
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Reviews.

The Art of Preaching, and the Composition of Sermons. With an Introductory Essay on the Power, Position and Influence of the Pulpit of the Church of England. By the Rev. HENRY BURGESS, LL.D., Vicar of St. Andrew's, Whittlesey. Pp. 396. Hamilton, Adams & Co. 1881.

A CHAPLAIN to a High Sheriff, several years ago, wrote his Assize discourse with unsparing labour. He had thoughts, and he desired to express them clearly. In the afternoon, the Sheriff, chatting with one of the Judges—a judge eminent for his scholarship—asked in a leisure moment: "And how did you like the Chaplain's sermon, my Lord?" The Judge replied, "Why, to tell you the truth, Mr. Sheriff, I heard in that sermon what I never heard before, and what I hope I shall never hear again!" Something at this moment occurred to interrupt the conversation. The worthy Sheriff sought his Chaplain in private, and asked him if there was any new-fangled doctrine, or any one objectionable expression, in the discourse. The Chaplain warmly protested that the Judge's remark was most uncalled for; and as the Rural Dean was coming to dine at the Sheriff's that evening, it was agreed that the MS. should be submitted to Ruridecanal criticism. The Sheriff confessed that, for his part, the sermon had seemed to be both elaborate and eloquent. Shortly afterwards, however, the host was alone for a moment with his eminent guest; and he took the opportunity to allude to the remark about the sermon. *What* was it he had heard? With a smile, the Judge replied, "*I heard the clock strike twice!*" The Chaplain, a country clergyman, anxious to do his best, had preached more than an hour.

This story, which the Sheriff in question told us, came to our mind as we read Dr. Burgess's remarks on the length of sermons. Dr. Burgess thinks that in the present state of the Church of England no sermon should exceed half an hour "except on extraordinary occasions, and by men of reputation and popular abilities." We agree with him that, as a rule, a sermon of half an hour is long enough. In the Morning Service, indeed, we are rather inclined to think that twenty minutes, speaking broadly, is much more expedient than the half-hour. In a church where there are only two services on the Lord's Day, the first service, including the Morning Prayer, the Litany, a portion of the Communion Service, and a Sermon, is unavoidably long, even where musical encroachments are wisely restrained.[1] In the evening, however, the prayers are much shorter, and a sermon of half an hour is not likely to be complained of. Much depends, of course, on the preacher; and, again, a rule which is good for one congregation may not be good for another. Our own

[1] In referring to the length of sermons, Dr. Burgess omits to notice the Act passed a few years ago, under the provisions of which the Litany may be read after the third collect in the Evening Service. That Act has been of real use; but, as a measure of Church Reform, it did not go far enough, as (if we remember right) we heard Lord Shaftesbury say in the House of Lords. Our Services need simplifying and shortening. Convocation for several years went on working away at the Prayer Book, but nothing really serviceable has been done. When Dr. Burgess says that "long sermons are a sort of *tessera* of the Evangelical party," and "that complaints of the length of Common Prayer come

opinion is that by the peasantry, and the urban working classes, and by the lower middle classes, long sermons, if they are good, are preferred to short. The "cultured" class of hearers, probably, as a rule, are contented with a quarter of an hour in the morning and twenty minutes in the evening.

If the sermons are good, we said. But what is a good sermon? Here opinions differ widely. Hints may be gathered from the volume before us, which contains many apposite quotations, and a good deal of shrewd, sensible advice. As regards the more directly spiritual aspects of the question, we may remind our readers of the valuable article in THE CHURCHMAN, by Canon Clayton, "Preaching the Word" (vol. iii. p. 352). Upon some secondary matters, with Dr. Burgess's work by our side, we may briefly touch.

A formal Introduction, says the learned author, is not necessary. As to an opening anecdote, the opinion of the Rev. Daniel Moore is quoted: "The anecdote should be apposite, brief, and pointed." An Exordium is sometimes a hindrance.

