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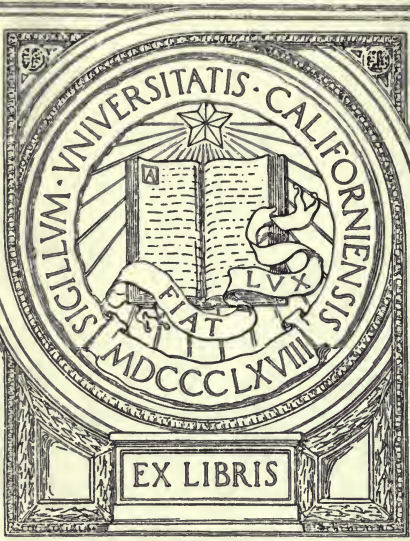


INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ON THE

DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PREACHER'S WORK.

THE remark has been often made, that a scholar of but moderate powers can be more certain of a livelihood in the profession of divinity, than in that of law or physic. It is said that men are more willing to entrust the care of their souls, than of their bodies or estates to incompetent pretenders. In order to attain eminence at the bar, a man must analyze with great care the principles of ethics and jurisprudence, must be familiar with the intricate windings of the human heart, must be well versed in the history of nations as well as individuals, must retain in his memory a multitude of statutes and precedents, must be capable of intense mental application to an individual case for a long time, must be calm amid the excitement of all around him, must think amid noise and confusion, must be ready for emergencies, for sudden rejoinder and repartee, for extemporaneous analysis and invention, as well as unpremeditated speech. But in order to succeed in the ministry, it is said, no more intellectual effort is required than to understand a number of truths in which the wayfaring man though a fool need not err, to pen homilies in the retirement of the study, to read them without the perils of being interrupted and confused or perhaps refuted by antagonists, to go from house to house uttering mild and sweet words to men, women and children. Thus has an opinion gone abroad that the clerical profession makes a less imperative demand than the legal upon the energies of the mind and will. It is recorded of certain men, that "being of a weakly habit" they were set apart for the church. Some eminent politicians have entered upon active life as clergymen, but have abandoned their sacred vocation because they deemed its sphere of activity too low and small. Young men



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THE

PREACHER AND PASTOR;

BY

FENELON, HERBERT, BAXTER, CAMPBELL.

1847

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY

EDWARDS A. PARK,
BARTLET PROFESSOR IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.



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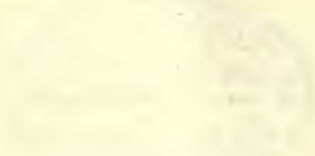
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P R E F A C E .

SOME of the reasons for republishing the following treatises of Fenelon, Herbert, Baxter and Campbell are the following :

First, all these treatises have an established character, and no minister's library should be destitute of the standard works in any department of his professional studies. "The Reformed Pastor," says Dr. Doddridge, "is a most extraordinary performance, and should be read by every young minister, before he takes a people under his stated care ; and, I think, the practical part of it reviewed every three or four years ; for nothing would have a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good men are but shadows of what (by the blessing of God) they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in that incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued." Dr. Bates characterizes the Reformed Pastor as "an accomplished model of an evangelical minister ;" and Baxter himself speaks of it as "one of the greatest and best works that I ever put my hand to in my whole life." Similar testimony has been given by venerated men to what Doddridge calls, "Fenelon's incomparable Dialogues on Eloquence." Dr. Edward Williams says in his Christian Preacher, that they "are deservedly mentioned by many writers of eminence, with a sort of respect bordering on veneration ; and no wonder, for such a union of the sublime and simple, of learning and familiarity, of judicious criticism and happy illustration ; such unaffected humility and warm benevolence, delicate taste and solid sense ; and above all, such reverence for sacred things, blended with a subject so often employed by human vanity and pride, are superior excellences very rarely found." It may also

be said of Campbell's Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence, that although imperfect, they have yet become a kind of professional classic for the preacher. They have already passed through many editions on both sides of the Atlantic, and derive a commanding reputation from the philosophical genius of their author, and from his known intimacy with the rhetorical writings of ancient and modern days. The labor which he expended on his Philosophy of Rhetoric, qualified him to write his Lectures on the Pulpit, and that work imparts to these lectures somewhat of its own authority. They contain the compressed results of a protracted study, in which he was an acknowledged master.

Secondly, the bare fact that these treatises have a standard authority in the church, imparts to them a factitious worth which cannot be attained by compositions of modern date. It is impossible that any living divine will give such counsels with regard to clerical duty, as will secure the veneration already paid to the maxims which our ancestors have sanctioned. Even if the contemporary author be as good a man as Richard Baxter, and if he express himself with as much pith and wisdom, still he cannot expect the same immediate deference, which is yielded, as by prescriptive right, to the Puritan of Kidderminster. The dead, when revered at all, have often one advantage over the living; their foibles are hidden behind the veil of years, it may be of centuries; their virtues are remembered, perhaps magnified,—and that which is unknown in reference to them is interpreted in their favor. There is a species of canonization, which we are instinctively inclined to practise, and which often gives to the departed a more unbroken influence than even they could have had while living.

Thirdly, the treatises here republished of our older writers are eminently *suggestive* in their character. A book which leads those who peruse it to think for themselves, is more valuable than one which is composed with greater punctiliousness, but without that peculiar kind of inspiration which infuses itself into the mind of the reader. George Herbert does not mention

some good rules for the pastoral care ; but he suggests far more than he expressly enjoins. He prescribes much that is now obsolete, but those maxims which are inappropriate to our time are still useful as illustrations of times gone by ; as intimating certain great principles of ministerial duty, which remain in all ages the same, while the methods in which the duty is discharged may be varied with successive generations. It would increase the ease of our living, if we could find the rules of our profession, all written out just as they are to be applied ; but it is far more impressive to learn the main principles of our calling from a comparison of the systems which are become somewhat antiquated with those which are at present in vogue. While it is important to read such works as those of Porter and Gresley, it is by no means prudent to neglect such as those of Campbell and Fenelon.

Fourthly, the style in which some of these treatises are written is a sufficient reason for presenting and earnestly commending them to our clergy. The language of George Herbert will never cease to be itself instructive. He published his *Country Parson* about forty years after the first three books of Spenser's *Faery Queen* were written, but this poem cannot well be understood without a glossary, while it may almost be said of Herbert, as Mackintosh says of Hobbes, that "two centuries have not superannuated more than a dozen of his words." It is interesting to the scholar to compare the style of the *Country Parson*, with that of Cotton Mather's "Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry ;" a work published nearly a century after that of Herbert, and yet more antiquated in its phraseology. Coleridge remarks in his *Friend*, p. 37, "Having mentioned the name of Herbert, that model of a man, a gentleman and a clergyman, let me add, that the quaintness of some of his thoughts, not of his diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly and unaffected, has blinded modern readers to the great general merit of his poems, (and, it may be also said, his prose writings,) which are for the most part exquisite in their kind." With the style

of Richard Baxter, no student of the English language, and especially no clergyman should fail to be familiar. He is, says Dr. Doddridge, "my particular favorite. It is impossible to tell you, how much I am charmed with the devotion, good sense and pathos which is everywhere to be found in him. I cannot forbear looking upon him as one of the greatest orators, both with regard to copiousness, acuteness and energy, that our nation hath produced;" and again, "he discovers a manly eloquence and the most evident proofs of an amazing genius, with respect to which he may not improperly be called the English Demosthenes." For judicious remarks on the excellence of Baxter's style, see *Edinburgh Review* for 1839 on the *Life and Times of Baxter*, and for 1840 on the *British Pulpit*.

Fifthly, the religious spirit which breathes through the treatises of Fenelon, Herbert and Baxter, is of itself a sufficient reason for insisting on their frequent perusal. They indeed contain some remarks which it should seem better to have omitted; but on the whole they exhibit the greatness of the sacred calling, so as to stimulate the preacher to an humble and earnest pursuit after excellence.

The editor has made scarcely any alterations in the phraseology of the treatises republished. In many instances he has retained the ancient punctuation even. He has omitted the Appendix which Palmer attached to the *Reformed Pastor*, and also a few irrelevant sentences from Campbell's *Lectures*. He has inserted an *Introductory Essay*, part of which he published in the *Christian Review*, Vol. IV. pp. 581—603.

Theol. Seminary, Andover, }
August 25, 1845. }



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of promise often turn away from the ministry, because it seems to demand of them a sacrifice of mental excellence. "Marrying and christening machines" have the clergymen of certain churches been called, not without some coloring of truth. There is reason to fear that many candidates for the sacred office undervalue its inherent dignity, and hope to enjoy the kindnesses of their parishioners, without any strong impulse toward personal improvement. And perhaps there are men who have begun to preach, and rest contented with the routine of common observances, and never feel that the kingdom of truth, as well as of religion, is to suffer violence, and the violent are to take it by force. But a minister cannot live in the healthful discharge of his duties, without feeling the need of his unceasing movement upward; nor will he perceive this necessity, unless he form a high idea of the work which is given him to do. A livelihood, and even a kind of eminence in his calling, may sometimes be secured by the minister who shrinks from that severity of mental toil which is needed for distinguished usefulness in the other professions. But his livelihood is not a true "living," and his eminence is productive of but little good, unless he be, in the full meaning of the term, a laborer, unless his standard of ministerial excellence be such as to exalt his whole character. What constitutes a call to preach the gospel; what kind of mental discipline should the pastor adopt; what books should he read; what subjects should he investigate; how much time should he devote to social interviews with his people; what, how, how often and how long should he preach; all such questions can be answered most fitly by him who has the deepest reverence for the pulpit.¹ "The moment we permit ourselves," says Robert Hall, "to think lightly of the Christian ministry, our right arm is withered; nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains. For no man ever excelled in a profession to which he did not feel an attachment bordering on enthusiasm; though what in other professions is enthusiasm, is in ours the dictate of sobriety and truth."

¹ Erasmus, mourning over the deficiencies of the ministry in his age, said, *Verum ad conciones sacras admittuntur, interdum etiam assiliunt, quilibet adolescentes leves, indocti, quasi nihil sit facilius quam apud populum exponere divinam scripturam, et abundè sufficiat perfricuisse faciem, et absterso pudore linguam volvere. Hoc malum ex eo fonte manat, quòd non perpenditur quid sit ecclesiastici concionatoris, tum dignitas, tum difficultas, tum utilitas.*

As it is thus important for the clergyman to entertain high views of his office, in order to learn its appropriate duties and feel the proper stimulus to perform them, it cannot be amiss to call his attention, for a few moments, to the dignity and importance of his work, and, in a special manner, of that branch of it which consists in the public ministration of the word.

In order to estimate the greatness of the preacher's calling, we must consider the nature of the themes which he is to study and discuss. The character of his office receives its hue from the character of the subjects that he is to master. All truths are important; all are religious in their tendency; yet there is a gradation among them, and one rises above another like the stones of the pyramid. Though it is neither scholar-like nor Christian to depreciate any of the sciences, there is yet no harm in saying that the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. Entomology is not an idle study; for the minutest insect is an illustration of the greatness of God's care and the cunning of his workmanship. But we commonly feel that we have made some advance, when we come to mineralogy and geology, and inspect those monuments of Jehovah's love and strength that are curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. And certainly we are rising higher still, when we expatiate on the truths with which astronomy expands and ennobles the soul. As the intellect is of more value than a whole system of worlds, we owe a profounder homage to the science of intellect than to that of all matter; yet even this is subordinate to its sister science, that of the heart; of the affections, the will. Man's moral nature is nobler than his mental, as the architrave is above the pedestal. For his moral nature all his other powers were made; they are the framework for this; his knowledge of them was meant to be subservient to his knowledge of duty and moral retribution. But from the mind and heart of a man we can make an ascent to the mind and heart of an angel; and higher still to that incomprehensible Spirit, our first idea of whom is a specimen of sublimity. Now the preacher of the gospel should go up all the steps of science; nothing of truth comes amiss to him; everything is of use. In the language of an acute divine, "he must know something of everything, although he can know everything of nothing." What Napoleon said of

France¹ may be accommodated to the Christian ministry, and "its true power may lie in not allowing a single new idea to exist without making it a part of the property" of the office.

But although the minister should acquaint himself with all the sciences, so that he may illustrate the truths of religion by the facts of nature, so that he may find "sermons in stones and good in everything," there are some investigations with which he should be peculiarly conversant. As a man, as a scholar, he must be able to draw analogies to moral truth from the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; but as a Christian orator he should be at home in the philosophy of the human intellect. His appropriate work begins with those studies, which were the end of many of the labors of such men as Descartes, Stewart and Brown. He is to answer some of the fundamental questions in theology by a reference to the analyses of intellectual operations. He must search out the laws of mind as they are developed in the structure of language, and must learn to interpret the Bible from the principles of mental suggestion. He must investigate the nature of the intellectual powers as he is to use them, and the susceptibilities as he is to address them in the pulpit. He must learn how to instruct, to convince, to enchain attention, to keep fast hold upon the memory. Not satisfied with the bare rules of rhetoric, he must seek for the reason of these rules in the nature of man. Nor is he to linger too long upon our intellectual faculties. His higher theme is our moral constitution. He must learn how to touch the secret springs of the heart; how to evoke that volition which will be followed by an eternity of reward; how to check the indulgence of that feeling which brings in its train an eternity of punishment. The exalted and impressive designation of his office is "the care of *souls*." Immortality, free agency, interminable joy and pain, such are the themes of his prolonged attention. Thus is the philosophy which transcends the knowledge of planets and suns, nothing more than an elementary branch of the preacher's great science.

But he does not confine himself to the spiritual phenomena of men. He is to discuss the doctrine of those superior intelligences who come from above or below on ministries of good or evil to our race. He is to analyze the intellectual

¹ Bourrienne's Memoirs, Vol. 1. p. 126.

character of God ; for he is to inquire into the divine omniscience, immutability, foreknowledge, decrees. He is to enlarge still more freely on what is still more exalted, the moral nature of him who is defined with more than logical preciseness, "God is love." Rising above the physical and psychological workmanship of the great Architect, above the government of the material and sentient universe, the preacher arrives at his mind's home and resting-place, when he comes to the crowning excellence of the adorable One, and portrays the atoning mercy of him who "*so* loved the world." If, then, the acme of the Creator's glories is to be the most familiar of the preacher's themes ; if all human sciences are but ancillary to that revealed system which the minister is to explain and enforce, if eternity and the resurrection, and God and Christ, the Sovereign, the Judge, the Saviour, are to be the great objects on which his mind is to dilate, then it is well to require of him that he be not a novice, but a man of greatness of spirit, of high aims and large compass of thought. If a vigorous intellect be needed for the study of human jurisprudence, it is doubly requisite for the examination of that law according to which all our wise codes of legislation are framed ; which is illustrated by precedents more numerous and complicated than are contained in all our juridical reports ; which has such relations to man as call for a close scrutiny into his nature and character ; and such relations to God as demand a comprehensive view of his rectitude on the one hand, and his grace on the other, and of that signal invention by which he can even honor the law by remitting its penalties. The proper study of the Bible, involving the investigation of ethical and metaphysical truth, of politics, history, geology, and astronomy ; and requiring the highest exercise of the judgment and imagination, the inventive genius and the memory, is not the work of a sciolist who enters the sacred office because he is unfit for any other.

The effects produced by a preacher illustrate the dignity and importance of his work. It is often said that his influence affords no argument in favor of his office, for every man and every event produce effects which no finite mind can comprehend. The genius of Robert Hall received no inconsiderable aid from the conversation of a tailor. A single leaf from Boston's Fourfold State, found and perused by an individual in Virginia, led to the small gathering at "Morris's Reading House," and to the preaching of Robinson in that

house, and to the assistance of Samuel Davies in his education for the ministry, and to the subsequent employment of that "prince of preachers" in the vicinity of that same reading house, and to the long continued results of his labors in the region which was first enlightened by a leaf from the Four-fold State. But from the circumstance that all things are important in their operation upon society, it were singular to infer that the Christian ministry is not important. The agency of many causes is, in the common language, accidental; that of the pulpit is the uniform operation of known laws. It is a prominent agency, attended with consequences peculiarly extensive, and meliorating the state of man more directly than is done by other causes, more uniformly and more radically. It is true that the influence of the preacher is not always tangible. He founds no cities which are called after his name. There is no pillar like Trajan's, no Coliseum, no Simplicon to remain as a specimen of his skill. Such effects may be produced indirectly and ultimately by the minister, but in general what is stately and imposing, filling the eye of the million, and fit to be celebrated with bonfires and illuminations, is not the immediate result of his labors. His direct influence is refined and inward. It is upon the soul, is felt oftener than celebrated, but is certainly none the less sublime because of its intangible value. Not seldom is it too modest to be even discovered, or to be described save by negations. That bad men are no worse rather than that good men are so good; that moral evil stops where it does rather than that goodness prevails and triumphs, is often the chief praise of the clergyman's usefulness. The father of our country displayed his generalship not so much in his victorious onset upon the hostile invaders, as in preventing their depredations upon him; and sometimes a spiritual shepherd has had no success in aggressive movements, but his great and only honor is to have guarded his flock from the wolves, and to say, "Those that thou gavest me I have *kept*, and none of them is lost." We wrong the good man's ministry, when we disparage it for its want of positive acquisitions. Bad as his people are, no one can tell how useful he has been in preventing them from becoming worse. The great parade they make of indifference to his teaching is often an attempt to hide their real alarm, and they are restive against him because they are held in by the curb. The bravado of wicked men is often a eulogium upon their minister, and their os-

tentation of sin comes from their very fear of doing what they boast to have done, and from an unwillingness to let any one know how much they dread the reproofs of the pulpit.

The preacher has an influence upon the intellect of his people. He presents to it the most enlivening and enlarging thoughts; and nothing takes so deep a hold of the reasoning powers as the series of proofs which he may enforce. The mind is invigorated by grappling with the objections that have been urged against the omniscience and goodness of God, the responsibility of man, the whole scheme of moral government. A sermon, if it be in good faith a sermon, reaches the very elements of the soul, and stirs up its hidden energies; for such a sermon is a message from God; is pregnant with what the mind was made for, the solemn realities of eternity; is prolific, if need be, in stern and skilful argument, holds out a rich reward to man's desire of mental progress, and allures as well as urges to an intense love of study. It is a book of mental discipline to its hearers, and its author is a school-master for children of a larger growth. A late professor in one of our universities, who has been famed throughout the land for his effective eloquence at the bar, and on the floor of Congress, says that he first learned how to reason while hearing the sermons of a New England pastor, who began to preach before he had studied a single treatise on style or speaking; and two or three erudite jurists, who dislike the theological opinions of this divine, have recommended his sermons to law students as models of logical argument and affording a kind of gymnastic exercise to the mind. It is thus that one of the most modest of men, while writing his plain sermons, was exerting a prospective influence over our civil and judicial tribunals. The pulpit of a country village was preparing speeches for the Congress of the nation. The discourses and treatises of such divines as Chillingworth¹ and

¹ "Chillingworth is the writer, whose works are recommended for the exertations of the student. Lord Mansfield, than whom there could not be a more competent authority, pronounced him to be a perfect model of argumentation. Archbishop Tillotson calls him "incomparable, the glory of his age and nation." Locke proposes "for the attainment of right reasoning, the constant reading of Chillingworth; who by his example," he adds, "will teach both perspicuity and the way of right reasoning, better than any book that I know; and therefore will deserve to be read upon that account over and over again; not to say anything of his arguments." Lord Clarendon, also, who was particularly intimate with him, thus cele-

Butler have been often kept by lawyers and statesmen, on the same shelf with Euclid and Lacroix. Patrick Henry lived from his eleventh to his twenty-second year in the neighborhood of Samuel Davies, and is said to have been stimulated to his masterly efforts by the discourses of him who has been called the first of American preachers. He often spoke of Davies in terms of enthusiastic praise, and resembled him in some characteristics of his eloquence.¹

The minister's influence is upon the taste as well as intellect. There is a kind of mystic union among all the virtues and excellences of the head and heart. A golden chain seems to bind them together, and when one link is gained all the rest are drawn along with it. Thus there is a strange tie between the sense of right and the sense of beauty, between the good and the elegant. The preacher holds out before his congregation the choicest models of all that can please the taste; of that spiritual comeliness which is the archetype of whatever is graceful and refined in nature or art. By winning his hearers to what is beautiful and grand in religious truth, he fosters the love of those lower excellences that are but the shadowings forth of the good things in heaven. In many minds he cherishes a taste for the elegances of Addison and Gray and Cowper and Wordsworth, and encourages that sense of honor, that interest in heroic deeds, that reverence for genius and worth, in fine all those amiable sentiments which are allied with a due appreciation of the beauties of nature and art.

brates his rare talents as a disputant: "Mr. Chillingworth was a man of so great subtilty of understanding, and of so rare a temper in debate, that as it was impossible to provoke him into any passion, so it was very difficult to keep a man's self from being a little discomposed by his sharpness and quickness of argument and instances, in which he had a rare facility and a great advantage over all the men I ever knew. He had spent all his younger time in disputation; and had arrived at so great a mastery, as he was inferior to no man in these skirmishes."—"Chillingworth has been named, for the reasons above assigned, as eminently calculated to subserve the purposes of mental discipline, for the student. He need not, however, be the *only* one. The subtle and profound reasonings of Bishop Butler, the pellucid writings of Paley, the simplicity, strength, and perspicuity of Tillotson, may all be advantageously resorted to by the student anxious about the cultivation of his reasoning faculties."—See *Warren's Law Studies*, § 153, 154, 160.

¹ See Davies's Sermons, vol. I. p. xlv. Stereotyped Ed.

Working as the preacher does upon the mental sensibilities, he of course modifies the literary character of a people. Whitefield made so little pretension to scholarship, that men often smile when he is called the pioneer of a great improvement in the literature of Britain. They overlook the masculine and transforming energy of the religious principle, when stirred up, as it was, by his preaching against the pride and indulgences and selfishness of men. They forget, that influence often works from the lower classes upward; and that when the mass of men become intellectual, the higher orders must either become so, or must yield their supremacy. Whatever operates deeply on the soul of the humblest mechanic, will modify the character of the popular literature. The sermons of a parish minister are the standard of taste to many in his society; his style is the model for their conversation and writing; his provincial and outlandish terms they adopt and circulate; and his mode of thinking is imitated by the school-teacher and the mother, the merchant and the manufacturer. You can see the effects of his chaste or rude style in the language of the ploughboy and the small talk of the nursery. He has more frequent communion than other literary men with the middle classes of the people, and through these his influence extends to the higher and the lower. He is the guardian of the language and the reading of the most sedate portions of society; and in their families are trained the men of patient thought and accurate scholarship. His influence on the popular vocabulary is often overlooked, and is not always the same; but he often virtually stands at the parish gate, to let in one book and keep out another; to admit certain words and to exclude certain phrases, and to introduce or discard barbarisms, solecisms, impropriety and looseness of speech. The sermons of Leighton, South, Howe, Bates, Atterbury and Paley show somewhat of the extent to which the literature of England is indebted to her priesthood. When Lord Chatham was asked the secret of his dignified and eloquent style, he replied that he had read twice from beginning to end Bayley's Dictionary, and had perused some of Dr. Barrow's sermons so often that he had learned them by heart. Dryden "attributed his own accurate knowledge of prose writing, to the frequent perusal of Tillotson's works." "Addison regarded them as the chief standard of our language, and actually projected an English dictionary to be illustrated with particular phrases to be se-

lected from Tillotson's sermons." "There is a living writer," said Dugald Stewart, "who combines the beauties of Johnson, Addison and Burke, without their imperfections. It is a dissenting minister of Cambridge, the Rev. Robert Hall. Whoever wishes to see the English language in its perfection, must read his writings." No one can be familiar with the style of Jeremy Taylor and that of several British essayists, without recognizing his influence upon them. The tincture of his phraseology is discernible in the expressions of Charles Lamb even. The character of Herbert's writings is stamped upon those of Izaak Walton, and the insinuating power of Walton upon the English language has not been, nor will it be inconsiderable. By the influence which a minister's own mind receives from his habit of sermonizing, and which he sends forth from the pulpit and from the fireside, he often raises the standard of scholarship, and excites the youth in his society to a course of liberal education. Very much through the instrumentality of a single clergyman living in a retired part of Massachusetts, thirty young men of his parish were trained for professional life. More than this number have gone to our colleges from a single religious society in New Hampshire. The Rev. Moses Hallock, of Plainfield, Mass., prepared about a hundred youth for college; Dr. Wood, of Boscawen, New Hampshire, prepared the same number, and among them his two parishioners, Ezekiel and Daniel Webster. A hundred and sixty-two young men were educated by a plain pastor in the neighborhood of Boscawen, and about thirty of them are members of the learned professions. Each of these clergymen will long live in his pupils, and whatever may have been his own literary attainments, will produce and has produced, a visible effect on the literary character of multitudes. This effect was not indeed produced by sermons altogether, but in some degree; not merely by their direct influence upon the auditor, but also by their reflex operation upon the preacher himself. His appropriate work inspires and prepares him for subordinate literary labors. He cannot fitly prepare his discourses without feeling a stimulus to labor in the cause of general education. From his habit of oral address he derives a certain kind of directness and energy of thought and expression, which qualify him for exerting an important influence from the press. Had not Martin Luther been trained for and in the pulpit, he had never been so forceful and popular in his written es-

says. It was in no small degree by his sermons that he woke up his own mind and that of his countrymen. The literature of Germany and of the world has been animated and enriched by the results of his preaching. Who can estimate the intellectual influence of the Bishop of Hippo upon his own age; upon the Augustinian and other monastic orders of succeeding ages; upon John Calvin, and through him upon Switzerland, Holland, and by the intervention of John Knox upon Scotland, England and America; upon Schleiermacher and through him upon Germany. It is not too much to say, that Augustine would never have wielded this power over the race, had he not been a preacher; for his sacred calling stirred up the depths of his soul, and gave him a strength and completeness of character, also a venerableness of name, which a mere philosopher, even one like Aristotle can seldom, if ever, acquire.

