

A STUDY OF HOMILETICAL THEORY.

ARTICLE IV.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOMILETICAL THEORY DURING THE REFORMATION, 1500-1600.

BY REV. E. C. DARGAN, D. D., LL. D., MACON, GA.

The Reformation, which vitally affected every department of Christian life and thought, could not fail powerfully to influence both the practice and theory of preaching. Modern homiletics is the product of that great era of transition. As in other spheres of religious activity so in the preaching of the Reformation there were three great related, mutually influential and yet distinct, movements of reform; the scholarly, or Humanistic; the reformatory proper, or Protestant; and the churchly, or Catholic. The first profoundly influenced both the others without receiving much reactive guidance from them; and the Protestant movement gave far more stimulus to the Catholic than it received. This general state of things finds striking illustration in the development of homiletical theory, where we can distinctly trace movement and interaction between the scholarly, the reformatory, and the churchly influences of the age. The time is properly limited to the sixteenth century alone, during which important and decisively influential treatises on preaching appeared from Humanists, Protestants and Catholics.

HUMANIST HOMILETICS.

The contribution of Humanism, or the Revival of Learning, to homiletical theory may be best exhibited by considering first the general influence of that great movement on homiletics, and then the definite homiletical work of two great Humanists—Reuchlin and Erasmus.

In the most general aspects of the matter we may observe several lines of humanistic influence upon the development of homiletics. (1) The general and widespread quickening of thought, which partly produced and fruitfully accompanied

and characterized the Revival of Letters, inevitably worked its effects in the department of preaching and its theory. (2) The more accurate scholarship which came in with the movement, with its enthusiastic attention to the details of literary acquisition and expression, was a force of no little importance in the same way. (3) The improvement of literary taste, which naturally went along with the rest, must also be recognized as having important general influence in the improvement of homiletical theory.

But while these general forces must be taken into the account a more direct and powerful influence is to be noted in the revived study of the classical rhetoric. Along with the other great classical writings those which deal especially with the principles of rhetoric came up for fresh and first-hand study. Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and others were read anew and with greater zest. The time for dry compilations and reproductions, for sapless imitations and barren rehashings of patristic and scholastic theories of public speaking had passed away. Men were going back to those original sources of higher rhetorical art which had given law to the classic periods of literature. Such study inevitably brought forth sharp and intelligent humanistic criticism upon the prevailing methods of preaching, the inheritance of scholasticism and its popular abuses. Among the many things which invited the satirical wit of humanist reformers the homiletical methods and principles of the clergy did not escape. Chief among those who gave special attention to rhetorical and homiletical matters were Reuchlin and Erasmus.

John Reuchlin (1455-1522) was born at Pforzheim in Baden and educated at Schlettstadt, Freiburg, Paris, Basel and Orleans. He studied both law and literature, became an adept in classical and Hebrew scholarship, and taught in a number of universities, including those at Tübingen and Ingolstadt. Perhaps his especial significance in the world of letters is the start he gave to Hebrew studies. He became involved in a celebrated controversy with the Dominicans of Cologne. His cause was taken up by Ulrich von Hutten and others, especially by the authors of the famous satirical budget of letters called

Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum. He was acquitted of heresy, but some of his writings and utterances were afterwards condemned. He lived and died a Catholic, though his work and writings gave great impulse to the cause of reform.

Among his many writings is one published in 1504 under the title: *Liber congestorum de arte praedicandi*, which means a collection of rules, etc., on the art of preaching. Thus the title itself indicates the want of originality and the lack of thoroughness in the treatment. I have not seen the original and therefore cannot speak from personal study of either its merits or defects. Christlieb in Herzog, and others do not give a high idea of its value. It seems to be a brief and ill-arranged treatise, but it had the excellent design of awakening a new interest in preaching on a more evangelical basis than the prevalent one. It owed much to Augustine, but went back to the classic rhetoric for its leading principles. It urged upon preachers to have a proper conception of the dignity of their calling and to observe a suitable delivery and demeanor. The work treats briefly and in the given order the following homiletical topics: Invention, Introduction, Reading (the Scriptures), Division, Proof, Refutation, Conclusion, Commonplaces (i.e., usual subjects of discourse), Memory (i.e., memorizing either the material or form of discourse for delivery).

Greatest among the Humanists and also most important for our present studies was the famous scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1457-1536). The life of Erasmus has been recently and ably presented by Professor Ephriam Emerton ("Heroes of the Reformation" series, G. P. Putnam's Sons), and of course, much has been written concerning him, as well as frequent mention in church histories, histories of literature, etc. His life and character present many difficulties to the historian and critic as well as to the moralist and psychologist. He was a man of remarkable intellect, wonderful acquirements, notable achievement, puzzling personality and extensive and enduring influence.

Born out of wedlock at Rotterdam, probably in 1467, Erasmus was acknowledged and cared for by his parents dur-

ing his infancy and childhood. His schooling began early, under an uncle at Utrecht, where he also served as choir boy in the cathedral. At nine he went to a famous school at Deventer where he remained four years. About this time his parents died, but had provided for his guardianship and further education. After spending several years in an establishment of the Brethren of the Common Life, he finally, and, as it appears, reluctantly and on the persuasion of friends and kindred, entered a monastery at Steyn near Gouda. The advantages of his school and monastic life were diligently improved and he well laid the foundation for that liberal culture which ever afterwards distinguished him. By permission of the ecclesiastical authorities he accepted a position as literary secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai, with whom he traveled and studied for some years. He never re-entered the monastery; and years later received tardy permission from the pope to lay aside his monastic habit. We cannot follow here his strange long life of many changes of residence, intense scholarly activity, much writing, editing, teaching, correspondence and social intercourse with scholars and other notable men in many lands. We find him in England several times, in Italy, in France, at Louvain, in the Netherlands, at Basel, at Freiburg, and last of all at Basel again where he died an old man in 1536. His way of supporting himself differed according to circumstances. He was disinclined to holding permanent professorships, though these were at his disposal all over Europe. Yet he resided at intervals at several of the universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, though the nature of his services and emoluments is in some doubt. Sometimes he seems to have received a fee for teaching, sometimes pay from publishers for proof-reading or other literary service, something from his books, sometimes he filled a church or college sinecure, and often (to his shame be it said) he derived his support from gifts and unblushing begging! He was fond of ease and luxury and made no bones of wheedling and cajoling his friends to help him find them. His vanity was abnormal, his grumbling continual and contemptible. He was double-minded, time-serving and timid on the great religious

