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Preaching and Sermons

Robert H. Ellison

In the opening chapter of The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901, William Gibson estimates that as many as ‘25 million unique sermon performances’ took place throughout the British empire between the end of the Glorious Revolution and the death of Queen Victoria.¹ While only a fraction of these sermons were ultimately published, the corpus of available texts is massive as well: extrapolating from the data in John Gordon Spaulding’s Pulpit Publications (1996), Gibson estimates that some ‘80,000 individual...sermons’ were published during this period of time.² Numbers like this are a mixed blessing for scholars. On the one hand, the sheer size of the canon suggests a virtually endless store of topics to pursue, and advances in digitization have made more texts readily available than ever before. Finding the most relevant texts within tens of thousands of choices, however, can be intimidating and inefficient for even the most diligent researchers.

Charting the pulpit of Protestant Dissent in nineteenth-century Britain and North America is a similarly daunting task. According to a poll taken in 1884 by the Contemporary Pulpit, five of the ten ‘greatest living English-speaking Protestant preachers’ were Baptists or Congregationalists,³ many of the scores of articles on preaching were published by Protestant

¹ William Gibson, ‘The British Sermon 1689-1901: Quantities, Performance, and Culture’, in Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, eds., The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901 (Oxford, 2012), p. 7.

² Ibid.

³ ‘A Plebiscite about Preachers’, Spectator 57 (1884), p. 1296.

periodicals, and biographical surveys published early in the twentieth century devote far more space to Dissenters than to Anglicans or Roman Catholics.⁴ In order to make the scope of this project somewhat manageable, this chapter elects to focus on a single genre: lectures on preaching, which reveal the advice that seasoned ministers gave to young men just starting their careers.

An Overview of the Genre

This essay draws upon approximately twenty-five volumes of lectures delivered in England, the United States, and Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the best known works in England during this period are the three volumes of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Lectures to My Students, which he delivered to the students in the Pastor's College, the school he founded in 1856 to 'help in the further education of brethren who have been preaching with some measure of success for two years at the least'.⁵ There were no educational prerequisites or financial requirements; all who had the necessary experience and some 'evident marks of a

⁴ Edwin Charles Dargan, A History of Preaching, 2 vols (New York, 1912), II, pp. 470-578; F.R. Webber, A History of Preaching in Britain and America, Including the Biographies of Many Princes of the Pulpit and the Men who Influenced Them, 3 Vols (Milwaukee, WI, 1952-57), I, pp. 377-746, II, pp. 261-657, III, pp. 175-524.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students: A Selection from Addresses Delivered to the Students of the Pastor's College, Metropolitan Tabernacle, First Series (London, 1875), p. vii.

Divine call' were eligible to be admitted.⁶ Spurgeon's lectures at the College were collected in three volumes, published in 1875, 1877, and posthumously in 1905. An additional collection was published in 1892 by Arthur T. Pierson, a Presbyterian minister who was enlisted to deliver the lectures after Spurgeon became ill. He spoke at the Pastor's College from October 1891 to June 1892, approximately five months after Spurgeon's death.⁷

On the American side, the best-known example of the genre is probably the Yale Lectures on Preaching, which began in 1871 and are still being delivered today.⁸ They were named in honor of the famed Presbyterian minister Lyman Beecher; Henry Ward, Lyman's eighth child and pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, delivered the lectures for the first three years. He discussed the parameters of the series in his inaugural lectures, noting that they were not 'to be confounded with a regular Professorship of pastoral theology', but were rather intended to 'secure a more perfect preparation of young men for preaching...by providing for them...a course of practical instruction in the art of preaching, to be given by those actively

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and His Private Secretary, 4 vols (London, 1897-1900), IV, pp. 148-9.

⁷ Arthur T. Pierson, The Divine Art of Preaching. Lectures Delivered at the 'Pastor's College' Connected with the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England, from January to June, 1892 (New York, 1892), p. ix.

⁸ A complete list of Yale lecturers can be found online at <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/beecher.html>.

engaged in the practice of it'.⁹ Several of his successors echoed this distinction, declaring that they came not to offer a comprehensive treatment of the homiletic arts, but rather to offer a few practical suggestions derived from their years of experience in the ministry.¹⁰

Finally, Canadian preaching and pastoral education is represented by lectures delivered before the Theological Union of Victoria University, in Toronto. They were apparently not part of the initial mission of the Union; its constitution simply states that it was formed to provide 'sacred and literary fellowship of all Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel in connection with the Methodist Church', and it stipulates that a lecture and a sermon be delivered at each of its annual meetings.¹¹ As the Prefatory Note to one of the published volumes indicates, those discourses are 'largely Apologetic in their character',¹² addressing such topics as the origin and nature of sin,

⁹ Henry Ward Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching. Delivered before the Theological Department of Yale College, New Haven, Conn, as the First Series in the Regular Course of the 'Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching' (New York, 1872), pp. v, 1.

¹⁰ A. J. F. Behrends, The Philosophy of Preaching (New York, 1890), p. vii; Howard Crosby, The Christian Preacher. Yale Lectures for 1879-80 (New York, 1879), pp. 7-8; R. W. Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching. Delivered at Yale College, New Haven, Conn. (New York, 1878), p. v; James Stalker, The Preacher and His Models: The Yale Lectures on Preaching, 1891 (New York, 1891), pp. 4-8; William M. Taylor, The Ministry of the Word (New York, 1876), Preface.

¹¹ Constitution of the Theological Union of Victoria University, pp. 1-2. I am most grateful to Mr. Ken Wilson, an archivist at Victoria University, for providing me a copy of this constitution.

¹² Lectures and Sermons Delivered Before the Theological Union of the University of Victoria College, Vol. I, 1878-1882 (Toronto, 1888), Prefatory Note.

the relationship between science and religion, and eternal reward and punishment; consequently, they say very little about the practice of preparing and delivering sermons.