As to divisions; should these be announced? Fénelon may be wrong in saying *No!* The practice of announcing divisions is not discountenanced by the orators of antiquity; Cicero's *primum, deinde, tum,* with many instances, may be quoted. But the firstly, secondly, and so forth, may be there—in the preacher's mind, or on his manuscript—whether stated or not. No canon, certainly, can be laid down for all, neither for preachers nor for congregations. Heads or divisions, as a rule, perhaps, are helpful: to announce them at the beginning of the sermon may have on the hearers, as Professor Blunt remarked, "the effect which the prospect of a long road has on the traveller." The difficulty with many preachers, no doubt, is to make their divisions *natural*—flowing easily from the key-thought. When the divisions are *forced*, artificial, and awkward, they make little impression; the discourse is rickety. Some Scriptures, of course, divide themselves, so to speak, and there cannot possibly be any difficulty in forming the "heads," or any impolicy in stating them. A careful regard to unity of subject stands foremost among the structural qualities of a good sermon.

As to choice of texts, Dr. Burgess contrasts the late Mr. Sortain, of Brighton, with Andrewes, Bramhall, and South. But the times of those "men of renown" are not our times; and we are inclined to think that Mr. Sortain's gleaning was wise. He was always on the look out with regard to the selection of texts and subjects, and also with regard to culling and storing up incidents suitable for illustration. Was it not Mr. Sortain who could not find a text for his sermon on "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure?" He searched the Concordance in vain; but Mrs. Sortain, at last being consulted, told him that the words on which he had been thinking all through the week were the Prayer Book version of "*Wait on the Lord.*" Mr. Sortain's sermons, delivered extempore—not even *notes* being used—were the result of prayerful and, to use the good old word, painful preparation. *Ars est celare artem;* and a sermon will flow on smoothly in proportion to previous thought and work. Mr. Sortain was,

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mostly" from Evangelicals, and that "a desire to luxuriate more in preaching leads many to wish to curtail the prayers," he only touches the fringe of a very important question, and, further, he does scant justice to Evangelicals. That there are repetitions in the Morning Service, and that, having regard to the poorer classes, some simplifications are desirable—with greater elasticity—few experienced and unprejudiced Church Reformers, we think, will deny. So far as our observation goes, in no churches are the prayers more devoutly read (or *said*, to use a catch phrase) than where Evangelical truths are faithfully preached.

indeed, a man of peculiar gifts; but second and third grade preachers have to follow the same lines; reading, judgment, thought, with ungrudging labour. To suppose that extempore preaching needs little preparation is a fatal mistake.[1] Loose, wordy, rambling, an in-and-out-and-round-about sermon, with an anecdote lugged in, with no leading ideas, no clear exposition, no really practical application—such an *ex tempore* sermon falls sadly short.[2]

On a very important subject Dr. Burgess quotes from Prebendary Moore's "Thoughts on Preaching." With regard to experimental preaching—*i.e.*, the describing the emotions and processes of the Christian inner life, Mr. Moore writes: "Such preaching is not for the unconverted man. Simulate it he may, and to a certain extent successfully." But to awaken a genial and grateful response in Christ-touched hearts is to preach "experimentally" from one's own experience.

In some parishes, according to Dr. Burgess, there is a strong prejudice against extemporaneous delivery: some people dislike to see a preacher without a book. Where such a prejudice exists it has been produced, probably, by a conceited, careless preacher, or else by a preacher who has not found out that he really ought to use a book. Concerning carelessness, we have already pointed out that its evils are great. But some men are not able, take what pains they may, to preach extempore: they are nervous, or they lack the altogether necessary gifts. And it is not every preacher who finds out quickly that he has no flow of words. We well remember a good man, whose sense and spirituality were beyond question, describing to us how he went on year after year, "hammering away," as he said, doing his very best. At length, a "brother beloved" in his congregation told him the truth; he had no pride, and he accepted the suggestion, to the contentment of all. Dr. Burgess, indeed, says that extemporaneous preaching is comparatively a rare attainment. We cannot go so far as this; but it may be admitted that in many country congregations, and perhaps we should say in many urban churches, too, complaints are justly made of feeble and tedious discourses. "*There's nothing in it!*" is a too common criticism.[3] Yet it ought to be remembered that a written discourse may be criticized, as correctly, in the same words. Only, it is true, the written sermon is the shorter, as a rule. Nevertheless, on the whole, extemporaneous sermons are more popular, we believe, than those which are written, and, other things being equal, more *telling*. There is a directness, a glow, a sympathetic force, in the language evoked on the spot which the language composed in the study cannot have.[4]

It may be, as Dr. Burgess thinks, that men who turn out successful speakers have had an incidental sort of training in early life. And a talent for speaking extempore, when rightly cultivated, steadily grows. In the

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[1] At the Winchester Diocesan Conference, last year, Lord Carnarvon with justice remarked that "an extemporary sermon . . . *if it is such as it should be* . . . needs even more thought and preparation than a written discourse."