question of the age—a great mind and a small character. But withal he was an eminent scholar, whose poorly requited services to letters might well excuse to some extent the patronage of the liberal and wealthy. He was a genial and witty talker, an admirable stylist, a sharp satirist, and on occasion a sane and judicious writer on moral and religious subjects. Among them rhetoric and homiletics.

Several things of a general sort are to be noted in regard to Erasmus' rhetorical and homiletical work. His own (Latin) style was admirable, its chief fault being verbosity. During his residence in Italy it is known that he gave instruction in rhetoric to a young illegitimate son of James IV. of Scotland, who held the appointment of archbishop of St. Andrews. Besides this instance of special teaching of the subject there may have been others. That he was deeply interested in general rhetoric and thoroughly versed in it as well, appears from the publication in 1511 of his book *De duplici copia verborum et rerum*, or more commonly briefly called his *Copia*. It is a textbook on rhetoric intended to aid, as the title indicates, in the finding of abundant thoughts and words in which to express them. It was a very popular work, passing through nearly sixty editions during the lifetime of the author. In his famous satire *The Praise of Folly* (*Encomium Moriae, or Laus Stultitiae*) and in other writings Erasmus frequently and sharply criticised the faults of the preaching of the day and inculcates sound homiletical principles. All this was excellent preparation for the production of his monumental work on homiletics, to which we must now give attention.

The most important work on the theory of preaching since Augustine, and one of the most important of all times, is this long and labored treatise of Erasmus. It bears the title, *Ecclesiastes, sive Concionator Evangelicus (Gospel Preacher)*, and was published at Basel during the last year of the author's life—the dedication being dated Aug., 1535, and his death occurring in Feb., 1536. The edition which I have used is that of the Works of Erasmus published at Leyden in 1704 by Peter van der Aa; and for the loan of it I am indebted to the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary.

In the dedicatory preface Erasmus names four of his friends, including the Bishop of Augsburg, Christopher à Stadio, and the noted Antwerp banker, Antony Fugger, whom he styles "most kind cherisher of studies." He declares that the writing of the book was a reluctant service, performed in fulfillment of a promise made years before. He had long been gathering the material, but had from time to time delayed the execution of his task. And now that it is done he finds much to make him dissatisfied with his work. It seems to him at last to be only a *sylva*—a forest of material, from which others may obtain that which can be worked out into better form. There is undoubted justice in this self-criticism. The book shows some weariness of mind, the material is not reduced to orderly and compact shape; but it does contain a wealth of thought, information, illustration and suggestion on the subject of preaching which is all but exhaustive for the age in which the work was prepared. The general plan, as announced in the preface and adhered to in the treatment, is simple enough: He will treat the subject in four books. The first will discuss the dignity of the preaching office and the virtues and character appropriate to the office. The second and third books will consist of doctrines and precepts on the art of preaching derived from rhetoricians, logicians, and theologians. The fourth book will be devoted to the suggestion of particular subjects for pulpit treatment and the best ways of handling them.

According to this previously announced plan Erasmus discusses in his first book the dignity, purity, prudence and other virtues of the preacher. He distinguishes preaching from other oratory as to its contents and aim, and this leads to a consideration of the dignity of the work of the preacher. This greater dignity requires a corresponding elevation and purity of character. As the preacher is the dispenser of the divine word he should be like him who is the Word, and should like him be filled and led by the Holy Spirit. He who would teach others must himself be divinely taught. The preacher is in peril on the one hand from the Scylla of pride and on the other from the Charybdis of despair. "I know not whether he has most to fear from those temptations which flatter or

those which terrify." Courage and fortitude are necessary virtues to the preacher—even the actor has something to fear from failure to please his audiences, and preachers must often face those whom they must, if faithful, displease. Again, it is not enough that a preacher should know (*scire*), he must also be wise (*sapere*). Further, and of course, he must be a man of prayer, and that from no double heart. Faults and sins weaken his message and his power. He must be above suspicion and live prudently as well as purely. He must remember that he is a steward, and be faithful to his trust, but he should also be prudent in adapting his message to the people and occasion. He must be abundant in good works of both kinds—ceremonial and benevolent, neglecting neither the ritual nor the moral. He must love what he persuades to. His highest business is to teach, and he must neither be a "dumb dog" nor an unfaithful shepherd. He must be patient in view of the inevitable opposition of the world and worldings. Considering the greatness of his reward he must endure poverty and be content with little. Yet he must not be a beggar, people will take care of a really deserving and self-sacrificing preacher. Here he digresses to insist that it is the duty of the church authorities to induct into the ministerial office only those who are worthy of it. In conclusion he dwells again on the dignity of the office, its functions, its difficulties, yet insisting that by a suitably unselfish and modest demeanor the preacher can win a hearing for his message.

