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THE REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR

Vol. V.

July, 1908.

No. 3.

A STUDY OF HOMILETICAL THEORY.

ARTICLE III.

THE STATE OF HOMILETICAL THEORY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES
A. D. 400-1500.

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The time included in the present survey extends from Augustine (d. 430) to Erasmus (d. 1536). Each of these distinguished writers marks an epoch in the history of homiletical theory; Augustine the close and culmination of the patristic development, Erasmus the beginning of the modern. Between them lies the long stretch of mediævalism, in which the only important contribution to homiletics was that of scholasticism. But the elaborations and refinements of the scholastic method added little of real value, except fuller and clearer analysis, to the principles laid down by Augustine; while it was precisely these excesses of method which invited the criticism and proposed improvements of the Humanists and Reformers. Why then, it will be asked, place Augustine at the beginning of the mediæval period instead of at the close of the patristic, where he more properly belongs? Simply because there was no new beginning immediately after him. His work remained the norm and standard of homiletical teaching throughout the Middle Ages, except for the scholastic developments mentioned. Nor was there any formal homiletics before Augustine. His position in the history of this subject is therefore unique.

He is the turning point of the patristic into the mediæval age, and therefore belongs to both; to the one because he sums up its development, to the other because he is its principal, and for a long time its only homiletical teacher. It would indeed be proper to make some sort of new homiletical era begin with the rise and dominance of the popular and scholastic preaching of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but as that would leave almost a blank between Augustine and that time (so far as homiletical theory is concerned), it is just as well to take the whole long period in one survey, dividing into four shorter periods as follows: (1) A. D. 400-600; (2) 600-1100; (3) 1100-1300; (4) 1300-1500.

THE FIRST PERIOD, 400-600.

As was pointed out in the preceding article we have no definite theory of preaching before Augustine. But in his famous treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Teaching*) we come at last upon a distinct and worthy effort to formulate the principles of public discourse as these apply to preaching. Both the title and contents of the book show that the author had in mind preaching as the function of teaching the Word of God in a worshipping assembly of Christians, rather than as the proclamation at first hand of the gospel to unbelievers. His treatment therefore is a study of the method of interpreting and publicly teaching the Scriptures. We must keep in mind in regard to the author these three things: (1) That he was a carefully trained rhetorician, and had taught rhetoric with success before his conversion to Christianity; (2) That he was a devout and profound thinker and theologian, fully committed to the view that the Christian Scriptures are an authoritative revelation from God; (3) That he was a preacher and prelate of long experience in the pastoral office when he wrote this treatise. Thus his equipment for his task was admirable, and as complete as his times and his personal limitations permitted.

The treatise *On Christian Teaching* consists of four books, of which the first three were written in the year 397, the fourth not until 426. The first three are not strictly homiletical, but

hermeneutical. They lay down the principles of Biblical interpretation as these were conceived by Augustine. He believes that the first duty of a preacher is to have a clear and correct understanding of the Word of God; but, it is also a rhetorical principle of the first importance that a speaker should have something to say! Accordingly in the opening chapter of the first Book he announces his purpose in these words: "There are two things on which all treatment of the Scriptures depends: the method of finding what is to be understood, and the method of setting forth what has been understood. We shall first discuss finding, then setting forth." In the prologue to the fourth Book (published thirty years later) he quotes this language when taking up the second part of his proposed task. Thus the first three Books are devoted to invention, and only the fourth, after a long interval, is given to rhetoric, or homiletics, proper. On this we may remark, first, that it was a well accepted rhetorical theory from Aristotle down that the invention of material was the main thing, the mode of expression secondary; and in thus giving first and more extended treatment to the materials of discourse Augustine was but carrying out the rhetorical principles in which he had been trained. Secondly, this procedure accorded well with the accepted practice in preaching as it had been developed up to Augustine, namely, making the careful interpretation of Scripture the principal element of discourse.

For our immediate purposes, however, the first part of the treatise *On Christian Teaching* (Books 1.-III.) may be omitted, and only the fourth Book need be brought under review. The edition used is that of Tauchnitz, a recension by Bruder of the Benedictine text. Reference is also made to the translation of J. F. Shaw in Dods' edition of the Fathers (T. and T. Clark, and reprinted in the American edition of the Post-Nicene Fathers). The work has been discussed by Paniel, Nebe and other students of the History of Preaching; and particularly well by Brömel, *Homiletische Charakterbilder*, Bd. I., S. 1ff. The following brief outline of this justly famous and profoundly influential study of the art of preaching will give the reader some inkling of its highly suggestive and useful con-

tents; but neither outline nor translation can be anything but a feeble substitute for the vigorous, terse, interesting original.

