

845 B74Zf

845

B7425

26945

Chapter I.
THE PURPOSE OF BOSSUET IN THE
FUNERAL ORATIONS.

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota

by

Lucille C. Franchère

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

June, 1924

45
2425

Chapter 1.

The Purpose of Bossuet in the Funeral Orations.

It was Bossuet who introduced the element of the sermon into the funeral oration of the seventeenth century in France. From the existing orations prior to those of Bossuet it is easy to see what were the expectations, even the demands, of a noble or a wealthy family in regard to the ceremonies appropriate upon the occasion of the burial of one of their members. Whether or not the deceased was worthy of eulogy because of noble traits of character or of unique distinction in Church and State, eulogy was demanded of the funeral orator. The effects of such a custom are evident. Not only were many eulogized who had no claim to such distinction and whose lives and characters were anything but examples to future generations, but magnificence amounting to pomp in funeral decorations and trappings became the order of the day. All these, - the extravagance and insincerity of the funeral orator, the elaborateness in plan and execution of the funeral arrangements - contributed to a false conception of the dignity of human life and to misleading conclusions as to the honor which might justly be accorded to the dead. They introduced in the public mind erroneous ideas of the

responsibilities of life, of the duties which every man owes to God, to his country, and to his fellowmen, and they suggested an atmosphere of romance around the catastrophe over which the stern realities of death, the nothingness of life, and the thought of eternity should predominate.

Bossuet believed that the life of the dead should be a lesson for the living. Through this conception he brought to the praise of the dead a meditation on death itself, (1). His aim was to make this kind of discourse worthy of the altar, before which, he said, he would not give praise where it was not due, (2). His eulogy, which, when he gave it, was sincere, was only an accessory to his address. He chose rather to dwell upon the weakness of men in the hands of God, (3), of their merits when they obey the divine law, (4), and of the vanity of their hopes when these hopes are purely human (5).

(1) Bossuet - Sermons Choisis, Paris, Hachette, op. cit., page 286. This text is chosen because it is based upon the last authentic edition of the sermons taken from the original manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

(2) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 17.

(3) Op. cit., page 73

(4) Op. cit., page 28.

(5) Op. cit., page 147.

Because of the difficulties connected with this type of sermon which demanded so much tact, and yet so much sincerity, it was with great reluctance that Bossuet consented to compose funeral orations at all. In the funeral oration of le Père Bourgoing, preached in Paris, 1662, (1), he says: "Je vous avoue que j'ai coutume de plaindre les prédicateurs lorsqu'ils font les panégyriques funèbres des princes et des grands du monde. Ce n'est pas que de tels sujets ne fournissent ordinairement de nobles idées Mais la licence et l'ambition, compagnes presque inséparables des grandes fortunes, mais l'intérêt et l'injustice, toujours mêlés trop avant dans les grandes affaires du monde font qu'on marche parmi les écueils; et il arrive ordinairement que Dieu a si peu de part dans de telles vies qu'on a peine à trouver quelques actions qui méritent d'être louées par ses ministres." Again, in the same sermon he says: "(2) Les autels ne se plaindront pas que leur sacrifice soit interrompu par un entretien profane: au contraire, celui que j'ai à vous faire, nous proposera de si saintes exemples, qu'il méritera de faire partie d'une cérémonie si sacrée, et qu'il ne sera pas une interruption, mais plutôt une continuation du mystère."

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 17.

(2) Op. cit., page 19.

Of the twelve funeral orations, six were printed during Bossuet's life, and by order of the king. The twelve orations are: Yolande de Monterby, 1656, Henri de

Chapter II.

Bossuet's Conception of the Preacher's Function.

Gornay, 1658, le Père Bourgoing, 1662, Nicolas Cornet, 1663 Anne d'Autriche, 1667, (discourse lost, Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page XVI), Henriette-Marie de France, 1669, Henriette d'Angleterre, 1670, Marie Thérèse, 1683, Anne de Gonzague, 1685, Michel le Tellier, 1686, Madame du Ble d'Uxelles, 1686, (discourse lost, Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page XVI, note 3), and Prince de Condé, 1687.