[2] As to ideas, a story is told of a certain preacher in the Church of Ireland. He said to a friend, concerning a sounding board over the pulpit—"That was my idea." His friend dryly answered: "Yes; that's the only idea in the pulpit I ever heard was yours!"

[3] Heat, and loudness, cannot make up for preparation. For vain and indolent preachers of a certain type, Shakspeare's line has pungent satire:—

"You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring."

[4] Pitt's happy translation is well known:—"It is of eloquence as of a flame; it requires matter to feed it, motion to excite it, and it brightens as it burns."

first three or four years of his ministry an earnest curate will find opportunity for practice: there is the cottage lecture (cottage *address* rather), the Bible Class, the Prayer Meeting "few words," and so on. Soliloquies, as Bishop Burnet says, are helpful: two or three minutes spoken meditation on some thought, in the study, or in a field, or, Demosthenes-like, on the sea-shore. Then, in his written sermon, as time goes on, he may leave a blank here and there, and fill up with words which come in the warmth of his argument. He may not be able, as was Bishop Wilberforce, to write FOG on a page, and expand the thought for five minutes, with ease and power; but if his heart[1] be in his work, and he have taken pains with his subject, he is not likely to get into difficulties. After a time the written sermon may be thrown aside altogether. A sudden summons may necessitate a really extempore effort. The present writer preached his first sermon in a church "without book," and without even a single note, at literally a minute's notice. While singing the first verse of the hymn before the sermon he was summoned to the vestry by the verger; and with just time to put on a gown, and make sure of the chapter and verse of a text, he had to walk up into the pulpit. It was matter of necessity. During the week he had been thinking over a certain Scripture, and in his passage to the pulpit he resolved to give a brief exposition, simply, slowly, and above all, quietly. Help was granted; and few people in the congregation were aware of the emergency. But the preacher had practised in a large room, and he had learnt confidence. After fifteen years, he himself in illness requested two clergymen, both men of some standing, to preach for him; but although they had several hours' notice, "not having brought a sermon with them," they were able only to "read prayers."

Dr. Burgess makes some allusion to the practice of committing sermons to memory. This has never seemed to us a desirable plan. It must take a considerable time; and what is gained by it?

Some years ago the present writer, on a week day, went to hear an eminent Nonconformist preach a special sermon. We had heard it stated that this eloquent Nonconformist preached extemporaneously. It was obvious, however, at least we had no difficulty in concluding, that the sermon was delivered *memoriter*. On leaving the chapel (it was in Westminster), we found a man at the door selling this very sermon; it had been printed the day before.

A Handbook for Travellers in Switzerland. Murray.

AN account of the passage of the Alphubel Joch, by a Sussex Rector, may have an interest for many readers of the invaluable "Murray's" Guide, at this season of the year.

On the west of the village of Saas, he writes[2]—as Murray, of twenty years ago, tells us—"rises the Saasgrat, a lofty chain of inaccessible snowy peaks, separating the valley of Saas from that of Zermatt." But though it is no longer true that this chain is "inaccessible"—as in various parts it has fallen before the assaults of different members of the English Alpine Club—yet the passage of it is still attended with so much difficulty that Mr. John Ball, the President of the Club, in his excellent guide book, describes it as follows:—

The range of the Saas Grat, extending from the Strahlhorn to the Balferin, ranks next in height to those of Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa, and the four passes leading to Zermatt—viz., the Mischabel Joch, the Alphubel Joch, the

[1] Romaine, if we remember rightly, lays stress on the *heart* of preaching.
[2] *Brighton Daily Post.*

Allalein Pass, and the Adler Pass, may be counted amongst the most considerable in the Alps; not to be attempted except by men in thorough training, with good guides, and in settled weather.