The minister's influence is obvious upon the morals and business of a people. He touches the main-spring of the political machine, and its extremities are quickened. Waking up the intellect, he stimulates to enterprise. Refining the taste, he throws an air of neatness over the parish. He pleads for industry and method, for honest dealing and temperate habits, for good order in the family, and school, and State. He preaches from that text which is the mother of friendship and thrift, "Study to be quiet and to do your own business." He infuses new vigor into the counting-room, and new faithfulness over the farm. Where the true preacher is at work, you will see fruits of his labor in even roads and strong walls and thriving arts and a wholesome police; but where the doors of the meeting-house are left unhinged, and the windows broken out, and the pulpit is given up to swallows' nests and the pews to sheep, there you will find a listless yeomanry and ragged farms, thin schools and crowded bar-rooms. The history of a church is often the history of a town; when the one flourishes, the other feels its influence. More than twenty parishes in New England might be mentioned, where the settlement of a faithful pastor was the prelude to rapid improvements in agriculture and trade, the style of building and of dress, the complexion of politics, and the whole cast of character. What one preacher does for a parish, thousands do for the nation. To the complaint that the ministry is expensive, we may reply in words like those of Dr. South, 'The money given for preaching must be

given away, if not for churches, then for more gaols; if not for houses of prevention, then for new houses of correction; and it is as good economy to support religious teachers as to support more watchmen and busier hangmen, to raise new whipping-posts and pillories. Even the history of the name, clergyman, illustrates the humane relations that subsist between the ministerial office and the literature, the morals, the penal code of the community. In the books of English law, we often read of criminals convicted with or without the benefit of clergy. This benefit was an exemption from the kind and degree of punishment prescribed for lay offenders, and the exemption was once extended to all criminals who could read and write. Still it retained its instructive name, the benefit of clergy, because nearly all who had any acquaintance with the rudiments of education were clergymen, and an ability to read was a legal sign of the sacred office. Hence clergy, scholars and clerks were convertible terms in the old English style, and clerk is still the law-term for a preacher of the gospel. When a man was convicted of felony or manslaughter, he was "put to read in a Latin book, of a Gothic black character, and if the ordinary of Newgate said, *legit ut clericus*, i. e. he reads like a *clerk*, he was only burned in the hand and set free; otherwise he suffered death for his crime." It is indeed a sad feature of past ages, that the circumstance of having received a clerk's education, should have released an offender from the punishment which he deserved; still there is a pleasant meaning in the fact that such an education was supposed to be incompatible with the grossest forms of sin, and that the term, clergyman, was regarded as synonymous with the words, learned and good.

It must be admitted that atheists are more frequently found in Christian lands than in any other. Where the true religion is known, the despisers of all religion are the most numerous. Even such Pagan philosophers as discarded the popular faith, were unwilling to injure its credit with the mass of men. But among us there are friends of universal education who decry the pulpit, though it is a great educator of the populace; there are fervid philanthropists who ridicule the missionary, though he carries the blessedness of learning to the heathen; and the founder of one of the most splendid colleges in our land has inserted the condition in his will, that no clergyman shall step his foot on the college grounds. When we hear Franklin speak so often in praise of frugality

and industry, and other virtues that derive their chief support from the Bible; when we read his question to an infidel associate, "If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it;" and his assertion to the same individual, that the great majority of men "need the motives of religion to restrain them from vice;"¹ we naturally expect to find him a reverential advocate of the preacher's office. But in his letter to Whitefield he says, "Now-a-days we have scarce a little parson that does not think it the duty of every man within his reach to sit under his petty ministrations, and that whoever neglects them, offends God. I wish to such more humility."² And we, in return, wish more consistency to our great men. Why eulogize the end and sneer at the means? Why praise virtue in the general and condemn it in its brightest particular? Our manufacturers say, that the preaching of the Gospel makes better cotton-spinners; our landlords, that it makes better tenants; our physicians for the insane, that it hastens the recovery of the diseased in mind; our friends of temperance and of social reform, that it affords efficient aid in every good work. A political economist may easily perceive, that the want of teachers of the truth in Gomorrah must have diminished the value of houses and lands in that doomed city, and that the kingdoms of ancient times would have been less unquiet and transient, if they had been under the influence of a well read and an instructive priesthood. On the lowest principle, then, of a calculating patriotism, how can a Jefferson allow himself to neglect, still more to deride the pulpit, to which his own country, more than any other, owes her political salvation. How suicidal the policy of Lord Chesterfield, and other devotees of an elegant literature, who delight in sneering at the very office that creates a demand for all of enduring value in their writings, and without which there will remain but little of healthy politeness, or of sound letters in Christendom. As we read of an eminent teacher's being accustomed to remark, "Give me the religion of a country, and I will tell you all the rest;" so we may add, the whole character of a people depends, far more than is commonly recognized, upon the teachings of the pulpit; and the man who aims to undermine rather than regulate the influence of the sacred office

¹ Franklin's Works, Phil. Ed. Vol. 6. p. 244.

² Franklin's Works, Phil. Ed. Vol. 6. p. 36.

is not, so far forth, an intelligent friend of the State. Had Robespierre been as circumspect as Napoleon, he would never have been inimical to preachers as a class, but, at least, would have encouraged all such as feared him. Buonaparte restored the pulpit to France, because he could not sustain his dominion without it. He saw that the ministrations of the sanctuary exert so radical an influence upon the common style of thinking, speaking and acting, as to produce an inevitable effect upon the political character of men. There always has been, there always will be, there always must be a kind of union between the church and the State, the latter deriving health and soundness from the former. Hence in all civil revolutions, the insurgents have opposed the established hierarchy as a main support of the obnoxious Government, and the friends of the Government have been afraid to lose the assistance of the clergy. The history of the American pulpit during the war for national independence, affords an instructive comment on the power of the preached Gospel to make men valiant for truth and right, timid in the defence of wrong, humane to their enemies, faithful to their friends, obedient to the powers that are ordained of God, but resolute in resisting all such encroachments as are contrary to the will of Heaven. The opposers of our revolution ascribed it, in no small degree, to the character of the religion of our fathers. It was a religion which gave great prominence to the pulpit, and made the clergyman a teacher more than a priest, and made the layman an intelligent citizen rather than a passive subject. The spirit of an ecclesiastical organization becomes effective in the character and in the discourses of its ministers; hence have monarchists been often fearful of the Genevan church-polity, which "breathes an innate antipathy to kings." They have feared the tendency of this system, as it affects the tone of the pulpit, to awaken thoughtfulness, self-respect, manly purposes, vigorous activity. Dryden in his poem of *The Hind and the Panther*, thus complains of the alliance between the ecclesiastical system of Calvin and democratic institutions:

"But as the poisons of the deadliest kind
Are to their own unhappy coasts confined;
So Presby'try and pestilential zeal
Can flourish only in a Commonweal."

But let us take higher ground. The preacher has been shown to exert an influence upon the perceptions, the tastes,

the business, the morals and politics of a community. His great effect, however, is produced upon the religious character. We shall not be suspected of implying that he transforms the heart without the special interposition of the Holy Ghost; and yet there is a sense in which a dependent apostle may declare, "I have begotten you through the gospel." Although the soul is in its nature percipient, yet when it has been quickened by the instructions of the man of God, it exclaims, "Whereas I was once blind, I now see." Although its very essence is to feel and act, it may still be so much animated by the preacher's words as to confess, "I was dead but am alive again; was buried in sin but am risen, and now walk in newness of life." Love to God, penitence for transgression, faith in Christ, and the specific virtues involved in these, are the noblest attainments of the soul; they are essential to the harmony between the intellectual and the moral nature, and without them man can never gain his appropriate honor and strength. But these are the qualities which the minister aims to call forth, and which are seldom manifested in the life of such as are not hearers of the word. Pain, the evil which all men would avoid, and by the fear of which they are hurried into the very courses which end in what they dread, can be ultimately averted only by yielding to persuasives like those of the preached gospel. Happiness, the first thing which man desires, and the love of which is essential to him as a voluntary agent, can be ultimately attained through the influence of such truth only as is declared from the pulpit. Not his own happiness alone does the minister secure, but that of his neighbor also; not mere animal or intellectual happiness but spiritual; not for a day or a life but for eternity; not merely eternal but eternally increasing. He procures this inward, immortal and ever-augmenting bliss for a soul that would otherwise endure an inward and ever-increasing misery. It is not one soul only that he benefits, nor two, nor twenty, but perhaps a hundred; and a hundred eternities otherwise spent in the darkness that no light cheers, are now spent in the paradise of God. Of the hundred immortals thus transformed by the means of a single preacher, who knows but some one may be an instrument of interminable good to a hundred more; may be a Fuller, or a Payson, or a Harlan Page, or a Mrs. Judson? Is it not a moderate calculation, that a hundred faithful disciples will exert an influence which God will bless to the spiritual welfare of at least

two hundred of their fellow-men, their kindred or friends for whom they toil and pray; each one on an average bringing two additional talents into the sacred treasury? And these two hundred Christians may impart, as parents do impart in a kind of legacy, their religious character to their children, and a thousand of their children's children may labor, each one in his own circle, for the renovation of other souls. Each one in his own circle of friends, and here are a thousand different circles, and each member of each of these circles has a separate band of his own associates, and the influence thus branches out into a new sphere, and will continue to widen and amplify and to include still other multitudes. It is well to reflect minutely on the manner in which influence is propagated, filling one area after another, transmitted from a few ancestors to a numerous posterity, and flowing on like a stream broader and deeper, till it becomes a mystery how such great effects can result from a cause so limited. Nor should we confine our view to the gradual and ceaseless propagation of the influence which the minister may have exerted during his life. We should also consider the *new* impressions which are often produced by his printed works, long after his death. The trains of moral cause and effect which he started by his living voice, are not only continued for ages, but his published discourses are setting original trains in motion; and as the author of written sermons, he sometimes gives an impulse to more minds than he affected by his spoken words. Many a clergyman never dies. If his name were forgotten, he would still be producing effects of which he is not recognized as the cause; but sometimes a clergyman, like Chrysostom, lives and preaches, generation after generation, among a larger community of readers, than he ever orally addressed; and in addition to the good that flows from the multitude who were benefitted by his life, is a still greater good that is constantly springing up in minds conversant with his posthumous sermons. He is still beginning to put in train systems of moral influence which are entirely distinct from the systems originated upon the minds of his contemporaries, and continued, by the natural laws of transmission and expansion, from one age to another of their posterity.

Seldom has the pulpit been honored with a great man, who composed and uttered his discourses in so clumsy and awkward a style as Dr. Samuel Hopkins. It was the burden of

his daily complaint that he had so little success in the ministry, and he is now often mentioned as a pious divine who added but little to the stock of public virtue. But let us glance at the effects produced by this "unsuccessful" laborer. Whatever may have been the extent of his indebtedness to the manuscripts of President Edwards, which were left in his possession, he has certainly done much toward moulding the theological character of New England. By his *System of Divinity*,¹ his four religious biographies, and his ten additional publications, he has given an impulse to many who have been esteemed more useful than himself. Dr. Jonathan Edwards ascribed his own speculative conviction of the truth to the reasoning of Hopkins. A pastor of one of the largest churches in Massachusetts, who was extensively admired for his rich and varied eloquence, who was honored as an instrument of many religious revivals, in one of which more than a hundred persons were gathered into the fold of his church, who was withal somewhat eminent as a theological instructor and controversialist, and who has now several descendants in the ministry, was converted to the truth by the blessing of heaven upon the labors of Hopkins. And there was another divine, who owed his renovation to the same instrumentality;—a divine whose acquaintance was sought and prized by the most eminent theologians in our own land, and by some in England;—a polished gentleman, who was said by his parishioner, Judge Sedgwick, to be "sure of silencing with his urbanity of manner those who were not convinced by his logic." For more than fifty-nine years he retained the pastoral care of a people among whom Edwards had written his treatise on the Will, in whose cultivated village lived six judges of our courts, and from whose intellectual circle there have come forth one president of Cambridge University, one president, as well as the original founder of Williams College. He wrote and preached more than three thousand sermons, published nineteen books, some of standard value. His reputation as a theological teacher is illustrated by the fact, that on the list of his divinity students are found the

¹ Hopkins's *System of Divinity* was written for the pulpit, and was preached before it was reduced to its present form. In like manner were many of the best works comprising our religious literature, originally sermons; as Edwards's *History of Redemption*, Hall's *Contemplations*, several well-known commentaries on the Bible, and even polemical treatises.

names of President Kirkland, Dr. Hyde, Dr. Catlin and Dr. Samuel Spring. During his pastoral life he was active in six different revivals of religion among his people, and he admitted to his church three hundred and eighty-four persons from the world, and one hundred and twenty from other churches. He died with the title of "patriarch of his neighborhood," and the seeds which he scattered are still bearing fruit. In the extended usefulness, then, of these two divines both of whom were so largely indebted to Dr. Hopkins, we see a portion of the results of his labors. In the churches where their influence will long remain; in the churches of which he himself was the pastor, he has been and still is enlarging the intellect and purifying, through grace, the affections of men. He saw, at the least, a hundred of his own parishioners subscribe with their own hands to be the Lord's, and he started more than a hundred circles, which will widen and expand upon the lake, wave following after wave, silently pursuing in all future time, but never overtaking each other, and never letting the sheet of waters become stagnant. And if this is the influence of an unsuccessful minister, what will be that of a successful one? At the last day, what a throng of witnesses will there be to the effect of John Newton's ministrations. We are now feeling this effect in the hymns of Cowper, in the writings of Buchanan, who owed his religious character to the instrumentality of Newton, writings which are said to have first awakened the missionary spirit of our own Judson; in the works of Dr. Scott, another monument of Newton's fidelity, and a spiritual guide to hundreds of preachers and thousands of laymen; in the words and deeds of Wilberforce who ascribed a large share of his own usefulness to the example and counsels of the same spiritual father. Edmund Burke on his death-bed sent an expression of his thanks to Mr. Wilberforce for writing the *Practical Christianity*, a treatise which Burke spent the last two days of his life in perusing, and from which he confessed himself to have derived much profit;¹ a treatise which has reclaimed hundreds of educated men from irreligion, but which would probably never have been what it now is, had not its author been favored with Newton's advice and sympathy. What shall we predict as the ultimate result of Whitefield's more than eighteen thousand addresses from the pul-

¹ See *Life of Wilberforce*, Am. Ed. p. 183.

pit, and of the impulse which he gave to the activity of the whole church, friends and foes, in America and Britain? His power was felt by Hume, Bolingbroke, Foote, Chesterfield, Garrick, Rittenhouse, Franklin, Erskine and Edwards; by the miners and colliers and fishermen of England, the paupers and slaves and Indians of America. "Had Whitefield never been at Cambuslang, Buchanan, humanly speaking, might never have been at Malabar." When, too, will cease the influence of Payson's pulpit; for we read that during his ministry of twenty years, interrupted by frequent sicknesses, he admitted to the communion-table more than seven hundred who had never previously separated themselves from the thoughtless multitude. There are men now upon the stage, who trace generation after generation of their own spiritual children rising up and cheering the religious community. William Jay began to preach the gospel before he was sixteen years old; he delivered nearly a thousand sermons before he had passed his minority; for more than fifty years he has held the pastoral office at Bath, and been honored there with numerous proofs of his usefulness; among those who have been radically improved by his discourses, are the founder of Spring Hill College, the martyred missionary Williams, and several living preachers; his practical writings have been the comfort of hundreds of families morning and evening on both sides of the Atlantic, and long after he shall have ceased to speak in audible language for God, will he continue his silent ministrations to those who may survive him. If the Christian scholar would meditate often on this diffusive nature of truth and goodness, on the inherent value of even one mind, in its influence over its contemporaries, and still more over succeeding generations, an influence which is inevitable, resulting from our sympathetic nature; if he would follow this widening train of moral causes through time to the judgment, when a single soul shall be revealed as the spiritual benefactor of millions, he would then easily explain the words of an old English archbishop and keeper of the seals,¹ "I have passed through many places of honor and trust, both in church and State, more than any of my order in England for seventy years before. But were I assured that by my preaching I had converted but one soul to God, I should herein take more comfort than

¹ John Williams.

in all the honors and offices that have been bestowed upon me." He that converteth one soul from the error of its way, shall not only save that being from death, but shall hide a great multitude that no man can number of the sins of others.

The dignity and importance of the preacher's work may be illustrated by the short time which it demands for securing an immense good. It operates with the most powerful of instruments, moral truth; upon the most susceptible substances, the intellect, heart, will; with the special aid of the Divine Spirit, who often accomplishes extensive good by very limited means. From the laws of our nature, that a sentiment once communicated to the soul is never wholly effaced; that it cannot be confined to the spirit which still retains it, but will be expressed in varied forms, sometimes without design but always with effect; that moral influence is diffusive and expansive, diverging from a single point and pervading a wide area, and never ending even when ages end; from such laws as these it follows, that when a preacher makes a good impression upon one man, woman or child, he benefits indirectly a multitude, and when he produces the slightest change in their character, he produces what will never terminate, but will always increase. In a single discourse he may put in operation a system of causes which will result in the moral renovation of thousands who never heard his name. On a certain Sabbath about the year 1642, an obscure and unpolished clergyman from the country supplied the pulpit of Edmund Calamy, the noted London divine. When the congregation were apprized that their favorite preacher was not to address them, many of them left the house. There was a young man, a stranger in the metropolis, who had come up to hear Mr. Calamy, and being disappointed in his expectation was entreated "to go and hear Mr. Jackson, a man of prodigious application as a scholar, and of considerable celebrity as a preacher." But the young man was an invalid, and was unwilling to walk further. He had been for five years in deep despondency of mind; he had at one season avoided almost all intercourse with men for three months; he "could scarcely be induced to speak, and when he did say anything it was in so disordered a manner as rendered him a wonder to many." The discourse of the country clergyman was from the words, Why are ye so fearful, Oh ye of little faith, Matt. 8: 26. It was a healing balm to this youthful invalid. It was a prominent means of relieving him

from his moral, mental, and thereby of his corporeal maladies. He began a life of new Christian activity as well as of new confidence and joy; he acquired an extensive influence both in church and State; for five years he held the office of Vice Chancellor in Oxford University, and for nine years the office next to this in literary importance; he numbered among his pupils John Locke, William Penn, Dr. South, Dr. Whitby, Sir Christopher Wren and Launcelot Addison, father of the celebrated Essayist; he published during his life seven folio volumes, twenty-one quartos, thirty octavos, and is still revered as a kind of prince and oracle among divines. It was John Owen, who thus ascribed his religious health and much of his usefulness to a single sermon. He was never able to find out the residence or even the name of the man to whose words he owed his freedom from a wasting melancholy. It seemed as if a spirit from a land of mysteries had touched him, and straightway vanished into heaven. But though we cannot ascertain who was the instrument of this eventful cure, we know that the word of God healeth all diseases of the mind, and a single application of it may revive the spirit of him who is to be the physician of many souls.

One of the most effective discourses noticed by modern historians, was preached at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, by John Livingston, an ancestor of the well known family who bear that surname in our own land. He was at that time chaplain to the Countess of Wigtoun, was licensed but not ordained as a minister, and was only twenty-seven years of age. His discourse is thus alluded to by Rev. Mr. Fleming of Cambuslang; "I can speak on sure ground, that near five hundred had at that time a discernible change wrought in them, of whom most proved to be lively Christians afterwards. It was the sowing of a seed through Clyddisdale, so that some of the most eminent Christians in that country could date either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation of their case from that day." The religious interest, resulting from this single effort of a youthful licentiate, extended throughout the west of Scotland, and among the inhabitants of the north of Ireland, and terminated in the moral improvement of thousands who, but for the sympathy excited by this discourse, might have remained indifferent to the claims of virtue.

Similar effects were produced by a sermon of President Edwards, preached July 8, 1741, at Enfield, Connecticut. It

gave a great impulse to the powerful religious movement which began, about that time, to engross the attention of the American churches, and which is supposed to have resulted in nearly thirty thousand instances of spiritual reformation. During the delivery of the sermon the auditors groaned and shrieked convulsively, and their outcries of distress drowned the preacher's voice, and forced him to make a long pause. His text was, *Their foot shall slide in due time, Deut. 32: 35*; and at a certain instance of his repeating these words, some of the audience seized fast hold of the pillars and braces of the meeting-house, they felt so sensibly that their feet were sliding at the very moment into ruin. A large number of the most influential of the hearers gave themselves no rest, till they had planted their feet on the sure ways of Zion. That discourse, which then alarmed hundreds of the citizens of Enfield and the adjoining towns, has been preached again and again to the social circle, and the fireside group in this and other lands, and it is not too much to say that new monuments of its efficacy are rising up every year.

Nor is it only by a single discourse that such great effects are produced; it is sometimes by a single sentence in that discourse. The very first clause of a sermon may seize the attention of some leading mind, and may never cease its transforming efficacy until that mind becomes an efficient advocate for God. Some plain statement, made without any anticipation of its peculiar consequences, is often referred to by a grateful convert as the point on which his destiny was suspended. Many instances are on record of a permanent transformation, wrought by the remembrance of a word with its accompanying gesture and look. "Oh, my hearers, the wrath to come! the wrath to come!"—these were the abrupt clauses that fell from the lips of an eminent orator, and fell in such a way as to sink like lead into the heart of one youth, who could not rest until he had become qualified for a useful station in the Christian ministry. "God only is great," were the words of Massillon, and all his hearers rose and reverently bowed. "Oh eternity! Oh eternity! Oh eternity!" were the closing words of a discourse from M. Bridaine, and they seemed to concentrate into one sudden view the whole subject that had been discussed, and the audience were melted down, and not a few permanently humbled.

If the students of moral history were as watchful as the

students of nature, they would often trace the influence of a phrase over such an extent of space and time, that it would excite our wonder and be gazed at like a *lusus naturae*. As we find the remains of fishes on mountains and deserts, so we may discover the effects of a spoken word where we would almost as soon have looked for the identical breath with which the word was uttered. Botanists have admired the wise provision of nature for the dissemination of seeds. The embryo plant is encircled with gossamer and swept by the wind over streams and wastes, and comes up in a strange land. And so a pithy remark is appended, as it were, to a tuft of down, and brings forth its fruit far away from where it was first uttered. There was a native of Dartmouth, England, a member of the trained band of Charles the First, who was present at the beheading of that monarch, had some acquaintance with Oliver Cromwell, and subsequently found his way to Massachusetts, and lived first in the merchants' service at Marblehead, and afterwards on a farm in Middleborough. At the age of fifteen years, while yet in his native land, he heard the pious Flavel preach from the text, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha; and at the age of a hundred years, while sitting in his field at Middleborough, he recalled the sermon that he had heard eighty-five years before, and the scenes that ensued when Flavel dismissed the auditory. He vividly remembered the solemn appearance of the preacher rising to pronounce the benediction, then pausing, and at length exclaiming with a piteous tone, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ is anathema maranatha." This sinner of a hundred years became at length alarmed by his reminiscence, and particularly by the fact that no minister had ever blessed him. He pondered on that closing remark of Flavel; and at the beginning of the second century of his life gave evidence to the church that he was worthy to be enrolled among her members. He began to address pious counsel to his children, and adorned his profession fifteen years, when he went to receive the benediction of God. His sepulchre remaineth with us, and his dwelling-spot is remembered to this day. The moral of his epitaph is that a phrase dropped into the mind of a lad on one continent and in one century, may lie buried long in dust, and then spring up and bear fruit on another continent and in another century, and be

destined to perpetual remembrance. Such instances remind us that a thousand hallowed associations cluster around the preacher; that his words come with power, not as his words but those of God; that they borrow efficacy from the house, the time, the whole scene of their utterance, and are retained in the memory long after they seem to be lost. A movement of the arm or eye has often a meaning in the pulpit which it has nowhere else; for it is enveloped there with new means of suggestion, and is witnessed by men of excited, quick-moving sensibilities. The preacher stands like one insulated and charged with the electric fluid; the touch is now startling, which a few minutes ago was like the touch of a common man. Or, if we may change the figure, he is like the surgeon operating on the most delicate tissues, and a hair's breadth movement of the knife saves or kills. That is not an office for the indolent, weak or trifling, in which the causes are for a moment and the effects for eternity; the causes are a short phrase condensing a world of import, or a breath of air making a significant interjection, or a line on the face indicative of a thousand hopes or fears; and the effects are, what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man."