The six orations printed during Bossuet's life and by order of the king were: Henriette-Marie de France, Henriette-Anne d'Angleterre, Marie Thérèse, Anne de Gonzague, Michel le Tellier, and Prince de Condé.

The orations of Henriette-Marie and Henriette-Anne were first printed separately by Cramoisy in 1669 and 1670, reedited in 1672, then again in 1680 by Cramoisy. The other four were also printed first separately, then united in one volume, 1689, by Desallier with Bossuet's corrections. It is a reproduction of this last text, the last one reviewed by Bossuet, that is being used for this work, (Oraisons Funèbres, cf. page XVI, note 3.)

... (3). "Ne regardons pas les prédicateurs comme un divertissement de l'esprit; n'exigeons pas des prédicateurs les agréments de la rhétorique, mais la doctrine des Ecritures ... (4) ... distinguons l'amusement de la

- (1) Œuvres Choies, page 145.
- (2) Op. cit., page 145.
- (3) Op. cit., page 145.
- (4) Œuvres Choies, page 147.

He had occasion to express his views in the Panegyric of St. Paul, Œuvres Choies, page 145, preached in Paris about 1682. He treats the saint as an example of the Christian preacher who, in preaching, Jesus Christ crucified, comes down to the level of the poor humble.

Chapter 11.

Bossuet's Conception of the Preacher's Function.

Bossuet was, first of all, preoccupied in convincing and in moving his audience. He abhorred "les beaux esprits de la chaire", able rhetoricians, and pompous orators. He had very definite ideas on what Christian eloquence should be, rejected fine rhetorical phrases, and appealed to the heart rather than to the mind; "Saint Paul rejette tous les artifices de rhétorique, (1). "Il a des moyens pour persuader que la Grèce n'enseigne pas et que Rome n'a pas appris." (2). . . . "une vertu plus qu'humaine qui persuade contre les règles, porte ses coups droit au coeur" (3). "Ne regardons pas les prédicateurs comme un divertissement de l'esprit; n'exigeons pas des prédicateurs les agréments de la rhétorique, mais la doctrine des Ecritures . . . (4) . . . distinguons l'assaisonnement de la

(1) Sermons Choisis, page 145.

(2) Op. cit., page 146.

(3) Op. cit., page 146.

(4) Sermons Choisis, page 147.

He had occasion to express his views in the Panegyrique de Stl Paul, Sermons Choisis, page 136, preached in Paris about 1659. He exalts the saint as an example of the Christian preacher who, in preaching Jesus Christ crucified, comes down to the level of the most humble.

nourriture solide (1). To Bossuet the human conscience was groping in the dark, seeking for truth and consolation, not for fine phrases. It was to the conscience that the preacher must speak. He must look for shafts of lightning and thunder-bolts that will sear and burn, and strike at the very souls of his audience, (2).

Bossuet compared the altar with the pulpit. He judged the priest and the auditor equally guilty of sacrilege if they allowed either the body or the word of Christ to fall. The preacher's mission, according to Bossuet, was not to enter the pulpit and to make a useless and vain discourse that would amuse the audience. He should come before the people in the same spirit as he would mount the altar steps to celebrate a sacred mystery. His sermons should be just as much a part of the Mass as the elevation of the Host.

Although Bossuet was always eloquent, his eloquence was in itself subordinate to the lesson he wished to teach, (3). To him it was wisdom that spoke first of all, and eloquence merely followed in its wake. The preacher must read the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and the Humanists, first, to justify what he is about to say, and then to embellish his sermon. The auditors, on the other hand, must know how to listen and to take the words

- (1) Sermons Choisis, page 147.
- (2) Op. cit., page 194.
- (3) Op. cit., page 194.

to heart. The preacher must remember that while his words come from the pulpit, the real sermon must come from the heart of the man.