In chapter 1 the author says it is not his purpose to "lay down any rules of rhetoric, such as I have learned, and taught, too, in the secular schools. These are useful, but can be learned elsewhere". In chapter 2 he shows that "it is lawful for the Christian teacher to use the art of rhetoric", and says: "Now the art of rhetoric being available for the enforcing of either truth or falsehood, who will dare to say that truth in the person of its defenders is to take its stand unarmed against falsehood? For example, that those who are trying to persuade men of what is false are to know how to introduce their subject so as to put the hearer into a friendly or attentive or teachable frame of mind, while the defenders of truth shall be ignorant of that art? [Augustine here states the commonly accepted theory of the Introduction as given by Cicero: *reddere auditores benevolos, attentos, dociles.*] That the former are to tell their falsehoods briefly, clearly and plausibly, while the latter shall tell the truth in such a way that it is tedious to listen to, hard to understand, and in fine not easy to believe? That the former are to oppose the truth and defend falsehood with sophistical arguments, while the latter shall be unable either to defend what is true or refute what is false? That the former while imbuing the minds of their hearers with erroneous opinions are by their powers of speech to awe, to melt, to enliven and to arouse them, while the latter shall in defence of the truth be sluggish and frigid and somnolent? Who is such a fool as to think this wisdom? Since then the faculty of eloquence is available for both sides, and is of very great service in enforcing either wrong or right, why do not good men study to engage it on the side of truth, when bad men use it to obtain the triumph of wicked and worthless causes, and to further injustice and error?"

In chapter 3, however, Augustine is careful to show that a mastery of rhetorical rules as such is not necessary to good speaking; that we can learn by hearing and following eloquent speakers. A wise caution is given in these words: "Care must be taken indeed lest the things which ought to be said escape

from the mind while attention is being given that they be said by art." In chapter 5 he says that wisdom is more valuable than eloquence, but both are needed, and goes on to show in the next chapter how the sacred writers employed both. As there is an eloquence appropriate to the different ages of men, so there is a species appropriate to men "who justly claim the highest authority and are evidently inspired of God. With this eloquence they spoke; no other would have been suitable to them." Further on this point he says: "It was as if wisdom were walking forth from its home—the breast of the wise—and eloquence, like an inseparable attendant, follows without being called." In chapters 7-9 he illustrates the combination of inspired eloquence and wisdom in the cases of Amos the prophet and Paul the apostle, acutely and interestingly analyzing and discussing passages from their writings. He cautions that the preacher must not imitate the obscurities of the sacred writers, which, though proper to them, are not so to us. This leads him in chapter 10 to discuss clearness of style and to say that it must be secured even at the expense of other things if necessary, saying that it is of no use to speak at all if our hearers do not understand us. In chapter 11 he says that a golden key which will not unlock the door is useless, while a wooden one that does is better. Yet as even the food necessary to life requires seasoning for some palates we must not reject elegance of speech where it is appropriate. In chapters 12 and 13 he develops Cicero's maxim that an eloquent man must so speak as "to teach, to please, to move", showing how the principle applies to the Christian preacher. This is one expression which he gives to the principle: *Oportet igitur eloquentem ecclesiasticum, quando suadet aliquid quod agendum est, non solum docere ut instruat, et delectare ut teneat, verum etiam flectere ut vincat.* Chapter 14 discusses beauty of diction and cautions against excess of ornament.

In chapters 15 and 16 Augustine wisely and seriously treats of the preacher's necessary dependence upon the Holy Spirit and prayer for any true success in his preaching. Yet he must not neglect a sensible use of proper human helps. In chapters 17-19 another great dictum of Cicero's is handled and applied

to preaching. It is the principle of the three different ways of speaking which grow out of the nature of the things to be discussed: *parva submisse, modica temperate, magna granditer*, that is, little things humbly, ordinary things moderately, great things grandly. Then in chapters 20-26 he discusses these three styles—the humble, the moderate, the grand—giving illustrations from the sacred writers, and also from Cyprian and Ambrose. In one highly entertaining passage (chapter 24) the author relates an incident from his own experience, when under an earnest appeal to a rude people in Mauretania to desist from the bloody feuds to which they had long been addicted they were led with tears to abandon an inveterate custom.

Chapters 27-29 present with force the great truth that whatever be the style of the preacher's speaking his life should enforce what he says; for though truth is truth and will do good even when spoken by evil men, yet the preacher who carefully practices what he preaches is sure to do the most good. So in chapter 30 the great duty of prayer for the divine aid and blessing is suitably once more pressed home. In chapter 31 the author concludes his treatise with an apology for making it longer than he intended, closing with these words: "I give thanks to our God that in these four books, with such little skill as I have been able, I have discussed not such a preacher as I, to whom many things are lacking, could claim to be, but such an one as he ought to be who in sound, that is Christian, teaching is diligent to labor not for himself alone but also for others."

Even so slight a sketch of this notable treatise shows that with a master's hand the great thinker has touched the essentials of the art of preaching for all time. There are three things which stand out pre-eminently clear in Augustine's teaching: (1) The essential of a right character in the preacher and a proper conception of his task; (2) The necessity of a correct interpretation of Scripture and its use as the authoritative material in preaching; (3) A sane and skillful employment of accepted rhetorical principles as far as these are available and serviceable to the preacher of the gospel.

Relatively to homiletics the treatise occupies the position of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* toward the art of speaking in general. Details of interpretation (especially the allegorical method) and of rhetorical theory itself are of course open to criticism and dissent, but on the whole this first treatment of homiletical theory remains one of the most important, not only for its historic and literary interest, but for its grasp of fundamental principles, its solidity of thought, its charm of style, its devoutness of aim.