The high character of the preacher's work is further illustrated by the bad effects which he may produce in a very short time. The evil that may ensue from an office poorly filled, sets out in relief the good that may be done by a fit incumbent. He is an important man who may do much hurt, even if he can never become a positive and decided benefactor. Though an armed maniac is powerless for good, he is guarded with jealous care merely for his tendency to mischief. Now the preacher may benumb the intellect which he ought to arouse and brighten. He may darken the conscience that he ought to illuminate, and may deprave instead of purifying the tastes and affections. As the soul which, with aid from above, he might have allured towards heaven, would have gained without ceasing new capacity for holiness and bliss, so the soul which he now indisposes for a pious life will be perpetually drinking in new sin and new punishment. The sin is just as debasing as the holiness would have been exalting, and the punishment is as refined and spiritual and keen, as would have been the reward. Nor does this soul go on alone to its ruin. Spirits move in sympathy, and make companions for their gloom if they do not find

them. The man whom the preacher hardens in guilt imparts a like hardening influence to at least three or four of his friends, perhaps of his household; and these will not shut up the contagion within their own breasts, but will spread it perhaps through nine or twelve of their admirers or dependents; and in this geometrical ratio the progress of the contamination may not cease in this world till the millennium, nor in the world to come till spirits no longer assimilate with each other. If the tide of virtuous influence flows upward from generation to generation, what shall be the breadth and depth and bitterness of that river of death that flows downward! As the good influence of Augustine is conspicuous at this late day, so likewise the evil which he did lives after him. The asceticism of monks, the gloominess of certain religious systems, the rudeness of some theological terms, and the results emanating therefrom, have an intimate connection with his labors. Nor is it only from the aggregate of the preacher's life, that such evil may take its rise. It is from one sermon and one sentence that a hearer may start in his course of desperation, and go on diverging further and further from the line of hope. A single unguarded expression has gone from the pulpit, and eased a conscience that had for days been extorting the complaint, Oh wretched man that I am! A rough remark on the perdition of infants has been known so to shock a hearer, as to make him leave the house of God and never listen again to an evangelical ministry. A morose appellative on the doctrine of eternal punishment was referred to by an enemy of that doctrine, as the first thing that inflamed his mind against it, and induced him to become a minister of false tidings, proclaiming peace to large assemblies for whom there was no peace, said the Lord. "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved;" this was one of the first texts from which Mr. Murray discoursed on his first visit to Boston. "If one should buy a rich cloth, and make it into a garment, and then burn the garment, but save the remnant, what must be thought of him;" this was one of his first sentences. Homely and clumsy as was the argument, it had a strange and sad effect upon a young man of enterprise who heard it; he carried it to his home in one of our inland towns, and made it the means of awakening a curiosity and a prejudice that terminated in the defection of a large neighborhood from the faith once delivered to the saints. From

that neighborhood have gone several lettered men, who have blended the fascinations of learning with the ungainly creed of their childhood; and may it not be a rational fear that several congregations will be seduced into a ruinous neglect of religion by a train of influences that started from the one witless illustration of John Murray? And well would it be if *all* the evil that flows from the pulpit were the emanation of an unsanctified ministry. Does not much of it come from the imperfect addresses of even pious divines; from their bad utterance, that gives an unkind meaning to goodly words; from their style of composition, that makes a hearer turn away the richest truth coming in such repulsive attire; from their want of forethought and skill; from an undue neglect of prayer and study; from clouded views, low purposes, little faith, obtuse feeling?¹ And, moreover, must it not deepen our sense of the preacher's critical situation to reflect, that he often does not foresee the results of his language? He does good without knowing it, and evil also. A sentence that hastily escapes him has performed its work as hastily, and has wrought a mischief which a century's discoursing will never repair. God has concealed from us the day of our death, so that every day may be the pivot on which our eternity is seen to depend. He has hidden from us the names of the elect, so that no sinner may fail of applying to himself the invitations of grace, and no Christian refuse the duty of perseverance in view of a final preservation promised of God. There is this apparent indefiniteness and obscurity flung over the works and ways of Jehovah, and therefore the seriousness which might otherwise be confined to a single point, is now diffused through a whole existence. If the preacher could always determine the moment when his auditory would be most impressible, he might set a double guard upon that moment. If he knew exactly what discourse or what paragraph would happen to seize the peculiar attention of an inquirer or caviller, a bright child or an inquisitive student, he might lay out his great strength on a few sentences and feel somewhat secure. He can indeed foresee that some parts of his ministration will require more skill than others; but he will often find a surprising efficacy where he looked

¹ A melancholy illustration of the evil consequences which may result from a single unguarded expression of a clergyman, is suggested in the *Memoirs of Aaron Burr*, Vol. I. p. 28.

for nothing. A discourse of Payson, which he thought little of and wrote almost entirely at a sitting, was one of the most effective that he ever preached. "I could not but wonder," he says, "to see God work by it." So too the sentence which the preacher utters without even a thought of its power, excites a prejudice or foment an evil passion, from the effects of which the mind will never be restored. The word fell almost unbidden from the pulpit, and it was perverted to the eternal sorrow of one who listened to little beside that word. The critical and momentous character of the preacher's work is therefore spread out over all its parts, even the most minute. He sometimes labors on his arguments and has no fear for his illustrations; but his illustrations are misunderstood and more than undo the effect of his reasoning. He neglects to prove his doctrine, and many from that accident infer that the doctrine is false. He fails to apply it, and thereby satisfies some with a dead faith. When he raises his hand to enforce a saying, he is like the man of old who drew a bow at a venture, and knew not whom or what he should smite. We have read of navigators, whose hair turned from black to gray while they were steering their bark through a dangerous pass, and feeling that a movement of the helm, even for a single inch, would be for the crew's life or death. But it is often told with seeming surprise, that Martin Luther never ascended the pulpit without fear;¹ as if there were no cause for his fear when immortal interests may have been suspended upon one felicitous or inapposite remark. It is because Paul understood the quickness of human sympathies, and the facility of doing evil, and the certainty of doing something either for the hardening or the mellowing of his hearers, that he preached with an alternation of hope and grief and courage and much heaviness of spirit. Nothing can be a more philosophical inference from such dubiousness of result, than the command of an ancient preacher, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." He who gives great heed to some things in his preaching and none at all to others, is like one

¹ "I am now an old man," said Martin Luther, "and have been a long time employed in the business of preaching; but I never ascend the pulpit without trembling."

who watched all the night and let the thief enter in the morning; who built his walls thick and high, and left only one aperture open to the enemy. The spiritual watchman ought *always* to pray and *never* to faint.

It were unphilosophical to object that a single discourse or sentence is only an *occasion* of the good or evil alluded to above, and should not be magnified into a *cause*; that the same good or evil would have been produced, even if there had been no such occasions, and was associated with them by a mere accident. The truth is, the occasion is as really needful for the effect, as is the cause; it is the OCCASIONAL CAUSE. The event may have taken place, perhaps, without that specific occasion, and *it may not*. The fact remains unaltered; the men who have been instrumental of good or evil are worthy of our praise or blame, even if other persons might, in event of need, have had the same instrumentality. Had it not been for Washington, we might perhaps have achieved our independence. Had it not been for our revolution, he might perhaps have been an eminent man. Had it not been for Judas, our Saviour might have been betrayed. Had it not been for money, Judas might have been a base man. Still, it might have been otherwise. The actual occasions of these good or evil events were, perhaps, *essential* to the events themselves; and are worthy of our regard as the conditions, even if not the indispensable conditions, of great effects. The contrary supposition diminishes our interest in the facts of history and in real life.

The dignity and importance of the preacher's work, may be illustrated still more clearly, by the fact that God has devised and approved it as the chief instrument of promoting his glory among men. What God has instituted may not be called common; and his mandate is not so much in the useful words of human philanthropy, 'disseminate tracts,' 'organize Sabbath schools,' as in the words of the Saviour's wisdom, 'Go ye and *preach* the gospel.' God has so formed the voice of the minister and the ear of the people, that the philosophical consequence is, "faith cometh by hearing," if the Spirit be present with his aid. He has so made the hand and the face of the speaker, and the eye and heart of the hearer, that the sacred office seems to have its foundation laid in the very constitution of the body and soul, and like the Sabbath, to have what is technically called a moral as well as positive ground-work. The eye, voice, lips, arm and

attitude of such men as Mason and Stillman seem to have an edifying power, because they are symbols of the truth which edifies. This mysterious relation between the spirit of the gospel and the tones of voice which express it, is a sign that the preacher's office is no arbitrary device. But the Christian ministry is not merely of Divine institution, it has received peculiar marks of the Divine approval, Christ himself was a preacher, and has thus imparted a lasting dignity to the office. Before he pronounced the sermon on the mount, which was the ordination sermon for his disciples, he spent a whole night in prayer; for he knew the weighty results which would follow from the ministry which he was to institute. He uttered a parable for the purpose of showing that the preached word is living and germinant, and that men ought therefore to "take heed how they hear." As Head of the new dispensation he diffused the knowledge of his gospel over what was termed the whole world, and planted churches in great numbers, before a single book of the New Testament was written. He sent forth apostles with no message save what came from their own mouths, and in obedience to his last command, "they went everywhere preaching the word." God testified his approval of their labors by the fact, that on the same day with one of Peter's sermons 'there were added to (the church) about three thousand souls,' and a few days afterward 'the number of the men (who believed) was about five thousand.' And in all succeeding times there have been some who preached, and their words were "as goads and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies; but when their posthumous sermons were read on the mute parchment, it became a wonder where was the hiding of their power. And there have likewise been some who reasoned justly and felt right, but their style of writing and speaking was so ill conformed to God's laws for the proclaiming of his word, that the hearer learned a falsehood when the reader would have learned a truth, and God blessed them as men and authors, but seldom owned them as living preachers of his word. The seals of peculiar favor which this office has received from God are also found in the direct expressions of the men whom he inspired. We hear indeed of "the foolishness of preaching;" it is not, however, a real foolishness but only a seeming one to the Greeks and them that perish. As in the soberest kind of irony we call him a great and wise man, who is great and wise only in his own esteem, so the apostle calls that work

foolishness, which is so only in the regard of perverse men, and which though fruitless without aid from heaven, is yet "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Jeremy Taylor did well in saying, "Let no preacher compare one ordinance with another, as prayer with preaching to the disparagement of either, but use both in their proper seasons and according to their appointed order;" yet there are some inspired eulogiums on the work of preaching that can well besit no other mode of Christian appeal. It were a singular fancy to conceive of Paul as saying in his first chapter to the Corinthians, 'I thank God that I preached the gospel to none of you but Crispus and Gaius, and I preached also to the household of Stephanas; besides I know not whether I preached to any other, for Christ sent me, not to preach the gospel but to administer sacraments.' The true language of an apostle is,—“Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach.” “For a necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.” “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, *especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.*”¹

We have spoken of the sacred office as the chief instrument of glorifying God. And here is its chief dignity. If it were nothing but the means of refining and saving men, it would command our homage; but that which it does for men, it also does, as a thing of course, for the illustration of the divine excellence. In more senses than one, whoever presents a cup of water to a sick man performs thereby a service to his father in heaven. It is the highest privilege conceivable to be an instrument of setting forth the grace of Jehovah by enlarging the number of his redeemed. But if the preacher fail of this highest honor, he still may not weep as one bereaved of all hope. His faithful message shall not return void to heaven, but shall accomplish a great work. All is not lost when man is lost, but the wrath of man shall pay a reluctant tribute to the doctrines which the preacher reveals. He magnifies the law and is sure of illustrating the holiness and justice of the Lawgiver, even if he be the melancholy savor of death unto men. Whatever right step he takes, is taken for the exaltation of the Divine character in some one of its features. The honor of the law he is certain of, or else the brighter glory of the gospel. A heathen

¹ See 1 Cor. 1 : 14—17. 9 : 16.

writer has said that "to know the Creator is to glorify him," and thus to make him known is to render sure honor to his name. Nor does the preacher illustrate the Divine excellences for the whole world merely; he is a minister to the praise of God for other ranks of being. The apostle who "magnifies his office" may say, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the church* the manifold wisdom of God."

Exalted and momentous as is the work of him who is called to be the ambassador and even the mouth of Jehovah, the work will rise yet higher in its worth and grandeur, as it is performed with increased ability. If a sermon be great in its theme, and good in its influence, then the more carefully the theme is studied so much the more important will be the sermon; the more skilfully the preacher adapts his style to the nature of man, so much the more exuberant is the fruit he may anticipate. True, he is only an instrument, and God is a sovereign, and may bless the feeblest agency rather than the strongest. He may do so, but commonly does not. If he require means, he thereby requires the best means. If he approve of preaching, then he gives most of his approval to the best, most real preaching. It is generally his sovereign purpose, to honor with the greatest success such instruments as are, in themselves, most wisely fitted to secure the end which he secures by them. He rules the wind and the tide as he pleases, and yet the most cunning mariner will so adjust the sails and prow and helm, as to receive the largest share of the blessings coming from absolute sovereignty. The man who is wise in winning souls to Christ will find out, what are the laws according to which the decrees of heaven are fulfilled among hearers of the word, and he will strive to shape his discourses so as to meet these laws. And he is the best husbandman in the moral vineyard, who studies most faithfully the nature of the soil and the qualities of the seed, who plants and waters at the hour and in the way which the soundest discretion advises, and moreover is sending up the devoutest and most persevering prayers to heaven whence alone cometh increase. But what manner of man

must he be who is making these intricate observations, and toiling for a perfect conformity to the laws of God's highest workmanship! What agonizing of the inner spirit must he often endure, when selecting and aiming the dart which may save or destroy a hearer dear to him as an own son! If a Christian is the highest style of man, what must a preacher be? If an undevout astronomer is mad, what shall we say of an undevout pastor and bishop? If any man should be one of various learning and severe, protracted study, of generous impulses and painful watchings, of intense longing after improvement, and of daily progress in mental and moral culture, what must be the character and purposes of the consecrated man who stands between the great God and a hostile congregation,—who knows that at every opening of his mouth he may so affect his hearers as to make them gems in the crown of his rejoicing, or make himself responsible for their ruin? The homely words that Philip Henry wrote on the day of his ordination over a small people, express the feelings of every true preacher: "I did this day receive *as much honor and work*, as ever I shall be able to know what to do with. Lord Jesus! proportion supplies accordingly."

An honor and a work indeed at all times, is the Christian ministry; but emphatically such is it in an age like our own. When Philip Henry preached, the people were less intelligent, less inquisitive, books were more difficult of access, the standard of popular eloquence was lower, the demands upon the ministry less imperative than they are at present. Then it was easier than it is now, for the clergyman to maintain a marked ascendancy over his people. This ascendancy ought to be still preserved, and hence the character of the modern pulpit should be more elevated than that of the pulpit two hundred years ago.

And if the preacher's work for our times is peculiarly exalted, so is it in an eminent degree for our nation. Other communities have severe laws and a rigorous police for the preservation of order; we must maintain the public quiet by a moral influence. Other nations retain standing armies as a means of suppressing cabals among the people; we must rely on the pulpit for our security against insurgents. The institutions of other lands are supported by their venerable antiquity; ours, by that sober conviction which comes, in part, from the preaching of the law of God. In many countries there is no popular orator except the clergyman; hence

is it easy for him to acquire a commanding authority over the multitude, who deem it a great exploit to speak in public. But we live in a land of declaimers, and the danger is that unless the occupants of our pulpit shall discipline their reasoning powers, their feelings and voices more than they have sometimes done, they will be surpassed in respect of eloquence by our statesmen, lawyers, lecturers and debaters. The popular mind has received an impulse among us, which adds an uncommon responsibility to our clergymen. Just so far as our citizens are distinguished for enterprise, thoughtfulness, independence of judgment, a power of controlling the minds of other men, in that degree does the work of preaching the Gospel to them rise in importance.

And if there is an unusual dignity investing the pulpit of an enlightened and free nation, there must be a greatness altogether peculiar in the preaching of divine truth to such of our Christian sects, as preserve a simple style of worship and an independent form of polity. These denominations are left to rely on the proclaiming of the Gospel, as their chief attraction. If the Romanists had no Bossuet or Bourdaloue or Massillon, still they would have a fascinating ritual to supply the place of interesting sermons. But the more apostolical churches have but little left them, when the "preacher's throne" is filled by incompetent men. They depend on the intellectual mode of administering truth. When this fails, all fails. Because they depend upon it, therefore is its dignity increased. Because their *preacher* is more important than their *masters of ceremonies*, because he receives but little adventitious aid from imposing rites, therefore should he bestow an unprecedented amount of labor upon his discourses, make them prominent and attractive by their length such as meets the demands of a contemplative mind, by their style such as is faithful to the sentiment, by their delivery such as is true to the style, by their appropriateness, richness and variety of thought, their spirit of sympathy with all that is innocent in man, their outflowings of nature as it is quickened and freshened by grace, their mellowing, genial and healthful influence on the feelings. It is often said that because our religious ceremonies are so modest, we cannot hope to exert a controlling influence over the people. And in recent days, a tendency has arisen to make our order of worship more ostentatious than it has been. The origin of this tendency may be traced to our low appreciation of pulpit

excellence. We have forgotten, that none of the fine arts can fascinate the mind so much and so long as eloquence; that painting and sculpture and architecture and music are less alluring than 'the gracious words which may come from the mouth of the preacher.' Eloquence is the natural accompaniment of religious truth. It is indeed, a part of this truth. Without it we cannot preach the whole Gospel, for the Gospel is itself eloquence. In some states of society men may be controlled by a parade of ceremonies, but the leading spirits in our community are governed by more intellectual means; by thought, by religious thought, by thought seen in its simple beauty, working without the aid of borrowed ornaments, expressed as it ought to be in the words of one who understands not books only but men also, and with the voice of one who feels what he is uttering. We are not poor enough to need the trappings of formality to cover our spiritual nakedness. Never was a form of worship more attractive than ours; its simplicity is its winning feature; for it does not hide or veil those truths for which the mind of man was made, and in which, whether holy or selfish, it must feel some kind of interest. But this form should be properly observed; and the proper observance of it requires an intelligent perception, a hearty love of sound doctrine. The fascinating ceremony of our Puritan worship must be, a style of discourse which expands the intellect while it subdues the heart. Never let our politicians have occasion to despise our clergymen; for the genius of Puritanism requires that its ministers be men of stature. Never let our literary journalists have reason to adopt, in describing our pulpit, the supercilious tone which has been common among the critics of Britain in describing theirs. "Malignity itself," says an Edinburgh reviewer, "cannot accuse our pulpits and theological presses of beguiling us by the witchcraft of genius. They stand clear of the guilt of ministering to the disordered heart the anodynes of wit or fancy. Abstruse and profound sophistries are not in the number of their offences. It is mere calumny to accuse them of lulling the conscience to repose by any syren songs of imagination. If the bolts of inspired truth are diverted from their aim, it is no longer by enticing words of man's wisdom. Divinity fills up her weekly hour by the grave and gentle excitement of an orthodox discourse, or by toiling through her narrow round of systematic dogmas, or by creeping along some low level of

schoolboy morality, or by addressing the initiated in mythic phraseology ; but she has ceased to employ lips such as those of Chrysostom and Bourdaloue. The sanctity of sacred things is lost in the familiar routine of sacred words. Religion has acquired a technology, and a set of conventional formulas, torpifying those who use and those who hear them." But so must it not be among us, for the high character of our clergy is the only "national establishment" that our church has to rest on. We cannot maintain the authority of religious truth, unless it be preached by men to whom all others shall have reason to look *up*. The sermons that were "delivered at Golden Grove, to the family and domestics of Lord Carberry, or, at most, to a few gentlemen and ladies of that secluded neighborhood, and to as many of the peasantry of the estate as could understand English"¹ should be surpassed in excellence by the sermons delivered before a thinking, an inquisitive, a reading, a free people, who have, and who know that they have, much of the civil and ecclesiastical power in their own hands, and who require of their preacher more acumen, more learning, more of moral excellence than has been demanded in other lands and times and churches. Our Sabbath Schools, and Bible classes, our popular commentaries, our cheap books, our lyceums, yea and even our railroads make it needful for the minister to push his investigations over and far beyond the line to which his predecessors advanced, distant as that line may be, and to search for wisdom among treasures yet hidden. For all this expense of energy, his pecuniary emolument is but small ; therefore must he be a man of generous philanthropy. He must undertake his labor for the love of it, and the love of its good results. In the best sense of the term, he must be a great man, for self denial in the service of mankind is true greatness. He must have that large-hearted professional enthusiasm which in this land, at this day, is essential to the true respectability of the pulpit. Such was the enthusiasm of Richard Baxter. In his *Dying Thoughts*, this veteran in the sciences affirms, "For forty years I have no reason to think that I ever labored in vain." He toiled in season and out of season, in the study and in the sanctuary, he published a hundred and sixty-eight volumes, all of them displaying acumen and an amount of erudition that surprises us ; yet, in

¹ See Heber's *Life of Jeremy Taylor*, pp. 189, 190.

the conclusion of the whole matter, he thus avows his preference for the preacher's duties above those of the philosopher even: "I have looked over Hutton, Vives, Erasmus, Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon and many other critical grammarians, and all Gruter's critical volumes. I have read almost all the physics and metaphysics I could hear of. I have wasted much of my time among loads of historians, chronologers and antiquaries. I despise none of their learning; all truth is useful. Mathematics which I have least of, I find a pretty manlike sport; but if I have no other knowledge than these, what were my understanding worth? What a dreaming dotard should I be? I have higher thoughts of the schoolmen than Erasmus and our other grammarians had. I much value the method and sobriety of Aquinas, the subtlety of Occam, the plainness of Durandus, the solidity of Ariemiensis, the profundity of Bradwardine, the excellent acuteness of many of their followers; of Aureolus, Capreolus, Bannes, Alvarez, Zumel, etc.; of Mayro, Lychetus, Trombeta, Faber, Meurisse, Rada, etc.; of Ruiz, Pennattes, Saurez, Vasquez, etc.; of Hurtado, of Albertinus, of Lud à Dola, and many others. But how *loath* should I be to take such sauce for my food, and such recreations for my business. The jingling of too much and false philosophy among them often drowns the noise of Aaron's bells. *I feel myself much better in Herbert's temple.*"

DIALOGUES ON ELOQUENCE,

PARTICULARLY THE

ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

BY

M. DE FENELON,

ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.

The following translation of Fenelon's Dialogues was made by Rev. William Stevenson, M. A., Rector of Morningthorp in Norfolk, England.

P R E F A C E ,

BY THE CHEVALIER RAMSAY.

BOTH the ancients and the moderns have treated of eloquence, with different views, and in different ways; as logicians, as grammarians, and as critics: but we still wanted an author, who should handle this delicate subject as a philosopher, and a Christian: and this the late Archbishop of Cambray has done in the following dialogues.

In the ancient writers we find many solid precepts of rhetoric, and very just rules laid down with great exactness: but they are oftentimes too numerous, too dry; and, in fine, rather curious than useful. Our author reduces the essential rules of this wonderful art, to these three points: proving, painting, and moving the passions.

To qualify his orator for proving, or establishing any truth, he would have him a philosopher, who knows how to enlighten the understanding, while he moves the passions, and to act at once upon all the powers of the mind, not only by placing the truth in so clear a light as to gain attention and assent, but likewise, by moving all the secret springs of the soul, to make it love that truth it is convinced of. In one word, our author would have his orator's mind filled with bright, useful truths, and the most exalted views.

That he may be able to paint, or describe well, he should have a poetic kind of enthusiasm; and know how to employ beautiful figures, lively images, and bold touches, when the subject requires them. But this art ought to be entirely concealed; or, if it must appear, it should seem to be a just copy of nature. Wherefore our author rejects all such false ornaments as serve

only to please the ear with harmonious sounds, and the imagination with ideas that are more gay and sparkling, than just and solid.

To move the passions, he would have an orator set every truth in its proper place; and so connect them that the first may make way for the second, and the next support the former; so that the discourse shall gradually advance in strength and clearness, till the hearers perceive the whole weight and force of the truth. And then he ought to display it in the liveliest images; and both in his words and gesture use all those affecting movements, that are proper to express the passions he would excite.

It is by reading the ancients that we must form our taste, and learn the art of eloquence in all its extent. But seeing that some of the ancients themselves have their defects, we must read them with caution and judgment. Our learned author distinguishes the genuine beauties of the purest antiquity, from the false ornaments used in after ages; he points out what is excellent, and what is faulty, both in sacred and profane authors; and shows us that the eloquence of the Holy Scripture, in many places, surpasses that of the Greeks and Romans, in native simplicity, liveliness, grandeur, and in everything that can recommend truth to our assent and admiration.

DIALOGUES

CONCERNING ELOQUENCE.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE, BETWEEN *A.* AND *B.* AND *C.*

A. WELL, Sir, I suppose you have been hearing the sermon to which you would have carried me. I have but very little curiosity that way, and am content with our parish minister.

B. I was charmed with my preacher. You had a great loss, Sir, in not hearing him. I have hired a pew, that I may not miss one of his Lent sermons. O! he is a wonderful man. If you did but once hear him, you could never bear any other.

A. If it be so, I am never to hear him. I would not have any one preacher give me a distaste of all others; on the contrary, I should choose one that will give me such a relish and respect for the word of God, as may dispose me the more to hear it preached everywhere. But since I have lost so much by not hearing this fine discourse you are so pleased with, you may make up part of that loss, if you will be so good as to communicate to us what you remember of it.

B. I should only mangle the sermon, by endeavoring to repeat any part of it. There were a hundred beauties in it that one cannot recollect, and which none but the preacher himself could display.

A. Well; but let us at least know something of his design, his proofs, his doctrine, and the chief truths he enlarged on. Do you remember nothing? Were you inattentive?

B. Far from it: I never listened with more attention and pleasure.

C. What is the matter then; do you want to be entreated?

B. No; but the preacher's thoughts were so refined, and depended so much on the turn and delicacy of his expres-

sions, that though they charmed me while I heard them, they cannot be easily recollected; and though one could remember them, if they be expressed in other words, they would not seem to be the same thoughts; but would lose all their grace and force.

A. Surely, Sir, these beauties must be very fading, if they vanish thus upon the touch, and will not bear a review. I should be much better pleased with a discourse which has more body in it, and less spirit; that things might make a deeper impression on the mind, and be more easily remembered. What is the end of speaking, but to persuade people, and to instruct them in such truths as they can retain?

C. Now you have begun, Sir, I hope you will go on with this useful subject.

A. I wish I could prevail with you, Sir, to give us some general notion of the elegant harangue you heard.

B. Since you are so very urgent, I will tell you what I can recollect of it. The text was this:¹ 'I have eaten ashes like bread.' Now could any one make a happier choice for a text for Ash-Wednesday? He showed us that, according to this passage, ashes ought this day to be the food of our souls; then in his preamble he ingeniously interwove the story of Artemesia, with regard to her husband's ashes. His² transition to his Ave Maria was very artful; and his division was extremely ingenious; you shall judge of it. 1. 'Though this dust,' said he, 'be a sign of repentance, it is a principle of felicity. 2. Though it seems to humble us, it is really a source of glory. 3. And though it represents death, it is a remedy that gives immortal life.' He turned this division various ways, and every time he gave it a new lustre by his

¹ Psalm cii. 9.

