

On my lap as I write this thinksheet is a rare book I'm about to give to the rare-book collection of a seminary library: a copy of the 1st ed. (1872) of the 1st Beecher lectures on preaching: Henry Ward Beecher, YALE LECTURES ON PREACHING: From Phonographic Reports (NY: J.B. Ford & Co.). Here, I'm pointing to Beecher's pastoring style, which I've capsuled in this thinksheet's title.... Four years later, Edison invented the phonograph--so "phonographic" in the subtitle refers not to that invention but, etymologically, to the fact that the text is not from the author's mind to print but from the scribe's ear ("phono-") to print. We become compeers of the secretary; we, too, can "hear" Beecher! And what we hear is fresh, direct, earthy, no-nonsense, humorous but sober, strong but not harsh....And what a master conversationalist! This 1st ed., unlike many succeeding edd., has the Questions/Answers after each lecture. How gentle, yet how penetrating, he is to these "young gentlemen" of what we now call Yale Divinity School! ....Some samples, + a few comments:

1. **"Capital is suspicious and watchful. You have sold yourself to any man fear of whom makes you silent."** (257) He was a root of what came to be called the social gospel. To his Brooklyn congregation of capitalists, he preached against the grinding of the faces of the poor: he was pro-labor against small and large robber-barons. (One of his congregants, viz., Henry W. Sage, "contributed the funds necessary to found" the lectureship: HWB was pro-capital when- and wherever capital was put to good use. As I write, Oct/84, China is rapidly modifying into a nonideological attitude toward capital-- in my opinion, the most significant economic fact in today's world.) **"You can discuss any topic if you only love enough; your heart will tell you how to approach it." Horses and congregations know when the driver is afraid of them. "If you want to stay in a place, be ready to leave it....If people are dissatisfied with you, they have a right to be."** (257ff)

2. **"If you preach justice alone, you will murder the gospel." (255) Just as truly as, if you neglect the shadow side (punishment, etc.), your preaching will be sentimental mush.** Fear, conscience, and intellect carry punishment along with them--but not as love does, viz., **"in a qualified form."** Sometimes, rarely, the whip is necessary--but don't hang it over the fireplace to be seen all the time. (260) 261: Jon. Edwards, **"in inventing new horrors for hell, above all, in attempting to picture the Divine Heart as so in love with justice that it rejoices in the merited sufferings of the wicked, was a sad perversion of the functions of imagination."**\* Blind nature and rigid social law are, than the loving family, poorer models of punishment for human good. Easy to see why HWB was Abraham Lincoln's favorite preacher: how much influence did B have on L? He had considerable influence on the founders of Craigville (the same year as these lectures: 1872), who were of the communion known as "The Christian Connection," of heart and mind as capacious as that of Congregationalist Beecher.

3. Throughout, these lectures (which he prefers to call, p.1, "familiar conversations") illustrate his definition of preaching as **"the communication of truth through personality."** 2: **"A teacher expends his force upon facts or ideas. But a preacher assumes facts and truths as a vehicle through which he may bring his spirit to bear. ...He looks beyond mere knowledge to the character which that knowledge is to form. It is not enough that men shall KNOW. They must BE. Every stroke of his brush must bring out some element of the**

\*Though (says HWB elsewhere) a man radiantly in love with God and all the creatures.

over

likeness to Christ which he is seeking to produce." 3: "soul-building....an artist of living forms, of invisible colors....an architect of a house not built with hands--Jesus Christ, the foundation....A preacher is in some degree a reproduction of the truth in personal form. The truth must exist in him as a living experience, a glowing enthusiasm, an intense reality. The Word of God in the book is a dead letter. It is paper, type, and ink. In the preacher that word becomes again as it was when first spoken." 4: "giving to such truth the glow and color and intensity which are derived from his own soul"--not merely truth as facts and philosophy.

4. A no-comment selection, for form and flavor, from throughout the book: The development indicated by Christianity is right along the line of nature./Religion is harmonized human nature: physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, spiritual./Q: Why short pastorates in churches nowadays? A: Largely, I think, the divine mercy toward the parish./When I see a man I instinctively divide him up, and ask myself, How much has he of the animal, how much of the spiritual, and how much of the intellectual? And what is his intellect, perceptive or reflective? Is he ideal(istic), or apathetic, or literal? And I instinctively adapt myself to him./How few ministers there are who can really comfort! How the office of comforter has fallen into disuse! How much nobler woman is than man in the administration of this gospel-gift from Jesus Christ! Woman is ordained to perform many things better than man, on account of her superior delicacy of organization and keenness of perception. Woman is a better instructor, from her very make and education, and as the molder and trainer of children in the household is by far man's superior./If you are going to be a minister, keep very close to plain folks; don't get above the common people. (I know all the workers on the Fulton Ferry.)/For myself, I am compelled to say that I must form an ideal of God through his Son, Jesus Christ./A man ought to be able to preach an hour, and to hold his audience too. By preaching to different parts of the minds of your audience, one part rests the others (as shifting the weight on one's feet)./Experience is always egotism, and that is what I am here to give you./If you do not sleep, first or last, your audience will; and therefore it is necessary that you should sleep for them, that they may keep awake to hear what you may have to say./(Study about four hours a day.)/The material for my sermons is all the time following me and swarming up around me. I am tracing out analogies which I afterward take pains to verify, to see whether my views of certain truth were correct. I follow them out in my study, and see how such things are taught by others./(Write 1/3rd of your sermons: 2/3rds of them should be like a handshake WITHOUT a glove.)/(Work on your sermons:) No wheel is ever turned without the rush and the weight of the stream upon it./Much larger use should be made of expository preaching than has been customary in our churches./(Hot subjects can better be handled biblically:) The Bible touches all sides of human life and experience, and scriptural exposition gives endless opportunities of hitting folks who need hitting./A sermon is a weapon of war./(For power, use Anglo-Saxon, which reverberates in the soul,) multiplying the meaning in the minds of men. (Contrast Bunyan's power with Sam. Johnson's: SJ is a mummy today.)/Short sermons for small subjects, and long sermons for large subjects. The true way to shorten a sermon is to make it more interesting./(The Greek has it) "truthing it in love"/(Emotionless preaching is) dragging a plough over frozen ground--marking it, but not furrowing it.