There are, however, some additional materials that directly pertain to the study undertaken here. In the 1880s, three series of lectures were delivered ‘under the auspices of the Theological Union of Victoria University’. The title pages of two of the published collections include the phrase ‘the annual lectures on preaching’;¹³ the third—which was published first, in 1883—contains an Introductory Note that explicitly aligns it with the Yale Lectures and other efforts to combine ‘scholastic work’ with ‘the ripe experience and original ideas of men fresh from the pastoral and pulpit work’.¹⁴

Two things should be noted about these speakers and their lectures. The speakers, admittedly, were not a very diverse group. Most were born in Britain or North America; educated at major

¹³ Edward B. Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ: The Annual Lectures on Preaching Delivered under the Auspices of the Theological Union of Victoria University, Cobourg, March, 1886 (Toronto, 1886); James Awde et al, The Minister at Work. The Annual Lectures on Preaching Delivered under the Auspices of the Theological Union of Victoria University before the Students in Preparation for the Ministry at Victoria College, Cobourg, 1887-8 (Toronto, 1888).

¹⁴ N. Burwash, ‘Introductory Note’, in H. F. Bland, Soul-Winning: A Course of Four Lectures Delivered under the Auspices of the Theological Union of Victoria University, Cobourg, February 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1883, Entitled Respectively ‘Student,’ ‘Preacher,’ ‘Pastor’ and ‘Soul-Winner’ (Toronto, 1883), p. iii.

seminaries and universities including Edinburgh, Oxford, Princeton, and Yale; and, at the time they delivered their lectures, serving as pastors, professors, or university presidents in major metropolitan areas such as Glasgow, New York, London, and Montreal. The lectures they delivered, however, were not intended to have only a local impact, as might have been the case if they were speaking to their own congregations. Rather, they were meant to reach far beyond the lecture halls, as the students who heard them would go on to serve churches across North America and throughout the British Empire.

Moreover, while they were all delivered by Protestant Dissenting ministers, they were not necessarily distinctively Protestant Dissenting lectures. There are, to be sure, clear denominational markers to be found. In the introduction to his second volume, for example, Spurgeon notes that ‘we confine our College to Baptists’, and references to the Methodist ministry frequently appear in the lectures delivered in Toronto. Yale was more multid denominational, but there were parameters for the lectures delivered there as well; the ‘Records of the Corporation of Yale College for April 12, 1871’ stipulated that they were to be given by ‘a minister of the Gospel of any evangelical denomination who has been markedly successful in the special work of the Christian ministry’.¹⁵

The lectures themselves, however, appear to be generally free of what the Victorians would have called ‘party spirit’. The overall content and tone is broadly Christian rather than specifically

¹⁵ Edgar DeWitt Jones, The Royalty of the Pulpit: A Survey and Appreciation of the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching Founded at Yale Divinity School 1871 and Given Annually (with Four Exceptions) since 1872 (New York, 1951), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

sectarian; as such, they might not have been out of place in talks delivered to Anglicans, Roman Catholics, or other groups. A full development of this idea is beyond the scope of this essay; as will be discussed in the conclusion, it is one of several promising avenues of further study

The Form and Content of the Lectures

These twenty-five volumes are anything but monolithic. They contain between four and thirteen lectures, with the lectures ranging from five to forty pages. Some were printed in ‘substantially’ the same form in which they were delivered,¹⁶ while other ministers used publication as an opportunity to significantly revise and expand their work.¹⁷ The content of these volumes is quite varied as well. Some of the Yale lectures address preaching only indirectly, and sometimes not at all. Congregationalist John Brown’s Puritan Preaching in England (New York, 1900) and Taylor’s The Scottish Pulpit from the Reformation to the Present Day (New York, 1887) are far

¹⁶ H. Clay Trumbull, The Sunday-School: Its Origin, Mission, Methods, and Auxiliaries. The Lyman Beecher Lectures before Yale Divinity School for 1888 (Philadelphia, 1893 edn.), p. viii; George Adam Smith, Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament: Eight Lectures on the Lyman Beecher Foundation, Yale University (New York, 1901), p. vii. See also the title pages of each of Beecher’s volumes, which note that the texts had been prepared ‘from phonographic reports’.

¹⁷ A. M. Fairbairn, The Place of Christ in Modern Theology (New York, 1893), p. x; Henry Van Dyke, The Gospel for an Age of Doubt: The Yale Lectures on Preaching 1896 (New York, 1896), p. v.

more historical surveys than ‘how-to’ manuals for the nineteenth-century pulpit. Two other works--The Place of Christ in Modern Theology (New York, 1893) by Scottish Congregationalist A. M Fairbairn and Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament (New York, 1901) by George Adam Smith, pastor of the Free Church College in Glasgow—are much more theological than homiletic, and Henry Clay Trumbull, Congregationalist minister and Civil War chaplain, saw his invitation to deliver the lectures in 1888 as a ‘providential call’ to continue his longtime interest in Sunday School work.¹⁸ Washington Gladden’s Tools and the Man: Property and Industry under the Christian Law may be the furthest removed of all; as the subtitle suggests, it is a treatise on ‘Christian Socialism’ and addressed not specifically to ministers, but rather to ‘all citizens of the kingdom of heaven’.¹⁹ It should be noted that all of these Yale lectures were delivered after 1882, when a change in the terms of the lectureship allowed speakers to discuss ‘a branch of pastoral theology, or...any other topic appropriate to the work of the Christian ministry’.²⁰ These volumes were thus within both the letter and the spirit of the law, but since they are not explicitly homiletic in their focus, they are not included in the works ed in the remainder of this essay.

These titles, however, are in the minority. Most of the works under discussion here offer extensive discussions of the pulpit, and many undertake to provide a good deal more. The lecturers recognise, and in some cases explicitly state, that a minister’s work involves much more

¹⁸ Trumbull, The Sunday-School, p. vii.

