogmaticus*, *elenchticus* or *polemicus*, *epanorthoticus*, *paedutious*, *paraeletieus*. They appeal to 2 Tim. 3: 16 and Rom. 15: 4, as if these passages were designed to supply clergymen with homiletical rules. But why should a preacher devote a special part of his sermon to each of these uses, when each may have been sufficiently attended to in his previous train of remark? Will it be said that he should systematically reserve all these applications for the close of his sermon, and therefore not insert them where they are logically appropriate? Shall the order of a discourse be thus invaded, and its whole shape distorted, for the sake of bending to an artificial and scholastic rule? And how shall every subject be made to suggest, naturally and without constraint, these five uses? It is a false view of the nature of a sermon, which induces its composer to abstain from all attempts to make it practical until he reaches the close of it. He should make it practical throughout, and as a whole.

Still, as some discourses are to be regulated by the theoretical proposition which is selected as their theme, these may properly defer until their close the most vehement or melting of their appeals to the heart and will. The conclusion of a sermon is often peculiarly fitted for delineating the practical results of a discussion, and for applying it to various classes of the audience. The final sentences of a discourse may very happily be one or more stanzas of a devotional hymn, or still more happily a passage of sacred writ. This is the most worthy top-stone of the whole structure. The echo of the sermon sounds so much the louder and deeper, by mingling it with the words of inspiration. Frequently this biblical and even the lyrical quotation may be the finishing words of a prayer with which the discourse closes. The excitement of the preacher rises higher and higher, until it can express itself only in the language of devotion. Both he and his hearers are more heartily interested in *concluding*, than they are in *beginning* their homiletical service with a prayer, although such a solemn address to God is an appropriate form for the commencement as well as for the termination of many a discourse. When this address is made the closing part of the sermon, it may breathe forth the emotions

which are naturally excited by the remarks which have been made, or it may express the personal hopes of the preacher that his discourse may be useful. He should give especial heed that it be animated with the spirit and be clothed in the language of supplication, and that it do not retain the prosaic character of the sermon. Reinhard sometimes inserts in his exordium a prayer which contains the division of his discourse, and sometimes the prayer in his epilogue is a virtual recapitulation of the leading ideas which he has advanced. The same may be said of other eminent preachers, and it cannot be indiscriminately condemned. The recapitulation may be expressed in such eminently devotional language, as to suggest no idea of a scholastic reference to the divisions in the sermon. Thus Herder, in his beautiful homily on the raising of the widow's only son from the dead at Nain, Luke 7: 11—17, expatiates on the providence of God that watches with fatherly care over the destiny of each individual, distributes and commingles joy and sorrow in a wonderful manner among men, sends helps and consolations at the very hour when they are most needed, not seldom in ways entirely unexpected, and most frequently by means of kind-hearted, compassionate men. He closes his discourse with the following recapitulatory yet affectionate prayer: "Oh thou who livest forever! thou Father of our destiny, before whose vision is stretched out the whole picture of our life with its sorrow and its joy; whose ear catcheth our cheerful and our mournful notes; in whose heart all our emotions resound! With a wise hand dost thou distribute joy and sorrow; thou troublest and consolest us, and teachest us thereby that we should comfort others. To all who are anxious and faint-hearted, give thou the inward assurance that thine eye seeth them, thy searching glance findeth them out, and thou hast compassion upon them. Let them hear the voice of thy Spirit speaking in their hearts, as none other can, and saying to them, Weep not!—and teach thou them to pray. At the right moment send thou the angel of consolation, who shall strengthen and quicken them with the cup of life. Awaken in men the noble sentiment, that they can be the very arm of the Most High, extending comfort and good cheer to the sorrowful. Lord! at that day when the last tears shall be wiped from our eyes, when thou by thy gentle power shalt raise us up to the higher life, when thine almighty hand shalt touch us and thou shalt say, I am he who liveth forever, and ye shall live also; oh, at that day, for all the events which have been intertwined with each other in our earthly course, for our mourning and our gladness, let there come into our eyes the tears of joy which are the thanks of the redeemed. Amen."