² The Romish preachers, in the preamble of their sermons, addressed themselves to the Virgin Mary; and are oftentimes very artful in their transition to it, as our author observes. We have a remarkable example of this in one of the greatest French orators, M. L'Esprit Flechier, bishop of Nismes, who seems to be oftener than once alluded to in these dialogues. In his panegyric on S. Joseph he introduces his Ave Maria thus:—Everything seems to concur to the glory of my subject; the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and Mary, are concerned in it; why may I not hope for the assistance of one of them, the grace of the other, and the intercessions of the Virgin? To whom we will address ourselves in those words that the angel said to her, and which S. Joseph no doubt often repeated; Hail! Mary, etc.—*Panegyrics*, Vol. I. p. 71.

antitheses. The rest of his discourse was not less bright and elegant; the language was polite; the thoughts new; the periods were harmonious; and each of them concluded with some surprising turn. He gave such just characters of common life, that his hearers found their various pictures faithfully drawn: and his exact anatomy of all the passions equalled the maxims of the great ROCHEFOUCAULT; in short, I think it was a masterpiece. But, Sir, I shall be glad to know your opinion of it.

A. I am unwilling to tell you my thoughts, or to lessen your esteem, of it. We ought to reverence the word of God; to improve ourselves by all the truths that a preacher explains; and avoid a critical humor, lest we should lessen the authority of the sacred function.

B. You have nothing to fear, Sir, at present. It is not out of curiosity that I ask your opinion, but because I would have clear notions of it, and such solid instructions as may not only satisfy myself, but be of use to others; for you know my profession obliges me to preach. Give us your thoughts therefore without any reserve; and do not be afraid either of contradicting or offending me.

A. Since you will have it so, I must obey your commands. To be free, then, I conclude, from your account of this sermon, that it was a very sorry one.¹

B. Why so?

A. Why; can a sermon, in which the Scripture is falsely applied, a scrap of profane history is told after a dry, childish manner, and vain affectation of wit runs throughout the whole; can such a sermon be good?

B. By no means; but I do not think that the sermon I heard is of that sort.

A. Have patience, and I doubt not but you and I shall agree. When the preacher chose these words for his text, 'I have eaten ashes like bread,' ought he to have amused his audience with observing some kind of relation between the

¹ "A preacher may propose a very regular method, prosecute it very exactly, express himself all along with abundance of accuracy, and, if you will, of elegance too; adorn the whole with many a fine flower and artificial trapping of language; in short, deliver a very pretty harangue, a very genteel discourse, as it is commonly termed; which yet may prove, after all, but a sorry sermon, and in reality good for little, but to amuse superficial judges, and to convince thorough ones that the man aspires to the reputation, without the qualifications of an orator."—FORDYCE, on *Pulpit Eloquence*.

mere sound of his text, and the ceremony of the day? Should he not first have explained the true sense of the words, before he applied them to the present occasion?

B. It had been better.

A. Ought he not, therefore, to have traced the subject a little higher, by entering into the true occasion and design of the Psalm, and explaining the context? Was it not proper for him to inquire, whether the interpretation he gave of the words was agreeable to the true meaning of them, before he delivered his own sense to the people, as if it were the word of God?

B. He ought to have done so: but what fault was there in his interpretation?

A. Why, I will tell you. David, (who was the author of the one hundred and second Psalm,) speaks of his own misfortunes: he tells us, that his enemies insulted him cruelly, when they saw him in the dust, humbled at their feet, and reduced (as he poetically expresses it) to 'eat ashes like bread,' and 'to mingle his drink with weeping.' Now, what relation is there between the complaints of David, driven from his throne, and persecuted by his son Absalom; and the humiliation of a Christian, who puts ashes on his forehead, to remind him of his mortality, and disengage him from sinful pleasures? Could the preacher find no other text in Scripture? Did Christ and his apostles, or the prophets, never speak of death, and the dust of the grave, to which all our pride and vanity must be reduced? Does not the Scripture contain many affecting images of this important truth? Might he not have been content with the words of Genesis,¹ which are so natural and proper for this ceremony, and chosen by the church itself? Should a vain delicacy make him afraid of too often repeating a text that the Holy Spirit has dictated, and which the church appoints to be used every year? Why should he neglect such a pertinent passage, and many other places of Scripture, to pitch on one that is not proper? This must flow from a depraved taste, and a fond inclination to say something that is new.

B. You grow too warm, Sir: supposing the literal sense of the text not to be the true meaning of it, the preacher's remarks might however be very fine and solid.

C. As for my part, I do not care whether a preacher's

¹ Gen. 3: 19.

thoughts be fine or not, till I am first satisfied of their being true. But, Sir, what say you to the rest of the sermon?

A. It was exactly of a piece with the text. How could the preacher give such misplaced ornaments to a subject in itself so terrifying, and amuse his hearers with an idle story of Artemesia's sorrow; when he ought to have alarmed them, and given them the most terrible images of death?

B. I perceive then you do not love turns of wit, on such occasions. But what would become of eloquence if it were stript of such ornaments? Would you confine everybody to the plainness of country preachers? Such men are useful among the common people; but persons of distinction have more delicate ears, and we must adapt our discourses to their polite taste.

A. You are now leading me off from the point. I was endeavoring to convince you, that the plan of the sermon was ill laid, and I was just going to touch upon the division of it; but I suppose you already perceive the reason why I dislike it, for the preacher lays down three quaint conceits for the subject of his whole discourse. When one chooses to divide a sermon, he should do it plainly, and give such a division as naturally arises from the subject itself, and gives light and just order to the several parts; such a division as may be easily remembered, and at the same time help to connect and retain the whole; in fine, a division that shows at once the extent of the subject, and of all its parts. But, on the contrary, here is a man who endeavors to dazzle his hearers, and puts them off with three points of wit, or puzzling riddles, which he turns and plies so dexterously, that they must fancy they saw some tricks of legerdemain.¹ Did this preacher use such a serious, grave manner of address, as might make you hope for something useful and important from him? But, to return to the point you proposed; did

¹ "A blind desire to shine and to please, is often at the expense of that substantial honor which might be obtained, were Christian orators to give themselves up to the pure emotions of piety, which so well agree with the sensibility necessary to eloquence."—*ABBE MAURY'S Principles of Eloquence*, sect. 9.

"Uncommon expressions, strong flashes of wit, pointed similes, and epigrammatic turns, especially when they recur too frequently, often disfigure, rather than embellish, a discourse. It commonly happens, in such cases, that twenty insipid conceits are found for one thought which is really beautiful."—*HUME'S Essays*.

you not ask me whether I meant to banish eloquence from the pulpit?

B. Yes. I fancy that is your drift.

A. Think you so? Pray what do you mean by eloquence?

B. It is the art of speaking well.

A. Has this art no other end, besides that of speaking well? Have not men some design in speaking? Or do they talk only for the sake of talking.

B. They speak to please, and to persuade others.

A. Pray let us carefully distinguish these two things. Men talk in order to persuade; that is certain: and too often they speak likewise to please others. But while one endeavors to please, he has another view, which, though more distant, ought to be his chief aim. A man of probity has no other design in pleasing others, than that he may the more effectually inspire them with the love of justice, and other virtues, by representing them as most amiable. He who seeks to advance his own interest, his reputation or his fortune, strives to please, only that he may gain the affection and esteem of such as can gratify his ambition, or his avarice: so that this very design of pleasing is still but a different manner of persuasion that the orator aims at; for he pleases others to inveigle their affection; that he may thereby persuade them to what advances his interest.

B. You cannot but own then that men often speak to please. The most ancient orators had this view. Cicero's orations plainly show that he labored hard for reputation; and who will not believe the same of Isocrates, and Demosthenes too? All the panegyrists were more solicitous for their own honor, than for the fame of their heroes; and they extolled a prince's glory to the skies, chiefly because they hoped to be admired for their ingenious manner of praising him. This ambition seems to have been always reckoned commendable both among the Greeks and the Romans; and such emulation brought eloquence to its perfection; it inspired men with noble thoughts and generous sentiments, by which the ancient republics were made to flourish. The advantageous light in which eloquence appeared in great assemblies, and the ascendancy it gave the orator over the people, made it to be admired, and helped to spread polite learning. I cannot see, indeed, why such an emulation should be blamed even among Christian orators; provided

they did not show an indecent affectation in their discourses, nor in the least enervate the precepts of the gospel. We ought not to censure what animates young people, and forms our greatest preachers.

A. You have here put several things together, which, if you please, Sir, we will consider separately; and observe some method in inquiring what we ought to conclude from them. But let us above all things avoid a wrangling humor, and examine the subject with calmness and temper, like persons who are afraid of nothing so much as of error, and let us place the true point of honor in a candid acknowledgment of our mistakes, whenever we perceive them.

B. That is the exact state of my mind, or at least I judge it to be so; and I entreat you to tell me when you find me transgressing this equitable rule.

A. We will not as yet talk of what relates to preachers; for that point may be more seasonably considered afterwards. Let us begin with those orators, whose examples you vouch-ed. By mentioning Demosthenes and Isocrates together, you disparage the former; for the latter was a lifeless declaimer, that busied himself in polishing his thoughts, and giving an harmonious cadence to his periods. He had a very¹ low and vulgar notion of eloquence, and placed almost the whole of it, in a nice disposal of his words. A man who employed ten or (as others say) fifteen years, in smoothing the periods of a panegyric, which was a discourse concerning the necessities of Greece, could give but a very small and slow relief to the republic, against the enterprises of the Persian king. Demosthenes spoke against Philip in a quite different manner. You may read the comparison that Dionysius Halicarnassus has made of these two orators, and see there the chief faults he observed in Isocrates; whose discourses are vainly gay and florid, and his periods adjusted with incredible pains, merely to please the ear: while on the contra-

¹ In the introduction of this very panegyric, that our author mentions, Isocrates says: Such is the nature of eloquence, that it makes great things appear little, and small things seem great; that it can represent old things as new, and new things as if they were old; and that therefore he would not decline a subject that others had handled before him, but would endeavor to declaim better than they.—Upon which Longinus (§ 38,) makes this judicious remark; that by giving such a character of eloquence, in the beginning of his panegyric, the orator in effect cautioned his hearers not to believe his discourse.

ry,¹ Demosthenes moves, warms, and captivates the heart. He was too sensibly touched with the interest of his country, to mind the glittering fancies that amused Isocrates. Every oration of Demosthenes is a close chain of reasoning, that represents the generous notions of a soul, who disdains any thought that is not great. His discourses gradually increase in force by greater light and new reasons, which are always illustrated by bold figures and lively images. One cannot but see that he has the good of the republic entirely at heart, and that nature itself speaks in all his transports, for his artful address is so masterly, that it never appears. Nothing ever equalled the force and vehemence of his discourses. Have you never read the remarks that Longinus made on them in his treatise of the Sublime?

B. No; is not that the treatise that M. Boileau translated? Do you think it fine?

A. I am not afraid to tell you that I think it surpasses Aristotle's Rhetoric; which, though it be a very solid tract, is yet clogged with many dry precepts, that are rather curious, than fit for practice; so that it is more proper to point out the rules of art to such as are already eloquent, than to give us a just taste of rhetoric, and to form true orators. But Longinus, in his discourse on the Sublime, intersperses among his precepts, many fine examples from the greatest authors, to illustrate them. He² treats of the Sublime in a lofty manner, as his translator has judiciously observed; he warms our fancy, and exalts our mind; he forms our taste, and teaches us to distinguish what is either fine, or faulty, in the most famous ancient writers.

¹ In oratoribus vero, Graecis quidem, admirabile est quantum inter omnes unus excellat. Attamen cum esset Demosthenes, multi oratores magni, et clari fuerunt, et antea fuerant, nec postea defecerunt.—Cic. *Orat.* § 2.

Quid denique Demosthenes? non cunctos illos tenues et circumspectos (oratores) vi, sublimitate, impetu, cultu, compositione superavit? non insurgit locis? non figuris gaudet? non translationibus nitet? non oratione ficta dat tacentibus vocem?—*Quintil.* lib. xii. cap. 10.

² Thee, bold Longinus! all the nine inspire,
And bless their critic with a poet's fire:
An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust,
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;
Whose own example strengthens all his laws,
And is himself that great Sublime he draws.

Mr. Pope's Essay on Criticism, p. 45.

B. Is Longinus such a wonderful author? Did he not live in the days of Zenobia, and the emperor Aurelian?

A. Yes; you cannot but know their history.

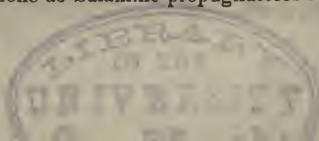
B. Did not those days fall vastly short of the politeness of former ages? and can you imagine that an author, who flourished in the declension of learning and eloquence, had a better taste than Isocrates? I cannot believe it.

A. I was surprised myself, to find it so; but you need only read him, to be convinced of it. Though he lived in a very corrupted age, he formed his judgment upon the ancient models; and has avoided almost all the reigning faults of his own time; I say almost all, for I must own, he studied rather what is admirable, than what is useful, and did not consider eloquence as subservient to morality, nor apply it to direct the conduct of life. And in this he does not seem to have had such solid views as the ancient Greeks, and especially some of their philosophers. But we ought to forgive him a failing, for which Isocrates was far more remarkable, though he lived in a more refined age. And this defect ought the rather to be overlooked in a particular discourse, where Longinus does not treat of what is proper to instruct men, but of what is apt to move and seize their passions. I choose to recommend this author, Sir, because he will help to explain my meaning to you. You will see what a glorious character he gives Demosthenes, from whom he quotes several passages that are most sublime; he will likewise show you those faults of Isocrates that I mentioned. If you be unwilling to take the trouble of becoming acquainted with these authors, by reading their works, you may get a very just notion of them by consulting Longinus. Let us now leave Isocrates; and talk of Demosthenes and Cicero.

B. You are for leaving Isocrates, because he is not for your purpose.

A. Let us go on then with Isocrates, since you are not yet convinced; and let us judge of his rhetoric by the rules of eloquence itself; and by the sentiments of Plato, the most¹

¹ Sed ego neque illis assentiebar, neque harum disputationum inventori, et principi longe omnium in dicendo gravissimo et eloquentissimo, Platoni, cujus tum Athenis cum Charmadâ diligentius legi Gorgiam; quo in libro, in hoc maxime admirabar Platonem, quod mihi in oratoribus irridendis ipse esse *Orator* summus videbatur.—*Cic. de Orat.* lib. 1. § xi. Quid denique Demosthenes?—non illud jusjurandum per cæsos in Marathone ac Salamine propugnatores rei-



eloquent writer among the ancients. Will you be determined by him?

B. I will be determined by him, if he be in the right: but I never resign my judgment implicitly to any author.

A. Remember this rule, it is all that I ask of you. And if you do not let some fashionable prejudices bias your judgment, reason will soon convince you of the truth. I would therefore have you believe neither Isocrates, nor Plato; but judge of them both, by clear principles. Now I suppose you will grant that the chief end of eloquence is to persuade men to embrace truth and virtue.

B. I am not of your mind; this is what I have already denied.

A. I will endeavor to prove it then. Eloquence, if I mistake not, may be considered in three respects; as the art of enforcing truth on people's minds, and of making them better; as an art indifferent in itself, which wicked men may use as well as good; and which may be applied to recommend injustice and error, as well as probity and truth; and as an art, which selfish men may use to ingratiate themselves with others, to raise their reputation, and make their fortune. Which of these ends do you admit of?

B. I allow of them all. What do you infer from this concession?

A. The inference will afterwards appear. Have patience a little, and be satisfied, if I say nothing but what is evidently true, till by gradual advances I lead you to the right conclusion. Of the three ends of eloquence I now mentioned, you will undoubtedly prefer the first.

B. Yes; it is the best.

A. What think you of the second?

B. I see what you drive at; you are going into a fallacy. The second sort is faulty, because of the ill use the orator makes of his eloquence, to enforce error and vice. But still the rhetoric of a wicked man may be good in itself, though the use he makes of it be pernicious. Now we are talking of the nature and rules of eloquence; not of the uses it should be applied to. Let us keep to the true state of the question.

A. If you will do me the favor to hear me a little, you will

publicae, satis manifesto docet praeceptorem ejus Platonem fuisse? quem ipsum num Asianum appellabimus, plerumque instinctis divino spiritu vatibus comparandum?—*Quint. lib. xii. cap. 10. See Longinus, § xiii.*

find that I have the point in dispute always in view. You seem then to condemn the second sort of eloquence; or, to speak without ambiguity, you condemn the abuse of rhetoric.¹

B. Right. You now speak correctly; so far then we are agreed.

A. What say you of the third end of eloquence; I mean the orator's endeavoring to please others by talking; that he may raise his reputation or his fortune?

B. You know my opinion already. I reckon such a use of eloquence very fair and allowable; seeing it excites a laudable emulation, and helps to improve men's talents.

A. What kind of talents would you have chiefly improved? Suppose you had some new State or Commonwealth, to model, in what kinds of knowledge would you have the subjects trained up, and instructed?

B. In every kind that could make them better. I would endeavour to make them good subjects, peaceable, obedient, and zealous for the public welfare. I would have them fit to defend their country in case of war, and in peace to observe and support the laws, to govern their families, cultivate their lands, train up their children to the practice of virtue, and inspire them with a strong and just sense of religion; I would have them carry on such a trade as the state and necessities of the country might require; and apply themselves to such arts and sciences as are useful in common life. These, I think, ought to be the chief aims of a lawgiver.

A. Your views are very just and solid. You would then have subjects averse to laziness, and employed about such useful things as should tend some way or other to advance the public good.

B. Certainly.

A. And would you exclude all useless professions?

B. Yes.

A. You would allow only of such bodily exercises as con-

¹ When I consider the means of happy living (says an eloquent writer) and the causes of their corruption, I can hardly forbear recanting what I said before; and concluding that eloquence ought to be banished out of all civil societies, as a thing fatal to peace and good manners. To this opinion I should wholly incline, if I did not find, that it is a weapon which may be as easily procured by bad men, as by good; and that if these only should cast it away, and those retain it, the naked innocence of virtue would be upon all occasions exposed to the armed malice of the wicked.—*Bishop Sprat's Hist. of the Royal Society*, p. iii.

duced to people's health and strength? I do not mention the beauty of the body; for that is a natural consequence of health and vigor, in bodies that are duly formed.

B. I would suffer no other exercises.

A. Would you not therefore banish all those that serve only to amuse people, and cannot render them fitter to bear either the constant labors and employments of peace, or the fatigues of war?

B. Yes; I should follow that rule.

A. I suppose you would do it for the same reason that you would likewise condemn, (as you already granted,) all those exercises of the mind which do not conduce to render it more strong, sound, and beautiful by making it more virtuous.

B. It is so. What do you infer from that? I do not see your drift; your windings are very long.

A. Why; I would argue from the plainest principles, and not advance the least step, without carrying light and certainty along with us. Answer me, then, if you please.

B. Seeing we lay down the rule you last mentioned, for the management of the body, there is certainly greater reason to follow it in the conduct and improvement of the mind.

A. Would you permit such arts as are only subservient to pleasure, amusement, and vain curiosity; and have no relation either to the duties of domestic life, or the common offices of society?

B. I would banish all such from my commonwealth.

A. If you allowed of mathematicians, then, it would be for the sake of mechanics, navigation, surveying of land, the fortification of places, and such calculations as are useful in practice, etc. So that it is the usefulness of the mathematics that would recommend them to your patronage. And if you tolerate physicians and lawyers, it would be for the preservation of health, and the support of justice.

B. Right.

A. And with the same view of usefulness you would admit of all other serviceable professions.

B. Certainly.

A. But how would you treat the musicians?

B. I would encourage them.

A. Would you not lay them under some proper restraint, according to the judgment and practice of the ancient Greeks, who always joined pleasure and usefulness together?

B. Explain yourself a little.

A. Though they joined music and poetry together, and carried both these arts to the greatest perfection, they applied them to inspire people's minds with fortitude, and noble thoughts. They used poetry and music to prepare them for battle, and carried musicians and their various instruments to war. Hence came drums and trumpets, which raised in them a spirit of enthusiasm, and a sort of fury that they called divine. It was by music and the charms of verse, that they softened savage nations; and by the same harmony, they sweetly instilled wisdom into their children. They made them sing Homer's verses, to inspire their minds with the love of glory, liberty, and their native country, and with a contempt of death, and riches, and effeminate pleasure. They gave their very dances a grave and serious turn: for it is certain they danced not merely for the sake of pleasure. We see by David's example,¹ that the eastern people reckoned dancing a serious kind of employment, like music and poetry. The mysterious dances of the priests were adopted by the heathens among their ceremonies, on solemn festivals, in honor of their gods. There were a thousand instructions couched under their poems and their fables; nay, their most grave and austere philosophy always appeared with an air of gaiety and good humor. All those arts that consisted either in melodious sounds, regular motions of the body, or the use of words; music, dancing, eloquence, and poetry, were invented to express the passions, and by that means, to communicate these passions to others. Thus did they endeavor to convey noble sentiments to people's minds, and give them lively, affecting views of the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice. So that all these arts, under the show of pleasure, favored the most serious designs of the ancients; and were used to promote morality and religion. Even the diversion of hunting was encouraged to train up the youth for war. Their strongest pleasures contained always some solid instruction. From which source flowed those many heroic virtues in Greece, which all ages have since admired. It is true, this first kind of instruction was afterwards changed; and of itself was accompanied with remarkable defects. The chief fault of it was, its being founded on a false and pernicious scheme of religion; in which the Greeks, and all the ancient sages of the heathen world, were strangely deceived,

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 5, 14.

being plunged into gross idolatry. But notwithstanding this fundamental mistake, they chose a very proper way of inspiring men with religion and virtue. Their method was wise, agreeable, and apt to make a lively, lasting impression.

C. You said that this first institution was afterwards changed; pray, how did it happen?

A. Though virtue gives men the true politeness, yet if great care be not taken, politeness gradually degenerates into an unmanly softness. The Asiatic Greeks fell first into this corruption. The Ionians grew effeminate, and all that coast of Asia was a theatre of luxury. The Cretans too became corrupted, notwithstanding the wise laws of Minos. You know the verse that St. Paul quotes from one of their own poets. Corinth was remarkable for its excessive riot and dissoluteness. The Romans, as yet unpolished, began to fall into such practices as quite relaxed their rustic virtue. Athens was not free from the general contagion, with which Greece was all-over infected. Pleasure, which was used at first to convey wisdom into people's minds, usurped the place of wisdom itself: and in vain did the philosophers remonstrate against this disorder. Socrates arose, and showed his deluded fellow-citizens that the pleasure, about which they were entirely employed, ought only to be used as the vehicle of wisdom and an incentive to virtue. Plato, his disciple, (who was not ashamed to compose his dialogues on the plan and subject of his master's discourses,) banished from his republic all such musical notes, scenes of tragedy, and poetical compositions, (even such parts of Homer himself,) as did not incline people to love order, and wise laws. This, Sir, was the judgment of Socrates and Plato concerning poets and musicians; do you approve of it?

B. I am entirely of their mind, and would allow of nothing that is useless. Since we may find pleasure enough in solid and valuable things, we ought not to seek for it elsewhere. In order to recommend virtue to men's esteem and practice, we must show them that it is consistent with pleasure; and on the contrary, if we separate pleasure from virtue, people will be strongly tempted to forsake a virtuous course. Besides, that which gives pleasure only, without instruction, can at best but amuse and soften the mind. Do not you see, Sir, how much a philosopher I am become, by hearing you? But let us go on to the end, for we are not yet perfectly agreed.

A. I hope we shall be very quickly. And since you are grown so much a philosopher, give me leave to ask one question more. We have obliged musicians and poets, to employ their art only for promoting virtue; and the subjects of your new republic are debarred from all such spectacles as can only please and not instruct them. But what would you do with conjurers?

B. They are impostors, that ought to be banished from all societies.

A. They do no harm. You cannot think they are sorcerers; so that you have no reason to be afraid of their practising any diabolical art.

B. No, I do not fear that, nor should I give the least credit to any of their senseless stories. But they do harm enough by amusing the common people. I will not suffer such idle persons in my commonwealth, as divert others from their business, and have no other employment but to amuse people with foolish talk.

A. But, perhaps, they get a livelihood that way, and lay up wealth for themselves, and their families.

B. No matter; they must find out some honest way of living. It is not enough that they seek a livelihood; they must gain it by some employment that is useful to the public. I say the same of all those strolling vagabonds, who amuse crowds with silly prattle and foolish songs. For though they should never lie, nor say anything that is immodest, their being useless to the public is guilt enough. So that they ought either to be excluded from the society, or compelled to follow some useful occupation.

A. Would you not at least tolerate tragedians, provided they represent no scenes of immodesty or extravagant love? I do not ask you this question as a Christian; answer only as a lawgiver, and a philosopher.

B. If tragedies did not conduce to instruction as well as to pleasure, I should condemn them.

A. Right. In that you are exactly of Plato's opinion; for he would not allow of any poems or tragedies in his republic, that should not first be examined by the guardians of the laws; that so the people might neither hear nor see anything but what should tend to strengthen the laws, and promote virtue. In this you likewise fall in with the sentiments of other ancient authors, who judged that tragedy ought to turn chiefly upon two passions; either the terror, that arises

from a view of the fatal effects of vice; or that compassion, which accompanies the representation of an oppressed and steady virtue. Sophocles and Euripides wrote with these views, and always endeavored to excite pity or terror.

B. I remember I have met with this last rule in M. Boileau's Art of Poetry.

A. You are right. He is a man that knows perfectly well not only the foundation of poetry, but likewise the solid aim to which philosophy (superior to all arts) ought to direct the poet.

B. But whither are you leading me all this while?

A. I lead you no farther; you guide yourself now, and are happily come to the conclusion I first proposed. Have you not said, that in your republic, you would not suffer idle people to amuse others, and have no other business but merely to talk? Is it not upon this principle that you would exclude all such tragedies as do not convey instruction as well as pleasure? Now, will you suffer that to be done in prose, which you will not tolerate in verse? After such a just rigor against useless poetry, how can you show any favor to those declaimers, who talk only to show their parts?