By one of these passes I wished to cross to Zermatt; and after consultation with my guide, Clement Zurbrücken, as the weather seemed settled and the snow was reported to be in good order, the Alphubel Joch was selected for the attempt. "This pass was first discovered," says Ball, "by the Rev. Leslie Stephen, one of the most energetic and successful explorists of this portion of the Alps, who has given in 'Vacation Tourists' an account of the difficulties encountered in effecting the descent of the Täsch Glacier." At 1 A.M. I was summoned by my guide, who reported all things to be favourable for the ascent; and after a hasty meal of coffee and bread and butter, we issued forth from the hotel. The morning was still and mild—not frosty, as is usually the case there, even in the height of summer. The stars shone brightly, while an occasional flash of summer lightning from some clouds to the east lit up the sky. For the first half hour we picked our way by the uncertain light, up a steady, but somewhat steep ascent, through a pine forest, and then emerged on the Fee Alp. After crossing this by a comparatively level path, we reached at 3.30 the moraine of an old glacier, now shrunk, and passed along some steep slopes, covered with pieces of rock and *débris*. . . . . The glacier is divided into two large branches by the Gletscher Alp, which for nine months in the year is covered with snow, but is a pasture in summer, when it is a perfect garden of wild flowers. Here were growing in the most luxuriant profusion, masses of most beautiful Alpine rose, forget-me-not, the lovely blue gentian, a bright orange marigold, a pale saffron-coloured anemone, and other flowers too numerous to mention. Mounting these steep grass slopes, we reached the top of this Alp, and stopped at 3.30 A.M. to survey the view. . . . . At 4.10, the last remaining star disappeared, and at the same moment the sun, though not yet above the horizon, began to illumine the top of the highest peak with its light, which rapidly descended the sides of the mountain towards the glacier of Fee. At 4.30, rising rapidly above the lower part of the glacier, we passed the first patches of snow, and continued over rocks till 5.15 (when the sun first touched us), and then crossed some snow slopes. Leaving these, we had a steep clamber over rocks, where hands and feet were both called into requisition, till we reached the glacier. This was here covered with snow, which was in pretty good order, though in places somewhat soft. We crossed it, however, with nothing worse than an occasional slip up to our middle *into* it (though a slip *down* it would have been rather awkward, as the slope was steep, and we should probably have gone faster and further than we wished), and at 5.50 reached the medial moraine of the glacier. Here a halt was called, and breakfast, consisting of bread and cold meat with some *vin du pays*, was discussed. At 6.20 we made a fresh start, and here it was considered advisable to take to the rope, which we accordingly fastened round our bodies, as we now left the moraine and got on to the glacier, which sometimes was alarmingly steep, resembling a high-pitched roof, and was interspersed with numerous crevasses and occasional *bergschrunds*. One of these gave us considerable trouble, as we had to get down some way into it, and then cut steps up the perpendicular side opposite. As, however, the snow which covered it was firm, we surmounted it without very much difficulty. We had also to be careful in crossing some of the crevasses which lay in our path. . . . . Happily we got safely over all the obstacles in our way; and, after a long and fatiguing trudge, reached the snow *arête*, forming the col. 12,524 feet above the level of the sea, at 9.55 A.M. During the last part of the way the ascent