Bossuet insisted that the preacher be well versed in the Bible. He himself read and reread the Holy Scripture. For the Fathers of the Church as well as for himself, he emphasized the necessity of becoming imbued with the writings of Saint Augustin and of Saint Chrysostome: Saint Augustin to acquire science; Saint Chrysostome, in order to learn how to present it to the people. Pope Saint Gregory should be studied as an example of Christian morality, and Saint Cyprian for the art of knowing how to interpret holy Scripture. But the great master was Saint Augustin. It was he who taught the art of treating theology and morality and the real spirit of Christianity. As models of style he suggested the Greek writers: Homer, Plato, and Socrates; in Latin: Cicero and Vergil; in French: Balzac, the works of les Messieurs de Port Royale, les lettres provinciales, and the tragedies of Corneille and Racine.

There are evidences in plenty in the sermons and funeral orations of Bossuet to show that he was true to his conception of the preacher's mission. In the following passage in the sermon on La Rigueur de Dieu, Bossuet makes an appeal to the heart of man, and thus endeavors to point

out to him the kindness and love of Jesus Christ for mankind: "Ah! que mon Sauveur a parcouru la Judée d'une manière bien plus aimable! il l'a parcourue moins par ses pas que par ses bienfaits. Il allait de tous côtés guerissant les malades, consolant les misérables, instruisant les ignorants, annonçant à tous avec une fermeté invincible la parole de vie éternelle que le Saint Esprit lui avait mise à la bouche; ce n'était pas seulement les lieux où il s'arrêtait, qui se trouvaient mieux de sa présence: autant de pas, autant de vestiges de sa bonté. Il rendait remarquables les endroits par où il passait, par la profusion de ses grâces. En cette bourgade il n'y a plus d'aveugles ni d'estropiés: sans doute, disait-on, le debonnaire Jésus a passé par là, (1)" "Que ne ressentons du moins ô fidèles, quelque peu de cette tendresse! (2)"

In the funeral oration on Anne de Gonzague, he quotes a line in one of the letters of the princess, in which she speaks of the kindness of God to mankind. It seemed that God was saying to her: "Je t'ai ram^ènée des extrémités de la terre, des lieux les plus éloignés, des voies détournées où tu te perdais, abandonnée à ton propre sens, si loin de la céleste patrie et de la véritable voie qui est Jésus Christ. Pendant que tu disais en ton

(1) Sermons Choisis, page 51

(2) Op. cit., page 5.

(3) Sermons Choisis, page 25. (4) Op. cit., page 5.

coeur rebelle. Je ne puis me captiver, j'ai mis sur toi ma main puissante et j'ai dit: Tu seras ma servante. Je t'ai choisie dès l'éternité, et je n'ai pas rejeté ton âme superbe et dédaigneuse," (1). When he wishes to be understood by the humble, he speaks to them in a language which they can understand: "D'autre part je regarde que la compagne n'est pas moins occupée, celui-ci a soin des troupeaux . . . personne n'y est de loisir, chacun y est en action et en exercice, qui à bâtir, qui à faire remuer la terre, qui à l'agriculture, qui est dans les jardins: celui-ci y travaille pour l'ornement et pour les délices, celui-là pour la nécessité ou pour le ménage. Et qu'est-il nécessaire que je vous fasse une longue énumération de toutes les occupations de la vie rustique. (2)" "Nous n'avons pas en nos mains ce grand et prodigieux pouvoir pour subvenir aux nécessités de nos pauvres frères; mais Dieu et la nature ont inséré dans nos âmes je ne sais quel sentiment qui ne nous permet pas de voir souffrir nos semblables sans y prendre part à moins que de n'être plus hommes, (3)".

In La Parole de Dieu Bossuet expresses his views upon those who do not accept the word of the gospel:

"Mais pensez maintenant, mes frères, quelle est l'audace de ceux qui attendent ou exigent même des prédicateurs

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, page 300.