B. But these orators we were speaking of, have two designs that are commendable.

A. What are they?

B. The first is to maintain themselves; for by their profession they procure a subsistence. Their rhetoric gets them repute, and this brings along with it that wealth they stand in need of.

A. You yourself have already answered this pretence; for did you not say that it is not enough that one gains a livelihood, unless he get it by some employment that is useful to the public? He, who should represent tragedies that give no instruction, might get his bread by them, but this would not hinder you from driving him out of the commonwealth. You would say to him, 'Go, choose some regular, useful employment, and do not divert your neighbors from their business. If you would have a lawful gain from them, apply yourself to do them some real service; or to make them more wise and virtuous.' Now why should you not say the same to the rhetoricians?

B. But I have a second reason to offer for tolerating them.

A. Pray, let us hear it.

B. Why! the orator serves the public.

A. In what?

B. He improves people's minds, and teaches them eloquence.

A. Suppose I should invent some fantastic art, or imaginary language, that could not be of any use; could I serve the public by teaching such a senseless language, or silly art?

B. No; because one cannot serve others as a master, unless he could teach them something that is useful.

A. You cannot prove, then, that an orator serves the public by teaching eloquence, unless you could first show that it is a useful art. Of what use are a man's fine thoughts, if they do not advance the public good? I am very sensible that they are advantageous to himself; for they dazzle his hearers, who have so bad a taste that they will applaud his skill, and even reward him for his useless talk. But ought you to suffer such a mercenary, fruitless eloquence in the government you have to model? A shoemaker is serviceable in his way, and maintains his family with what he gains by supplying other people's necessities. So that you see the most ordinary employments tend to some useful purpose; and there is no other art but the rhetorician's, that serves only to amuse people with talking. In fine, such eloquence can only, on the one hand, satisfy the vain curiosity of the hearers, and encourage their idleness; and, on the other, gratify the declaimer's pride and ambition. But, for the honor of your republic, Sir, do not tolerate such an abuse.

B. I must grant that an orator's aim should be to make people more wise and virtuous.

A. Do not forget this: you shall see the consequences of it by and by.

B. Notwithstanding this concession, he who is employed in instructing others, may at the same time endeavor to acquire reputation and wealth for himself.

A. I told you before, that we are not now handling the point as Christians; I need only use philosophy against you. Let me put you in mind that you grant an orator is obliged to instruct others with a design to improve them in virtue. Thus we get rid of all useless declaimers. We ought not even to suffer panegyrists any farther than they render true wisdom and probity more amiable by their praises,

and propose models of virtue¹ and valor that are worthy of imitation.

B. What, then, is a panegyric good for nothing, unless it be full of morality?

A. Have you not granted this already? Instruction is the proper end of speech, and the only good reason for praising any hero is, that we may represent his worth to others, in order to excite their emulation, and to show them that virtue and true glory are inseparable. Therefore a panegyric should be kept from all general, excessive, flattering praises, and such barren thoughts as do not afford the least instruction. Everything should tend to make the hearers in love with what is truly great and good. But we find that most panegyrists seem to magnify particular virtues, only that they may more effectually praise those that practised them, and set off their heroes to greater advantage. When they have any one to praise, they exalt his peculiar virtues far above all others. But everything has its turn; and, on another occasion, those very qualities, which they preferred before, must now give place to some other virtues, that come in course to be extolled to the highest pitch. In this respect, I think Pliny is to be blamed. If he had praised Trajan as a fit model for other heroes to copy after, this would have been a design worthy of an orator. But the praise of that prince, (however deserving he was,) ought not to have been Pliny's chief aim. Trajan should only have been proposed to mankind as an imitable example, to allure them to virtue. When a panegyrist has such a mean view, as to praise the person, rather than the virtues that render him conspicuous, this is only flattery addressed to pride.

B. What think you then of those poems, that were made in praise of ancient heroes? Homer has his Achilles, and Virgil his Æneas. Will you condemn these two poets?

A. By no means, Sir; do but examine the design of their works. In the Iliad, Achilles is the chief hero; but his praise is not the main end of the poem. His character is faithfully drawn with all its defects; nay, these very defects

¹ Perspicuum est igitur, alia esse in homine optanda, alia laudanda. Genus, forma, vires, opes, divitiæ, ceteraque quæ fortuna det, aut extrinsecus, aut corpori, non habent in se veram laudem, quæ deberi Virtuti uni putatur.—Virtus autem, quæ est per se ipsa laudabilis, et sine qua nihil laudari potest, tamen habet plures partes, quarum alia est ad laudationem aptior.—*Cic. de Orat. lib. ii. § 84.*

are a part of that instruction, which the poet designed to convey to posterity. The great design of this work was to inspire the Greeks with the love of warlike glory, and a dread of discord, as the greatest obstacle to success. This moral instruction is plainly interwoven throughout the poem. The *Odyssey* indeed represents in Ulysses, a hero more regular, and more accomplished; but this is still natural. For, of course a man like Ulysses, whose chief character is wisdom, must be more wary and uniform in his conduct, than such a rough, warm, forward youth as Achilles. So that in drawing both these heroes, Homer seems only to have copied nature. In fine, throughout the *Odyssey* we find innumerable instructions for the whole conduct of life; and one cannot but observe that the poet's design, in describing a prudent man whose wisdom makes him always successful, was to show posterity what good effects might be expected from prudent piety, and a regular life. Virgil in his *Æneid*, has imitated the *Odyssey* in his hero's character, and has drawn him brave, moderate, pious and steady. But it is evident that the praise of *Æneas* was not the poet's principal aim. That hero was designed to represent the Roman people, who descended from him; and Virgil meant to show them that their extraction was divine, that the gods had destined them to govern the world; and by this he animated them to the practice of such heroic virtues as might support the glory designed for them. Now a heathen could not possibly devise a nobler moral than this. The only fault of which Virgil can be suspected, is his having had his private interest too much in view; and his turning his excellent poem to the praise of Augustus, and his family, with too great an air of flattery. But we ought not to criticise any author too severely.

B. But will you not allow a poet, or an orator, to seek his fortune in an honorable way?

A. After this useful digression concerning panegyrics, we now return to the difficulty you proposed. The question is, whether an orator ought to be entirely disinterested?

B. I do not think that he ought; for this would overturn the most common maxims.

A. In your republic, would you not have orators obliged to the strictest rules of truth? do not you own that they ought never to speak in public, but in order to instruct people, to reform their conduct, and strengthen the laws?

B. Yes.

A. An orator then should have nothing either to hope or fear from his hearers, with regard to his own interest. If you allowed of ambitious,¹ mercenary declaimers, do you think they would oppose all the foolish, unruly passions of men? If they themselves be subject to avarice, ambition, luxury, and such shameful disorders, will they be able to cure others? If they seek after wealth, can they be fit to disengage others from that mean pursuit? I grant that a virtuous and disinterested orator ought always to be supplied with the conveniences of life, nor can he ever want them, if he be a true philosopher,—I mean such a wise and worthy person, as is fit to reform the manners of men; for then he will live after a plain, modest, frugal, laborious manner; he will have occasion but for little, and that little he will never want, though he should earn it with his own hands. Now, what is superfluous ought not to be offered him, as the recompense of his public services, and indeed it is not worthy of his acceptance. He may have honor and authority conferred on him; but if he be master of his passions, as we suppose, and above selfish views, he will use this authority only for the public good, and be ready to resign it, when he can no longer enjoy it without flattery or dissimulation. In short, an orator cannot be fit to persuade people, unless he be inflexibly upright; for, without this steady virtue, his talents and address, would, like a mortal poison, infect and destroy the body politic. For this reason Cicero² thought, that vir-

¹ Jam hoc quis non videt, maximam partem orationis in tractatu aequi bonique consistere? dicetne de his secundum debitam rerum dignitatem malus atque iniquus? denique—demus id quod nullo modo fieri potest, idem ingenii, studii, doctrinae, pessimo atque optimo viro; uter melior dicetur orator? nimirum qui homo quoque melior. Non igitur unquam malus idem homo, et perfectus orator.—*Quint. lib. xii. c. 1.*

² Est enim eloquentia una quaedam de summis virtutibus—quae quo major est vis, hoc est magis probitate jungenda, summaque prudentia; quarum virtutum expertibus si dicendi copiam tradiderimus, non eos quidem oratores effecerimus, sed furentibus quaedam arma dederimus.—*De Orat. lib. iii. § 14.*

Sit ergo nobis orator quem instituimus is, qui a M. Catone, finitur, vir bonus, dicendi peritus—Adde quod ne studio quidem operis pulcherrimi vacare mens, nisi omnibus vitiis libera, potest—Quid putamus facturas cupiditatem, avaritiam, invidiam? quarum impotentissimae cogitationes, somnos etiam ipsos et illa per quietem visa, perturbent. Nihil est enim tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus concisum atque laceratum, quam mala mens—*Quint. lib. xii. cap. 1.*

ture is the chief and most essential quality of an orator, and that he should be a person of such unspotted probity as to be a pattern to his fellow-citizens; without which he cannot even seem to be convinced himself of what he says, and consequently, he cannot persuade others.

B. I am sensible there is a great deal of weight in what you say; but after all, may not a man fairly employ his talents to raise himself in the world?

A. Let us look back always to the principles we laid down. We have agreed that eloquence, and the profession of an orator, should be devoted to the instruction of people, and the reformation of their practice. Now, to do this with freedom and success, a man must be disinterested; and must teach others to contemn death and riches and unmanly pleasure. He must infuse into their minds the love of moderation, frugality, a generous concern for the public good, and an inviolable regard to the laws and constitution; and the orator's zeal for all these must appear in his conduct, as well as in his discourses. But will he, who strives to please others, that he may make his fortune, and who therefore avoids disobliging anybody; I say, will such an artful, selfish person inculcate unacceptable truths with boldness and authority? or, if he should, will any one believe a man, who does not seem to believe himself?

B. But supposing him to be in narrow circumstances, he does no harm, I hope, by endeavoring to improve them?

A. If he be pinched, let him try to mend his condition some other way. There are other professions that will easily set him above want. But if he be in such extreme distress as to depend on relief from the public, he is not yet fit to be an orator. Would you choose men that are indigent and almost starving, to be judges in your commonwealth? Would you not be afraid that their wants might expose them to corruption, or betray them into some dishonorable compliance? Would you not rather choose persons of note and distinction, who are above necessity, and out of the reach of its temptations?

B. I believe I should.

A. For the same reason, if you wanted orators, that is, public masters to instruct, reclaim, and form the minds and manners of the people, would you not choose such men as wanted nothing, and are far above little selfish aims? And if there were others who had proper talents for this su-

perior office, but were clogged with their personal concerns and narrow views of private interests would you not excuse them from showing their eloquence till they were more easy and disengaged in their circumstances, and could speak in public without being suspected of any mean design ?

B. It would be better. But does not the experience of our own age plainly show that an orator may make his fortune, by preaching rigid virtue with great vehemence ? Where can we find keener satires against the prevailing corruptions of the age, and severer moral characters, than those which come from the pulpit ? Yet people are not disturbed at them ; nay, they are pleased with them ; and the ingenious preacher gets preferment by them.

A. It is very true ; but moral instructions have no weight or influence, when they are supported neither by clear principles, nor good examples. Whom do you see converted by them ? People are accustomed to hear such harangues, and are amused by them, as with so many fine scenes passing before their eyes. They hearken to such lectures just as they would read a satire, and they look on the speaker as one that acts his part well. They believe his¹ life, more than his talk ;

¹ The clergy have one great advantage beyond all the rest of the world in this respect, besides all others, that whereas the particular callings of other men prove to them great distractions, and lay many temptations in their way, to divert them from minding their high and holy calling, of being Christians ; it is quite otherwise with the clergy ; the more they follow their proper callings, they do the more certainly advance their general one ; the better priests they are, they become also the better Christians. Every part of their calling, when well performed, raises good thoughts, and brings good ideas into their minds, and tends both to increase their knowledge, and quicken their sense of divine matters. A priest then is more accountable to God and the world for his deportment, and will be more severely accounted with, than any other person whatsoever. He is more watched over and observed than all others. Very good men will be, even to a censure, jealous of him ; very bad men will wait for his halting, and insult upon it ; and all sorts of persons will be willing to defend themselves against the authority of his doctrine and admonitions, by this,—he says, but does not ; the world will reverse this quite, and consider rather how a clerk lives, than what he says. They see the one, and from it conclude what he himself thinks of the other ; and will think themselves not a little justified, if they can say that they did no worse than they saw their minister do before them. Therefore a priest must not only abstain from gross scandals, but keep at the farthest distance from them,—such diversions as his health or the temper of his mind may render proper for him, ought to be manly, decent, and grave ; and such as may neither possess his mind or time

and when they know him to be selfish, ambitious, vain, given up to sloth and luxury, and see that he parts with none of those enjoyments which he exhorts others to forsake; though for the sake of custom and ceremony, they hear him declaim, yet they believe and act as he does. But, what is worst of all, people are too apt to conclude, that men of this profession do not believe what they teach; this disparages their function, and when others preach with a sincere zeal, people will scarce believe the zeal to be sincere.

B. I cannot but own that your notions hang well together; and that they are very convincing when one considers them attentively. But tell me freely, does not all you have said on this subject flow from a pure zeal for Christian piety?

A. No; if an unbeliever reason justly, he must fall into the same train of thoughts; but indeed one must have a Christian spirit to act up to them, for it is grace alone that can suppress the disorderly emotions of self-love. When I pressed you with the authority of Socrates and Plato, you would not resign your judgment to theirs; and now, since reason itself begins to convince you, and that I need not enforce the truth from authorities, what if I should tell you after all, that I have only used their arguments on this subject?

B. Is it possible? I should be very glad of it.

A. Well then; Plato introduces Socrates discoursing with Gorgias, a famous rhetorician, and Callicles, one of his disciples. This Gorgias was Isocrates' master; and (as Tully tells us,) he was the first man that boasted of his being able to talk eloquently on everything, in which ridiculous vanity he was afterwards imitated by other Greek declaimers. These two men, Gorgias and Callicles, harangued plausibly enough on every subject; being wits that shone in conversation, and had no other business but to talk finely. However, they wanted, what¹ Socrates wished every man to have, solid

too much, nor give a bad character of him to his people. He must also avoid too much familiarity with bad people, and the squandering away his time in too much vain and idle discourse. His cheerfulness ought to be frank, but neither excessive nor licentious. His friends and his garden ought to be his chief diversions, as his study and his parish ought to be his chief employments.—*Bishop Burnet's Disc. of the pastoral care, ch. viii.*

¹—*Inventi sunt qui, cum ipsi doctrina et ingeniis abundarent, a re autem civili et a negotiis, animi quodam judicio abhorrent, hanc di-*

principles of morality, and a sedate, just way of reasoning. Plato therefore having shown what a ridiculous turn of mind these men had; represents Socrates as diverting himself with their folly, and facetiously puzzling the two orators so much that they could not tell him what eloquence is. Then he proves that rhetoric, (which was the profession of these declaimers,) is not truly an art; for, according to him, 'an art is a regular discipline, which teaches men to do something that will help to make them wiser and better than they are.' So that he allows of no other arts but the liberal ones; and he shows that even these are perverted, when they are applied to any other end besides training up men to virtue. He proves that this was not the aim of the rhetoricians, that even Themistocles and Pericles had quite other views, and that therefore they were not truly orators. He says those famous men only persuaded the Athenians to make harbors and build walls and obtain victories; they only made their citizens wealthy, warlike and powerful, and were afterwards ill treated for it; which was really no more than they might have expected. If they had rendered the people good and virtuous by their rhetoric, they would have been sure of a just recompense; for he who makes men upright and good, cannot lose the reward of his labor, seeing virtue and ingratitude are inconsistent. I need not tell you all the arguments he uses to show how useless such false rhetoric is; for, all that I have said hitherto on this point, in my own name, is really taken from him. It will be more proper to represent to you what he says of the evils that these vain haranguers occasioned in the republic.

B. It is evident that such rhetoricians were dangerous in the Grecian commonwealths, where they could mislead the people and usurp the government.

A. That is the chief danger that Socrates apprehended from them. But the principles he lays down, on this occasion, reach a great deal further. In fine, though you and I speak now of ordering a commonwealth, our inquiry and conclusions are not applicable to democracy alone, but to every

cendi exercitationem exagitant atque contemnerent. Quorum princeps Socrates fuit, is qui omnium eruditorum testimonio totiusque judicio Græciæ cum prudentia et acumine et venustate et subtilitate, tum vero eloquentia, varietate, copia, quamcumque in partem dedisset, omnium fuit facile princeps—Cujus ingenium variosque sermones immortalitati scriptis suis Plato tradidit.—Cicero de Orat. lib. iii. § 16.

kind of government, whether it be strictly a republic, an aristocracy, or a monarchy. So that the particular form of government does not enter into the present question. For in all countries, the rules of Socrates are equally useful.

C. I wish you would explain them to us.

A. He says that, seeing a man is composed of a mind and a body, he ought to improve them both. Now there are two arts that concern the mind; and two others, that relate to the body. The two that belong to the mind, are moral philosophy and the knowledge of the national laws. Under the head of moral philosophy he comprehends the laws of nature and nations, and all those dictates of philosophy that are proper to govern the inclinations and manners of the whole republic, as well as of every individual member of it. He considered the second art, as a remedy that is to be used to suppress falsehood, injustice, and the like disorders among the citizens: for, by it lawsuits are determined, and crimes are punished. So that moral philosophy serves to prevent evil, and the knowledge of the laws and constitution, to punish it. There are likewise two arts for managing the body; the gymnastic art, which by due exercise and temperance renders it healthy, active, vigorous and graceful, (for, you know, Sir, the ancients made a wonderful use of this art, which we have now quite lost,) and the knowledge of physic which cures the body when its health is lost, or impaired. The gymnastic art assists the body, as moral philosophy doth the soul, namely, to form and improve it; and skill in medicine is helpful to the body, as the knowledge of the laws is to the mind, for correcting and curing disorders. But this wise institution was altered, says Socrates; instead of a solid, practical philosophy, we have only the vain subtilty of wrangling sophists; a set of spurious philosophers, who abuse reason, and, having no sense of public good, aim only at promoting their own selfish ends. Instead of attaining a thorough insight into the national laws, people are amused and misled by the vain-glorious ostentation of these rhetoricians, who endeavor only to please and dazzle the mind; and instead of recommending the knowledge of the public constitution, and the administration of justice, (which being the medicine of the soul, should be applied to cure its disorderly passions,) these false orators think of nothing but how to spread their own reputation. And with regard to the body, says Socrates, the gymnastic art begins to be exchanged for skill in

dress, which gives the body but false, deceitful ornaments. Whereas we ought to desire only such a natural comeliness as results from health of body, and due proportion of its members; which must be acquired and preserved by temperance and exercise. The proper and seasonable use of medicine is likewise laid aside, to make room for delicious dishes, and such palatable things as raise and ensnare the appetite. And instead of carrying off gross humors from the body by proper evacuations, to restore its health; nature is clogged and overcharged, and a false appetite is excited by all the various ways of luxury and intemperance. He farther observes, that those orators, who in order to cure men should have given them bitter physic, and with authority have inculcated the most disagreeable truths; have on the contrary done for the mind, what cooks do for the body; their rhetoric is only an art of dressing up delicacies to gratify the corrupted taste of the people. All their concern is to please and soothe them, by raising their curiosity and admiration. For these declaimers harangue only for themselves. He concludes his remarks with asking, where are those citizens whom the rhetoricians have cured of their vicious habits? Whom have they made sober and virtuous? Thus Socrates describes the general disorders, and corruption of manners that prevailed in his time. But does he not talk like one of the present age, who observes what passes among us, and speaks of the abuses that reign in our own days? Now that you have heard the sentiments of this wise heathen, what do you say of that eloquence which tends only to please and give pretty descriptions; when (as he says) we ought to cauterize, and cut to the quick, and earnestly endeavor to cure people's minds by the bitterness of remedies, and the severity of an abstemious diet? I appeal to your own judgment in this case; if you were sick, would you be pleased with a physician, who in the extremity of your illness should waste his time, and amuse you with explaining to you some fine hypothesis in an elegant style, instead of making pertinent inquiries into the cause and symptoms of your distemper, and prescribing suitable remedies? Or, in a trial at law, where your estate or your life were at stake, what would you think of your lawyer, if he should play the wit in your defence, and fill his pleading with flowers of rhetoric and quaint turns, instead of arguing with gravity, strength of reason, and earnestness, to gain your cause? Our natural love of life and well-being, shows us

plainly the absurdity of false oratory, and of the unseasonable ostentation of it, in such cases as I have now mentioned; but we are so strangely unconcerned about religion, and the moral conduct of life, that we do not observe the same absurdity in careless, vain-glorious orators, who yet ought to be the spiritual physicians and censors of the people. Indeed, the sentiments of Socrates on this subject ought to make us ashamed.

B. I perceive clearly enough, that, according to your reasoning, orators ought to be the defenders of the laws, and instructors of the people, to teach them true wisdom and virtue. But among the Romans, the rhetoric of the bar was otherwise employed.

A. That was certainly the end of it. For, when orators had not occasion to represent in their discourses the general wants of the republic, they were obliged to protect innocence and the rights of particular persons. And it was on this account that their profession was so much honored, and that Tully gives us such a lofty character of a true orator.¹

B. Let us hear then how orators ought to speak. I long to know your thoughts on this point, seeing you deny the finical, florid manner of Isocrates, which is so much admired and imitated by others.

A. Instead of giving you my opinion, I shall go on to lay before you the rules that the ancients give us, but I shall only touch upon the chief points; for, I suppose, you do not expect that I should enter into an endless detail of the precepts of rhetoric. There are but too many useless ones; which you must have read in those books where they are copiously explained. It will be enough if we consider the most important rules. Plato in his *Phaedrus* shows us, that

¹ Neque vero mihi quidquam praestabilius videtur, quam posse dicendo tenere hominum coetus, mentes allicere, voluntates impellere quo velit: unde autem velit, deducere. Haec una res in omni libero populo, maximeque in pacatis tranquillisque civitatibus praecipue semper floruit, semperque dominata est. Quid enim est aut tam admirabile, quam ex infinitâ multitudine hominum existere unum, qui id quod omnibus naturâ sit datum, vel solus, vel cum paucis facere possit?—aut tam potens, tamque magnificum, quam populi motus, judicium religiones, senatûs gravitatem, unius oratione converti?—Ac ne plura, quae sunt pene innumerabilia, consector, comprehendam brevi; sic enim statuo, perfecti oratoris moderatione et sapientiâ, non solum ipsius dignitatem, sed et privatorum plurimorum et universae reipublicae salutem maxime contineri.—*Cic. de Orat. lib. i. § 8.*

the greatest fault of rhetoricians is, their studying the art of persuasion, before they have learned, (from the principles of true philosophy,) what those things are of which they ought to persuade men. He would have orators begin with the study of mankind in general; and then apply themselves to the knowledge of the particular genius and manners of those, whom they may have occasion to instruct and persuade. So that they ought first of all to know the nature of man, his chief end and his true interest, the parts of which he is composed, his mind and his body, and the true way to make him happy. They ought likewise to understand his passions, the disorders they are subject to, and the art of governing them; how they may be usefully raised and employed on what is truly good; and, in fine, the proper rules to make him live in peace and discharge his duties in society. After this general study, comes that which is particular.

Orators ought to know the laws and customs of their country, and how far they are agreeable to the genius and temper of the people, what are the manners of the several ranks and conditions among them, their different ways of education, the common prejudices and separate interests that prevail in the present age, and the most proper way to instruct and reform the people. You see, Sir, this knowledge comprehends all the solid parts of philosophy and politics. So that Plato meant to show us that none but a philosopher can be a true orator. And it is in this sense we must understand all he says in his *Gorgias*, against the rhetoricians; I mean, that set of men who made profession of talking finely and persuading others, without endeavoring to know, from solid philosophy, what one ought to teach them. In short, according to Plato, the true art of oratory consists in understanding those useful truths of which we ought to convince people, and the art of moving their passions, in order to persuasion. Cicero¹ says almost the very same things. He seems, at first, to think that an orator should know everything, because he may have occasion to speak on all sorts of

¹ *Ac mea quidem sententia, nemo poterit esse omni laude cumlatus orator, nisi erit omnium rerum magnarum, atque artium scientiam consecutus.—De Orat. lib. 1. § 6. Oratorem plenum atque perfectum esse eum dicam, qui de omnibus rebus possit varie copioseque dicere.—Ibid. § 13. Verum enim oratori quae sunt in hominum vita, quandoquidem in ea versatur orator, atque ea est ei subjecta materies, omnia quaesita, audita, lecta, disputata, tractata, agitata esse debent.—Lib. iii. § 14.*

subjects; and (as Socrates observed before him)¹ a man can never talk well on a point of which he is not entirely master. But afterwards, because of the pressing necessities and shortness of life, Tully insists only upon those parts of knowledge that he thinks the most necessary for an orator. He would have him at least well instructed in all that part of philosophy,² which relates to the conduct and affairs of social life. But above all things, he would have an orator³ know the fame of man, both with regard to his soul and body, and the natural tendency and force of his passions; because the great end of eloquence is to move the secret springs of them. He reckons the knowledge of the laws and constitution, to be the foundation of all public discourses; but he does not think a thorough insight into all the particular cases and questions in law to be necessary, because upon occasion one may have recourse to experienced lawyers, whose peculiar profession it is to understand and disentangle such intricate points. He thinks, with Plato, that an orator should be a master of reasoning,⁴ and know how to define, and argue, and unravel the most specious sophisms. He says we destroy eloquence, if we should separate it from philosophy, for then, instead of wise orators, we should have only trifling, injudicious de-

¹ Etenim ex rerum cognitione efflorescat, et redundet oportet oratio; quae nisi subest res ab oratore percepta et cognita, inanem quandam habet elocutionem et pene puerilem.—*De Orat. lib. i. § 6.*

² Positum sit igitur in primis—sine philosophia non posse effici, quem quaerimus eloquentem—Nec vero sine philosophorum disciplina, genus et speciem cujusque rei cernere, neque eam definiendo explicare, nec tribuere in partes possumus; nec judicare, quae vera, quae falsa sint; neque cernere consequentia, repugnantia videre, ambigua distinguere. Quid dicam de natura rerum, cujus cognitio magnam orationis suppeditat copiam? De vita, de officiis, de virtute, de moribus?—*Orat. § 4.*

³ Omnes animorum motus, quos hominum generi rerum natura tribuit, penitus pernoscendi.—*De Orat. lib. i. § 5.*—Num admoveri possit oratio ad sensus animorum atque motus vel inflammandos, vel etiam extinguendos, (quod unum in oratore dominatur), sine diligentissima pervestigatione earum omnium rationum quae de naturis humani generis ac moribus, a philosophis explicantur.—*De Orat. lib. i. § 14.* Quare hic locus de vita et moribus, totus est oratori perdiscendus.—*Ibid. § 15.*

⁴ Nec vero dialecticis modo sit instructus, sed habeat omnes philosophiae notos et tractatos locos. Nihil enim de religione, nihil de morte, nihil de pietate, nihil de caritate patriae, nihil de bonis rebus, aut malis, nihil de virtutibus, aut vitiis—nihil, inquam, sine ea scientia, quam dixi, graviter, ample, copiose dici et explicari potest.—*Orat. § 33.*

claimers. He further requires not only an exact knowledge of all the principles of ethics, but likewise that the orator be fully acquainted with antiquity.¹ He recommends the careful perusal of the ancient Greek writers, especially the historians, both for their style, and for the historical facts they relate. He particularly enjoins² the study of the poets, because of the great resemblance there is between the figures of poetry and those of eloquence. In fine, he often declares that an orator ought to furnish his mind with a clear, comprehensive view of things, before he attempt to speak in public. I fancy I could almost repeat some of his words on this subject; so often have I read them, and so strong an impression did they make on my thoughts. You will be surprised to see how much knowledge, and how many³ qualities he requires. 'An orator,' says he, 'ought to have the acuteness of logicians, the knowledge of philosophers, the style almost of the poets, the elocution and gesture of the finest actors.' Consider now how much application is necessary to attain all this.