After Augustine there is no treatise on preaching for centuries. Though Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604) was a diligent preacher and urged the duty upon others, he added nothing of importance either to the theory or practice of preaching. His justly celebrated *Pastoral Rule* (*Regula Pastoralis*) is a highly interesting and important contribution to Poimenics but has little value for Homiletics. (Besides the edition in Migne's *Latin Patrology*, Gregory's Works, there is a convenient edition containing both the original and a translation, by H. R. Bramley, Oxford, 1874). The little book was a great favorite throughout the Middle Ages. It was paraphrased by Alfred the Great into Anglo-Saxon and its study enjoined upon the priests. Charlemagne also admired it much and caused several synods to urge the reading of it upon the clergy. The treatise owes much to Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom, and something to Ambrose, but has also an independent value. Devoted to a discussion of the duties and character proper to a pastor it gives a few hints here and there on preaching, but no formal discussion. In the introduction and first chapter Gregory insists that only suitable and skilled men should be made pastors. In chapter 7 he discusses with good sense the calls of Isaiah and Jeremiah as well illustrating both the modest reluctance and the courageous obedience which should characterize one who is called to the duty of preaching. Chapter 4 of Part II. opens with the good remark, "Let the pastor be discreet in silence, useful in speech; that he may neither declare what ought to be kept, nor keep what ought to be declared." There is some discussion of how he may be "useful in speech". The Lord rebukes the pastors

who will not speak, calling them "dumb dogs that cannot bark." He uses the words of our Lord and of Paul to enforce the duty of preaching; he insists on careful preparation by the preacher, "lest if he is hurried into speaking without due order the hearts of the hearers be hurt with the wound of error". Again, "Often the value of the things said is lost, when it is made light of to the hearts of the hearers by a careless or unbecoming manner of speech." In Part III. Gregory discusses (much after Chrysostom and the Nazianzen) the different kinds of hearers to be addressed, with suggestions as to what is appropriate to each sort. It may be remarked in passing that the ancient and mediæval rhetoric and homiletics both made much more of this topic than is customary in modern treatises. Gregory uses a curious illustration when he says that as the cock strikes himself with his wings before crowing in order to awaken himself and be alert, so the preacher must smite himself before he warns others! Finally in Part IV. he briefly sets forth how the preacher should be duly on his guard not to be puffed up either because of his good life or his good preaching.

THE SECOND PERIOD, 600-1100.

The period from the seventh to the eleventh century inclusive is the darkest in the history of preaching. Ignorance and other unfitness in the clergy, brutality and illiteracy among the people, and many other hindrances worked against the preaching of these ages. It is not to be expected that our research into the state of homiletical theory during such times will be rewarded with anything of special value. Yet there are a few treatises which present some degree of interest as filling what would otherwise be a total blank. Two of these claim slight notice here, for this and other reasons, and not as having any intrinsic worth. These are works of Isidore of Seville and Rabanus Maurus.

For Isidore I have studied the accounts in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexikon*, Hauck-Herzog *Realencyclopadie*, Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. IV., p. 662ff., Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Vol. I., p. 424ff., and the Works of Isidore in Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, tt. 81-84.

Isidore of Seville (d. 636) was the younger brother of Leander whom he succeeded in the archbishopric of their city. He was a man of wonderful learning, a notable prelate, and an esteemed preacher. He wrote a number of works on a great variety of subjects. His most remarkable production is the treatise in twenty books usually called the *Etymologies*, sometimes the *Origins*, in which he briefly discusses all the learning of his time. Most of it indeed is mere compilation, and he is said to have quoted 150 authors. The title is quite misleading, as the discussion of etymology proper is only a small part of the work. Schaff describes it as "a concise encyclopedia of universal learning".

In Book I., after defining culture ("discipline") and describing the Seven Liberal Arts, he takes up grammar, discussing the alphabet and the grammatical rules of the schools. In Book II. he proceeds to rhetoric. Here he condenses the accepted body of doctrine on that subject. There is nothing new or striking in his treatment, but it shows easy mastery of his matter and power of vigorous and condensed statement of principles. He defines rhetoric as "the science of speaking well", and adopts (of course without quotation marks) Cato's famous definition of the orator as "a good man skilled in speaking" (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*), adding that the "good man consists of nature, morals and arts". One of the best of the little chapters (Bk. II., Chap. VII.) may be given entire as a sample of the author's manner: "Chap. VII. On the Four Parts of an Oration. 1. The parts of an oration in the art of rhetoric are four: exordium, narration, argumentation, conclusion. The first of these arouses the mind of the hearer, the second explains things that have been done, the third produces confidence in assertions, the fourth embraces the end of the whole oration. 2. We must begin then in such a way as to make the hearer well disposed, teachable or attentive: well disposed by beseeching, teachable by instructing, attentive by exciting. We must so narrate as to speak briefly and clearly. We must so argue as first to strengthen our own [arguments] and then to crush those opposed to us. We must so conclude as to stir up the mind of the hearer to do [lit. to fulfill,

implere] what we say." The whole of the little treatise is only a condensed rhetoric, with nothing distinctively homiletical. And this is all that the literature seems to show in the way of homiletical theory up to the ninth century!