In the Second and Third Books of his treatise Erasmus comes to the main portion of his work: Precepts and teachings of Rhetoricians, Logicians and Theologians as to the things required in preaching. The disclaimer of originality involved in this way of stating the case is honest and just, but so great and acute a mind as that of Erasmus could not content itself with mere compilation, or with jejune reproduction of the commonplace of rhetorical science. The treatment shows wide reading and masterly learning; it is judicious enough to hold and unfold the well-wrought developments of the past; but there is enough of the author's own work, in the way of observation, reflection, application, illustration, to give this great

treatise an assured place of its own in the literature of homiletics. Yet that place now is only that of historical and critical interest. One need not (happily!) go to Erasmus to learn homiletics. I confess I found it a wearisome task to toil through these lengthened and repetitious pages, and I do not profess to have read every one of them with close attention. Erasmus is as vexatious as Aristotle in his involved order of discussion. He adopts an order of treatment, and before the reader is aware he shunts off on another line. Then somewhere else he will take up what he left behind—or thinks he has—and say something more about it! Moreover there is a deal of wordiness and refining which produces satiety. All that is really worth while in the book can be now more easily gotten elsewhere. But it contains a wealth of material, an acuteness of thought, and a wisdom of application which stamp it as one of the great contributions to homiletical thought and treatment.

A survey of the principal teachings of the Second and Third Books is all that can be attempted here. Their general theme is the acquisition of *skill* in preaching through the training of *faculty*.

In the First Book the introduction discusses the need of training—natural gifts and a good character in the preacher being presupposed. Rhetoric is art in the good sense of the term, not artifice. As related to logic it suggests that if one should train his reasoning powers why not also his faculty and speech? The importance of the preacher's work makes it imperative that he should be highly trained for his business. Yet he must not be artificial. The highest art is not to conceal but to use art, and be unconscious of so doing. Here is a fine saying which looks better untranslated: "Necesse est enim ut prius sit iudicium quam eloquim, prius sapere quam dicere; quemadmodum in natura prior est fons quam fluvius, et in artibus prior est delineatio quam pictura." (*Op. cit.*, col. 851).

Erasmus first takes up Grammar as the necessary precedent of Rhetoric. This is the order of the *Liberal Arts* in the *trivium*; and by grammar of course he understands more than

is meant in the modern restricted use of the term. Grammar, or Letters, as then understood, included the elements of all linguistic and literary studies, both as taught in the preparatory (grammar) schools, and as pursued in the universities. Accordingly Erasmus recommends the careful study of language and literature as essential to the preacher. He is careful to urge the importance of a knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but does not fail to say that the preacher should also have a good knowledge of the vernacular so as to speak both clearly and elegantly in the popular tongue. He urges the careful study of the classic authors, the Fathers, theologians, and other literature. He also advises the reading of sermons, past and contemporary.

All these preliminaries being now disposed of, Erasmus comes to the heart of his subject and proceeds to discuss such of the precepts of rhetoric as seem to be of special value to the preacher. Some of these precepts and principles evidently do not apply to preaching, and some are unsound in themselves; but many are of service, and the Holy Spirit does not disdain to use them in furtherance of the gospel. In regard to the three kinds of rhetoric—judicial, deliberative, epideictic (which he calls *genus encomiasticum*)—Erasmus remarks that the first only applies to preaching so far as general precepts pertaining to all public speaking are common to both species. Deliberative, or persuasive, rhetoric, however, gives many important hints to the preacher, especially in regard to the formulation and statement of propositions. Epideictic, or laudatory, rhetoric may be of help in the matter of praise and thanksgiving to God in sermons, and in funeral or memorial addresses. This leads Erasmus to digress here into a discussion of hymns. He dismisses for the present the materials of discourse, to be treated fully further on.

He proceeds to a discussion of what he calls the *office*, or as we may more clearly conceive it, the strictly rhetorical duties, of the preacher. In the general consideration his first duty is to teach, to please, to move. Here we have the Ciceronian dictum as applied by Augustine: *doceat, delectet, flectet*. Of these offices, teaching comes first and is very important. As to

pleasing there is first a sort of diffused pleasantness in the speech as a whole. Some preachers, as Bernard and others, were highly gifted in this way. Then there is a pleasure to be produced by reasoning, as when one tries to prove the felicity of the angels and saints. There is also a third kind which seeks to please by pleasantries and jests. It is questionable whether this kind properly belongs to preaching at all. Certainly no case of it occurs in Scripture, unless the ridicule of Elijah at Carmel and the occasional sarcasm of our Lord may be held as such. Yet in the practice of many preachers the element of pleasantry has had effective place, and may be defended; but of course it is to be sparingly used, in subordination to higher ends, and in good taste. Vulgarities and scurrilities are inexcusable. As to moving, this is the main end of preaching—for the preacher to carry his hearers with him. More will be said on this matter when the feelings come to be considered.

Another way of considering the rhetorical functions of the preacher comes to light in the accepted divisions of rhetoric. First comes that into Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory, Delivery (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*). Erasmus compares invention to the bones, arrangement to the nerves, style to the flesh and skin, memory to vitality, and delivery to action or motion. These are the essential things in preaching, and they underlie the other mode of presenting rhetorical theory, i. e., according to the parts of the speech: Exordium, Narration, Division, Confirmation, Confutation, Conclusion. In the discussion of these which follows our author treats introduction and narration together, distinguishes without separating positive and refutative argument, and omits to treat the conclusion; so that now he presents the three very important topics of Introduction, Division and Argument. These are discussed at length. Under Exordium he treats also the theme, or statement of the proposition, and brings in his few remarks on narration. An introduction is proper, but it must not be too remote from the theme. There is much affectation of this sort. It is well to derive the introduction from Scripture, and not always the text itself.

Various ways of so using Scripture are suggested. Narration (Scriptural or other) often forms a suitable introduction. This should be probable, vivid, preserving the proprieties of place, occasion, etc. The narrative should not present fictitious things as true, but should appear in its true light. Coming back to the exordium proper the author shows how it often arises from a wise or clever use of the occasion, instancing Paul's address at Athens. From secular oratory he tells this good story: An ambassador once came from Byzantium to Athens to secure concord after some interruption of good relations between the cities. He happened to be a very fat man and when he arose to speak the lightminded Athenians greeted him with roars of laughter. Instead of taking offence or being embarrassed he said: "Why do you laugh? My wife is fatter than I; and yet when we are at peace one couch suffices for us both, but when we disagree the whole house is not large enough for us." A number of other counsels on the introduction are given; the last one being that the introduction may often simply be a statement of the proposition and its divisions. It is customary with some before passing to the discussion of the theme to pause and bring in an invocation. [It may be remarked that this custom still prevails in many German churches, perhaps elsewhere also]. This probably arose from the usage of the poets in invoking the muses, and has no Scriptural or even patristic authority. It may be easily abused, especially invocations to the Virgin.