¹ Cognoscat etiam rerum gestarum et memoriae veteris ordinem, maxime scilicet nostrae civitatis, sed et imperiosorum populorum et regum illustrium—Nescire autem quid antea quam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puerum—Commemoratio autem antiquitatis exemplorumque prolatio summa cum delectatione, et auctoritatem orationi affert et fidem.—*Orat.* § 34. Apud Graecos autem eloquentissimi homines remoti a causis forensibus, cum ad caeteras res illustres, tum ad scribendam historiam maxime se applicaverunt. Namque et Herodotus—Et post illum Thucydides omnes dicendi artificio mea sententia facile vicit—Denique etiam a philosophia profectus princeps Xenophon.—*De Orat. lib. ii.* § 13, 14.

² Legendi etiam poetae, cognoscenda historia, omnium bonarum artium scriptores.—*De Orat. lib. i.* § 34. Est enim finitimus oratori poeta, numeris adstrictior paulo, verborum autem licentia liberior; multis vero ornandi generibus socius ac pene par; in hoc quidem certe prope idem, nullis ut terminis circumscribat aut definiat jus suum, quo minus ei liceat eadem illa facultate et copia vagari qua velit.—*Ibid.* § 16.

³ Non quaeritur mobilitas linguae, non celeritas verborum, non denique ea quae nobis non possumus fingere, facies, vultus, sonus. In oratore autem acumen dialecticorum, sententiae philosophorum, verba prope poetarum, memoria juris consultorum, vox tragoedorum, gestus pene summorum actorum, est requirendus. Quamobrem nihil in hominum genere rarius perfecto oratore inveniri potest; quae enim, singularum rerum artifices, singula si mediocriter adepti sunt, probantur, ea, nisi omnia summa sunt in oratore, probari non possunt.—*De Orat. lib. i.* § 28.

C. I have observed, indeed, on several occasions, that some orators, though they have good natural parts, want a fund of solid knowledge. Their heads seem unfurnished, and one cannot but perceive they labor hard for matter to fill up their discourses. They do not seem to speak from the abundance of their hearts, as if they were full of useful truths; but they talk as if they were at a loss for the very next thing they are to say.

A. Cicero takes notice of this kind of people; who live always, as it were, from hand to mouth, without laying up any stock of provision. But the discourses of such declaimers appear always thin and half-starved, whatever pains they take about them. Though these men could afford three months for studying a public harangue, such particular preparations, however troublesome, must needs be very imperfect, and any judicious hearer will easily discern their defects. They ought to have employed several years in laying up a plentiful store of solid notions; and then after such a general preparation, their particular discourses would cost them but little pains. Whereas, if a man, without this preparatory study, lay out all his application upon particular subjects, he is forced to put off his hearers with florid expressions, gaudy metaphors, and jingling antitheses. He delivers nothing but indeterminate common-place notions; and patches together shreds of learning and rhetoric, which any one may see were not made one for another. He never goes to the bottom of things, but stops in superficial remarks, and oft-times in false ones. He is not able to show truths in their proper light and full extent, because all general truths are necessarily connected among themselves, so that one must understand almost all of them, before he can treat judiciously of any one.

C. However, many of our public speakers get repute by those slight attainments you so much despise.

A. It is true, they are applauded by women and the undiscerning multitude, who are easily dazzled and imposed on; but this repute is very precarious, and could not subsist long, if it were not supported by a cabal of acquaintance, and the zeal or humor of a party. They who know the true end and rules of eloquence cannot hear such empty vain harangues, without satiety, disgust, and contempt.

C. It seems then you would have a man wait several years before he attempt to speak in public; for the flower of his

age must be spent in attaining that vast fund of knowledge, which you reckon necessary to an orator, and then he must be so far advanced in years, that he will have but little time to exert his talents.

A. I would have him begin to exert them betimes, for I know very well how great the power of action is. But under the pretence of exercising his parts, I would not have him immediately engage himself in any kind of employment that will take off his mind from his studies. A youth may try his skill from time to time; but for several years, a careful perusal of the best authors ought to be his main business.

C. Your judicious observation puts me in mind of a preacher I am acquainted with, who lives, as you say, from hand to mouth, and never thinks of any subject till he be obliged to treat of it; and then he shuts himself up in his closet, turns over his concordance, combefix, and polyanthea, his collections of sermons, and common-place book of separate sentences and book quotations that he has gathered together.

A. You cannot but perceive, Sir, that this method will never make him an able, judicious preacher. In such cases, a man cannot talk with strength and clearness; he is not sure of anything he says, nor doth anything flow easily from him. His whole discourse has a borrowed air, and looks like an awkward piece of patchwork. Certainly those are much to be blamed, who are so impatiently fond of showing their parts.

B. Before you leave us, Sir, pray tell us what you reckon the chief effect of eloquence.

A. Plato says an oration is so far eloquent as it affects the hearer's mind. By this rule you may judge certainly of any discourse you hear; if an harangue leave you cold and languid, and only amuses your mind instead of enlightening it, if it does not move your heart and passions, however florid and pompous it may be, it is not truly eloquent. Tully approves of Plato's sentiments on this point; and tells us¹ that the whole drift and force of a discourse should tend to move those secret springs of action that nature has placed in the hearts of men. Would you then consult your own mind to know whether those you hear be truly eloquent? If they make a lively impression upon you, and gain your attention and assent to what they say; if they move and animate your

¹ *Lib. i. § 5. lib. ii. § 82.*

passions, so as to raise you above yourself,¹ you may be assured they are true orators. But if instead of affecting you thus, they only please or divert you, and make you admire the brightness of their thoughts, or the beauty and propriety of their language, you may freely pronounce them to be mere declaimers.

B. Stay a little, Sir, if you please, till I ask you a few more questions.

A. I wish I could stay longer, gentlemen, for your conversation is very engaging; but I have an affair to despatch which will not admit of delay. To-morrow I will wait on you again, and then we shall finish this subject at leisure.

B. Adieu, then, Sir, till to-morrow.

SECOND DIALOGUE.

B. You are extremely kind, Sir, in coming so punctually. Your conversation yesterday was so agreeably instructive, that we longed impatiently to hear you again upon the same subject.

C. For my part, I made what haste I could, lest I should have come too late; for I was unwilling to lose any part of your discourse.

A. Such conferences are very useful among those who really love truth, and talk with temper; for then they exchange their best thoughts, and express them as clearly as they can. As for myself, gentlemen, I find an advantage in conversing with you; seeing you are not displeased at the freedom I take.

B. Let us leave off compliments, Sir; I know best how to judge of myself, and I perceive clearly that without your assistance I should have continued in several errors. I entreat you, Sir, to go on, and set me entirely right in my notions of eloquence.

A. Your mistakes, (if you will allow me to call them so,) prevail among most people of worth and learning, who have not examined this matter to the bottom.

¹ See *Longinus*, § vii.

B. Let us lose no time in preamble; we shall have a thousand things to say. Proceed, therefore, Sir, to rectify my mistakes, and begin at the point where we left off yesterday.

A. Of what point were we talking, when we parted? I have really forgotten.

C. You were speaking of that kind of eloquence which consists entirely in moving the passions.

B. Yes; but I could not well comprehend that the whole design of rhetoric is to move the passions. Is that your opinion, Sir?

A. By no means.

C. It seems then I mistook you yesterday.

A. What would you say of a man, who should persuade without any proof, and affect his hearers, without enlightening them? You could not reckon him a true orator. He might seduce people by this art of persuading them to what he would, without showing them that what he recommends is right. Such a person must prove very dangerous in the commonwealth, as we have seen before from the reasoning of Socrates.

B. It is very true.

A. But on the other hand, what would you think of a man, who in his public discourses should demonstrate the truth, in a plain, dry, exact, methodical manner; or make use of the geometrical way of reasoning, without adding anything to adorn or enliven his discourse? Would you reckon him an orator?

B. No; I should think him a philosopher only.

A. To make a complete orator then, we must find a philosopher, who knows both how to demonstrate any truth, and at the same time, to give his accurate reasoning all the natural beauty and vehemence of an agreeable, moving discourse, to render it entirely eloquent. And herein lies the difference between the clear, convincing method of philosophy, and the affecting, persuasive art of eloquence.

C. What do you say is the difference?

A. I say a philosopher's aim is merely to demonstrate the truth, and gain your assent; while the orator not only convinces your judgment, but commands your passions.

C. I do not take your meaning exactly, yet. When a hearer is fully convinced, what is there more to be done?

A. There is still wanting what an orator would do more

than a metaphysician, in proving the existence of God. The metaphysician would give you a plain demonstration of it, and stop at the speculative view of that important truth. But the orator would further add whatever is proper to excite the most affecting sentiments in your mind, and make you love that glorious Being whose existence he had proved. And this is what we call persuasion.

C. Now I understand you perfectly well.

A. You see then what reason Cicero had to say, that we must never separate philosophy from eloquence. For, the art of persuading without wisdom and previous instruction, must be pernicious: and wisdom alone, without the art of persuasion, can never have a sufficient influence on the minds of men, nor allure them to the love and practice of virtue. I thought it proper to observe this by the by, to show you how much those of the last age were mistaken in their notions of this matter. For, on the one hand, there were some men of polite learning, who valued nothing but the purity of language, and books elegantly written, but having no solid principles of knowledge with their politeness and erudition, they were generally libertines. On the other hand, there were a set of dry, formal scholars, who delivered their instructions in such a perplexed, dogmatical, unaffected manner as disgusted everybody. Excuse this digression. I return now to the point; and must remind you that persuasion has this advantage beyond mere conviction or demonstration, that it not only sets truth in the fullest light, but represents it as amiable, and engages men to love and pursue it.¹ The whole art of eloquence, therefore, consists in enforcing the clearest proofs of any truth, with such powerful motives as may affect the hearers, and employ their passions to just and worthy ends; to raise their indignation at ingratitude, their horror against cruelty, their compassion for the miserable, their love of virtue, and to direct every other passion to its proper objects. This is what Plato calls affecting the minds of an au-

¹ —Omnes animorum motus, quos hominum generi rerum natura tribuit, penitus pernoscendi; quod omnis vis ratioque dicendi in eorum qui audiunt mentibus aut sedandis aut excitandis, exprimenda est.—Cic. *De Orat. lib. i.* § 5. Maximaque pars orationis admoventi est ad animorum motus nonnunquam, aut cohortatione aut commemoratione aliquâ, aut in spem, aut in metum, aut ad cupiditatem, aut ad gloriam concitandos, saepe etiam a temeritate, iracundia, spe, injuria, credulitate revocandos.—*Ibid. lib. ii.* § 82.

dience, and moving their bowels. Do you understand me, Sir?

B. Very plainly; and I see too that eloquence is not a trifling invention to amuse and dazzle people with pompous language, but that it is a very serious art and serviceable to morality.

A. It is both a serious and a difficult art. For which reason, Tully said he had heard several persons declaim in an elegant, engaging manner, but that there were but very few complete orators, who knew how to seize and captivate the heart.

C. I am not surprised at that, for I see but very few who aim at it; nay, I freely own that Cicero himself, who lays down this rule, seems oftentimes to forget it. What do you think of those rhetorical flowers with which he embellished his harangues? They might amuse the fancy, but could not touch the heart.

A. We must distinguish, Sir, between Tully's orations. Those he composed in his youth, (when he chiefly aimed at establishing his character,) have oftentimes the gay defect you speak of. He was then full of ambition, and far more concerned for his own fame, than for the justice of his cause. And this will always be the case when people employ one to plead for them, who regards their business no farther than as it gives him an opportunity of distinguishing himself and of shining in his profession. Thus we find that among the Romans, their pleading at the bar was oftentimes nothing else but a pompous declamation. After all, we must own that Tully's youthful and most elaborate orations show a great deal of his moving and persuasive art. But to form a just notion of it we must observe the harangues he made in his more advanced age, for the necessities of the republic. For then, the experience he had in the weightiest affairs, the love of liberty, and the fear of those calamities that hung over his head, made him display the utmost efforts of his eloquence. When he endeavored to support and revive expiring liberty, and to animate the commonwealth against Antony, his enemy, you do then not see him use points of wit and quaint antitheses; he is truly eloquent. Everything seems artless, as it ought to be when one is vehement. With a negligent air, he delivers the most natural and affecting sentiments, and says everything that can move and animate the passions.

C. You have often spoken of witty conceits and quaint

turns. Pray what do you mean by these expressions? For I can scarce distinguish those witty turns from the other ornaments of discourse. In my opinion, all the embellishments of speech flow from wit and a vigorous fancy.

A. But Tully thinks, there are many expressions that owe all their beauty and ornament to their force and propriety and to the nature of the subject they are applied to.

C. I do not exactly understand these terms; be pleased to show me in a familiar way, how I may readily distinguish between a flash of wit, (or quaint turn,) and a solid ornament or noble, delicate thought.¹

A. Reading and observation will teach you best; there are a hundred different sorts of witty conceits.

C. But pray, Sir, tell me at least some general mark by which I may know them; is it affectation?

A. Not every kind of affectation, but a fond desire to please and show one's wit.

C. This gives me some little light, but I want still some distinguishing marks to direct my judgment.

A. I will give you one, then, which perhaps will satisfy you. We have seen that eloquence consists not only in giving clear, convincing proofs, but likewise in the art of moving the passions. Now in order to move them, we must be able to paint them well, with their various objects and effects. So that I think the whole art of oratory may be reduced to proving, painting, and raising the passions. Now all those pretty, sparkling, quaint thoughts that do not tend to one of these ends, are only witty conceits.²

¹ True wit is *nature* to advantage dress'd,
 What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd :
 Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,
 That gives us back the image of our mind.
 As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
 So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.
 For works may have more wit than does them good,
 As bodies perish through excess of blood.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

² I cannot forbear warning you, in the most earnest manner, against endeavoring at wit in your sermons, because, by the strictest computation, it is very near a million to one that you have none; and because too many of your calling have consequently made themselves everlastingly ridiculous by attempting it. I remember several young men in this town, who could never leave the pulpit under half a dozen conceits; and this faculty adhered to those gentlemen a longer or a shorter time, exactly in proportion to their several degrees of dul-

C. What do you mean by painting? I never heard that term applied to rhetoric.

A. To paint,¹ is not only to describe things, but to represent the circumstances of them, in such a lively,² sensible manner, that the hearer shall fancy he almost sees them with his eyes. For instance; if a dry historian were to give an account of Dido's death, he would only say, she was overwhelmed with sorrow after the departure of Æneas, and that she grew weary of her life, so went up to the top of her palace, and, lying down on her funeral pile, she stabbed herself. Now these words would inform you of the fact; but you do not see it. When you read the story in Virgil, he sets it before your eyes.³ When he represents all the circumstances of Dido's despair, describes her wild rage, and death already staring in her aspect; when he makes her speak at the sight of the picture and sword that Æneas left, your imagination transports you to Carthage, where you see the Trojan fleet leaving the shore, and the queen quite inconsolable. You enter into all her passions, and into the sentiments of the supposed spectators. It is not Virgil you then hear; you are too attentive to the last words of the unhappy Dido, to think of him. The poet disappears, and we see only what he describes, and hear those only whom he makes to speak. Such is the force of a natural imitation, and of painting in language. Hence it comes that the painters and the poets are so nearly related; the one paints for the eyes, and the other for the ears, but both of them ought to convey the liveliest pictures to people's imagination. I have taken an example from a poet, to give you a livelier image of what I mean by painting in eloquence; for poets paint in a stronger manner than orators. Indeed, the main thing in which poetry differs

ness; accordingly, I am told that some of them retain it to this day. I heartily wish the brood were at an end.—*Swift's Letter to a Young Clergyman.*

¹ See Longinus, § xv.

² Plus est evidentia, vel ut alii dicunt, repræsentatio, quam perspicuitas; et illud patet; hoc se quodammodo ostendit—Magna virtus est, res de quibus loquimur, clare atque ut cerni videantur, enunciare. Non enim satis efficit, neque ut debet plane dominatur oratio, si usque ad aures valet, atque ea sibi judex, de quibus cognoscit, narrari credit, non exprimi, et oculis mentis ostendi—Atque hujus summae, judicio quidem meo, virtutis facillima est via. Naturam intueamur, hanc sequamur.—*Quintil. lib. viii. c. 3.*

³ Æneid, lib. iv.

from eloquence is, that the poet paints with enthusiasm, and gives bolder touches than the orator. But prose allows of painting in a moderate degree; for, without lively descriptions, it is impossible to warm the hearer's fancy, or to stir his passions. A plain narrative does not move people; we must not only inform them of facts, but strike their senses by a lively, moving representation of the manner and the circumstances of the facts we relate.

C. I never reflected on this before. But seeing what you call painting is essential to oratory, does it not follow that there can be no true eloquence, without a due mixture of poetry?

A. You are right; only we must exclude versification, that is, a strict regard to the quantity of syllables, and the order of words, in which the poet is obliged to express his thoughts, according to the measure or verse he writes in. Versification indeed, if it be in rhyme, is what injudicious people reckon to be the whole of poetry. Some fancy themselves to be poets, because they have spoken or written in measured words; but there are many who make verses without poetry, and others are very poetical without making verses. If therefore we set versifying aside, poetry in other respects is only a lively fiction that paints nature. And if one has not this genius for painting, he will never be able to imprint things on the hearer's mind, but his discourse will be flat, languid and wearisome. Ever since the fall of Adam, men have been so low and grovelling that they are inattentive to moral truths, and can scarce conceive anything but what affects their senses. In this consists the degeneracy of human nature. People grow soon weary of contemplation, intellectual ideas do not strike their imagination, so that we must use sensible and familiar images, to support their attention and convey abstracted truths to their minds. Hence it came, that soon after the fall the religion of all the ancients consisted of poetry and idolatry, which were always joined together in their various schemes of superstition. But let us not wander too far; you see plainly that poetry, I mean, the lively painting of things, is, as it were, the very soul of eloquence.

C. But if true orators be poets, I should think that poets are orators too; for poetry is very proper to persuade.

A. Yes; they have the very same end. All the difference between them consists in what I have told you. Orators

are not possessed with that enthusiasm, which fires the poet's breast and renders him more lively, more sublime, and bolder in expression. You remember the passage I quoted from Cicero.

C. Which? is it not—

A. That an orator ought to have the style almost of a poet: that almost points out the difference between them.

C. I understand you. But you do not come to the point you proposed to explain to us.

A. Which?

C. The rule for distinguishing between witty turns and solid ornaments.

A. You will soon comprehend that. For of what use in discourse can any ornament be, that does not tend either to prove, to paint, or to affect?

C. It may serve to please.

A. We must distinguish here between such ornaments as only please, and those that both please and persuade. That which serves to please in order to persuade, is good and solid; thus we are pleased with strong and clear arguments. The just and natural emotions of an orator have much grace and beauty in them, and his exact and lively painting charms us. So that all the necessary parts of eloquence are apt to please, but yet pleasing is not their true aim. The question is, whether we shall approve such thoughts and expressions as may perhaps give an amusing delight, but in other respects, are altogether useless; and these I call quaint terms, and points of wit. You must remember now that I allow all those graces of style, and delicate thoughts that tend to persuasion; I only reject those vain, affected ornaments that the self-conceited author uses, to paint his own character, and amuse others with his wit, instead of filling their minds entirely with his subject. In fine, I think we ought to condemn not only all jingle and playing with words, as a thing extremely mean and boyish, but even all witty conceits, and fanciful turns; I mean such thoughts as only flash and glitter upon the fancy, but contain nothing that is solid, and conducive to persuasion.

C. I could agree to that, but that I am afraid such severity would retrench the chief beauties of discourse.

A. Do not you reckon Homer and Virgil very agreeable authors? are they not the most delicate you ever read? and yet in them you do not find what we call points of wit. Their poems are full of a noble simplicity; their art is entirely con-

cealed;¹ nature itself appears in all that they say. We do not find a single word that seems purposely designed to show the poet's wit. They thought it their greatest glory never themselves to appear, but to employ our attention on the objects they describe; as a painter endeavors to set before your eyes wide forests, mountains, rivers, distant views and buildings, or the adventures, actions, and different passions of men, in such a lively manner, that you cannot trace the masterly strokes of his pencil; for art looks mean and coarse when it is perceived. Plato, (who had examined this matter more thoroughly than any other orator or critic,) assures us that in composing, the poet should always keep out of sight, make himself quite forgotten by his readers, and represent only those things and persons, which he would set before their eyes. You see how much the ancients excelled us in just and lofty sentiments.

B. I see the use and necessity of painting, in eloquence; let us next know the nature and use of those affecting movements you spoke of.

A. They serve to raise in the hearer's mind such emotions as answer the orator's purpose.

C. But in what do these movements of an orator consist?

A. In his words, and in the actions of his body.

B. What movement can there be in words?

A. A great deal. Tully tells us, that the very enemies of Gracchus could not forbear weeping when he pronounced these words²—'Miserable man that I am! Whither shall I

¹ When first young *Maro* sung of kings and wars,
'Ere warning Phœbus touch'd his trembling ears,
Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,
And but from nature's fountains scorn'd to draw;
But when t' examine every part he came,
Nature and *Homer* were, he found, the same.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them.

Pope.

² *Quid fuit in Graccho, quem tu, Catule, melius meministi, quod me puero tantopere ferretur? quo me miser conferam? quo certam? in Capitoliumne? at fratris sanguine redundat. An domum? matremne ut miseram lamentantemque videam, et abjectam? quae sic ab illo acta esse constabat oculis, voce, gestu, inimici ut lachrymas tenere non possent. Haec eo dico pluribus, quod genus hoc totum oratores, qui sunt veritatis ipsius actores, reliquerunt; imitatores autem veritatis, histriones, occupaverunt.—Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. § 56.*

turn myself? Where can I go? to the Capitol? it swims with my brother's blood. Shall I go to my own house? there to see my unhappy mother dissolved in tears, and oppressed with sorrow? This is moving language. But now if one were to say the same things in a cold manner, they would lose all their force.

B. Think you so?

A. Let us try. 'I know not where to go, nor whither I should turn myself, amidst my misfortunes. The Capitol is the place where my brother's blood was shed; and at home, I shall see my unhappy mother, lamenting her condition, with the utmost grief.' This is the same thing that was said before; but what has become of that force and vivacity we then perceived? Where is that vehement manner, and abrupt language, which so justly describes nature in the transports of grief? The manner of saying a thing shows how it affects the mind, and that is what most effectually touches the hearer. In such passages, one ought studiously to avoid all refined, uncommon thoughts, and even neglect connexion and order; otherwise the passion described has no appearance of truth, or nature, in it. Nothing is more shocking than a passion expressed in beautiful figures, pompous language and well-turned periods. On this head I must recommend Longinus² to you, who quotes many sublime examples from Demosthenes and others.

C. Besides the movements that attended an affecting, vehement style, you mentioned others that flow from the orator's gesture and action; which I must entreat you to explain.

A. I cannot pretend to give you a complete system of rhetoric. It is a task I am not fit for. However I shall give you some remarks I have made on the point of gesture. We find in Tully and Quintilian,³ that the action of the Greeks and Romans was far more violent than ours. They stamped on the ground, and even beat their forehead. Tully mentions an orator, who in his pleading laid hold of his client, and tore open his clothes to show the judges the wounds he

¹ See Longinus, § xviii.

² See Longinus, §§ xviii, xix, xx, xxi.