¹⁹ Washington Gladden, Tools and the Man: Property and Industry under the Christian Law (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1893), p. 8.

²⁰ Jones, The Royalty of the Pulpit, p. xxiv.

than preaching,²¹ and their published volumes sometimes take the form of pastoral manuals, offering suggestions for overseeing all aspects of the worship service—the music,²² prayers,²³ Scripture readings²⁴—conducting prayer meetings apart from the regular service,²⁵ directing the Sunday School programme,²⁶ planning times of special revival,²⁷ and working with the church

²¹ John Hall, God's Word Through Preaching. The Lyman Beecher Lectures before the Theological Department of Yale College, Fourth Series (New York, 1875), p. 8-9; Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 23.

²² Henry Ward Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching. Delivered before the Theological Department of Yale College, New Haven, Conn, in the Regular Course of the 'Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching', Second Series (New York, 1873), pp. 114-45; Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, pp. 271-86; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, pp. 231-40.

²³ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, pp. 53-71; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, pp. 240-55; Nathaniel J. Burton, Yale Lectures on Preaching, and Other Writings, ed. Richard E. Burton (New York, 1888), pp. 187-200; John Watson, The Cure of Souls. Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale University, 1896 (New York, 1896), p. 253-68.

²⁴ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 213-28.

²⁵ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, pp. 53-113; Bland, Soul-Winning, pp. 76-8; Matthew Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, Delivered before the Theological Department of Yale College (New York, 1879), p. 265-6.

²⁶ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, pp. 181-90; Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 267-9; Trumbull, The Sunday-School.

²⁷ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, pp. 221-301.

officers and other laypersons who assist him in his efforts.²⁸ In order to do all these well, ‘every minister of Christ should seek to become what has been called a good-all-around man—good preacher, good pastor, good business man, good in every department of his work’.²⁹

Perhaps the most important of these duties were prayer and pastoral visitation.³⁰ Several lecturers insist that the preacher be a praying man.³¹ This is, of course, a valuable discipline for all believers, but it is especially important to the minister, who is not only responsible for his own spiritual well-being, but must also ‘abound in intercession’, in ‘wrestling with God’ on behalf of his people.³² While the preacher must spend a great deal of time alone in prayer, he must not allow himself to become a recluse or a hermit. He is rather to be ‘a man among men’,³³ a true minister who ‘lose[s] himself’ in his people’s ‘service and for their benefit’.³⁴ The minister

²⁸ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 293-4.

²⁹ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 165.

³⁰ For a discussion of how visitation might have been carried out by an Anglican clergyman, see Peter C. Hammond, The Parson and the Victorian Parish (London, 1977), pp. 132-51.

³¹ Behrends, The Philosophy of Preaching, pp. 178-81; Crosby, The Christian Preacher, pp. 125-30; Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, pp. 40-52; Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 53.

³² Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, pp. 43, 45.

³³ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 99.

³⁴ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 12.

stands to benefit from such service as well: through frequent visitation, Beecher says, he will ‘reinvigorate himself by contact with life and with men’.³⁵

These endeavours are, moreover, important to his work not only as a pastor, but also as a preacher. Earnest prayer, the lecturers maintain, is the foundation of effective preaching;³⁶ as Pierson put it, if the preacher ‘wants to prevail with man, he must learn, first of all, to prevail with God’.³⁷ Similarly, they discuss what John Hall, an Irish-born Presbyterian and the 1875 Yale lecturer, calls the ‘interaction between the visiting and the preaching’.³⁸ Frequent visitation, they suggest, not only helps the minister care for his congregants during the week, but it also better equips him to preach to them on Sunday.³⁹ There can be, in fact, a sort of feedback loop as the ‘pastorate and the pulpit act and react upon each other’:⁴⁰ interacting with people before Sunday can help the minister determine what to preach, and visiting them again the following

³⁵ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, p. 148.

³⁶ Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 125; Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 41-9; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 26.

³⁷ Pierson, The Divine Art of Preaching, p. 151.

³⁸ Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 52.

³⁹ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 40-2; Bland, Soul-Winning, p. 93-6; Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 43-50; Pierson, The Divine Art of Preaching, pp. 123-6; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 259-61; Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 87-8; William Jewett Tucker, The Making and the Unmaking of the Preacher. Lectures on the Lyman Beecher Foundation, Yale University, 1898 (Boston, 1898), p. 125.

⁴⁰ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 259.

week will give him ‘an opportunity to learn the influence of his sermons, and to ascertain accurately the effects which they have produced’.⁴¹

The Minister’s Qualifications

As important as prayer and visitation are, the lecturers also recognize that preaching is the minister’s primary task—one declared that all of his other duties ‘either issue from’ the pulpit ‘or are auxiliary to it’⁴²—and they devote the bulk of their lectures to preparing students for that work. The prioritisation of preaching had a noticeably gendered dimension. In the nineteenth century, significant numbers of women could be found preaching in Dissenting congregations and reform organizations such as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in North America and the suffragist Women’s Social and Political Union in England.⁴³ Some of the lecturers

⁴¹ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 243-4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴³ Catherine A. Brekus, Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1998); Jacqueline R. deVries, ‘Transforming the Pulpit: Preaching and Prophecy in the British Women’s Suffrage Movement,’ in Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker, eds., Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity (Berkeley, California, 1998, pp. 318-33; O.C. Edwards, A History of Preaching (Nashville, Tennessee, 2004), pp. 558-90, 749-73; Christine L. Krueger, The Reader’s Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse (Chicago, 1992); Dorothy Lander, ‘The Itinerant Pulpit of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU): Teachers

discussed here explicitly set aside that aspect of their history, insisting that the preacher be a man, and that he exhibit ‘manly’ traits.⁴⁴ If, they asserted, the goal of preaching is at least in part to ‘develop true manliness in others’,⁴⁵ it would follow that the preacher must be the epitome of masculinity himself.⁴⁶ This involves not only possessing such moral characteristics as sincerity and honor, but perhaps an ‘imposing physical’ presence as well; as E. B. Ryckman, the Victoria University lecturer for 1886, put it, ‘We cannot, of course, demand that our candidates for the ministry shall all be six feet four, but we should not have many four feet six’.⁴⁷ The nineteenth-century Protestant preacher, then, must be a man, and he must be a Christian man. This may seem too obvious to state, but it is a point that Spurgeon and lecturers at both Yale and the

or Preachers?’, in Robert H. Ellison, ed., A New History of the Sermon: The Nineteenth Century (Leiden, 2010), pp. 367-412.