became very laborious, as the snow began to get rather soft, under the influence of the sun, which now streamed down upon us with almost tropical heat; and the steep ascent, combined with the rarefied state of the atmosphere at that elevation, rendered breathing difficult, and compelled us to make frequent halts for breath before reaching the summit. Here the view which broke upon our sight towards Zermatt was magnificent. The whole range of the snow-capped Monte Rosa group lay stretched before us in unclouded splendour. . . . . Far below us lay the Täsch Alp, leading away to the valley of Zermatt, which, however, itself was not yet visible. After enjoying the glorious view for a short time, though not so long as I wished (for the hot sun and cold wind were beginning to tell on the skin of my face and neck, and rendered a speedy move advisable), we started on the descent, and proceeded for some time rapidly down some easy snow slopes that fall to the westward till they reach the verge of a rocky escarpment, to which we were soon compelled to take, owing to the snow becoming very much crevassed. After traversing the rocks for some time, it is necessary, as Mr. Ball tells us, to bear to the left, when the precipice gradually diminishes in height, and the descent to the lower part of the glacier may be made, if the right point is hit, without much difficulty. Unluckily we overshot this point, and in endeavouring to get down to the glacier, which lay about fifty feet below us, were landed in serious and unlooked-for difficulties. In one place I stepped upon one of those stones (or, rather, in this case, masses of rock) which, (as the proverb tells us) "gather no moss," and this giving way under my weight, caused me an unpleasant, and what might have been a dangerous, fall. However, happily for myself, I was pulled up by the rope which we had not yet discarded, with no further damage than some bruises in various parts of my body, some cuts on my shins and elbow, and the loss of the bar of my watch chain. My watch had flown off in the fall, but (to use cricketing parlance) had been beautifully caught by Zurbrücken *at short slip*. After searching some time we reached a spot where we thought the descent was practicable, and after sundry slips, and a somewhat perilous and very "unpleasant quarter of an hour," we found ourselves safely landed on the lower glacier, where I halted to apply some snow to the still bleeding wounds on my shins. Our difficulties, however, were not yet over, for after traversing the snow for some time, we came to some ice-slopes, where we were compelled to have recourse to the axe for the purpose of cutting steps. This was the chief difficulty, and perhaps the only real danger, of the pass, as great care was needed—an ice-slope being (as everyone knows), much more difficult to descend than to ascend—and a false step would have placed us in a very precarious position. The ice, however, was at length successfully crossed, and we then finally left the glacier and took to the moraine, where we stopped half an hour for lunch. At 11.45 we started again over moraine and rocks, and soon came to a steep descent of grass, covered with *débris*. This portion of the descent was rather fatiguing, as the sun was very hot, and it was necessary to pick our way carefully among the large boulders which were scattered in admired confusion all around. However, the "longest lane has a turning," and so had this uncomfortable portion of our route, for the stones gradually became fewer and farther between; and, following the course of the stream which flowed out of the glacier, we at length reached the Täsch Alp. The flora here again was magnificent, and some time was spent in collecting specimens of the "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue" gentians and other flowers, for friends in England. I may here remark that in the whole course of our journey we did not come across a single plant of the much coveted *Edelweiss*,

though a few days subsequently, I found, and with much difficulty and at some risk secured, a few specimens of it on the St. Théodule. After leaving the Täsch Alp we crossed the stream, and came upon the foot-path leading to Zermatt, carried for a considerable distance through a pine forest, by the side of a water-course. This part also of the journey was very rough and fatiguing, and the heat almost insufferable. After an hour and a-half of this we struck the main road to Zermatt, a little above Täsch, and reached Zermatt .... at four o'clock, having been just fourteen hours on our journey. No doubt the passage might be accomplished in considerably less time than we took, but our halts, both for rest and for botanizing, were numerous.

A Brief Sketch of the Life of General Charles A. Browne, formerly Military Secretary to the Government at Madras; afterwards Hon. Sec. to the Church Missionary Society. With Personal Reminiscences of Christian Life in India Half-a-Century Ago. By a General Officer. Pp. 120. Dublin: George Herbert, 117, Grafton Street. 1881.

THIS valuable little volume owes its origin to THE CHURCHMAN. The General Officer who wrote it had been laid aside from all active work for his beloved Master; he had been much in prayer for guidance as to how he might in any way be useful, and his prayer seems to have been answered by the receipt of the CHURCHMAN for May, which some unknown friend—we quote from the opening paragraph—had kindly sent to him. For that number we had secured a Paper on "Old Indians," written "by one of them," a member of the Civil Service, known as a devoted servant of Christ. When General —— received the CHURCHMAN containing this Paper, the thought occurred to him that by some personal reminiscences he might further illustrate our "Old Indian's" description of Evangelicals in India fifty years ago. A main portion of General ——'s reminiscences (he does not permit us to give his name) is a sketch of his "chum," the late General Browne. Many of his old friends will no doubt recognize the "chum" of that excellent officer and consistent Christian, Charles Browne, Honorary Secretary to the Church Missionary Society.