The next topic is Division. This may be understood in two ways: (1) It is a certain part of the speech or sermon which has the twofold function of calling the hearers' attention to the points which he should specially keep in mind, and of promising on the speaker's part the order and number of the matters to be discussed. (2) Division may also be understood in the more general sense of the order or arrangement of the matter in the sermon as a whole—the course of discussion. It is here considered in the restricted sense of a statement of the theme and its outline. The discussion implies announcement, but proceeds mainly on the finding and unfolding of the theme and its divisions. Division helps the memory of the hearer,

aids in holding the speaker to his subject, but sometimes confines thought. To avoid the embarrassment of slips in memory it is well to have notes of the outline. Some topics are not readily thus analyzed, and when this is so do not try to force divisions. When the argument is obscure or involved it is well to have very clearly marked division to aid the hearer in comprehension. Faulty divisions are those which have too many points and thus becloud the mind of the listener—a great fault of the scholastic. Again, it is a fault to announce as one head a statement which really includes the others—merely re-stating the theme as a division of itself, or giving a division which renders others superfluous. Another fault is where the parts of the division are not coherent, but merely state points not logically connected. On the whole division is very important, but is difficult, and requires much thought and care.

Before passing to his next topic Erasmus digresses at length to consider the invention of propositions and heads of discourse. He seems to have been led to this by his mention of the difficulty of division. The digression goes over some ground already covered, but with some new matter. It makes suggestions as to finding themes of the various sorts, such as those which fall under the *genera* Suasory (Deliberative), Laudatory (Demonstrative), Hortatory, Consolatory, and Admonitory. Under each he gives some sage advices to the preacher on the division and presentation of his themes. He then takes up the *status*, or Statement of the Case, the Proposition. Illustrations here are chiefly from forensic oratory—where the statement of the case is often of supreme importance—but the preacher can learn something from this practice; since it is important that both he and his hearers should have clearly before them just what he is proposing to discuss. This leads him to “add a little more” on the invention and division of propositions, and the order of statement.

At last Erasmus takes up Argument, or Proof, as one of the essentials of sermon material. But his discussion of the subject has little of originality or value. He follows the Aristotelian categories and distinctions as to the nature and kinds of arguments, and shows how they may be derived from a variety

of sources, such as the consideration of times, places, persons and things. He of course distinguishes proof and refutation, and gives general counsels as to their employment and order. He advocates the climactic order in presenting arguments. He advises vividness in the presentation, with occasional interjections to arouse and hold attention; speaks of recapitulation in the conclusion and the best way of managing that. Thus concludes the Second Book.

In the Third Book Erasmus begins by recalling his enumeration of the five "offices," or rhetorical functions of the preacher: Invention, Arrangement, Style (*elocutio*), Memory, and Delivery (*pronunciatio*). Of these he has shown that invention belongs to the whole discourse. Style (or expression, *elocutio*) has been treated in Book I., under the preacher's needs, and in Book II. under Grammar, Order or Arrangement (*dispositio*), has also been discussed and here only a few things are added, or repeated, on that topic. It therefore remains to consider Memory and Delivery (*pronunciatio*).

In regard to Memory dependence on artificial mnemonic aids is really harmful. It is better to trust and train the memory. If long passages are to be quoted, or other cases of special difficulty be encountered let notes be used. A clean life is an aid to memory. Dissipations weaken it. Cares, and the reading of many books weaken the memory. This is why old men forget so readily—they have so much on their minds!

In regard to delivery, which after the older rhetoricians he usually calls "pronunciation," sometimes "action", Erasmus defines it as "apta ad rem vocis, vultus ac totius corporis moderatio," i. e., the management, in a way suited to the matter in hand, of the voice, the expression of countenance, and the whole body. (*Op. cit.*, col. 956). Nature itself teaches us to use differences of voice, look and gesture toward different people and under different circumstances; but nature needs to be taught and also to be corrected, especially when led astray by imitation of the faults of others. We often fail to observe our own faults, and so are sometimes pleasing to ourselves in the very things in which we displease others. In which case it is well to have a good friend as monitor. Erasmus proceeds

then to give sound and judicious counsels on the several topics of voice, face and gesture. On the last he remarks (col, 964): "In gestibus corporis loquacissimae sunt manus." In the whole matter of delivery decorum, propriety and suitability to occasion and subject must be observed.

A long and very important part of the work follows, which must be noticed with greater brevity. It is devoted to certain "deferred matters," suggested or only slightly touched in the preceding treatment. They are concerned with making the address forcible, pleasing and copious." The topics presented are five: Force (*vehementia*), Amplification, Appeal to the Feelings, Figures of Speech (including a discussion of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture), and Judgment or Good Sense. Some of the best work of the author appears in this lengthy section. Under Force he treats of how to dwell on a topic so as to make it impressive. Under Amplification (including Diminution by way of contrast) he shows how the preacher must enlarge or diminish for effect, but always strictly within the bounds of truth and propriety. Among the ways of doing this he mentions change of terms, correction, hyperbole, increment, comparison, and emphasis. The discussion of the Feelings has much of interest; and judicious advices are given in regard to restraint, reality, etc. The more vehement emotions it is rarely well for the preacher to stir. To awaken feeling he must feel. It has been well said, *Nihil incendere nisi ignem* (nothing kindles but fire). And he adds a phrase of his own worth quoting: *Mens ignea linguam facit igneam*. He gives hints and illustrations as to the best means of exciting the feelings, giving sound cautions on the subject, and earnestly urging the preacher to prayer for wisdom in this most important matter. In regard to Figures a long discussion ensues. The use of figures is required by the "virtues" of a speech, and the principal virtues are: probability, perspicuity, vividness (*evidentia*), pleasantness, force, and splendor or sublimity. He discusses the figures which tend to these ends, and brings in a consideration of maxims and proverbs which aid in the same way. Recurring to figures he gives a long and for the most part judicious consideration to the use of figures and