³ Femur ferire, quod Athenis primus fecisse creditur Cleon, et usitatum est, et indignatos decet, et excitat auditorem. Idque in Callidio Cicero desiderat. *Non frons, inquit, percussa? non femur? pedum nulla supplisio?*—*Quint. lib. xi. c. 3.*

had received in the service of the republic. This was a vehement kind of action indeed; but such as is reserved for extraordinary occasions and doth not fall within the common rules of gesture. I think it is not natural to be always moving one's arm in talking; that motion¹ is proper enough when the orator is very vehement, but he ought not to move his arm in order to appear vehement. Nay, there are many things that ought to be pronounced calmly, and without any motion.

B. Would you have a preacher for instance, use no gesture at all on some occasions? That would look very strange indeed.

A. I know that most people lay it down for a rule, (or a custom at least,) that a preacher should be always in motion, whatever the subject be that he treats of. But it might be easily shown that our [French] preachers usually have too much gesture, and sometimes too little.

B. I wish you would state this matter clearly. For I always believed, from the example of *** that there are not above two or three motions of the hands to be used in a whole sermon.

A. Let us, then, lay down some principle to argue upon. Now of what use is the action of the body² in speaking? Is it not to express the sentiments and passions of the mind?

B. I think so.

A. The motion of the body then should help to paint the thoughts of the soul.

B. Yes.

A. And that painting ought to be exact and faithful.³

¹ Brachii moderata projectio remissis humeris, atque explicantibus se in proferenda manu digitis, continuos et decurrentes locos maxime decet.—*Ibid.*

² Actio, inquam, in dicendo una dominatur; sine hac summus orator esse in numero nullo potest; mediocris, hac instructus summus saepe superare. Huic primas dedisse Demosthenes dicitur, quum rogaretur quid in dicendo esset primum; huic secundas; huic tertias.—*De Orat. lib. iii. § 56.* Est enim *actio* quasi *sermo corporis*; quo magis menti congruens esse debet—Atque in iis omnibus quae sunt actionis, inest quaedam vis a natura data; quare etiam hac imperiti, hac vulgus, hac denique barbari maxime commoventur—iisdem enim omnium animi motibus concitantur, et eos iisdem notis, et in aliis agnoscunt et in se ipsi[s] indicant.—*Ibid. § 59.*

³ Omnis enim motus animi suum quendam a natura habet vultum et sonum et gestum; totumque corpus hominis et ejus omnis vultus

Every look and motion should in an easy, natural manner represent the speaker's sentiments, and the nature of the things he says; but so as to avoid all mean and theatrical gestures.

B. I think I understand your notion exactly. Let me interrupt you then a little, that you may see how far I enter into the consequences that flow from the principle you laid down. You¹ would have an orator use such a lively, natural, becoming action, as will help to point out distinctly what his words alone could express only in a flat and languid manner. So that you reckon his very action a sort of painting.²

A. Right. But we must farther conclude, that to paint well, we must imitate nature; and observe what she does when she is left to herself, and is not constrained by art.

B. That is plain.

A. Now, doth a man naturally use many gestures when he says common things, without vehemence or the least mixture of any sort of passion?

B. No.

A. On such common subjects, then, we ought not to use any action in public discourses, or at least but little; for

omnesque voces, ut nervi in fidibus, ita sonant, ut a motu animi quoque sunt pulsae.—*Cicero. de Orat. lib. iii. c. 57.*

¹ Gestus quantum habeat in oratore nomenti, satis vel ex eo patet quod pleraque etiam citra verba significat. Quippe non manus solum, sed nutus etiam declarant nostram voluntatem, et in mutis pro sermone sunt—Contra si gestus ac vultus ab oratione dissentiant, tristia dicamus hilares, affirmemus aliqua renuentes, non auctoritas modo verbis sed etiam fides desit.—*Quint. lib. xi. c. 3.*

² Our preachers stand stock still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world. Our words flow from us in a smooth, continued stream, without those strainings of the voice, motions of the body, and majesty of the hand, which are so much celebrated in the orators of Greece and Rome. We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and keep our temper, in a discourse which turns upon everything that is dear to us. Though our zeal breaks out in the finest tropes and figures, it is not able to stir a limb about us. I have heard it observed more than once, by those who have seen Italy, that an untravelled Englishman cannot relish all the beauties of Italian pictures, because the postures which are expressed in them are often such as are peculiar to that country. One who has not seen an Italian in the pulpit, will not know what to make of that noble gesture in Raphael's picture of St. Paul preaching at Athens, where the apostle is represented as lifting up both his arms, and pouring out the thunder of his rhetoric, amidst an audience of pagan philosophers.—*Addison.*

there we ought always to follow nature;¹ nay, there are some occasions where an orator might best express his thoughts by silence. For if, being full of some great sentiment, he continued immoveable for a moment, this surprising pause would keep the minds of the audience in suspense, and express an emotion too big for words to utter.

B. I doubt not but such unexpected pauses seasonably employed, would be very significant, and would powerfully affect the hearers. But, Sir, you seem to think that one who speaks in public, ought to use no other action than what is proper for ordinary conversation.

A. You mistake me, Sir; I think the sight of a great assembly, and the importance of the subject an orator treats of, ought to animate him far more than if he were talking familiarly with his friends. But both in private and in public, he ought always to act naturally. He should use some action when his words are moving; but when his expressions are quite calm and simple, there is no occasion to move the body, except it be in the gentlest manner. Nothing appears more shocking and absurd, than to see a man very warm and active, when he is saying the driest, coldest things. Though he sweats himself, he chills the blood of his audience. Some time ago, I happened to fall asleep at a sermon, as you know one is apt to do in the afternoon, (and indeed in former times, they preached but once a-day after the gospel in the morning service,) but I soon waked and found the preacher in a very violent agitation, so that I fancied, at first, that he was pressing some important point of morality—

B. What was the matter then?

A. He was only giving notice, that on the Sunday following he would preach upon repentance. I was extremely surprised to hear such an indifferent thing uttered with so much vehemence, and must have laughed out, if the regard I had for the place and some other circumstances had not restrained me. The pronunciation of these declaimers is exactly like their gesture; for, as their voice is a perpetual monotony, so there is a uniformity in their gesture, that is no less

¹ Unum jam his adjiciendum est, cum praecepue in actione spectentur *decorum*, saepe aliud alios decere. Est enim latens quaedam in hoc ratio et inenarrabilis; et ut vere hoc dictum est caput esse artis, decere quod facias—Quare norit se quisque, nec tantum ex communibus praeceptis, sed etiam ex natura sua capiat consilium formandae actionis.—*Quint. lib. xi. c. 3.*

nauseous and unnatural, and equally contrary to the good effect that one might expect from decent action.

B. You said that sometimes they have not action enough.

A. We cannot wonder at that. For they do not discern the things that require warmth and earnestness. They waste their spirits in saying the plainest things, and so are forced to utter those things faintly, which ought to be delivered with a vehement action. I must own indeed that the French are not very capable of this vehemence, for they are too airy, and do not conceive things with sufficient strength, and therefore do not speak with a proper energy. The Romans had a wonderful talent this way, and the Greeks a greater. The eastern nations excelled in it, and particularly the Hebrews. Nothing can equal the strength and vivacity of the figures they employed in their discourse, and the very actions they used to express their sentiments; such as putting ashes on their heads, and tearing their garments, and covering themselves with sackcloth, under any deep distress and sorrow of mind. I do not speak of what the prophets did to give a more lively representation of the things they foretold, because such figurative actions were the effect of divine inspiration. But even in other cases, we find that those people understood much better than we do, how to express their grief and fear and other passions. And hence, no doubt, arose those surprising effects of eloquence which we never experience now.

B. You approve then of many different gestures, and various inflections of the voice?¹

A. It is that variety, which gives so much grace and force to the action of an orator, and made Demosthenes far excel all others. The more easy and familiar the voice and action appear, when the speaker only narrates, explains or instructs, the more apt he will be to surprise and move the audience in those parts of his discourse, where he grows suddenly vehement, and enforces lofty, affecting sentiments by a suitable

¹ In omni voce est quoddam medium, sed suum cuique voci. Hinc gradatim adscendere vocem utile et suave est; (nam a principio clamare agreste quiddam est;) et idem illud ad formandam est vocem salutare. Deinde est quoddam contentionis extremum—Est item contra quoddam in remissione gravissimum, quoque tamquam sonorum gradibus descenditur. Haec varietas, et hic per omnes sonos vocis cursus, et se tuebitur, et actioni afferet suavitatem.—*Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. § 61.*

energy of voice, and action. This due pronunciation¹ is a kind of music, whose beauty consists in the variety of proper tones and inflections of the voice, which ought to rise or fall with a just and easy cadence, according to the nature of the things we express. It gives a light as well as a grace to language, and is the very life and spirit of discourse.

B. According to your notions of elocution, it is an art unknown to our greatest orators. The preacher that you and I heard, about a fortnight ago, did not observe your rule nor even seem to endeavor it. Except the first thirty words of his sermon, he spoke always in the same tone, and the only sign I could perceive of his being more vehement in some parts of his discourse than in others, was, that when he seemed earnest he spoke faster than at other times.

A. To me, Sir, his voice seemed to have two tones, though they were well adapted to his words. You have observed justly enough that he did not follow the rules of pronunciation, and I believe he did not perceive the need of them. His voice is naturally melodious, and though it be ill managed, it is however pleasing enough. But you see plainly that it does not make those strong, affecting impressions on the mind that it would produce, if it had such various inflections as are proper to express the speaker's sentiments. Such preachers are like fine clocks, that give a clear, full, soft, agreeable sound; but after all they are clocks only, of no significancy, and having no variety of notes, they are incapable of harmony or eloquence.

¹ Ornata est pronuntiatio, cui suffragatur vox facilis, magna, beata, flexibilis, firma, dulcis, durabilis, clara, pura, secans aëra, auribus sedens. Est enim quaedam ad auditum accommodata, non magnitudine, sed proprietate, ad hoc velut tractabilis, utique habens omnes in se qui desiderantur sonos intentionesque, et toto ut aiunt organo instructa.—Illud vero maximum, quod secundum rationem rerum de quibus dicimus, animorumque habitus, conformanda vox est, ne ab oratione discordet. Vitemus igitur illam quae Graece *μονοτονία* vocatur, una quaedam spiritus ac soni intentio; non solum ne omnia clamose, quod insanum est; aut intra loquendi modum, quod motu caret; aut summisso murmure, quo etiam debilitatur omnis intentio; sed ut in iisdem partibus, iisdemque affectibus, sint tamen quaedam non ita magnae vocis *declinationes*, prout aut verborum dignitas, aut sententiarum natura, aut depositio, aut inceptio, aut transitus postulabit; ut qui singulis pinxerunt coloribus, alia tamen eminentiora, alia reductiora fecerunt, sine quo ne membris quidem suas lineas dedissent.—*Quint. lib. xi. c. 3.*

B. But were there not many graces in the rapidity of his discourse?

A. Yes; and I grant that in some affecting, lively passages, one ought to speak faster than usual. But it is a great fault to speak with so much precipitation that one cannot stop himself, nor be distinctly understood. The voice and action bear some resemblance to verse. Sometimes we must use such a slow, and grave measure as is fit to describe things of that character; and sometimes a short, impetuous one, to express what is quick and ardent. To use always the same degree of action, and the same tone of voice, is like prescribing one remedy for all distempers. But we ought to excuse the uniformity of that preacher's voice and action. For, besides his possessing many excellent qualities, the fault we complain of is the natural effect of his style. We have already agreed that the modulation of the voice should be exactly suited to the words. Now his style is even and uniform, without the least variety. On the one hand, it is not familiar, insinuating and popular; and on the other, it has nothing in it that is lively, figurative and sublime; but it consists of a constant flow of words that press one after the other, containing a close and well-connected chain of reasoning, on clear ideas. In a word, he is a man that talks good sense very correctly. Nay, we must acknowledge that he has done great service to the pulpit; he has rescued it from the servitude of vain declaimers, and filled it himself with much strength and dignity. He is very capable of convincing people, but I know few preachers who persuade and move them less than he doth. If you observe carefully, you will even find that his way of preaching is not very instructive, for, besides his not having a familiar, engaging, pathetic manner of talking (as I observed before), his discourse does not in the least strike the imagination,¹ but is addressed to

¹ The senses and the imagination are fruitful and inexhaustible sources of mistakes and delusion; but the understanding or mind acting by itself, is not so subject to error; we cannot always speak so as to affect the senses and imagination of others, nor ought we always to endeavor it. When a subject is *abstracted*, we can seldom render it *sensible* (or apt to strike the imagination); without making it obscure; it is enough if it be made *intelligible*. Nothing can be more unjust than the usual complaints of those, who would know everything, and yet will not apply themselves to anything. They take it amiss when we require their attention, and expect that we should always *strike* their fancy, and continually please their senses

the understanding only. It is a thread of reasoning that cannot be comprehended without the closest attention. And seeing there are but few hearers capable of such a constant application of mind, they retain little or nothing of his discourse. It is like a torrent that hurries along at once, and leaves its channel dry. In order to make a lasting impression on people's minds, we must support their attention, by moving their passions, for dry instructions can have but little influence. But the thing that I reckon least natural in this preacher, is the continual motion he gives his arms, while there is nothing figurative, nor moving in his words. The action used in ordinary conversation, would suit his style best, or his impetuous gesture would require a style full of sallies and vehemence, and even then he behoved to manage his warmth better, and render it less uniform. In fine, I think he is a great man, but not an orator. A country preacher, who can alarm his hearers, and draw tears from them, answers the end of eloquence better than he.

B. But how shall we know the particular gestures, and the inflections of voice that are agreeable to nature?

A. I told you before, that the whole art of good orators consists in observing what nature does when unconstrained. You ought not to imitate those haranguers who choose always to declaim, but will never talk to their hearers. On the contrary, you should address yourself to an audience in such a modest, respectful, engaging manner, that each of them shall think you are speaking to him in particular. And this is the use and advantage of natural, familiar, insinuating tones of voice. They ought always to be grave and becoming, and even strong and pathetic, when the subject requires it. But you must not fancy, that you can express the passions by the mere strength of voice; like those noisy speakers, who by bawling and tossing themselves about, stun their hearers instead of affecting them. If we would succeed in painting, and raising the passions, we must know exactly what movements they inspire. For instance, observe what is the posture, and what the voice of one, whose heart is pierced with sorrow, or surprised at the sight of an astonish-

and their passions. But it is not in our power to gratify them. The authors of romances and comedies are obliged thus to please and amuse them; but as for us, it is enough if we can instruct those who are truly attentive.—*P. Malbranche's Recherche de la verite, liv. iii. c. i.*

ing object; remark the natural action of the eyes; what the hands do; and what the whole body. On such occasions nature appears, and you need only follow it; if you must employ art,¹ conceal it so well under an exact imitation, that it may pass for nature itself. But to speak the truth, orators in such cases are like poets, who write elegies or other passionate verses; they must feel the passion they describe,² else they can never paint it well. The greatest art imaginable can never speak like true passion,³ and undisguised nature. So that you will always be but an imperfect orator, if you be not thoroughly moved with those sentiments that you paint, and would infuse into others. Nor do I say this from a pious motive; I speak now only as an orator.⁴

B. The case I think is abundantly plain; but you spoke to us of the eyes; have they their rhetoric too?

A. Yes; if you will believe Tully,⁵ and other ancient

¹ Τότε γὰρ ἡ τέχνη τέλειος, ἠνίκ' ἂν φύσις εἶναι δοκῇ· ἢ δ' αὖ φύσις ἐπιτυχῆς, ὅταν λανθάνουσα περιέχῃ τὴν τέχνην.—*Longinus*, § xxii.

² Ut identibus arident, ita flentibus adflent
 Humani vultus. Si vis me flere, dolendum est
 Primum ipsi tibi —
 — male si mandata loqueris,
 Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. Tristia moestum
 Vultum verba decent; iratum plena minarum.
 Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem
 Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,
 Aut ad humum moerore gravi deducit, et angit;
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.

Hor. de. Ar. Po.

³ Θαρβῶν γὰρ ἀφορισαίμην ἂν ὡς οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ γενναῖον πάθος ἐνθα χρῆ μεγάληγορόν ἐστι, ὥσπερ ὑπὸ μανίας τινος, καὶ πνεύματος ἐνθουσιαστικοῦς ἐκπνέον, καὶ οἰονεὶ φοιβάζον τοῦς λόγους.—*Longinus*, § viii.

⁴ Neque fieri potest, ut doleat is qui audit, ut oderit, ut invidet, ut pertimescat aliquid,—nisi omnes ii motus quos orator adhibere volet iudici, in ipso oratore impressi esse, atque inusti videbuntur—Ut enim nulla materies tam facilis ad exardescendum est, quae nisi admoto igni ignem concipere possit, sic nulla mens est tam ad comprehendendam vim oratoris parata, quae possit incendi, nisi inflammatus ipse ad eam et ardens accesseris.—*Cic. de. Orat. lib. ii.* § 45.

⁵ Sed in ore sunt omnia. In eo autem ipso dominatus est omnis oculorum—Animi est enim omnis actio; et imago animi vultus est, indices oculi. Nam haec est una pars corporis quae, quot animi motus sunt, tot significationes et commutationes possit efficere—Oculi sunt quorum tum intentione, tum remissione, tum conjectu, tum hilaritate motus animorum significemus apte cum genere ipso orationis; est enim actio quasi sermo corporis, quo magis menti congru-

orators. Nothing is more intelligible than the aspect; it expresses every passion of the soul. And in the aspect, the eyes are most active and significant. One well-timed look will pierce to the bottom of the heart.¹

B. The preacher we were speaking of, has usually his eyes shut. When we observe him near, it is very shocking.²

A. It is disagreeable because we perceive that he wants one of the chief things that ought to enliven his discourse.

B. But why does he so?

A. He makes haste to pronounce his words, and shuts his eyes, because it helps his laboring memory.

B. I observed indeed that it was very much burdened; sometimes he repeated several words to find out the thread of his discourse. Such repetitions make one look like a

ens esse debet.—Quare in hac nostra actione secundum vocem vultus valet; is autem oculis gubernatur.—*Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. § 59.*

¹ Smiles and sadness display themselves partly at the mouth; the former by raising, the latter by depressing, the corners of it, and yet we might in many cases mistake a laughing for a weeping countenance, if we did not see the eye. Indeed this little organ, whether sparkling with joy, or melting in sorrow; whether gleaming with indignation, or languishing in tenderness; whether glowing with the steady light of deliberate valor, or sending forth emanations of good will and gratitude, is one of the most interesting objects in the whole visible universe. There is more in it than shape, motion and color; there is thought and passion; there is life and soul; there is reason and speech.—*Beattie.*

² But the face is the epitome of the whole man, and the eyes are, as it were, the epitome of the face. No part of the body, besides the face, is capable of as many changes as there are different emotions in the mind, and of expressing them by all those changes. As the countenance admits of so great variety, it requires also great judgment to govern it. Not that the form of the face is to be shifted on every occasion, lest it turn to farce and buffoonery; but it is certain that the eyes have a wonderful power of marking the emotions of the mind; sometimes by a steadfast look, sometimes by a careless one—now by a sudden regard, then by a joyful sparkling, as the sense of the word is diversified; for action is, as it were, the speech of the features and limbs, and must therefore conform itself always to the sentiments of the soul. And it may be observed that in all which relates to the gesture, there is a wonderful force implanted by nature; since the vulgar, the unskilful, and even the most barbarous, are chiefly affected by this. None are moved by the sound of words but those who understand the language, and the sense of many things is lost upon men of a dull apprehension; but action is a kind of universal tongue; all men are subject to the same passions, and consequently know the same marks of them in others, by which they themselves express them.—*Spectator.*

careless school boy that has forgotten his lesson. They are very disagreeable, and would not be easily excused in a preacher of less note.

A. It is not so much the preacher's fault as the defect of the method he follows after many others. So long as men preach by heart, and often, they will be apt to fall into this perplexity.

B. How do you mean? Would you have us not preach by heart? Without doing so, one could not make an exact, pithy discourse.

A. I am not against a preacher's getting some particular sermons by heart. They may always have time enough to prepare themselves for extraordinary occasions. And they might even acquit themselves handsomely without such great preparation.

B. How? This seems incredible.

A. If I be mistaken, I shall readily own it. Let us only examine the point without prepossession. What is the chief aim of an orator? Is it not to persuade? And in order to this, ought he not to affect his hearers, by moving their passions?

B. I grant it.

A. The most lively and moving way of preaching is therefore the best.

B. True; what do you conclude from that?

A. Which of two orators will have the most powerful and affecting manner; he who learns his discourse by heart, or he who speaks without reciting word for word what he had studied?

B. He, I think, who has got his discourse by heart.

A. Have patience; and let us state the question right. On the one hand, I suppose a man prepares his discourse exactly, and learns it by heart to the least syllable. On the other, I suppose another person, who fills his mind with the subject he is to talk of; who speaks with great ease, (for you would not have any body¹ attempt to speak in public, without having proper talents for it;) in short, a man who has attentively considered all the principles, and parts of the subject he is to handle, and has a comprehensive view of them in all their extent; who has reduced his thoughts into a prop-

¹ — Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
Nec rude quid possit video ingenium — *Hor. de. A. P.*

er method, and prepared the strongest expressions to explain and enforce them in a sensible manner; who ranges all his arguments, and has a sufficient number of affecting figures; such a man certainly knows everything that he ought to say, and the order in which the whole should be placed;¹ to succeed therefore in his delivery, he wants nothing but those common expressions that must make the bulk of his discourse. But do you believe now that such a person would have any difficulty in finding easy, familiar expressions?

B. He could not find such just and handsome ones as he might have hit on, if he had sought them leisurely in his closet.

A. I own that. But according to you, he would lose only a few ornaments, and you know how to rate that loss, according to the principles we laid down before. On the other side, what advantage must he not have in the freedom and force of his action, which is the main thing. Supposing that he has applied himself much to composing, (as Cicero requires of an orator,²) that he has read all the best models, and has a natural or acquired easiness of style and speech, that he has abundance of solid knowledge and learning, that he understands his subject perfectly well, and has ranged all the parts

¹ He, then, that would prepare himself to be a preacher in this method, must accustom himself to talk freely to himself, to let his thoughts flow from him, especially when he feels an edge and heat upon his mind; for then happy expressions will come in his mouth—he must also be writing essays upon all sorts of subjects; for by writing he will bring himself to a correctness both in thinking and in speaking; and thus by a hard practice for two or three years, a man may render himself such a *master* in this way, that he can never be surprised, nor will new thoughts ever dry upon him. He must talk over himself the whole *body* of divinity, and accustom himself to explain and prove, to clear objections, and apply every part of it to some *practical* use—and if in these his meditations, happy thoughts and noble, tender expressions, do at any time offer themselves, he must not lose them, but write them down—by a very few years' practice of two or three such soliloquies a day, chiefly in the morning, when the head is clearest, and the spirits are liveliest, a man will contract a great easiness both in thinking and speaking.—*Bp. Burnet's Disc. on the pastoral care*, p. 210, 211.

² Caput autem est, quod (ut vere dicam) minime facimus, est enim magni laboris quem plerique fugimus, quam plurimum scribere. Stilius optimus, et praestantissimus dicendi effector, ac magister; neque injuriâ; nam si subitam et fortuitam orationem, commentatio, et cogitatio facile vincit; hanc ipsam profecto assidua ac diligens scriptura superabit.—*De Orat. lib. i. § 33.*

and proofs of it in his head ; in such a case we must conclude that he will speak with force, and order and readiness.¹ His periods perhaps will not soothe the ear so much as the others, and for that reason he must be the better orator. His transitions may not be so fine ; it is no great matter ; though these he might have prepared without getting them by heart ; besides, these little omissions were common to the most eloquent orators among the ancients. They thought such negligence was very natural, and ought to be imitated, to avoid the appearance of too great preparation. What then could our orator want ? He might make some repetition, but that too must have its use. Not only will the judicious hearer take a pleasure in observing nature here, which leads one often to resume whatever view of the subject strikes strongest upon the mind ; but likewise this repetition imprints the truth more deeply, which is the best manner of instruction. At the worst, one might find in his discourse some inaccuracy of construction, some obsolete word that has been censured by the academy, something that is irregular ; or, if you will, some weak or misapplied expression, that he may happen to drop in the warmth of action. But surely they must have narrow souls, who can think such little escapes worth any one's notice. There is abundance of these to be met with in the most excellent originals.² The greatest orators among the ancients neglected them, and if our views were as noble as theirs, we should not so much regard those trifles,³ which can amuse none but such as are not able to discern and pursue what is truly great. Excuse my freedom, Sir ; if I did not think you had a genius very different from these little, cavilling critics I condemn, I should speak of them with greater caution.

¹ — cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.
Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.

Hor. de Art. Poet.

² Παρατεθειμένος δ' οὐκ ὀλίγα καὶ αὐτὸς ἀμαρτήματα, καὶ Ομήρου, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσοι μέγιστοι, καὶ ἤκιστα τοῖς παισίμασιν ἀρεσχόμενος, ὁμῶς δὲ οὐχ ἀμαρτήματα μᾶλλον αὐτὰ ἐκούσια καλῶν, ἢ παρορήματα δι' ἀμέλειαν, εἰκῆ πον καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν ὑπὸ μεγαλαοφύϊας ἀνεπιστάτως παρενηνεγμένα.—LONGINUS, § xxxiii.

³ Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus ;
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem vult manus et mens,
Poscentique gravem persaepe remittit acutum ;
Nec semper feriet quodcumque minabitur arcus.

B. You may always speak your mind, Sir, without any reserve on my account. Be pleased therefore to go on with your comparison.

A. Consider then, in the next place, the advantages that a preacher must have who does not get his sermon by heart. He is entirely master of himself; he speaks in an easy, unaffected way, and not like a formal declaimer. Things flow then from their proper source. If he has a natural talent for eloquence, his language must be lively and moving; even the warmth that animates him,¹ must lead him to such pertinent expressions and figures, as he could not have found out by study.