Nearly two hundred years after Isidore lived the famous Rabanus Maurus (d. 856), archbishop of Mainz. He, too, was a learned and voluminous writer. His complete works occupy six volumes (Tt. 107-112) in Migne's *Latin Patrology*. Besides other authors I have found something on Rabanus as a homiletician in Lentz' *Christliche Homiletik*, Bd. I., S. 218ff. Of his works as given in Migne the famous treatise *De Clericorum Institutione* (*On the Institution of the Clergy*) contains what he has to say on homiletical theory.

The book was written in the early years of the author, probably while still a monk at Fulda, though perhaps already a teacher of others. It is dedicated to the then archbishop of Mainz, Haistulph, and to the author's fellow-monks at Fulda. The treatise is a sort of text-book of clerical duties, and matters pertaining to the clerical office. It treats of the ranks of the clergy, tonsure, vestments, etc.; of the rites and ordinances, such as baptism, the Supper, unction, the mass. In the second book he discusses the sacred seasons, fasting, penance, confession, reading and singing in worship, the Catholic faith and heresies. In the third book he takes up preaching and thus describes his purpose (*Pat. Lat.*, tom. 107, col. 296): "The third book sets forth how all things written in the divine books are to be investigated and learned, also those things in the studies and arts of the heathen which are useful to be studied by the ecclesiastic man. Lastly also the book shows in what way it becomes those who bear the office of teaching to address different hearers with different modes of speech, and in ecclesiastical doctrine faithfully to teach them." In the work itself he adheres to this preannounced plan and comes in his third book to the discussion of the discipline or education of the preacher. In the first fifteen chapters he treats of the Biblical material and its interpretation, acknowledging (very justly!) his great indebtedness to Augustine and referring to that father for fuller treatment.

In chapters 16-25 he discusses the Seven Liberal Arts—the *trivium* and *quadrivium*—in regular form. In chapters 26, 27 he makes some remarks as to the bearing of the study of philosophy and morals on preaching. At last in chapters 28-36 he takes up and discusses *quid debeat doctor catholicus in dicendo agere*, that is, how the orthodox preacher ought to act in speaking; or, in other words, how the principles and practice of rhetoric are applicable to preaching. But let not the expectant reader look for much, now he has come to the main point. For what follows is only a rehash of Augustine's *Christian Teaching*. It is greatly condensed, but all the ideas are borrowed from that great book. The three ends of teaching—to please, to instruct, to move; the three styles—humble, moderate, grand; the example of Paul (though not of Amos), all are here. Rabanus even reproduces Augustine's ingenious and sophistical defense of plagiarism—which is surely quite to the point! The substance of the defence is that when one takes and commits to memory what another has written, for use in speech, he does no wrong, provided he puts himself into the feelings of the original author; for he who steals takes away what is another's, but the word of God is in no such exclusive sense another's, for it really belongs to him who obeys it! That is, he makes it his own (no matter who has put it into form) if he lives up to it! In another passage Rabanus discusses (after the Gregories this time, even using one Gregory's acknowledgement of debt to the other!) the three very important matters of (1) how the preacher should adapt his teaching to the quality of his audience, (2) how he should be able to distinguish, classify and contrast the virtues and vices, (3) how he should pray to God for power in speech. In case we have learned anything from others we should pray for those from whom we have received it, and for those to whom we offer it, and give thanks to God who gave it both to our teachers and to us.

These two weak compilations are all the treatises which have come down to us from the long period under review. Perhaps there were others, but if so they have either perished or have escaped the notice of scholars.

THE THIRD PERIOD, 1100-1300.

The impulse given to preaching by the reforms of Hildebrand (c. 1050) and the first crusade (c. 1095) naturally first affected practice rather than theory. But within the flourishing epoch of mediæval preaching which reached its height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find that renewed attention is given to the art as well as the act of preaching.

One of the most important and famous writers of this age was Guibert of Nogent (1053-1124). He was born of excellent and wealthy parents at Clermont. His father died while the boy was yet an infant, but his good mother gave him a careful upbringing, a service which he has duly and tenderly recognized and eulogized in his autobiography. (See Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, tom. 156, col. 839, and elsewhere). Among other educational advantages Guibert enjoyed the instructions of the noted and beloved Anselm at Bec. He became a preacher of some note, Abbot of Nogent after 1104, and a writer of many books, among them the well-known *Gesta Dei per Francos*, an account of the First Crusade. His homiletical work comes in the way of a preface to his commentary on the Book of Genesis (*Moralia in Genesim*), under the title *Liber Quo Ordine Sermo Fieri Debeat, or A Treatise on the Method (order) in which a Sermon Ought to be Made*. (The original in Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, tom. 156, col. 21ff; and a slight account in Lentz, *Gesch. der Hom.*, I. S. 235ff). It is by no means a formal treatise on rhetoric, sacred or secular, but rather a defence or explanation of the author's preferred method of interpreting Scripture, and therefore appropriately prefixed to a commentary on the first book of the Bible. It was written at the request of a friend. The style is rather crabbed and involved, but the book is spirited, and shows both vigor and independence of mind. The treatise does not lend itself to formal analysis, but is for substance as follows:

It is a perlious thing for one whose function it is to preach to neglect his business; for if it is blameworthy for one to commit sin, it is likewise so for one to fail to try to hinder others from sinning, or to help save the sinner. But preaching

is much neglected by some, and that on account of pride; of which there are two sorts: (1) Distaste, (2) Jealousy. Distaste arises from "sermonizers" who by making a business and boast of preaching disgust those who do not wish to be reckoned with that class. Others decline to preach through jealousy, not being willing for others to profit by their knowledge, or fearing lest they might profit too well and surpass themselves. Others still are provoked by envy to only occasional efforts, and these for vainglory. Yet others are kept from preaching because they are evil men and naturally do not wish to speak of good things while they themselves are doing evil things. And still others withhold their services from their brethren because they have no pastoral charge. Let us belong to none of these "orders", but the rather be living members of the church of Christ, clean in heart and earnest in effort to learn and teach the holy things of Scripture. "Let prayer precede the sermon, that the mind glowing with divine love may ardently declare the things which it received from God; that as it glows inwardly it may thus inflame the hearts of the hearers." A lukewarm and languid sermon pleases neither preacher nor hearer. When we find ourselves dull and lifeless it is better to make an end, for if even a good sermon wearies by excessive length how much more does a dull one! Also a preacher should consider both elements of his audience, making things plain to the uncultured and at the same time giving the educated something to stir thought and kindle aspiration.

There are four well-known methods of interpreting Scripture in sermons: (1) historical; (2) allegorical; (3) tropological, or moral; (4) anagogical, or spiritual. For example, Jerusalem, after the historical method is the city of that name; allegorically, the church; tropologically or morally it is "the believing soul of any one who sighs for the vision of eternal peace"; according to the anagogical or spiritual method it signifies the life of the heavenly citizens who see God face to face. Each of these methods has its value, and the preacher should know how to use them all; but the most useful for edification is the tropological, the way of moral application.

For though allegory be pleasing to the believer, and may help his faith, moral application is more profitable to his life. For its effective use the preacher should know both virtue and vice, that he may persuade to the one and warn against the other. From his own experience he should know what temptation is and how the Lord delivers from it. "Magnifice enim tentati magnificentius sunt erepti gratias magnificentissimas debent." Some allegory intermingled imparts freshness, and the preacher should also know how to illustrate from nature and life. His sincerity and good intentions should be not open to question; there should be no ground to suspect him of preaching either for fame or money. In moral preaching it must be made clear that vice is punished both in this life and forever in hell, and that virtue is eternally rewarded in heaven. But the preacher must also remember how God forgives the penitent and accepts the fruits of genuine contrition. Paul knew how bitterly vice punishes him who commits it, and St. Gregory says there is nothing happier than an innocent mind. But a theoretical knowledge of vice and virtue is not enough. In vain is a soldier armed if he has no mind to fight. "And what profits it to perceive the virtues contrary to lusts if the reason torpid and inert, will not arise to fight with them?" Holding these principles in mind the author proceeds to comment on the Book of Genesis.

Next after Guibert should be mentioned Alan of Lille (Alanus ab Insulis) who died about 1203. There were several influential men of this name, and the tangle of personality has not been quite satisfactorily worked out by scholars. But this particular Alan seems to have been a Cistercian abbot at the town later known as Lille in Flanders. He is said to have lived to a very great age, and to have been a man of great learning. He was a voluminous author and his writings were much read. We are here concerned only with his *Summary of the Art of Preaching* (*Summa de Arte Praedicatoria*), a treatise which shows great acuteness of thought, ample learning and considerable homiletical skill. (It may be consulted in Migne, tom. 210, col. 110 sqq., and is noticed by Lentz, *op. cit.*, S. 232ff, by Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire Francaise*

au Moyen Age., etc., p. 152 seq., by the cyclopedias, and quite recently in the new volume of Schaff's *Hist. of the Christian Church*, V. 853f.)

In the preface Alan begins by saying that the ladder of Jacob consisted of seven rounds which represent the progress of "the catholic man" and are these: (1) Confession; (2) prayer; (3) thanksgiving; (4) study (*perscrutatio*) of the Scriptures; (5) in doubtful interpretations seeking aid from older men; (6) exposition of Scripture; (7) preaching. Each of these is elaborated somewhat, and on the last it is remarked: "He ascends the last round when he publicly proclaims what he has learned from Scripture." Alan says that on the first six steps much has been written, but on the last very little. So "we have thought it worth our while to compose this treatise for the benefit of our neighbors. First, then, we must consider what preaching is and of what sort as regards both the surface matter of words and the weight of opinions, and how many are its kinds; secondly, who ought to preach; thirdly, to whom it should be delivered; fourthly, why; fifthly, where." According to this promised outline the work proceeds to treat of the first topic, or set of topics, in chapters 1-37. Chapter 38 suffices for the second—whose office it is to preach. The third head, on the different kinds of hearers occupies chapters 39-48. And here the book abruptly ends, the two last of the proposed topics being omitted without explanation.