figurative language in Scripture, in the course of which he condemns the excesses of the allegorical interpretation. In regard to the Good Judgment of the preacher in dealing with his themes and audiences a number of good things are said. He must avoid giving offence, but not compromise with evil, must mitigate blame as far as is right, and be fatherly and sympathetic in administering it; must not preach the atonement so as to give excuse for sin, remembering that those who continued in sin have no justifying faith. So in all things the preacher must be circumspect and avoid doing harm while seeking to do good.

The Fourth Book is of little or no value. It consists of a long collection of subjects and suggestions of how to treat them. This was a feature of the mediaeval and to some extent of the reformatory homiletics which most modern treatises have wisely abandoned. On the whole this labored, diffuse, ill-arranged and long-drawn-out treatise could never have had many readers, but it must have proved, as its author hoped it would, a thesaurus from which many teachers of rhetoric and homiletics drew material for the instruction of their pupils and the composition of briefer treatises.

PROTESTANT HOMILETICS.

The influence of the Humanists on the development of Protestant homiletics was direct and powerful, but it was by no means the sole or most important force in that development. Modern preaching, both in its theory and practice, received its most formative as well as its most beneficent impulse from the Protestant Reformation. This general influence appears in several easily discernible particulars: (1) The Reformation induced and confirmed a greater respect for preaching as one of the chief means of instruction in Christian doctrine and life. This not only heightened the tone of preaching itself, but necessarily and powerfully reacted on the theory of preaching. (2) The Reformation brought in a better interpretation and application of Scripture. The great influence of this upon both practice and theory is apparent without elaboration. (3) The Reformation exemplified and expressed

in its preaching a deeper interest in the spiritual life of the people, both in respect to *credenda* and *agenda*. This mightily affected the theory of preaching both on its doctrinal and its ethical sides, though it has been true that in both the early and the later distinctively Protestant homiletics the proclamatory or evangelistic element of preaching has not been sufficiently recognized.

More particularly does the general effect of the Reformation on homiletics appear in the personal influence of the great leaders. This was, however, more in their practice and in their talk than in any formal treatises. Luther wrote nothing definite on homiletics, but in his Sermons and his Table Talk his ideas on preaching find occasional and vigorous expression. As to the Swiss Reformers my information is at fault. I do not recall any definite homiletical teaching from my slight reading in the works of Zwingli or Bullinger. Yet it cannot be supposed that Bullinger could wholly have neglected this element of teaching in his work with the young preachers at Zurich. Calvin does not seem to have paid any attention to the theory of preaching in his writings, but his practice was a living and powerful example to the students at Geneva, and it is hardly to be doubted that in his instructions some were included which bore at least indirectly on the homiletical side of ministerial discipline. Among the English Reformers the subject received some attention, for as early as 1613 we find a translation into English of a Latin treatise on "The Art of Prophecy-*ing*," which was of course written earlier and shows a good grasp of the matter. The book was written by William Perkins, and appears to have been the first homiletical treatise by an English author; but it gives evidence of a much earlier attention to the subject in that country.

Going back to the early Protestant writers on homiletics we come first upon the little work of Philip Melancthon (1497-1560). The theologian of the Reformation and friend of Luther was born and educated in South Germany. He was kinsman and pupil of Reuchlin, received excellent education, had the scholar's bent, became the distinguished professor at Wittenberg, and the teacher of multitudes of Protestant

preachers and teachers. In his subjects of instruction at Wittenberg rhetoric was included—of course with application to preaching. Among his writings there exists in several editions, and with some variation of title, a compendious treatise on rhetoric. By courtesy of the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary I have been able to read the original in Vol. XIII. of Bretschneider's *Corpus Reformatorum*, under the title: *Ph. Melancthonis Elementorum Rhetorices Libri Duo*. Some of the editions give it in three books. The treatise contains nothing original or profound. It follows the accepted canons of the classical rhetoric, of course with application to preaching. It discusses, in its three general divisions, Invention, Arrangement (*Dispositio*), and Style (*Elocutio*). In the introduction he adds the other two "offices": Memory and Delivery (*Pronunciatio*), but does not enlarge upon them in the treatment. Under Invention he discusses the three kinds of oratory—forensic, deliberative, demonstrative (or epideictic), and insists that to these must be added the *genus didascalicum*, which embraces preaching. Under Disposition (which is necessary for victory and clearness) he gives examples from Demosthenes and Cicero, and from the Epistle to the Romans. He insists that the arrangement should be logical. Under Style (*Elocutio*) Melancthon considers the three topics of Grammar, Figures (to which he devotes a very good discussion), and Amplification—where he refers with appreciation to the *Copia* of Erasmus. On the whole the work is of trifling importance in itself, but shows that the Reformers gave attention in their education of preachers to the principles of homiletics as based on rhetoric.

By far the most original and significant work by any early Protestant writer on homiletics is that of Andrew Hyperius (1511-1564). Not having access to the original treatise I have been particularly fortunate in being enabled through the kindness of Professor Henry E. Dosker of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, to read an elaborate survey of Hyperius' book. This is found in the able inaugural address of Dr. P. Biesterveld on assuming the rectorate of the Theological School of the Reformed Church in Holland, Dec. 6,

1895. The address is enlarged in the publication and bears the title, *Andreas Hyperius voornamelik als Homileet* (And. Hyperius especially as Homiletician). The study is a very careful one, and is next best to having the original at hand.