A Preface to this delightful book has been written by the Rev. Frederick Chalmers, Vicar of Nonington, Kent (well-known as Rector of Beckenham), who served for twenty-two years in the Madras Army. General Browne and the author, says Mr. Chalmers, were his fellow-soldiers:—

"With both I was for some years officially associated in different public duties; and with both I was privileged to enjoy that intimate friendship which, from the necessity of mutual reliance, and mutual and confiding frankness incident to their profession, military men have special facilities for contracting and maintaining."

Mr. Chalmers continues:—

"With General Browne, I was for four years associated in a Military Examining Committee, who were selected to examine—in Hindoostani or Persian, as the case might be—all officers in the Madras army, who were candidates for staff appointments: the third officer of that committee being now a retired colonel of high character and attainments, and 'whose praise is in all the churches.' At the beginning of this period of four years, General Browne was the only one of the three examiners who loved the Saviour and revered His Word; the other two (including myself) were 'of the world,' and entirely in it. And as we frequently met, and were some hours together, we two indulged in occasional lamentation, that so fine an officer, and possessing such brilliant and acknowledged talents as our friend Browne, should

have taken up what we considered to be an eccentric and strange fanaticism. The examiners sat at a table together in the centre of the large hall of the Old Madras College, while the officers who were under examination were distributed at smaller tables preparing their papers; and we had frequent intervals for reading or conversation while these officers were so occupied. On one occasion Browne seemed to be much engrossed with a little book which he was reading, and I have a distinct recollection of the following conversation with one of his colleagues. 'Browne, what is that little book you are reading so diligently?' With his calm smile, he quietly handed it to his interrogator, who found it to be the well-known treatise, 'The Force of Truth,' by Thomas Scott. After a short inspection of its contents, it was returned to him with the remark, 'O, my dear Browne! I wish, instead of Thomas Scott, you would read Walter Scott, it would be much better for your mind.' And yet it happened, through God's wondrous grace and mercy, that before the four years of our association on that Military Examining Committee had expired, we were all three of one mind in the Lord, and the remaining two formed an attachment to our elder brother Browne, which was only terminated by his sudden and premature death."

Open this book where one may, appears some interesting incident or quotation. Reference—*e.g.*, is made to that sincere and earnest Christian, General Alexander. A sketch also is given of Major Henry O'Brien, uncle to the well-known Smith O'Brien. The General writes:—

He was, as I heard from old officers, long a leader in gay society, especially on the turf. As a cavalry officer, he was one of the best riders in the Madras Army, and pre-eminently brave. Having been wounded in the last Mahratta war, he was sent home on sick certificate, and while at home, was brought to a knowledge of his Saviour. He returned to India, accompanied by a young wife, lovely in person, and still more so in Christian character. Major O'Brien, being one, if not the first, of those old Indians referred to by the writer in the CHURCHMAN, had to endure an amount of persecution, to which others were not subsequently subjected.

How Lieutenants, Captains, and Colonels became converted, and in after years fought under the banner of "Christ crucified," as His faithful soldiers and servants, this little book narrates in a pleasing and profitable way.

Short Notices.

Dorothy's Daughters. By EMMA MARSHALL, Author of "Life's Aftermath," "Mrs. Mainwaring's Journal," &c. Seeley. Pp. 343. 1881.

Mrs. Marshall's stories are always good; and "Dorothy's Daughters" will be no exception to this general rule. Everyone will like and admire "Dorothy," in other words—Mrs. Singleton; and there is another widow, Mrs. Fairfax, equally good and saintly. But we think Mrs. Fairfax's son, the hero of the tale, a finer character than either of Dorothy's three daughters.

Practical Reflections on every verse of the Holy Gospels. By a Clergyman. With a Preface by H. P. LIDDON, D.D. Pp. 660. Rivington.

In the author's Preface to the first edition of this work (which is dedicated to one of the curates of St. Alban's, Holborn, he states that the Reflections are chiefly derived from Quesnel's "Réflexions Morales sur le Nouveau Testament," but that he has freely used several commentaries, "whether Catholic or Protestant" (by "Catholic" here, possibly, he