

proposition, or developing but one general truth. Hence the conclusion of the sermon is appropriate only as it is single and incomplex in its structure and spirit. It matters not what the proposition or subject may have been, let the direct concluding address be in entire harmony with it. Some homiletists lay down the rule: 'Always conclude with the gospel; always end with the hopes and promises.' This, we think, is a false rule, both rhetorically and morally. If the law has been preached, then let the conclusion be legal, damnatory, terrible. If the gospel has been preached, let the conclusion be winning, encouraging, and hopeful. Then the sermon is a homogeneous composition, developing one theme, and making a single impression. A preacher should know beforehand the wants of his audience, and deliberately make up his mind in respect to the species of impression which it is desirable to produce. When this point is settled, then let him not be diverted from his purpose, but do what he has undertaken. If he judges that mercy and love are the appropriate themes for the hour, let him present them to the hearer's mind, and apply them to the hearer's heart without any let or hinderance. And if he judges that divine justice needs to be exhibited, and set home to the conscience, let him not temper or soften it by a mixed peroration, in which, owing to the brevity of the treatment to which he is now shut up, the two opposite ideas of love and wrath will inevitably neutralize each other in the mind of the auditor.

The rule above mentioned is also indefensible on moral grounds. It is not upright in a preacher, either from fear