Andrew Gerard (Andreas Gerardus), better known as Hyperius from his birth-place, was born at Ypres in Flanders, May 16, 1611, to a lawyer of learning and distinction, whose name he inherited. His mother was of an excellent family of Ghent. The boy enjoyed the best early advantages of education, worked for awhile in his father's office, and then took his degree at the University of Paris, where rhetoric and logic were among his favorite studies. After taking his degree he took post-graduate work in theology at the Sorbonne, intending to enter the church. But he had become touched with the ideas of the Reformation, and the archbishop of Louvain refused to confirm his appointment to a professorship at the university. On this Hyperius went to England and taught there for four years. As yet Henry VIII. had not broken with Rome, and the young Hollander's infection with Luther's doctrines being suspected he was required to leave England. In some way he was led to Marburg in Hesse, where an old friend of his, Geldenhauer, was one of the leading teachers in the Protestant school. Here Hyperius was welcomed, and found his life-work. On Geldenhauer's death he succeeded to the principalship, and remained at Marburg during the rest of his life, a beloved teacher and preacher and leader in the religious affairs of Hesse. His type of theology was more Calvinistic than Lutheran, and he was therefore somewhat underestimated among the rigid Protestants, but he was much beloved and very influential in the church life of the principality.

Hyperius was an all-round scholar. His lectures and works in exegetical, systematic and practical theology were useful and justly noted. He wrote two homiletical books: (1) *De Formandis Concionibus Sacris, seu de interpretatione sacrae scripturae populari libri duo*; and (2) *Topica Theologica*. The second is really an appendix to the first and contains, after the manner of the older homiletics, a list of subjects for preaching with suggestions for their suitable treatment. This really

has no permanent value, and by his making it into a separate treatise it is possible that Hyperius was already beginning to feel the drift away from this as a necessary part of homiletical instruction. But the earlier treatise, *On the Making of Sacred Discourses*, was and remains a work of the first importance in the development of homiletics. Writers like Christlieb, Th. Harnack, and others, do not hesitate to pronounce this work of Hyperius as the first really "scientific" treatise on the theory of preaching. In the preface (dated Oct., 1552) the author says that the book was written at the request of many candidates for the ministry who had heard him lecture and preach at Marburg. The work consists of two books of sixteen chapters each. The First Book treats of the general principles of the art of preaching; the Second Book of the particular parts of the art. Certainly this division of the matter is not very "scientific" or logical. It reminds us of the course adopted by Erasmus in the two principal Books of his treatise, and may indeed have simply followed that work. Also the exact subdivision of the two Books into sixteen smaller divisions each smacks rather of artifice than art; but surely we can do nothing else than follow the division which the author himself lays down.

Book I. Here without a heading the general principles of homiletics are presented. Chapter I sets forth the distinction between the "popular interpretation" of Scripture and the "scholastic." The latter has place in the schools, is academic discussion for students and teachers. The popular method is for the instruction of the common people and has place in the pulpit and must be adapted to its end. The author has treated the academic method in other works—this is given to the popular. But before going into the discussion he proceeds (after Erasmus) to consider the dignity and value of the preacher's office. Chapter 2 takes up this topic and points out three requisites in the preacher: (1) Knowledge (*doctrina*), and not only of Scripture and theology, but of all truth and current affairs. (2) Purity of morals. His life must be a seal to his teaching. (3) Ability to teach—power to set forth sound doctrine clearly and attractively. Chapter 3 takes up the

aim of preaching, which is none other than to labor with all zeal and energy for the salvation of sinners and their reconciliation to God. Chapter 4 discusses the points which the preacher has in common with other public speakers. The author refers to Augustine's treatment and names the five elements (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronunciatio*), the three aims of discourse (*docere, delectere, flectere*), and the three kinds of eloquence (sublime, humble, medium). These general principles of discourse must be wisely applied to the peculiar needs of preaching. Chapter 5 tells of the choice of texts. This servant of the word is compared by Christ to a wise householder, and by Paul to a steward of divine mysteries. Hence the main principle in his choice of Scriptural themes must be what is useful, easy and necessary. These points, with their necessary qualifications, are sensibly discussed. Chapter 6 treats judiciously the form of sermons, and points out that they should be (1) short, (2) clear in language, (3) well outlined. Hard study and careful previous preparation are needed. Chapter 7 discourses of the kinds of sermons, of propositions, of the forms of themes. Hyperius rejects, as unmeaning for the preacher, the accepted division of rhetoric into judicial, deliberative, and demonstrative, and seeks to found his division upon Scripture as given in 2 Tim. 3:16 and Rom. 15:4. From these passages he works out a scheme of the kinds of pulpit discourse into five, which he gives in both Greek and Latin terms, but which we may translate as follows: Doctrinal (or Didactic), Argumentative, Institutive (not a happy term, he afterwards explains that it includes both the deliberative and demonstrative genera of the secular rhetoric so far as available for preaching), Corrective, and Consolatory. These may be reduced to three, which he names in Greek terms as they relate to Knowledge, Practice and Comfort; but it is better for clearness to retain the five as pointed out, and even to add a sixth, the Mixed, according as two or more of these may be combined in one discourse. Proceeding to discuss propositions and their statement he shows that these are merely brief statements of the whole matter to be discussed, and that their kinds necessarily correspond to the kinds of