(2) Sermons Choisis, page 29. (3) Op. cit., page 5.

autre chose que l'Évangile . . . il doit faire trembler tout ensemble et les prédicateurs et les auditeurs, quand ceux-ci désirent et que ceux-là donnent la parole de l'Évangile autrement que ne l'a déposée entre les mains de son Église ce celeste prédicateur que le Père nous ordonne aujourd'hui d'entendre, (1)". Bossuet emphasizes remorse of conscience in his sermon on "La Parole de Dieu": "Dieu a les orages en sa main; il n'appartient qu'à lui de faire éclater dans les nues, le son du tonnerre; il lui appartient beaucoup plus d'éclairer et de tonner dans les consciences et de fendre les coeurs endurcis par des coups de foudre. . (2). In the following lines he urges Christians to learn from Saint Augustin: "Comment saurez-vous chrétiens que vous êtes véritablement enseignés de Dieu? Vous le saurez par les oeuvres. Car il faut apprendre de St. Augustin la manière d'enseigner de Dieu, cette manière si haute, si intérieure . . (3)

(1) Sermons Choisis, page 193.

(2) Op. cit., page 194.

(3) Op. cit., page 204.

There is no lack of passages in the funeral orations which show clearly that Bossuet is not sparing the living, but addressing a warning to those who neglect their duty to the people of the century: first, to kings, second, to princes and courtiers, third, to princesses, fourth, to ministers of justice. In the funeral oration of Marie Thérèse, (1) he says: "Un roi, dit David, (2), ne se sauve pas par ses armées, et le puissant ne se sauve pas par sa valeur." "Respectez, leur disait David, votre pourpre, respectez votre puissance qui vient de Dieu, et ne l'employez que pour le bien. Connaissiez ce qui vous a été confié et le grand mystère que Dieu accomplit en vous. Il se réserve à lui seul les choses d'en haut; il partage avec vous celles d'en bas; montrez-vous dieux aux peuples soumis, en imitant la bonté et la munificence divine," (3).

In the following passage he speaks of an angry God who strikes down the very prince of the land, the most precious hope of the country: "Pourrai-je même, maintenant jeter les yeux sur la terrible menace du ciel irrité lorsqu'il sembla si longtemps vouloir frapper ce Dauphin même, notre plus chère espérance?" (4)

- (1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 251.
- (2) Ps. XXXII, 16.
- (3) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 265.
- (4) Op. cit., page 250.

In the funeral oration on Henriette-Marie of France, Bossuet aims directly at court life when he speaks of those "monstrous crimes", (1), which are the outcome of great prosperities that blind and make men forget God, themselves, and their Faith.

"De là naissent des monstres de crimes, des raffinements de plaisir, des délicatesses, d'orgueil qui ne donnent que trop de fondement à ces terribles malédictions que Jésus Christ a prononcées dans son Evangile: (2) "Malheur à vous qui riez! Malheur à vous qui êtes pleins et contents du monde.'" In Henriette-Anne d'Angleterre: "Considérez messieurs ces grandes puissances que nous regardons de si bas. Pendant que nous tremblons sous leur main, Dieu les frappe pour nous avertir. Leur élévation en est la cause, (3)".

Second: In the oration on Marie Thérèse, Bossuet quotes from Scripture to show princes how helpless they are in the hands of God: "Le Terrible, le Tout Puissant qui ôte quand il lui plaît, l'esprit des princes," (4). Again, in the same oration: (5) "Écoutez-là princes; écoutez-là peuple; écoutez-là Monseigneur plus que tous les autres. Elle vous dit par une bouche et par une

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, page 120, note 4.

(2) Op. cit., page 120.

(3) Op. cit., page 159.

(4) Ps. LXXV, 12, 13.

(5) Oraisons Funèbres, page 265.

voix qui est connue, que la grandeur est un songe, la joie une erreur, la jeunesse une fleur qui tombe, et la santé un nom trompeur. Amassez-donc les biens qu'on ne peut perdre."