⁴⁴ See Roxanne Mountford, The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces (Carbondale, Illinois, 2003), pp. 40-64 and more broadly, Donald E. Hall, ed., Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age (New York, 1994); John J. MacAloon, ed., Muscular Christianity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Worlds (London, 2008); and Norman Vance, The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought (Cambridge, 1985).

⁴⁵ William Williams, ‘The Minister’s Relation to the Development of Christian Character and Perfection of Manhood’, in The Minister at Work, p. 58.

⁴⁶ Ibid.; Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, pp. 29-31; Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 165.

⁴⁷ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 19.

Theological Union felt compelled to make.⁴⁸ He must also not be a new or untested convert, but rather ‘a mature and advanced believer’.⁴⁹ It was also vital that he be truly called to preach. ‘The call of God’, Canadian lecturer William Williams said, ‘is as essential to the validity of the Christian ministry to-day, as it was in apostolic times’,⁵⁰ and, as was the case back then, it is ‘the gift and calling of only a comparatively small number’ of believers.⁵¹ The notion of a ‘calling’, moreover, can be something of a double-edged sword: while it would be ‘a fearful calamity to a man to miss his calling’,⁵² it is also the case that ‘no one should attempt to enter upon the holy office without a true consecration of heart’.⁵³ A prospective minister must therefore see that his own salvation is ‘secure’,⁵⁴ seek wise counsel from other Christians,⁵⁵ and, above all else, listen for ‘God’s voice to [his] conscience, saying, “You ought to preach”’.⁵⁶

Finally, the lecturers were united in their expectation that a preacher would be an educated man. This begins, of course, with theological instruction—which, after all, is what brought the

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-4; Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, pp. 3-7; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 25.

⁴⁹ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Williams, ‘The Minister’s Relation’, p. 49.

⁵¹ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 20.

⁵² Ibid., p. 22.

⁵³ Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 173.

⁵⁴ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 26-7; Burton, Yale Lectures on Preaching, pp. 39-41.

⁵⁶ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 46.

students to their respective schools in the first place—but it should not end there. They are careful to note that scholarship is no substitute for spirituality,⁵⁷ which is why salvation, not education, is the first prerequisite to preaching. They also insist, however, that ‘the call of the Divine Spirit’ is not a ‘substitute for study and for intellectual preparation’.⁵⁸ The preacher should therefore be what we might call a ‘lifelong learner’, familiar first and foremost with the scriptures,⁵⁹ but also with ancient and modern languages;⁶⁰ history, politics, and science;⁶¹ and both classic and contemporary literary works.⁶² Such study will take time and effort, but it will also pay great dividends because it will help the preacher to ‘converse understandingly and

⁵⁷ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 44; Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, pp. 128-9. See also Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 32; Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, pp. 27-8; Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 21.

⁵⁹ Henry Ward Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching. Delivered before the Theological Department of Yale College, New Haven, Conn, in the Regular Course of the ‘Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching’, Third Series (New York, 1874)., pp. 26-8; Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, pp. 107-9; W.J. Ford, ‘The Minister’s Workshop—in the Study and among the People’, in The Minister at Work, pp. 67-8.

⁶⁰ Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 40; Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 67; Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 87; Ford, ‘The Minister’s Workshop’, pp. 74-7.

⁶¹ Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 100.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2; Ford, ‘The Minister’s Workshop’, p. 72; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, pp. 55-6.

effectively' with his congregants during the week⁶³ and deliver interesting, substantive, and factually accurate sermons to them on Sundays.⁶⁴

The Content and Delivery of Sermons

When it comes to the art of preaching itself, several of the lecturers explicitly placed themselves within a certain historical and rhetorical tradition. It is not, however, the tradition of Cicero and Aristotle, but rather that of the ancient church. The apostles were invoked at Yale by Beecher and James Stalker, Scottish minister and lecturer for 1890-91, and at Victoria University by E.B. Ryckman. Beecher declared that 'preaching must come back to what it was in the apostolic times',⁶⁵ and he and Stalker looked especially to Paul as not only 'the greatest of preachers',⁶⁶ but 'the most complete embodiment of the ministerial life'.⁶⁷ To further emphasize the importance and biblical times and models, Stalker rather ingeniously borrowed the language of his more liturgically-oriented counterparts, stating that 'Though we may not believe in apostolic succession in the churchly sense, we are the successors of the apostles in this sense, that the

⁶³ Crosby, The Christian Preacher, p. 63.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 64-5; Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 129; Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 110; Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 250-1; Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 53.

⁶⁵ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 6.

⁶⁶ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Third Series, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 18.

apostles filled the office which we hold...and illustrated the manner in which its duties should be discharged.’⁶⁸

Stalker and Pierson also looked to an apostle and a church father for guidance on how sermons should be constructed. In the Introduction to The Divine Art of Preaching, Pierson states that Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2:14-41, ‘was in some sense a model for all subsequent preaching’, and set the precedent for the threefold homiletic structure of ‘an argument, a testimony, and an exhortation’.⁶⁹ Similarly, Stalker cites St. Augustine’s belief that ‘a discourse should instruct, delight, and convince’, and suggests that ‘perhaps these three impressions should, upon the whole, follow this order’.⁷⁰

The other lecturers had various opinions about the structure of a sermon. Spurgeon and Yale lecturer Matthew Simpson, for example, advocated—or at least permitted—dividing a discourse into ‘heads’ and announcing those heads to the congregation to make the sermon easier to follow.⁷¹ On the other hand, Hall chose not to ‘dwell’ on ‘the subject of divisions of sermons’,⁷² and Taylor declined to ‘enter upon minute details concerning such technicalities as exordium,

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁹ Pierson, The Divine Art of Preaching, pp. xii-xiii.