discourses just considered. Themes may in their statement be either "simple" or "composite," according as they are put in one or more *dictiones* or terms. Chapters 8 and 9 treat of the parts of sermons, or rather of the sermon service, since he includes the reading of the Scripture and the invocation. After these come the exordium, the proposition or division, proof (*confirmatio*), refutation, and conclusions. Chapters 10 to 14 discuss these in the order given. The discussion is judicious and excellent, but need not be detailed, as it gives nothing especially new or profound. Chapter 15 contains a discussion of amplification. Hyperius does not highly regard the rhetorical devices usually practised here, since the preacher must not exaggerate nor diminish the truth for effect. But amplification for emphasis, for getting things in their right proportion, for impressing the importance of neglected truth, etc., is highly important and should be carefully studied and practised. With caution the usual rhetorical methods may then be employed. Chapter 16 gives careful and admirable treatment to the matter of moving the feelings in preaching. The aim of the preacher should of course be not mere excitement, but the production of spiritual fruit and the awakening and improvement of the spiritual life. He gives an enumeration of the feelings usually sought to be aroused by orators. Some of these the preacher should leave alone. He is naturally concerned chiefly with those which stand in closest relations with the subjects which he discusses. The preacher must keep close to life. He has more freedom than the advocate. He must himself feel what he urges, getting in full touch with his subject. His manner must be controlled and appropriate. Hyperius shows how the various kinds of feeling may be properly approached and aroused. The preacher must be master in the use of the various figures of speech, which help in this matter. Many examples are given in Scripture of proper appeal to feeling.

Book II. Particular Application of General Principles. Really this is a discussion of the various kinds of sermons, as pointed out before, and the best methods of composing and delivering them. Chapter 1 treats of the importance of having

clear ideas of which kind the particular sermon belongs to. Chapter 2 teaches that in each genus one must seek the things peculiar to that genus, finding the appropriate arguments, illustrations, etc. Chapter 3 shows how the various kinds of sermons may be preached from the same passage of Scripture, using Mark 8 as an example. Chapters 4 to 7 give a number of excellent hints on the interpretation and handling of Scripture themes and texts. "One of the chief virtues of the preacher is to explain the Scripture with his eye on the circumstances of the times." Thus the allegorical interpretation is discredited. He must be sure that the theme is really derived from the text, and that its lessons are correctly applied. Chapter 8 exemplifies how a "simple" theme of the "didactic" sort may be handled. Chapter 9 does the like for a "complex" theme. Chapter 10 discusses at length and with excellent judgment how a preacher should apply Scripture themes and texts to his own times. This is really his main business. He must avoid far-fetched and strained applications, and deal honestly both with the word of God and his audience. The author also takes occasion to give a sharp and deserved rebuke to plagiarism. Chapters 11 to 14 treat with care and sense examples of preaching under the *genera* Argumentative, Institutive, Corrective and Consolatory. Chapter 15 treats of the *genus mixtum*, where two or more of these kinds are exemplified—as must often happen—in one sermon. Chapter 16 closes the work in emphasizing three very necessary things which the preacher must ever have in mind: (1) The needs of his hearers; (2) decorum in speech and conduct; (3) the peace and unity of the church. The earnest prayers of both preachers and hearers for God's blessing on the work are urged.

This truly great work of Hyperius marks an epoch in homiletical writing. As a fact the book does not seem to have had as wide use as its merits demanded. Yet there are traces of its influence upon other writers, and no doubt its principles found some dissemination in the teaching of the schools. The Humanists, including Melancthon, had criticized and rejected the errors and extremes of the scholastic homiletics, but they had taught rhetoric as applied to preaching. Hyperius went

further and taught preaching only as related to rhetoric. After him, especially in the seventeenth century, Protestant homiletics again fell into the slough of scholasticism. Cold and minute analysis and refinement, with little adaptation to life and need, was the order of the time. Traces of this degeneracy appear already in some of the books of the latter part of our period. Christlieb, Lentz, Biesterveld and others mention various works (which I have not seen) as having some vogue in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Among them those of Hieronymus Weller (1562), Nic. Hemming (1556), Andrew Pancratius (1574), L. Osiander (1582), Jac. Andreae (1595), Aegidius Hunnius (1604). Of these the most important seem to be those of Pancratius, who taught the distinction of "textual" and "thematic" sermons, and seems to have given start and vogue to the scholastic tendency which reigned soon after him; and that of Hunnius, who set himself against this trend, and taught a more reasonable and Scriptural method of making sermons. But none of these treatises can be compared in value with that of Hyperius.

CATHOLIC HOMILETICS.

Our survey could not be complete without some mention of the state of homiletical theory among the Catholics of the period, though their contributions are not so important for the general subject as those previously considered. In homiletics as well as in other spheres of reform, they owed much to both the Humanists and the Protestants. Though it is natural for Protestants to exaggerate and for Catholics to minimize this influence, it must be recognized as important. It was felt both in the theory and the practice of preaching. Yet of course the improvement due to reforms within the Catholic church must not be denied. Of these may be recalled the work of the humanistic reformers who remained in the Catholic fold. Besides Reuchlin and Erasmus, who never separated from the Catholic church, there were many scholars of the time who were warmer partisans of the ancient order. There were a considerable number of these, especially in Italy, and the work of these scholarly leaders was felt in every sphere of Catholic

thought, including preaching. Prominent here was Charles Borromeo the famous archbishop of Milan, cardinal and later saint. He not only took a deep personal interest in the improvement of preaching, wrote a little book on pastoral duties in which he touched on the matter, perhaps influenced if he did not directly frame the action of the Council of Trent on this subject, but he induced Valerio to write a book on preaching. The Council of Trent, among its other stupendous labors, gave active and decisive attention to reforms in preaching, and sought to correct some of the more flagrant abuses both in practice and theory.

Among Catholic writers of the time a few deserve notice. Augustine Valerio, at the request of Cardinal Borromeo, published in 1575 a *Rhetoric Ecclesiastical*. (Art. *Homiletik* in Wetzer and Welte's Lexicon). He groups and discusses the materials of preaching under the heads of things to be believed, hoped for, feared, avoided, done. He insists on maintaining a distinction between sacred and common rhetoric. He urges that the two chief duties of the preacher are to teach and to move his hearers. In 1565 the Spanish court preacher, Lorenzo Villavicentio, published a treatise on preaching which seems (from the title and some indication of the treatment as given by Keppler in Wetzer and Welte), to have been directly borrowed from Hyperius—with such changes as the situation demanded. It has the same title as the work of Hyperius—*De formandis concionibus sacris, etc.*, and adopts his classification of the kinds of preaching as distinguished from secular oratory. There are three books, however, instead of two, and the author pays much attention to argument and the refutation of heresy.