In the opening chapter Alan discusses the nature and qualities of preaching, giving this definition: "Preaching is open and public instruction in morals and faith, promoting the information of men, and proceeding from the path of reasons and the fountain of authorities"—by the last lumbering expression he means that it is to be supported by arguments addressed to the reason and by the authority of the Scriptures and of the church or theologians. Developing his theme he shows that preaching must be open, according to Christ's command in Matt. 10:26f, and as opposed to the secret teaching of heresy; and that it must be public, that is, addressed to more than one. By morals and faith he means of course duty and doctrine, and thus explains: "The two parts of theology are intended,

namely, the rational, which pursues knowledge of divine things, and the moral, which offers instruction in morals. For preaching instructs now in divine things, now in morals; which is signified by the angels ascending and descending; for these angels are preachers, who ascend when they preach heavenly things and descend when through moral teaching they adapt themselves to their inferiors." Promoting information gives the final cause, or utility, of preaching. Preaching in ambitious or undignified language for effect is to be avoided; but we must not be too censorious of those who thus preach, but rather bear with them, according to the example of Paul who rejoiced in the preaching of the gospel, even in pretense. The weight of thought in a sermon is the main thing. As regards form, preaching should first of all rest upon the authority of Scripture as its own proper foundation, especially the Gospels, the Psalms, the Epistles of Paul, and the writings of Solomon, from which useful moral instruction may be derived. But other parts of Scripture should not be neglected, especially when they can be made to serve the purpose in view in preaching. In the next place, the preacher should capture the good will of his hearers alike by his own modest bearing and by the usefulness to them of the theme which he proposes to discuss. He ought to impress them that he is setting before them the word of God for their good, and not for any earthly reward to himself or for applause, for they should be thinking not of the speaker but of what he says. "For in a thornbush not the sharpness of the thorn but the beauty of the rose is to be considered; for even in a frail reed honey is found, and from a stone a flame is struck." Next the preacher should proceed to the exposition and application of his text. He should not take too difficult and obscure a text. Nor should he range too widely from his theme, lest the beginning, middle and end of his discourse should not agree! He should adduce other authorities to sustain his proposition, occasionally quoting even secular authors, as did Paul. He should put in moving speech to soften the minds of his hearers even to bring tears. When he sees tears flowing he should pause a little, but not too long, remembering what Lucretius says: "*Nihil citius arescit*

lacryma" (nothing dries more quickly than a tear). The sermon should be concise, "lest prolixity beget disgust". Finally, the preacher should use examples to prove his points, for teaching by illustration is both easy and popular. So much for theory.

Alan now proceeds in chapters 2-38 to illustrate his principles by examples. He takes up a number of different subjects and gives model sketches and outlines showing how they ought to be treated. These are more curious than valuable, full of strained interpretations and applications, but exhibiting not a little homiletical skill and shrewdness in the outlines and hits. Some of the subjects treated are Contempt of the World, Contempt of Self, Gluttony, Luxury, Avarice, Pride, Spiritual Grief and Joy, Talkativeness, Lying, Prayer, Alms, Hospitality, etc. In chapter 38 Alan takes up his second general topic of discussion, Who should preach? and claims that the function should be confined to those duly authorized by the church. They must be sound in doctrine that they may teach others, and pure in life that they may offer a good example. He condemns unsparingly the lazy, the mercenary, the unworthy. "To preachers belong knowledge, that they be trained in both Testaments, discreet in the examination of opinions, skilled in sermons, circumspect in all their actions, contemners of the world, assiduous in their duty." In chapters 39-48 he discusses the matter of audiences—the different kinds of hearers. It is evident that he has in mind imperfect believers rather than unbelievers. Membership in the church is presupposed. Those outside are rather regarded as swine before whom the pearls of gospel truth must not be thrown. He instances a great variety of hearers, and shows how the preacher must adapt his teaching to the different ones as a physician his remedies to different patients. As before, he gives examples of sermons to the different kinds of hearers, showing how it must be done. These include sketches of sermons to soldiers, lawyers, princes and judges, monks, priests, married people, widows, virgins, *and the sleepy*. With this crack of the whip our worthy homilist concludes his homily on homiletics. Whether the remaining two topics proposed in the introduction

were purposely dropped, or postponed and never again taken up, does not appear. But either of these conjectures is more probable than that this part of the treatise was finished and lost.

This is the most important work on the theory of preaching since Augustine. It introduces the scholastic method and the more numerous treatises of the scholastic period. Though incomplete, ill arranged, abounding in strained conceits and other faults, it has some measure of originality, and a good deal of shrewdness, good sense and suggestiveness.

The great collection of mediæval Latin writers embraced in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* ends with the twelfth century; I have therefore not had access to the originals of the treatises to be mentioned in the remainder of this article. But they have been carefully studied and their substance presented by one or more of the following scholars from whose works, and some other authorities, the ensuing discussion is chiefly derived. Lentz, *Geschichte der Homiletik*, 2 vols., an old work, but still valuable in many points though incomplete, Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire Francaise au Moyen Age*, a very able, thorough and satisfying work, a model of its kind; R. Cruel, *Geschichte der Deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter*, a work as satisfactory for the German pulpit as the preceding one is for that of France. The thoroughness of research, candor and critical ability displayed in these latter two great works would seem to leave little for an independent investigator to do but to verify their facts and occasionally to differ in judgment as to details.