⁷⁰ Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, pp. 114-5.

⁷¹ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 95; Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 140-1.

⁷² Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 127.

division, discussion, peroration, and the like'.⁷³ Ryckman made an important distinction between form and function when he said that 'a good sermon is not one that is beautifully composed, logically arranged, and oratorically delivered only, but one that accomplishes the ends for which sermons are preached.'⁷⁴

What, then, were those 'ends'? E.G. Robinson, Baptist pastor and Yale lecturer for 1882, joined Stalker in echoing Augustine's language, stating that 'Instruction and persuasion are the two chief elements in all true preaching',⁷⁵ and Congregationalist A.J.F. Behrends, who lectured at Yale in 1890, emphasized the persuasive element in his declaration that 'Every utterance of the pulpit must urge, either explicitly or implicitly, to moral decision and action'.⁷⁶ Ryckman and his Victoria University counterpart W.J. Ford invoked all three persons of the trinity in their Canadian lectures: all good sermons, they told their students, should result in 'the reconciliation of rebel souls to their God and King',⁷⁷ the 'perfecting of men in Christ',⁷⁸ and 'the renewal and sanctification of the heart by the Holy Ghost'.⁷⁹ The goal of preaching, in short, is not to help

⁷³ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 109.

⁷⁴ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 163.

⁷⁵ Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Behrends, The Philosophy of Preaching, p. 233.

⁷⁷ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 161.

⁷⁸ Ford, 'The Minister's Workshop', p. 89.

⁷⁹ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 161.

people become smarter, or even wiser, but rather holier; as Beecher succinctly stated in his second Yale lecture, homiletics is ‘the art of moving men from a lower to a higher life’.⁸⁰

All preaching, then, had the same purpose, but it could take a variety of forms. The taxonomy of nineteenth-century Protestant sermons was apparently quite vast: approaches mentioned in these lectures include ‘doctrinal’ and ‘biographical’;⁸¹ ‘descriptive, rhetorical, [and] sentimental’;⁸² and ‘textual’, ‘topical’, ‘doctrinal’, ‘experimental’, ‘practical’, ‘hortatory’, and ‘didactic’.⁸³

Sermons may have been varied, but some lamented that they were not very effective or successful. English Congregationalist R.W. Dale, the Yale lecturer in 1878, saw ‘desultoriness and want of method’ as ‘one of the gravest faults of our modern preaching’,⁸⁴ and E.G. Robinson declared that the preaching of the day showed ‘little that firmly grasps and wields the profounder doctrines of the gospel’.⁸⁵

The solution, many lecturers maintained, was a renewed emphasis upon ‘expository’ preaching. The simplest definition of the term is ‘telling us precisely what the writers of Scripture meant to say’;⁸⁶ others include ‘the consecutive interpretation, and practical enforcement, of a book of the

⁸⁰ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 29.

⁸¹ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 155.

⁸² Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 122.

⁸³ Behrends, The Philosophy of Preaching, p. 24.

⁸⁴ Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 232.

⁸⁵ Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 122.

⁸⁶ Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 171.

sacred canon'⁸⁷ and the process whereby 'a minister, having...learned for himself what meaning the Holy Ghost intended to convey in the passage he has in hand...tells it to his people, with clearness, simplicity, force, and fervor'.⁸⁸ Whatever the language used, the benefits of exposition could be legion: it can appeal to both the 'scholar' and 'uncultivated minds',⁸⁹ it will 'build up' the church,⁹⁰ 'it will promote Biblical intelligence',⁹¹ and it can bring 'both preacher and hearers into direct and immediate contact with the mind of the Spirit'.⁹² The first step in expository preaching, logically enough, is the selection of a topic and a text. Whether topic and text are selected at more or less the same time,⁹³ or the topic comes first and a text is found to fit it,⁹⁴ two things are paramount. First, as Spurgeon put it in his first series of lectures, the 'matter' of the sermon 'must be congruous to the text'.⁹⁵ The text should never, in other words, be simply a 'motto'⁹⁶ or a mere 'pretext' for what the preacher wants to say.⁹⁷ The text must then be

⁸⁷ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 155.

⁸⁸ Hall, God's Word Through Preaching, p. 71.

⁸⁹ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 226

⁹⁰ C.H. Spurgeon, Second Series of Lectures to My Students: Being Addresses Delivered to the Students of the Pastor's College, Metropolitan Tabernacle (London, 1877), p. 25.

⁹¹ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 170, emphasis in the original.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 161-2, emphasis in the original.

⁹³ Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 135-6.

⁹⁴ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, pp. 89-91; Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 134-5.

⁹⁵ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 74, emphasis in the original.

⁹⁶ Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 124; Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 93.

⁹⁷ Hall, God's Word Through Preaching, p. 271.

explained or expounded in a doctrinally sound way. Spurgeon offers a list of some dozen doctrines that all evangelical sermons should emphasize—sin, the atonement, ‘justification by faith’, and so on⁹⁸—but most of the others simply state that preachers must be sure to give their people a steady diet of sound teaching.⁹⁹

It seems somewhat ironic that while ‘pulpit presence’ was generally regarded as secondary to content—Spurgeon, for example, declared that good delivery means little ‘if a man has nothing to deliver’¹⁰⁰—the lecturers gave considerably more attention to the former than the latter. Many recommended that preachers employ the same public-speaking strategies and techniques employed by their counterparts on the secular stage. They should, English Congregationalist and Yale lecturer Robert F. Horton says, get a ‘proper course of teaching in elocution’, ‘cultivate’ their speaking voice, and ‘study the secret of great orators’.¹⁰¹ Some ‘secrets’ mentioned by some of the other lecturers include ‘lucidity’,¹⁰² a ‘conversational’ style;¹⁰³ ‘plainness, force, and beauty’ of expression;¹⁰⁴ well-chosen illustrations and anecdotes;¹⁰⁵ and natural postures and gestures in the pulpit.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ Spurgeon, Second Series of Lectures to My Students, pp. 180-8.