In his *History of Spanish Literature* (Vol. III., pp. 187, 188) Ticknor mentions several works of homiletical interest. "Juan de Guzman in 1589 published a formal treatise on Rhetoric, in the seventh dialogue of which he makes an ingenious application of the rules of the Greek and Roman masters to the demands of modern sermonizing in Spanish." . . . "Paton, the author of several works of little value, published in 1604 a crude treatise on 'The Art of Spanish Eloquence,' founded

on the rules of the ancients." The critic adds in a footnote: "The extracts from old Spanish books and hints about their authors in this treatise are often valuable, but how wise its practical suggestions are may be inferred from the fact that it recommends an orator to strengthen his memory by anointing his head with a compound made chiefly of bears' grease and white wax."

But among Catholic writers on homiletics of this period the palm undoubtedly belongs to the eminent Spanish preacher, bishop and devotional writer, Luiz of Granada (1504-1588). (See my *History of Preaching*, p 547f). His *Rhetorica Ecclesiastica*, or Six Books on the Method of Preaching, is a work of real value alike for its contents and its style and its place in the literature and history of homiletics. I had the pleasure of reading it in a fine old edition at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris some years ago. After a dedication to his *alma mater*, the University of Valencia, and a preface giving his reasons for writing, he proceeds to discuss his subject in six books.

Book I. sets forth the origin of rhetoric in the nature of men and things as providentially ordered. Nature is helped and trained by art. Cicero and Aristotle were the ancient masters of rhetoric. The utility and necessity of rhetorical art are argued. Its principles are naturally and easily turned to account by the preacher, just as other natural and necessary things may be turned to the service of God. Chrysostom so used oratory, and Augustine ably treated it in his *De Doctrina Christiana*. The dignity and difficulty of the preacher's office are great, and he must be a man of purity of character and rectitude of intention, pious in spirit and having in mind the glory of God. Let him remember the calls of Jeremiah and Isaiah, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. The preacher must also be zealous in charity, in prayers, in meditation. Book II. takes up rhetoric proper and shows how it differs from logic. Every discourse may be divided into the three parts of Exposition, Argumentation, Amplification. The division of the question and the sources of arguments are considered; also the forms of argument, induction, syllogism, dilemma, etc.; then the order of arguments; then adornment,

accommodation, etc. Book III. is largely devoted to Amplification—its nature as different from argument, its kinds, such as description and others. Book IV. recurs to Arrangement and goes more fully into the discussion of it. The three kinds of oratory are considered and it is urged that a fourth, the *genus didascalicum*, must be added. The preacher will employ all except the judicial, and mainly the didactic. The parts of a speech are six: Exordium, Narration, Proposition, Proof, Confutation, Conclusion. Recurring to the kinds of preaching the author discusses (1) the suatory, corresponding to the deliberate oratory; (2) the demonstrative (panegyric), as applied to the saints and angels; (3) the narrative (i. e., the gospel, or reading and exposition of Scripture); (4) a mixture of these; and (5) the didactic proper, which is more given to doctrine than to persuasion or appeal. Book V. treats of Style (*elocutio*), where four essentials are enforced: (1) Purity and correctness of language; (2) Perspicuity; (3) Adornment, including a good discussion of tropes and figures; (4) the avoidance of faults of language and expression. Book VI. treats of Delivery (*pronunciatio*), where again four things are discussed: (1) Correction of faults; (2) Clearness of utterance; (3) Elegance of manner; (4) Fitness, i. e., to subject, occasion, etc. Gesture and movement should be appropriate. In conclusion the author reverts to a number of things necessary to the preacher's highest success. Again he insists on a good life as fundamental. Then the preacher must have due regard to times, occasions, and subjects for fitting speech. Night or early morning is the best time for study. Prayer and meditation are very necessary. Both in preparation and in preaching the thoughts must be directed to Christ alone. A certain Armenian lady was returning with her husband and others from the court of Cyrus, when the conversation turned upon the beauty and grace of the king. This lady being silent her husband asked what she thought of Cyrus, and she replied with loving modesty, "I was keeping my eyes on thee, my husband, and do not know how other men looked."

Our survey of the development of homiletical theory has shown us how that theory is both historically and naturally

related to general rhetoric as the art or science of oratory. But it has also shown how impossible it is to consider preaching, with its artistic or theoretical expression, as only one of the forms of public address. Three great elements of preaching give to it and its theoretical unfolding a distinction which marks off homiletics from general rhetoric. These are the origin of preaching in the distinctively religious aims of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus and his apostles, the historic unfolding of preaching as a fixed and characteristic element in the worship and work of the Christian religion, and the unique relation of preaching to the Bible considered as the revelation of the mind and will of God for all time. We have seen how these conceptions of preaching gave impulse to the masterly work of Origen as a teacher of the Bible, to the splendid oratory of Chrysostom and other preachers of the fourth century, and to the creative studies of Augustine who first formulated these principles into a system of instruction for preaching as a distinctive work. The earlier Middle Ages added nothing to Augustine's presentation of the theory of preaching. But the rise and dominance of Scholasticism brought in the analytical method. Excess and misuse of this method have at various times demanded reform, but its value is indisputable as an aid to the clear and convincing presentation of truth. In the epoch of the Reformation Humanists, Protestants and Catholics attacked previous errors of homiletical conception and method, and advanced the treatment of homiletical theory to a much higher plane than it had ever occupied. The modern development of homiletics as a discipline of theological schools is due to the Reformation. As such a discipline may it hold its place and grow in usefulness and power!