

**SACRED RHETORIC: OR,
COMPOSITION AND DELIVERY
OF SERMONS; HINTS ON
EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING**

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Sacred rhetoric: or, Composition and delivery of sermons; Hints on extemporaneous preaching
by Henry J. Ripley & Henry Ware

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HENRY J. RIPLEY & HENRY WARE

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E. B. Washburn

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OR,
COMPOSITION AND DELIVERY
OF
SERMONS.

BY
HENRY J. RIPLEY,
PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC AND PASTORAL DUTIES IN THE NEWTON
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
HINTS ON EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING,
BY HENRY WARE, JR., D. D.

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P R E F A C E .

A REMEMBRANCE of my early wants, and a regard to the natural action of the mind in composing sermons, led to the preparation of the following work.

Without detracting from the substantial merits of existing works on preaching, I may just mention two particulars in which they have appeared to me deficient. They do not contemplate the actual position of a man who undertakes to compose a sermon; and, consequently, they do not unfold the process through which his mind ought to pass. In other words, they contemplate a sermon, as composed; not the man, as preparing to compose, and as actually composing, a sermon. This remark presents the idea on which a chief part of the following work is built, and which is also employed by Gresley in his Treatise on Preaching.

For this idea I am as much indebted to Cicero and Quintilian, as to my own experience: probably, more; for nature has not sufficient play in many of our studies; and however ready she may be to indicate the proper starting-point, some of us need more than a hint, from other quarters, in order to accept her guidance.

The other particular alluded to, is, that in some valuable works on this subject a student is left without a proper view, and without proper specimens, of sermons commonly denominated *textual*. Now, however superior are sermons which are marked by unity of subject—and the following pages will bear testimony to a high valuation of them on my part—the experience of the pulpit, and the mental constitution and habits of large masses of hearers, and of many preachers, clearly show that textual sermons are not to be dispensed with. Much space is not required for instructions on such sermons; still, a practical view of them is evidently desirable.

Though I have intimated that existing works do not meet the wants which I have felt as a teacher, yet I have not the presumption to suppose that every want of teachers, or of young ministers, will be met by the present volume. Indeed, on the subject of preaching, the range for

precepts and advice is so ample, and the demand for common sense and philosophy, for experience and observation, is so constant; the peculiarities of taste and custom in different denominations of Christians, as well as the diversities of time and place, all exerting an influence on preaching, are so many, that it would be marvellous if any one book on the subject should receive universal favor.

This volume takes for granted, that the student has already become acquainted with the works of Campbell and Whately on rhetoric; more particularly, with the latter author's *Elements of Rhetoric*. No book exhibits, better than the last-mentioned, the principles on which a man must act, who would reason justly and cogently, write or speak lucidly and earnestly, and thus be able to "carry his point."

The present work presupposes, also, the possession and the habitual cultivation, by candidates for the ministry, of personal religion. It does not, therefore, discuss the necessity of piety to a preacher. The general spirit of a work on preaching, and particular suggestions naturally occurring at appropriate places, should be such as to indicate, without the danger of mistake, the indispensableness of piety to the proper discharge of the preacher's office. I

use the word *piety*, here, in distinction from mere upright moral deportment, and as involving a radical spiritual renovation. Piety, thus understood, is indispensable to a preacher. I do not assert, that a man cannot be an eloquent preacher without it: for, eloquence requires mainly a dignified and interesting subject, a good acquaintance with it, an inventive genius, and a sensibility sufficiently keen to make a man feel his subject and forget himself; and, evidently, many religious subjects may be amply known, and may awaken genius and sensibility, in the absence of genuine piety. Yet, beyond question, religion presents many subjects which cannot be properly apprehended, and, of course, cannot be adequately treated but by a man who has had inward experience in regard to them. Many relations, also, or bearings of subjects, less exclusively experimental, will escape the observation, or cannot stir the sympathies, of any but a pious man. Besides, even subjects more strictly intellectual would be more eloquently treated by a man who should have, in addition to the requisites which another may possess, the advantage of a heart pervaded by love to God. It is strictly correct, therefore, even on rhetorical grounds, to insist on piety as a prime requisite to a preacher; and to enjoin on him the assiduous cultivation