In the funeral oration of le Prince de Condé, (1), Bossuet exhorts a nation, but especially princes and courtiers: "Venez, peuples, venez maintenant; mais venez plutôt, princes et seigneurs; et vous qui jugez la terre, et vous qui ouvrez aux hommes les portes du ciel, et vous, plus que tous les autres, princes et princesses, nobles rejetons de tant de rois, lumières de la France, mais aujourd'hui obscurcies et couvertes de votre douleur comme d'un nuage; venez voir le peu qui vous reste d'une si auguste naissance, de tant de grandeur, de tant de gloire: Jetez les yeux de toutes partes; voilà tout ce qu'a pu faire la magnificence et la piété pour honorer un héros; les titres des inscriptions, vaines marques de ce qui n'est plus; des figures qui semblent pleurer autour d'un tombeau, et des fragiles images d'une douleur que le temps emporte avec tout le reste; des colonnes qui semblent vouloir porter jusqu'au ciel le magnifique témoignage de notre néant; et enfin, rien ne manque dans tous ces honneurs que celui à qui

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 554.

on les rend. Pleurez-donc sur ces faibles restes de la vie humaine, pleurez sur cette triste immortalité que nous donnons aux héros."

Third: In the oration on Anne de Gonzague, Bossuet chooses the princesse Palatine as an example of a soul who is incapable of failing in her duties toward mankind, yet can easily fail in her duties to God: "Quel est, messieurs, cet aveuglement dans une âme chrétienne, et qui le pourrait comprendre, d'être incapable de manquer aux hommes, et de ne craindre pas de manquer à Dieu? Comme si le culte de Dieu ne tenait aucun rang parmi les devoirs!" (1). "Tremblez (2) âmes reconciliées qui renoncez si souvent à la grâce de la pénitence; tremblez, puisque chaque chute creuse sous vos pas de nouveaux abîmes; tremblez enfin au terrible exemple de la princesse Palatine."

Again, in the same oration, Bossuet warns his listeners of a death which is certain and inevitable: "Elle viendra cette heure dernière: elle approche, nous y touchons, la voilà venue. Il faut dire avec Anne de Gonzague: (3), 'Il n'y a plus ni princesse, ni Palatine; ces grands noms dont on s'étourdit, ne subsistent plus.' Il faut dire avec elle: 'Je m'en vais, je suis

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 328.

(2) Op. cit., page 335.

(3) Op. cit., page 372.

emporté par une force inévitable". "Siècle (1) vainement subtil ou l'on veut pécher avec raison, où la faiblesse veut s'autoriser par des maximes où tant d'âmes insensées cherchent leur repos dans le naufrage de la foi, et ne font d'efforts contre elles-mêmes que pour vaincre, au lieu de leurs passions, les remords de leur conscience: la princesse Palatine t'est donnée comme un signe et un prodige. Tu la verras au dernier jour, comme je t'en ai menacé, confondre ton impertinence et tes vaines excuses!"

Fourth: In the oration on Michel le Tellier, Bossuet strikes at the very heart of those who have failed in their duty to administer justice. Where personal ambition reigns, there is no justice. "Non, non, (2), ne le croyez pas que la justice habite jamais dans les âmes où l'ambition domine. Toute âme inquiète et ambitieuse est incapable de règle. L'ambition a fait trouver ces dangereux expédients ou, semblable à un sepulchre blanchi, un juge artificieux ne garde que les apparences de la justice. Ne parlons pas des corruptions qu'on a honte d'avoir à se reprocher. Parlons de la lacheté ou de la licence d'une justice arbitraire, qui, sans règle et sans maxime se tourne au gré de l'ami puissant.

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 374.

(2) Op. cit., page 413.

Parlons de la complaisance, qui ne veut jamais ni trouver le fil, ni arrêter le progrès d'une procédure malicieuse."

"Mais ce que cette chaire, (1), ce que ces autels, ce que l'Evangile que j'annonce et l'exemple du grand ministre dont je célèbre les vertus, m'oblige à recommander plus que toutes choses, c'est les droits sacrés de l'Eglise. L'Eglise ramasse ensemble tous les titres par où l'on peut espérer le secours de la justice. La justice doit une assistance particulière aux faibles, aux orphelins, aux épouses délaissées, et aux étrangers. Qu'elle est forte cette Eglise, et que redoutable est le glaive que le Fils de Dieu lui a mis dans la main!"

articles form the basis of Christian faith and morality, and it is Bonnet's aim to explain, to interpret, and to justify them, persuaded that the Christian man or woman will necessarily live a good life if he or she is taught what to believe.