In the great thirteenth century the most important name that comes up in the theory of preaching is that of the renowned "Seraphic Doctor", Bonaventura (d. 1274), theologian, mystic, cardinal and saint. Among his numerous writings is one which bears the title *The Art of Preaching (Ars Concionandi)*. The little work follows closely the *Christian Teaching* of Augustine. It discusses as its three main topics: Division (the general outline of the whole discourse), Distinction (the more minute and logical analysis of the proposition), and Enlargement (*Dilatatio*, filling out with illustration, argument, appeal, etc.). The book gives sound teaching and useful

cautions on all these points, but seems to pay chief attention to the last. It is noticeable that this great scholastic gives a sane warning against that minute and subtle division of which he was himself so great a master; which goes to show that already the doctors of the scholastic method realized how their weaker pupils were carrying the method to excess. It is at least refreshing to hear this great doctor say (as quoted by Lentz): "For the more simple an analysis is, that is by the fewness of its members, so much the better."

The next treatise of any importance is that of Humbert de Romanis (d. 1277), a Frenchman, educated in Paris, a Dominican monk, and for a long time general of his order. He is said to have begun his book about the year 1255 and to have spent several years in writing it. The work is entitled *De Eruditione Praedicatorum* (On the Education of Preachers) and has special reference to the training of preachers for their duties. It consists of two books of a hundred chapters each. The first book treats of the office of the preacher in a more general way—its requirements, duties, aims, effects, etc. The second book bears more directly on preaching, and is divided into two parts: (1) The art of composing sermons for all classes of hearers; and (2) How to compose sermons promptly (*De modo prompte cudendi sermonen*). It seems, from what Lentz and Lecoy have to say of it, to be a dry and wooden method; a set of detailed rules to be followed in various circumstances, but to contain some valuable hints and suggestions. Lentz says (Bd. I. S. 239f): "The author appears in a more engaging light when he criticises the faults of his contemporaries. Here he gives warnings which are useful for all times. He blames especially the hankering after subtleties, in order, by what is novel and paradoxical, to shine in the pulpit." He also condemns excessive length of sermons, whimsical choice and forced interpretations of texts, and other faults common then and always. One of his sayings worth quoting is: "There are those who are more studious for ornaments of language than for the views to be expressed; like those who care more for the beauty of the dish in which they serve the food than for the food itself."

THE FOURTH PERIOD, 1300-1500.

Toward the end of the thirteenth century the great age of preaching which then came to its height was already declining. This was especially apparent in the scholastic and popular types of preaching; it was not so manifest in the mystic type, which rather came to its height in Tauler of Strasburg in the next century (d. 1361). But the homiletics of the time does not show as much decline as the preaching; and the reason for this is apparent in that as theory commonly follows practice, the theory of any epoch is likely to be based more on preceding than on contemporary practice. This does not hold good entirely, but is sufficiently near the truth to account for the fact mentioned. But even at best we find that the homiletics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is marked by many faults of its own and the preceding age. It cannot be regarded as of the highest sort, but it affords much of more or less curious interest, both as an evolution from the past and as an impulse to the future of homiletical theory. The number of treatises is greater, and they are more elaborate.

Toward the last of the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century there belongs a group of treatises of uncertain authorship. One of these is assigned to the famous theologian, Thomas Aquinas, (d. 1274), but is almost certainly not his. It is called *A Treatise on the Art of Preaching* (*Tractatus de Arte Praedicandi*), and discusses the nature, value and effect of preaching; the mode of amplifying the discourse; and certain points which the preacher must observe, such as, he must not be ashamed to preach Christ, but must avoid things likely to cause stumbling and be silent about doubtful things, never raise a question without answering it, speak clearly, deliberately, and without unnecessary repetitions; must prepare as carefully for village folk as for the more cultivated, avoid needless haste, must not let his looks wander around when preaching, never address a particular person, nor preach too long, not more than an hour in any case; must carefully turn his Latin sketch into a common tongue, but studiously avoid all coarse, undignified and offensive expressions. A later sup-

plement gives some examples of sermons of different kinds, and distinguishes three different modes of preaching: (1) The laic or popular mode, like the old homily or running comment on Scripture; (2) the thematic, or topical form, which derives a *status* or proposition from the text and logically unfolds it; (3) the remaining mode is described rather than named as being the use of the text itself as the proposition which gives the division, and supporting it with illustrations, arguments, application. Thus we see that the threefold distinction so familiar to us—expository, topical and textual—was already in use and clearly distinguished.

An anonymous treatise belonging to the end of the thirteenth century or early in the next was found by Lecoy in the Sorbonne and is discussed by him in the work already noted. Of the two titles given the critic prefers "A Certain Treatise on Amplifying Sermons (*Tractatus quidam de dilatatione sermonum*). It is very brief, only a sort of homiletical sketch showing how to expand a sermon—chiefly, it would seem, a sketch or outline either made to order or bodily stolen by the preacher! In several places the treatise seems itself to owe guiltily much to the sketch of Bonaventura on the same subject. It gives eight ways of amplifying a discourse: (1) Putting a proposition for a word—by definition, description, explanation; (2) dividing and analyzing, but not overmuch; (3) reasoning, both direct and refutative; (4) citation of texts; (5) use of the degrees—positive, comparative, superlative; (6) use of figures of speech; (7) use of allegory, tropology, anagogy; (8) setting forth of causes and effects. Along with this may be mentioned a *Treatise on the Art of Preaching* usually ascribed to Henry of Hesse (d. 1397), but really of unknown date and authorship. Cruel discusses it, but it seems to be of little or no value except as a specimen of its kind. It distinguishes four kinds of preaching: (1) The most ancient (homily, exposition); (2) the modern (thematic, topical); (3) the ancient (textual); (4) the subaltern (a kind of mixture of the last two). Examples of each kind, except the last, are given.