⁹⁹ Bland, Soul-Winning, pp. 53-6; Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, p. 90; Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 119-20.

¹⁰⁰ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 117.

¹⁰¹ Horton, Verbum Dei, pp. 274, 75, 77.

¹⁰² Watson, The Cure of Souls, p. 45.

¹⁰³ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 153.

¹⁰⁴ Tucker, The Making and the Unmaking of the Preacher, p. 105.

These are all components of eloquent oratory, but eloquence should never be the preacher's ultimate goal. As Taylor put it, 'The effort to be eloquent will produce a rhetorician; the concentrated purpose to move men to live for God in Christ, will produce, in the end, an orator, and the two are as far from each other as the poles'.¹⁰⁷ Rather, they should strive to preach with what some lecturers called 'unction' or, to use a popular Victorian term, 'earnestness'. H.F. Bland, who lectured at Victoria in 1883, noted that unction is 'subtle, indefinable, [and] ethereal',¹⁰⁸ and his fellow lecturers usually discuss it in terms of what it is not. It is not found, for example, in 'unnatural tones and whines',¹⁰⁹ 'mere vehemence of manner',¹¹⁰ or behaving as 'mere actors' in the pulpit.¹¹¹ Rather, it is a spiritual 'intensity'¹¹² and

¹⁰⁵ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, pp. 155-80; Spurgeon, Third Series of Lectures to My Students. The Art of Illustration: Being Addresses Delivered to the Students of The Pastor's College, Metropolitan Tabernacle (London, 1905); Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, pp. 183-203.

¹⁰⁶ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, pp. 136-7; Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, pp. 193-5; Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, Second Series, pp. 96-143.

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, pp. 20-1.

¹⁰⁸ Bland, Soul-Winning, p. 65.

¹⁰⁹ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 131.

¹¹¹ Spurgeon, Second Series of Lectures to My Students, p. 148.

¹¹² Watson, The Cure of Souls, p. 61.

‘zeal’¹¹³ that ‘springs out of an unwavering conviction of the truth of that which we are at the moment preaching, and of the fact that just that truth needs to be spoken to our hearers’.¹¹⁴

Finally, the lecturers discussed which method of delivery—reciting a memorized text, reading from a manuscript, or preaching extempore—was most compatible with earnest preaching. A previous project examined books and periodical articles from a range of traditions in Victorian Britain and found a rough consensus that, while reading could be appropriate if a preacher needed to gain experience in composition or was speaking to an educated congregation, the extemporaneous approach was by far the preferred method.¹¹⁵ The source material used here is different, but the conclusion is very much the same.

At first, the Yale lecturers often seemed reluctant to be too strident or dogmatic in this debate. Beecher, for example, was rather noncommittal, stating simply that ‘If you can do best by writing, write your sermons; and if you can do better by not writing, do not write them.’¹¹⁶ Hall, for example, declared that there is no ‘absolute rule’ that all preachers are to follow;¹¹⁷ Horton had ‘no inclination to give any rules for the composition of sermons’;¹¹⁸ and Robinson

¹¹³ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 183.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, The Ministry of the Word, p. 132.

¹¹⁵ Robert H. Ellison, The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, 1998), pp. 33-42.

¹¹⁶ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 106.

¹¹⁷ Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 134.

¹¹⁸ Horton, Verbum Dei, p. 279.

asserted that ‘experience alone can determine’ which method ‘will be the best for each one personally’.¹¹⁹ Stalker offered a reasonable rationale for such hesitation, writing that if the issue ‘were discussed every year for a century, it would be as far from being settled as ever’.¹²⁰ Despite such disclaimers, the lecturers contributed to the debate nonetheless. They acknowledged that written sermons may be more ‘precise’¹²¹ and ‘orderly’¹²² than extemporaneous ones, but they cautioned that a verbatim reading was also likely to be ‘mechanical’¹²³ and ‘stale’.¹²⁴ The best approach, then, was to write out sermons during the week, but take only notes with ‘leading lines of thought’ into the pulpit on Sunday.¹²⁵ Those who lectured before the Theological Union were likewise proponents of the extempore sermon. Bland advised against both memorizing sermons and reading them from manuscript,¹²⁶ and Ryckman declared that ‘bad reciting is worse than even bad reading’.¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ Robinson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 188.

¹²⁰ Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 20.

¹²¹ Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 157.

¹²² Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 212.

¹²³ Behrends, The Philosophy of Preaching, p. 70.

¹²⁴ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, First Series, p. 212.

¹²⁵ Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 166.

¹²⁶ Bland, Soul-Winning, p. 61.

¹²⁷ Ryckman, The Ambassador for Christ, pp. 134-5.

Spurgeon joined his counterparts in rejecting both reading and reciting in favor of extemporaneous delivery, which he called ‘an indispensable requisite for the pulpit’.¹²⁸ He introduced an additional element to the discussion as well, devoting an entire lecture to ‘the faculty of impromptu speech’.¹²⁹ While the extemporaneous method requires some work in advance, preparing the sermon ‘so far as thoughts go, and leaving the words to be found during delivery’, impromptu speaking is truly spur-of-the-moment, preaching ‘without special preparation, without notes or immediate forethought’.¹³⁰ The ability to preach impromptu, he says, should be cultivated so that a minister can speak ‘with propriety’ if an ‘emergency’ requires him ‘to cast away the well-studied discourse, and rely upon the present help of the Holy Spirit’.¹³¹ This should happen, however, only in such cases; he cautions his students that ‘The method of unprepared ministrations is...theoretically unsound’, and should not be adopted as a ‘general rule’ of preaching.¹³²

Conclusion

¹²⁸ Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students, First Series, p. 151.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 151, 166.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 97, 155.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 151, 152.