Bonnet's conception of God and of the religious life, though austere, does not frighten. He believes that if God has given commandments, man must be able to keep those commandments. Neither does Bonnet necessarily teach a life of fasting and of prayer. It is sufficient in order to be saved, to live a good practical Christian life. He rarely, if ever, in his sermons aims point-blank at the life of a person serving as an example, as he does

(1) Oraisons Funébres, page 1.

(1) Discours Funébres, page 103.

Chapter 111.

Bossuet's Sermons as Compared with
his Funeral Orations.

a) With the exception of a few sermons preached directly to the king and to the court, (1), Bossuet's sermons do not differ in form and content from those preached by the average preacher. They are usually an explanation of the articles of Christian faith. These articles form the basis of Christian faith and morality, and it is Bossuet's aim to explain, to interpret, and to justify them, persuaded that the Christian man or woman will necessarily live a good life if he or she is taught what to believe.

Bossuet's conception of God and of the religious life, though austere, does not frighten. He believes that if God has given commandments, man must be able to keep those commandments. Neither does Bossuet necessarily teach a life of fasting and of prayer. It is sufficient in order to be saved, to live a good practical Christian life. He rarely, if ever, in his sermons aims point-blank at the life of a person serving as an example, as he does

(1) Sermons Choisis, page 162.

in the funeral oration. His sermon on "La Rigueur de Dieu", preached on the ninth Sunday after Pentecost, at Metz, 1653, (1), is a meditation on the teachings of Gospels and of the Bible. It is an exhortation to the people as a whole to hold fast to religion: "Israel dit Moïse, si tu résistes jamais aux volontés de ton Dieu, il amènera sur toi, des extrémités de la terre, une nation inconnue dont tu ne pourras entendre la langue, (2)." The sermon on the Passion of Jesus Christ, preached on Good Friday, at Paris, March 26, 1660, (3), is a meditation on the Passion and sufferings of Jesus Christ. In this sermon Bossuet loses himself in religious exaltation, in such a passage as this: "O plaies que je vous adore! flétrissures sacrées que je vous baise! ô sang qui découlez soit de la tête percée, soit des yeux meurtris, soit de tout le corps déchiré! ô sang précieux, que je vous recueille! Terre, terre, ne bois pas ce sang!" (4).

Although Bossuet keeps in mind that his sermon is a lesson, he always conforms in spirit to that of the Gospel. His sermon usually takes the form of a general exhortation to the people to believe implicitly in the word of the Gospel: "Mais, messieurs, pour espérer, il faut croire.

(1) Sermons Choisis, page 3.

(2) Deutr. XXVIII, 49.

(3) Sermons Choisis, page 180.

(4) Op. cit., page 186.

Et c'est ce qu'on nous dit tous les jours: donnez-moi la foi, et je quitte tout; persuadez-moi de la vie future, et j'abandonne tout ce que j'aime pour une si belle espérance." (1). Again, he exhorts his people to flee from worldly things, and to seek, rather, the solitude of their thoughts. "Et en effet, le voyez-vous, Chrétiens, comme il est rêveur et pensif; de quelle sorte il fuit le grand monde, devenu extraordinairement amoureux du secret et de la solitude? Là il s'entretient doucement de telles ou de semblables pensées," (2). For those who are burdened with sin, he tells them of the pardon they will receive in the Sacrament of Penance: "Jésus Christ a ouvert aux hommes une source inépuisable de miséricordes dans le Sacrament de la Pénitence, mais cette facilité que Dieu donne aux pécheurs, de purifier leur conscience, fait qu'ils ne craignent point de la souiller," (3). In the above discourse he also warns of the danger of over confidence in the forgiveness of sins through the Sacrament of Penance.

b) In the funeral orations, on the contrary, Bossuet emphasizes rather the morality than the dogma. Although the dogmatic truths are always present, the very raison d'être of his discourse is the occasion itself. Through

(1) Sermons Choisis, Op.cit., page 4041

(2) Op. cit., page 58.