It is a long time before we come to anything else worth

mentioning in the way of the literary treatment of homiletical theory. We find it at the end of the fifteenth century, just prior to the new era of Humanists and Reformers who introduce the modern epoch. Just about the turn into the sixteenth century there appeared two treatises which show some advance upon the preceding in fulness and force of treatment, but little if any in other respects. One of these is a *Treatise on the method of learning and teaching to the people sacred things, or the method of preaching*, as the long title runs. The author calls himself Hieronymus (Jerome) Dungersheim of Ochsenfurt, and dedicates his work to Ernst, archbishop of Magdeburg, who died in 1513 but seems to have been still living when the book was published. This gives us a general but not exact hint as to the date of the work. Cruel speaks highly of "the vigorous handling and logical division of the material". In the preface the author declares the aim of his work to be the instruction of young preachers for the most important of all tasks, lamenting that so many are thrust into the work without sufficient preparation. He divides homiletics into three parts, somewhat after the manner of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: (1) As it relates to the preacher; (2) the sermon itself; (3) the hearers. In the first section he gives sensible counsels as to the preacher's studies, character and habits of work. One good warning, which it is refreshing at least to find, is directed against the practice of depending on collections of sermons prepared for use. And it is interesting to note that the author urges at least three years of preparatory theological studies before taking up the active duties of the priesthood. In the second section, which is more definitely homiletical, the treatise sets forth in chapters 1 and 2 the utility, material, and composition of sermons. Chapter 3 tells of the different kinds of sermons and discusses at length the *modus communis*, or prevalent method of preaching: First comes the announcement of the text in Latin, then the greeting to the people, next repetition or paraphrase of the text in the vernacular, with prayer for divine aid in expounding it, using with this an *Ave* or a *Paternoster* or the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*; then comes the introduction which may be derived

from various sources; then the proposition; next the disposition or arrangement, which may be either a logical division of the theme or may follow the natural division of the text. The author then proceeds to specify ten ways in which the method of treatment may be varied, such as, a running comment on the lesson of the day (the old homily fashion), division of the passage into several parts, explanation in the fourfold manner (historical, moral, allegorical, spiritual), consideration of causes, effects, circumstances, modes, peculiarities of the text; and so on. Chapters 4-8 discuss amplification, figures of speech, turning the sermon into German, faults of delivery, and the conclusion. The third section covers the long familiar ground of the various kinds of hearers and the preaching adapted to each.

About the same time flourished another homiletician of some note in Ulrich Surgant who says that he was a young priest in 1475; the first book of his treatise is dated 1502, and in the second book 1508 is mentioned as the current year. He held important positions as canon and dean in churches at Basel, was a titled doctor and evidently a man of some culture. His book bears the title A Manual for Curates (*Manuale Curatorum*). It is important both in itself and as marking the transition to the homiletical work of the Humanists of the opening period. It consists of two books, of which the first treats of the theory of preaching, and the second gives a collection of models, extracts, subjects and examples suited to all sorts of occasions. The first book is the one of special interest here. Without a more general classification it discusses the art of preaching in twenty-five chapters under the following topics: What preaching is, who should preach, what and how, the fourfold interpretation, the special art or science of preaching, different kinds, parts of the sermon, rules and authorities, rules for turning the Latin into German (in the delivery, indicating the use of Latin notes or ready-made sermons), relation of sacred to secular rhetoric, memorizing, delivery, adaptation to the intelligence of the audience, faults in delivery, conclusion of the sermon, homiletical helps—especially books. We see from this enumeration that the treatise covers many points

of practical value; but not having seen the original I cannot give any estimate of the comparative worth of the treatment.

On the whole, as we survey the long path through which we have toiled, we see that homiletics after Augustine was sadly lacking in originality and power. The treatment was sapless and mechanical; life and interest are wanting. I think the little book of Guibert of Nogent prefixed to his commentary on Genesis shows more liveliness than the more formal treatises, but it is merely a sketch. We cannot have failed to notice how largely the matter of adaptation to audiences figures in these works as compared with those of our times. The general rhetorical principles of division and style and delivery receive conventional notice, but the reproduction is monotonous and tame for the most part. One thing we cannot fail to commend is the urgent insistence on fitness in character and culture in the preacher; and, however far short practice fell, it is gratifying that at least theory was found on this vital point. The four modes of interpretation are often explained, but no particular encouragement is given to the allegorical and spiritual. Theoretically at least the historical and moral seem to be preferred. The faults of extremists and oddities are reprehended. After the twelfth century the influence of scholasticism is clearly apparent. There is great need of new and better treatment, and the time is at hand.