The phrase ‘golden age’ has been used to describe several epochs of Anglo-American preaching.¹³³ As a time in which thousands of sermons were delivered to millions of people every week, ‘sermons outsold novels’,¹³⁴ and the foremost pulpiteers were nearly as popular as royalty,¹³⁵ the nineteenth century would certainly seem worthy of the term.

Some nineteenth-century observers would have agreed with this assessment. In 1848, the Presbyterian minister Gardiner Spring published a 459-page treatise entitled The Power of the Pulpit; later in the century, Protestant periodicals published several articles echoing Spring’s belief that ‘Not only does the pulpit stamp its impress on the passing times, but it leaves its mark for a long time to come’.¹³⁶

¹³³ Siegfried Wenzel, Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation (Washington, D.C., 2008), p. xiv; Arnold Hunt, The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640 (Cambridge, 2010), p. 390; Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, ‘Preface’, in Francis and Gibson, eds., The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901, p. xiii. For an application of the term to American preaching in the middle of the twentieth century, see Edward Gilbreath, ‘The Pulpit King’, Christianity Today 11 December 1995, p. 28.

¹³⁴ Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870 (New Haven, CT, 1985), p. 21. See also Ellison, Victorian Pulpit, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁵ In 1858, the Unitarian minister Andrew Preston Peabody wrote that American tourists returning from England were often asked two questions: “‘Did you see the Queen?’” and next, “‘Did you hear Spurgeon?’” (‘Spurgeon’, North American Review 86 [1858], p. 275).

¹³⁶ Gardiner Spring, The Power of the Pulpit; or Thoughts Addressed to Christian Ministers and Those Who Hear Them (New York, 1848), p. 34. Examples of such articles include H.W.

Others, however, would probably have said that 'golden' was much too strong a term.

Around the same time that these lectures were being delivered, Protestant and secular periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic were also publishing articles examining what the editor of the Methodist Review called 'the want of success of the pulpit'.¹³⁷ A lengthy, and particularly harsh, critique was The Decay of Modern Preaching, published in 1882 by Irish clergyman John Mahaffy. In this 'essay', which runs to 160 pages, Mahaffy offers a catalogue of the 'historical', 'social', and 'personal' factors working against the 'success' of preaching throughout the various denominations of the Christian church. He does suggest some 'remedies', but the Epilogue makes clear that his 'main object is to exhibit the decay, not to attempt the reform, of modern preaching'.¹³⁸

Bellows, 'The Alleged Unattractiveness of the Christian Pulpit', Christian Examiner, 87 (1869), pp. 28-38; Mary Harriott Norris, 'The Need of the Pulpit', Methodist Review, 77 (1895), pp. 430-40; and John M. Titzel, 'The Pulpit: Its Province and Its Power', Reformed Quarterly Review, 31 (1884), pp. 134-46.

¹³⁷ Daniel Curry, 'Some Causes of the Want of Success of the Pulpit', Methodist Review, 57 (1887), pp. 269-83. See, for example, J. Baldwin Brown, 'Is the Pulpit Losing its Power?', The Nineteenth Century, 1 (1877), pp. 97-112; C.H. Grundy, 'Dull Sermons', Macmillan's Magazine, 34 (1876), pp. 264-7; S.J. Herben, 'Is the Power of the Pulpit Waning?', Methodist Review, 81 (1899), pp. 896-910; and G. Monroe Royce, 'The Decline of the American Pulpit', Forum, 16 (1894), pp. 568-77.

¹³⁸ John Mahaffy, The Decay of Modern Preaching (New York, 1882), p. 157.

The lecturers discussed here are more closely aligned with Gardiner than Mahaffy. Their positive outlook was not absolute—Beecher and Pierson, for example, lamented that the pulpit lacked the ‘spiritual power’ it enjoyed ‘a hundred years ago’¹³⁹—but it was apparent nonetheless. Some degree of optimism could perhaps be inferred from the very existence of these lectures; the speakers, presumably, would not have accepted their invitations if they did not believe that preaching was still worth doing, and worth doing well. Several, moreover, explicitly expressed their confidence in sermons’ continuing value. Hall assured his listeners that they were not ‘going to a sinking profession’,¹⁴⁰ Stalker continued to hold to a high ‘ideal...of what the pulpit ought to do, and might do’,¹⁴¹ and even Beecher declared that while others may believe ‘The pulpit has had its day’, he was confident that ‘its day has just begun’.¹⁴²

Two lecturers went so far as to devote entire discourses to this question. In his final lecture, Tucker expressed ‘optimism’ for Christianity in general and preaching in particular. While Matthew Arnold and other poets may have succumbed to ‘a spirit of unwilling doubt’, he believed that ‘the atmosphere of Christianity...is charged with hope’.¹⁴³ As the primary means of communicating Christianity to the world, there is nothing that can ‘take the place of preaching in

¹³⁹ Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, p. 27; Pierson, The Divine Art of Preaching, p. 152.

¹⁴⁰ Hall, God’s Word Through Preaching, p. 232.

¹⁴¹ Stalker, The Preacher and His Models, p. 23.

¹⁴² Beecher, Yale Lectures on Preaching, Second Series, p. 28.