(3) Op. cit., page 349.

the death of the person lying in state before him, he judges and regulates life in general.

"Quand l'Eglise (1) ouvre la bouche de ses prédicateurs dans les funérailles de ses enfants, ce n'est pas pour accroître la pompe du deuil par des plaintes étudiées ni pour satisfaire l'ambition des vivants par de vains éloges des morts. La première de ces deux choses est trop indigne de sa fermeté, et l'autre trop contraire à sa modestie. Elle se propose un objet plus noble dans la solennité des discours funèbres: elle ordonne que ses ministres dans les derniers devoirs que l'on rend aux morts, fassent contempler à leurs auditeurs la commune condition de tous les mortels, afin que la pensée de la mort leur donne un saint dégoût de la vie présente, et que la vanité humaine rougisse en regardant le terme fatal que la Providence divine a donné à ses espérances trompeuses." This passage is from the first funeral oration that Bossuet preached. It was the oration on Madame Yolande de Monterby, abbess of the religious order of Benedictines of Ste. Marie du Petit Clairvaux, pronounced at Metz, December, 1656, (2).

Bossuet believed that in speaking of the dead the natural thing was to dwell upon the religious significance of death. He interpreted Christian doctrine as an explanation of death, and taught that Christian teaching was a

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, page.1.

(2) Op. cit., page 1.

consequence of death; that for the Christian man or woman, the science of life was contained in the thought of death. It was a Christian death that led to an eternal life. Death, then, must always be the end in view.

In the midst of joys and sorrows, Bossuet placed death in the center. He judged man's life by this central idea. In his orations he forgot the eulogy in the dominating thought of death and of the ultimate end of a Christian soul after death. The lesson which Bossuet taught may not always have been the same, but it was always appropriate for the person who had died, and whose funeral oration he was preaching. If Henriette-Marie acted her part in the political and religious troubles in England, he said, it was because she knew that she was going to die (1), and she accepted her trials as a preparation for death. Marie Therese lived a pure and holy life because she knew that she must one day die, (2). Anne de Gonzague taught the necessity of repentance because death was certain (3). It was because we must die that le Tellier was unattached to worldly ambitions (4). Condé's genius and greatness were

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, page 135.

(2) Op. cit., page 233.

(3) Op. cit., page 302.

(4) Op. cit., page 456.

nothing without piety, and all because death was the final victory. His last thoughts were of the grace of a happy death, (1), rather than regrets for what he was compelled to leave behind.

If these discourses presented examples for the living, rather than merely voicing the praises of the dead, then they were veritable sermons, in which the Christian idea of death was paramount. What death took away, and the lesson it gave, was Bossuet's explanation of life. Death was a proof to man that he was nothing, and at the same time it was a proof to him of what he was worth (2).

In his conception of the funeral oration, then, Bossuet set for himself an ideal, and it was translated into a reality in the portraits of personages whom he praised. He dreamed of an ideal, and portrayed it in so far as it was realized by the person whose body lay in state before him. He was less preoccupied in describing a picture of objective reality than he was in sketching a symbolical type. And Bossuet doubtless had this idea in mind when he praised his heroes. His main preoccupation was to be useful. In his own words: "Je suis, et ne veux être qu'un prédicateur, un

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page 544.

(2) Op. cit., page 148.

prêtre que hante la passion apostolique, le désir de purifier ou de sanctifier les âmes mondaines, (1)."

These were the souls which, since his arrival in Paris, and his frequenting the court, Bossuet knew so well, and the frivolities and moral poverty of which he could so well deplore.

(1) Oraisons Funèbres, Op. cit., page XXXII.

...in dealing with the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

Library
College of St. Scholastica
Duluth, Minnesota 55812

(1) Quintus Tullius, Op. cit., Page XVII.

LIBRARY
College of St. Scholastica
Duluth, Minnesota 55812



CADO

PUNCHLESS BINDER

PB 118 S

MFD. BY CUSHMAN & DENISON MFG. CO.
NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

MADE IN U. S. A.