¹⁴³ Tucker, The Making and the Unmaking of the Preacher, p. 202, 222.

the public mind'.¹⁴⁴ Simpson's final lecture of 1878 is entitled 'Is the Modern Pulpit a Failure?' He is very precise in how he defines his terms, taking care to distinguish 'between failures in the pulpit and the failure of the pulpit itself'.¹⁴⁵ When taken in the first sense, the 'failure' is undeniable, as there have undoubtedly been ineffective or even incompetent preachers; when taken in the second, however, the answer is more nuanced. He acknowledges that, for any number of reasons, 'the pulpit has not accomplished all that could be desired, but he also believes that it 'possesses a wonderful vitality' and continues to hold a position of 'influence...over the popular mind', qualities that are 'still greatly needed' in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶

There are a number of ways in which we can assess this 'vitality' for ourselves. As suggested in the introduction, one approach could be to compare the theories presented in these lectures to those written by non-Dissenters or intended for non-Dissenting audiences. Texts that could be used in such a study might include preaching manuals by Anglicans¹⁴⁷ and Roman Catholics,¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁴⁵ Simpson, Lectures on Preaching, p. 300.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 301, 324, 329, 331.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Charles John Ellicott, ed., Homiletical and Pastoral Lectures (London, 1879), and William Gresley, Ecclesiastes Anglicanus: Being a Treatise on Preaching as Adapted to a Church of England Congregation (London, 1835).

¹⁴⁸ John Henry Newman 'University Preaching', in The Idea of a University (London, 1852);

Thomas Potter, Sacred Eloquence: The Theory and Practice of Preaching (Dublin, 1866).

and perhaps even the Yale lectures by Bostonian Phillips Brooks¹⁴⁹ and New York minister David Hummell Greer.¹⁵⁰ Brooks and Greer could be particularly intriguing subjects; they were the only two: Episcopalians to deliver Yale lectures in the nineteenth century, and their volumes can serve as case studies in how ministers might adapt their ideas to audiences and occasions in a tradition other than their own.

One might also extend the genre study begun here into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Yale series has continued, with minimal interruptions, for nearly 150 years. Other series sponsored by Protestant Dissenting institutions include the Charles Spurgeon Lectures on Biblical Preaching at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City and the Heritage Preaching Lectures at Heritage College and Seminary, an evangelical Baptist school in Ontario. The very existence of these lectures suggests a certain level of institutional investment in the future of the sermon; it would be interesting to gauge the extent to which optimism comes across in the lectures as well.

One might also—and perhaps more importantly—examine the sermons themselves.

A natural follow-up to this project, for example, would be an article examining the sermons delivered by these lecturers, identifying common themes and assessing the extent to which their practices corresponded to their theories.

These sermons and lectures are valuable primary sources, but they share a significant limitation.

Almost all of them are delivered by white men, so we need to look elsewhere to examine the

¹⁴⁹ Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (New York, 1877).

¹⁵⁰ David Hummell Greer, The Preacher and His Place (New York, 1895).

contributions that women and people of color have made to Protestant Dissenting preaching. A relatively small number of articles have been published in recent years¹⁵¹ and most of the major monographs date at least to the turn of the millennium,¹⁵² so these are subjects that are ripe for further study.

Additional opportunities arise if the scholarly scope is expanded beyond the English-speaking world. In 1857 and 1912, Henry C. Fish and Edwin Charles Dargan published introductions to those whom they regarded as among the most important European preachers of the nineteenth century.¹⁵³ As far as I have been able to determine, little scholarship, at least in English, has been done, either on these individual figures or the broader European Protestant preaching tradition;¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Some of the most recent publications include Patricia Bizzell, 'Frances Willard, Phoebe Palmer, and the Ethos of the Methodist Woman Preacher', Rhetoric Society Quarterly 36.4 (2006), pp. 377-398, and Christopher Z. Hobson, 'The Lord is a Man of War: John Jasper, Covenant, and Apocalypse', African American Review 44.4 (Winter 2011), pp. 619-631.

¹⁵² See, for example, Catherine A. Brekus, Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845 (Chapel Hill, 1998), Bettye Collier-Thomas, Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979 (San Francisco, 1998), and Cleophus LaRue, The Heart of Black Preaching (Louisville, 2000).

¹⁵³ Henry C. Fish, Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1857); Edwin Charles Dargan, A History of Preaching. Vol. II (New York, 1912).

¹⁵⁴ The limited number of English-language titles includes David Crouner and Gerald Christianson, The Spirituality of the German Awakening (New York, 2003); Christoffer H.

while the number of authors and texts may not be as extensive as what can be found in Britain and North America, scholars who can work in French, German, and other languages can nonetheless make important contributions to our understanding of how Protestant Dissent operates on a global scale.

The Protestant Dissenting pulpit, then, was diverse in the nineteenth century, and it continues to be diverse today. Technological developments have made it possible to study audio and video recordings as well as manuscripts and printed texts, and new genres continue to emerge as well. In the Introduction to Preaching from Memory to Hope, the most recent of the Yale lectures to be published, Thomas G. Long writes that we now have not only ‘Multimedia sermons’, but also ‘first-person sermons, musical sermons, dialogue sermons, sermons preached from bar stools, silent sermons’, and ‘many other experiments’ in preaching.¹⁵⁵ Opportunities for research therefore abound as well. Richard Altick once noted that ‘No scholar ever has to peer around for

Grundmann, ‘Mission in Simplicity of Heart and Mind: Ludwig Harms and the Founding of the Hermannsburg Mission’, Missiology 40.4 (October 2012), pp. 381-392; Ellen Astrid Koehler, Religious Liberty and Civisme Morale: Alexandre Vinet, French Protestantism, and the Shaping of Civic Culture in Nineteenth-Century France (Dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2002); David George Mullan, ‘The Dialectics of Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century France’, The Catholic Social Science Review 16 (2011), pp. 213-228; and James L. Osen, Prophet and Peacemaker: The Life of Adolphe Monod (Washington, D.C., 1984).

¹⁵⁵ Thomas G. Long, Preaching from Memory to Hope (Louisville, Kentucky, 2009), p. xiv.

something to do’;¹⁵⁶ those working in this area of religious studies will certainly have enough material to keep them occupied for many years.

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¹⁵⁶ Richard Altick, The Art of Literary Research, 3rd ed, rev. John J. Fenstermaker (New York 1981), p. 141.

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