B. Why? Surely a man may enliven his fancy, and compose very sprightly discourses in his closet.

A. I own that; but a just elocution and gesture must still give them a greater life and spirit. Besides what one says in the ardor of action is far more natural and affecting; it has a negligent air; and discovers none of that art, which is visible in all elaborate composures. We may add farther, that a skilful, experienced orator adapts things to the capacity of his hearers,² and varies his discourse, according to the

Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.——

Hor. de Art. Poet.

¹ But the rule I have observed last, is the most necessary of all; and without it all the rest will never do the business: it is this; that a man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion; he must have a life and flame in his thoughts with relation to these subjects; he must have felt himself those things which he intends to explain and recommend to others. He must observe narrowly the motions of his own mind;—that so he may have a lively heat in himself when he speaks of them; and that he may speak in so sensible a manner, that it may be almost *felt* that he speaks from his heart. There is an authority in the simplest things that can be said, when they carry visible characters of genuineness in them. Now if a man can carry on this method, and by much meditation and prayer draw down divine influences, which are always to be expected when a man puts himself in the way of them, and prepares himself for them; he will always feel that *while he is musing, a fire is kindled* within him; and then he will speak with authority, and without constraint; his thoughts will be true, and his expressions free and easy.—*Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, p. 111, 112.

² Erit igitur haec facultas in eo quem volumus esse eloquentem, ut definire rem possit; neque id faciat tam presse et anguste, quam in illis eruditissimis disputationibus fieri solet, sed cum explanatius, tum

impression he sees it makes upon their minds. For, he easily perceives whether they understand him, or not,—and whether he gains their attention and moves their hearts; and if it be needful, he resumes the same things in a different manner, and sets them in another light; he clothes them in more familiar images, and comparisons; or he goes back to the plainest principles, from which he gradually deduces the truths he would enforce; or he endeavors to cure those passions, that hinder the truth from making a due impression. This is the true art of instruction and persuasion; and without this address and presence of mind, we can only make roving and fruitless declamations. Observe now how far the orator, who gets everything by heart, falls short of the other's success. If we suppose then a man to preach, who depends entirely on his memory, and dares not pronounce a word different from his lesson; his style will be very exact, but, as Dionysius Halicarnassus observes of Isocrates, his composition must please more when it is read, than when it is pronounced. Besides, let him take what pains he will, the inflections of his voice will be too uniform, and always a little constrained. He is not like a man that speaks to an audience, but like a rhetorician, who recites or declaims. His action must be awkward and forced; by fixing his eyes too much, he shows how much his memory labors in his delivery, and he is afraid to give way to an unusual emotion, lest he should lose the thread of his discourse. Now the hearer perceiving such an undisguised art, is so far from being touched and captivated, as he ought to be, that he observes the speaker's artifice with coldness and neglect.

B. But did not the ancient orators do what you condemn?

A. I believe not.

B. What! do you think that Demosthenes and Tully did not learn by heart those finished orations they have left us?

A. We know very well that they composed and wrote their harangues, before they spoke in public; but we have several reasons to believe that they did not get them by heart, word for word. Even the orations of Demosthenes, as we

etiam uberius, et ad commune iudicium, popularemque intelligentiam accommodatius.—*Cic. Orat.* § 33.

have them show rather the sublimity and vehemence of a great genius that was accustomed to speak powerfully of public affairs, than the accuracy and politeness of an author. As for Cicero, in several places of his harangues, we find things spoken on sudden emergences, that he could not possibly have foreseen. And if we take his opinion of this matter,¹ he thinks an orator ought to have a great memory, and he even speaks of an artificial kind of memory as a useful invention; but all he says on this point does not imply that we ought to learn every word by heart. On the contrary, he seems only to require, that we should range all the parts of a discourse exactly in our memory, and prepare the figures and chief expressions we are to use, so as to be ready to add, off-hand, whatever may occasionally be suggested from a view of the audience, or unexpected accidents. And it is for this reason, that he requires so much application and presence of mind in an orator.

B. You must allow me to tell you, Sir, that all this does not convince me; for I cannot believe that one can speak so very well, without having prepared and adjusted all his expressions.

C. The reason why it is so hard to persuade you in this case, is, because you judge of the matter by common experience. If they, who get their sermons by heart, were to preach without that preparation, it is likely they would succeed but very ill; nor am I surprised at it, for they are not accustomed to follow nature, they have studied only to compose their sermons, and that too with affectation. They have never once thought of speaking in a noble, strong and natural manner.² Indeed, the greatest part of preachers have

¹ Sed verborum memoria, quae minus est nobis necessaria, majore imaginum varietate distinguitur; multa enim sunt verba, quae, quasi articuli, connectunt membra orationis, quae formari similitudine nulla possunt; eorum fingendae nobis sunt imagines, quibus semper utamur. Rerum memoria propria est oratoris; eam singulis personis bene positae notare possumus, ut sententias imaginibus, ordinem locis comprehendamus.—*De Orat. lib. ii. § 88.*

² This leads me to consider the difference that is between the reading, and the speaking of sermons. Reading is peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no other. It has indeed made our sermons more exact, and so has produced to us many volumes of the best that are extant. But after all, though some few read so happily, pronounce so truly, and enter so entirely into those affections which they recommend, that in them we see both the correctness of reading, and the seriousness of speaking sermons, yet every one is not so

not a sufficient fund of solid knowledge to depend on, and are therefore afraid to trust themselves without the usual preparation. The method of getting sermons by heart, qualifies many who have but very scanty and superficial parts, to make a tolerable figure in the pulpit; seeing they need only lay together a certain number of passages and remarks, and however little genius or assistance a man has, he may, with time and application, be able to work up and polish his matter into some form. But to preach with judgment and strength, requires an attentive meditation upon the first principles of religion, an exact knowledge of morality, an insight into antiquity, strength of reasoning, and suitable action. Is not this, Sir, what you require in an orator, who does not learn his discourse by heart?¹

happy. Some by hanging their head perpetually over their notes, by blundering as they read, and by a cursory running over them, do so lessen the matter of their sermons, that as they are generally read with very little life or affection, so they are heard with as little regard or esteem. Those who read, ought certainly to be at a little more pains than, for the most part, they are, to read true, to pronounce with an emphasis, to raise their head, and to direct their eyes to their hearers; and if they practised more, alone, the just way of reading, they might deliver their sermons with much more advantage. Man is a low sort of creature; he does not, nay, the greater part, cannot consider things in themselves, without those little seasonings that must recommend them to their affections.—Besides, the people, who are too apt to censure the clergy, are always carried into an obvious reflection on reading, that it is an effect of laziness.—*Discourse of the Pastoral care, ch. ix.*

¹ It may be proper to present the reader, in one view, the opinion of several other distinguished authors, on the use of written discourses in the pulpit. “I know a clergyman of some distinction, who appeared to deliver his sermon without looking into his notes, which, when I complimented him upon, he assured me he could not repeat six lines; but his method was to write the whole sermon in a large, plain hand, with all the forms of margin, paragraph, marked page, and the like; then on Sunday morning he took care to run it over five or six times, which he could do in an hour; and when he delivered it by pretending to turn his face from one side to the other, he would (in his own expression) pick up the lines, and cheat his people by making them believe he had it all by heart. He farther added, that whenever he happened by neglect to omit any of these circumstances, the vogue of the parish was, ‘our doctor gave us but an indifferent sermon today.’ Now among us, many clergymen act so directly contrary to this method, that from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner, with such frequent blots and interlineations, that they are hardly able to go on without perpetual hesitations, or extemporary expletives; and

A. You have explained my thoughts exactly. Only it may not be improper to add, that though a man should not

I desire to know what can be more inexcusable, than to see a divine and a scholar at a loss in reading his own compositions, which it is supposed he has been preparing with much pains and thought, for the instruction of his people? The want of a little more care in this article, is the cause of much ungraceful behaviour. You will observe some clergymen with their heads held down from the beginning to the end, within an inch of the cushion, to read what is hardly legible; which, beside the untoward manner, hinders them from making the best advantage of their voice; others again have a trick of popping up and down every moment from their paper to the audience, like an idle school-boy on a repetition day.

“Let me entreat you therefore to add one half crown a year to the article of paper; to transcribe your sermons in as large and plain a manner as you can; and either make no interlineations, or change the whole leaf; for we, your hearers, would rather you should be less correct, than perpetually stammering, which I take to be one of the worst solecisms in rhetoric. And lastly, read your sermon once or twice a day for a few days before you preach it; to which you will probably answer some years hence, ‘that it was but just finished when the last bell rang to church,’ and I shall readily believe, but not excuse you.”—*Swift’s Letter to a Young Clergyman.*

“That a discourse well spoken hath a stronger effect than one well read, will hardly bear a question. From this manifest truth I very early concluded, and was long of the opinion, that the way of reading sermons should be absolutely banished from the pulpit. But from farther experience, I am now disposed to suspect, that this conclusion was rather hasty. As to my personal experience I shall frankly tell you what I know to be a fact. I have tried both ways; I continued long in the practice of repeating, and was even thought (if people did not very much deceive me) to succeed in it; but I am absolutely certain, that I can give more energy, and preserve the attention of the hearers better, to what I read, than ever it was in my power to do to what I repeated. Nor is it any wonder. There are difficulties to be surmounted in the latter case, which have no place at all in the former. The talents in other respects are the same, that fit one to excel in either way. Now as it will, I believe, be admitted by everybody who reflects, that a discourse well read is much better than one ill spoken, I should not think it prudent to establish any general rule, which would probably make bad speakers of many, who might otherwise have proved good readers. There is something in charging one’s memory with a long chain of words and syllables, and this is one of the difficulties I hinted at, and then running on, as it were, mechanically in the same train, the preceding word associating and drawing in the subsequent, that seems by taking off a man’s attention from the thought to the expression, to render him insusceptible of the delicate sensibility as to the thought, which is the true spring of rhetorical pronunciation. That this is not invariably the effect of getting by heart, the success of some actors on the stage is an undeniable proof. But the comparative facility, arising from the much

possess all these qualities in a remarkable degree, he may yet preach very well, if he has a solid judgment, a tolerable

greater brevity of their speeches, and from the relief and emotion that is given to the player by the action of the other dialogists in the scene, makes the greatest difference imaginable in the two cases. A man through habit, becomes so perfectly master of a speech of thirty or forty lines, which will not take him three minutes to repeat, that he hath no anxiety about recollecting the words; his whole attention is to the sentiment. The case must be very different, when the memory is charged with a discourse which will take thirty minutes to deliver.

“Now when once the attention, as was hinted already, loses hold of the thought, and is wholly occupied in tracing the series of the words, the speaker insensibly, to relieve himself from the difficulty of keeping up his voice at the same stretch, falls into a kind of tune, which, without any regard to the sense of what is said, returns as regularly, as if it were played on an instrument. One thing further may be urged in favor of reading, and it is of some consequence, that it always requires some preparation. A discourse must be written before it can be read. When a man who does not read, gets over, through custom, all apprehension about the opinion of his hearers, or respect for their judgment, there is some danger, that laziness may prompt him to speak without any preparation, and consequently to become careless what he says. But to return, the sum of what has been offered, is not that reading a discourse is universally preferable to repeating it. By no means. But only that if the latter way admits of higher excellence, the former is more attainable and less hazardous.”—*Campbell's Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence.*

“And here it may not, perhaps, be improper to make a few remarks on the expediency of pronouncing sermons from memory; and I make them the more willingly, because what I have to say on this head, may be comfortable to those young men, whose memory like my own, inclines rather to weakness, than to strength.

“First, then, it can admit of no doubt, that every public speaker and teacher ought to be able to speak from memory, or even without premeditation, as the circumstances may require; and should, therefore, now and then practise extemporary speaking, and study to acquire a readiness of apprehension and a command of words, and take every prudent method he can think of for improving remembrance.

“Secondly, They whose faculties are uncommonly susceptible, who can retain a sermon after once or twice reading it, or who like the gentleman above-mentioned, can commit one to memory in two or three hours, may, at all times, or as often as they choose, preach without notes; especially, if they have confidence in their recollection, and can divest themselves of anxiety. But many men there are, of good parts, who, from natural bashfulness, or from bodily weakness, or from having been in danger of exposing themselves through a sudden failure of memory, cannot depend on their presence of mind, or quickness of recollection, when they appear in public; though in the ordinary affairs of life, they have no reason to com-

stock of knowledge, and an easy way of speaking. For, in this method, as in the other, there may be different degrees

plain of this faculty. Such persons ought not to preach without papers. If they do, it will be injurious both to themselves, and to their hearers. To themselves, by tormenting them with solicitude, to the great prejudice of their health. And to their hearers, because the fear of forgetting will take off their attention from the management of their voice; the consequence whereof is, that they will speak without that energy which impresses the meaning on the audience, and may, moreover, contract bad habits of drawling, canting, hesitating, or quick speaking; which are all disagreeable to rational hearers, and make every hearer inattentive, and the most eloquent sermon insipid.

“Thirdly, Those preachers who, after much practice, cannot commit a discourse to memory in less than two days, (and this, I believe, is a common case,) should never in my opinion, attempt it; except, perhaps, on extraordinary occasions, when they may be obliged to speak with ease and elegance, and yet have no opportunity of reading. Two days every week are almost a third part of human life. And when one considers, that the sermons thus committed to memory are forgotten as soon as delivered, which is also a common case, who would not regret such a waste of time? At this rate, of thirty years employed in the ministry, there are almost ten consumed—in what? in drudgery more laborious, and far more unprofitable, than that of a school-boy; in loading the memory with words, which are not remembered for three days together. Would not the preacher have laid out those years to better purpose, in giving correctness to his public discourses, or in other improving studies, or in visiting and instructing the neighbors, or in agriculture, and the like liberal amusements? Besides, in these circumstances, a clergyman can never preach without long preparation; nor if at any time his health should fail, without a degree of anxiety that may be detrimental to both his mind and his body.

“Indeed, were sermons, that are pronounced from memory, found to have a more powerful effect upon the hearer, than such as are read, I should not think this time altogether lost. But, if the preacher have learned to read well, which he may, and ought to do, and if he write what he has to say, with that distinctness which is here recommended, and prepare himself for the public exhibition by several private rehearsals at home, I am inclined to think, that he will pronounce with more composure and self-command, and with an energy more becoming the pulpit, than if he were to speak from recollection. For in the one case his mind is at ease, and he has nothing to do but pronounce; in the other, he pronounces and recollects at the same time, and is, besides, liable to mistakes and failures of memory, and, if his nerves are not uncommonly strong, to occasional fits of solicitude. Why does a musician choose to play by book even the music that he remembers? It is, because by taking in, with one glance of his eye, a number of contiguous notes, his mind is always disengaged, and he is everywhere the better prepared for introducing the expressive touches, and other necessary ornaments. In like manner

of eloquence. You may further observe, that most of those who preach without getting their sermons by heart, do not prepare themselves enough. They ought to study their subject with the closest attention, prepare all those moving passages that should affect the audience, and give the several parts of their discourse such an order as will best serve to set the whole in the most proper light.

B. You have oftentimes spoken of this order; do you mean anything else by it than a division of the subject? Perhaps you have some peculiar notion on this point too.

A. You think that you rally me; but in good earnest, I am as singular in my opinion upon this head as on any other.

B. I easily believe you.

A. It is certainly so; and since we have fallen upon this subject, I will show you how far I think the greater part of orators are defective in the point of order.

B. Since you are so fond of order, I hope you do not dislike divisions.

A. I am far from approving them.

B. Why? Do they not methodize a discourse?

A. For the most part, divisions give only a seeming order; while they really mangle and clog a discourse, by separating

a good reader will, if I mistake not, read more emphatically and with greater elegance, what he sees before him, and is well acquainted with, than he can pronounce what is suggested by continual recollection; especially, if the discourse he has to deliver be of considerable length.

“As to the effect upon the hearers; if I am to judge from my own feelings, and trust to the declaration of many persons of candor and sensibility, I must say, that sermons in the mouth of a good reader have a more powerful energy, than those that are spoken without book. The pathos may be less vehement, perhaps, but it is more solemn, and seems better adapted to the place and to the subject. Preachers, indeed, there are, who lay claim to extraordinary gifts and pretend to speak from supernatural impulse; and there are hearers, who give them credit for this; and that what is written and read to them, has too much the air of mere human doctrine. But such a conceit is of no account in rational inquiry, for it only proves, that the preacher is vain and the people ignorant.

“In Italy and France, sermons are generally pronounced without notes. But they are at the same time accompanied with much theatrical gesture; and the consequence is, that the people consider them rather as an amusement, than as a part of the church service. In England, the established clergy do for the most part read their sermons. And England has produced a greater number of good preachers, than any other country in Europe.”—*Beattie on Memory.*

it into two or three parts, which must interrupt the orator's action, and the effect it ought to produce. There remains no true unity after such divisions,¹ seeing they make two or three different discourses, which are joined into one, only by an arbitrary connection. For three sermons preached at different times, (if they be formed upon some regular concerted plan, as the sermons in Advent usually are,) make one piece or entire discourse, as much, as the three points of any of these sermons make one whole by being joined, and delivered, together.²

¹ A text being opened, then the point upon which the sermon is to run, is to be opened, and it will be the better heard and understood, if there be but one point in a sermon; so that one head, and only one is well stated, and fully set out.—*Discourse on the Pastoral Care*, p. 249.

² A question has been moved whether this method of laying down heads, as it is called, be the best method of preaching. A very able judge, the archbishop of Cambray, in his dialogues on eloquence, declares strongly against it. But notwithstanding his authority and arguments, I cannot help being of opinion, that the present method of dividing a sermon into heads, ought not to be laid aside. Established practice has now given it so much weight, that, were there nothing more in its favor, it would be dangerous for any preacher to deviate so far from the common track. But the practice itself has also, in my judgment, much reason on its side. If formal partitions give a sermon less of the oratorical appearance, they render it, however, more clear, more easily apprehended, and of course, more instructive to the bulk of hearers, which is always the main object to be kept in view. The heads of a sermon are great assistances to the memory and recollection of a hearer. They serve also to fix his attention. They enable him more easily to keep pace with the progress of the discourse; they give him pauses and resting-places, where he can reflect on what has been said, and look forward to what is to follow. They are attended with this advantage too, that they give the audience the opportunity of knowing, beforehand, when they are to be released from the fatigue of attention, and thereby make them follow the speaker more patiently. "The conclusion of each head," says Quintilian, "is a relief to the hearers; just as upon a journey, the mile-stones, which are set up on the road, serve to diminish the traveller's fatigue. For we are always pleased with seeing our labor begin to lessen, and, by calculating how much remains, are stirred up to finish our task more cheerfully." With regard to breaking the unity of a discourse, I cannot be of opinion that there arises, from that quarter, any argument against the method I am defending. If the unity be broken, it is to the nature of the heads, or topics of which the speaker treats, that this is to be imputed, not to his laying them down in form. On the contrary, if his heads be well chosen, his marking them out, and distinguishing them, in place of impairing the unity of the whole, renders it more conspicuous and complete, by showing how all the

B. What is it then that you mean by order? How confused must a discourse be that is not divided?

A. Do you think there is more confusion in the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, than in the sermons of your parish preacher!

B. I do not know. I believe not.

A. You need not be afraid of giving your judgment too freely. The harangues of these great men are not divided as our sermons are. Nay, Isocrates, (of whom we spoke so much before,) and other ancient orators, did not follow our method of dividing. The fathers of the church knew nothing of it. Even St. Bernard, the last of them, only gives a hint of some divisions, and does not pursue them, nor divide his discourses in form. And for a long time after him, sermons were not divided. It is a modern invention, which we owe originally to the scholastic divines.

B. I grant that the schoolmen are a very bad model for eloquence; but what form did the ancients use to give their discourses?

A. They did not divide them; but they pointed out carefully all those things that ought to be distinguished; to each of them they assigned its proper place,¹ after having attentively considered where it might be introduced to the best advantage, and be fittest to make a due impression. Oftentimes that, which would seem nothing to the purpose by being unseasonably urged, has a very great weight when it is reserved for its proper place, till the audience be prepared by other things to feel all its force and consequence. Nay, a single word, when happily applied, will set the truth in the strongest light. Cicero tells us, that we ought sometimes to delay giving a full view of the truth, till the very conclusion. But then throughout our discourse, there ought to run such a concatenation of proofs, as that the first may make way for the second, and the next always serve to support the former.

parts of a discourse hang upon one another and tend to one point.—
Blair.

¹ Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,
Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici,
Pleraque differat, et praesens in tempus omittat——
Infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum
Nesciet. ——

We ought at first to give a general view of our subject, and endeavor to gain the favor of the audience by a modest introduction,¹ a respectful address, and the genuine marks of candor and probity. Then we should establish those principles on which we design to argue, and in a clear, easy, sensible manner propose the principal facts we are to build on, insisting chiefly on those circumstances, of which we intend to make use afterwards. From these principles and facts we must draw just consequences, and argue in such a clear and well-connected manner, that all our truths may support each other, and so be the more remembered. Every step we advance, our discourse ought to grow stronger, so that the hearers may gradually perceive the force and evidence of the truth, and then we ought to display it in such lively images and movements as are proper to excite the passions. In order to this we must know their various springs, and the mutual dependence they have one upon another; which of them we can most easily move, and employ to raise the rest; and which of them, in fine, is able to produce the greatest effects, and must therefore be applied to, in the conclusion of our discourse. It is oftentimes proper, at the close, to make a short recapitulation, in which the orator ought to exert all his force and skill in giving the audience a full, clear, concise view of the chief topics he has enlarged on. In short, one is not obliged always to follow this method without any variation. There are exceptions and allowances to be made, for different subjects and occasions. And even in this order I have proposed, one may find an endless variety. But now you may easily see, that this method, (which is chiefly taken from Tully,) cannot be observed in a discourse that is divided into three parts, nor can it be followed in each particular division. We ought therefore to choose some method, Sir, but such a method is not discovered, and promised in the beginning of our discourse. Cicero tells us, that the best method is generally to conceal the order we follow, till we lead the hearer to it without his being aware of it before. I remember, he says in express terms, that we ought to con-

¹ Sed haec adjuvant in oratore, lenitas vocis, vultus, pudoris significatio, verborum comitas; si quid persequere acrius, ut invitus, et coactus facere, videare. Facilitatis, liberalitatis, mansuetudinis, pietatis, grati animi, non appetentis, non avidi signa proferri perutile est—tantum autem efficitur sensu quodam ac ratione dicendi, ut quasi mores oratoris effingat oratia.—*Cic. de Orat.*

ceal even the number of our arguments, so that one shall not be able to count them, though they be very distinct in themselves; and that we ought not plainly to point out the division of a discourse. But such is the undistinguishing taste of these latter ages, that an audience cannot perceive any order unless the speaker distinctly explain it in the beginning, and even intimate to them his gradual advances from the first to the second, and following general heads or subdivisions of his discourse.

C. But do not divisions help to support the attention, and ease the memory of the hearers? It is for their better instruction that the speaker divides his discourse.

A. A division chiefly relieves the speaker's memory. And even this effect might be much better obtained by his following a natural order, without any express division; for the true connection of things best directs the mind. Our common divisions are of use to those only, who have studied, and been trained up to this method in the schools. And if the common people retain the division better than the rest of the sermon, it is only because they hear it often repeated; but, generally speaking, they best remember practical points, and such things as strike their senses and imagination.

B. The order you propose may be proper enough for some subjects, but it cannot be fit for all, for we have not always facts to lay down.

A. When we have none we must do without them, but there are very few subjects into which they might not be aptly introduced. One of Plato's chief beauties is, that in the beginning of his moral pieces, he usually gives us some fragment of history, or some tradition that serves as the foundation of his discourse. This method would far more become those who preach religion, which is entirely founded upon tradition, history, and the most ancient records. Indeed, most preachers argue but weakly, and do not instruct people sufficiently, because they do not trace back things to these sources.

B. We have already given you too much trouble, Sir, and I am almost ashamed to detain you longer, but I wish heartily you would allow me to ask you a few more questions concerning the rules of public discourse.

A. With all my heart; I am not yet weary; you may dispose as you please, of the little time I have left.

B. Well then, you would have all false and trifling orna-

ments entirely banished from discourse. Now, though you touched upon this point before, pray show me, by some sensible examples, how to distinguish such false beauties from those that are solid and natural.¹

A. Do you love quavering notes in music? Are you not better pleased with those brisk, significant notes that describe things, and express the passions?

B. Yes, certainly; for quavers are of no use; they only amuse the ear, and do not affect the mind. Our music was once full of them, and was therefore very weak and confused; but now we begin to refine our taste, and to come nearer the music of the ancients, which is a kind of passionate declamation that acts powerfully upon the soul.

A. I knew that music, of which you are so good a judge, would serve to make you understand what concerns eloquence. There ought to be a kind of eloquence in music itself; and in both these arts, we ought to reject all false and trilling beauties. Do you not perceive now that by a trilling discourse I mean the humming jingle of languid, uniform periods, a chiming of words that returns perpetually like the burden of a song? This is the false eloquence that resembles bad music.

B. I wish, Sir, you could make it a little plainer still.

A. The reading of good and bad orators will more effectually form your taste, on this point, than all the rules in the world. However, it were easy to satisfy you by some pertinent examples. I will not mention any modern ones, though we abound in false ornaments. That I may not offend any person, let us return to Isocrates, who is the standard of those nice and florid harangues that are now in vogue. Did you ever read his famous panegyric on Helen?

B. Yes; I have read it sometime ago.

A. How did you like it?

¹ False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colors spreads on every place;
The face of nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay.
But true expression, like the unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable.

B. Extremely well. I thought I never saw so much wit, elegance, sweetness, invention, and delicacy in any composition. I own to you that Homer himself, (whom I read afterwards,) did not seem to have so much spirit as he. But now that you have shown me what ought to be the true aim of poets and orators, I see plainly that Homer, who concealed his art, vastly surpasses Isocrates, who took so much pains to display his skill. But I was once charmed with that orator, and should have been so still, if you had not undeceived me. Mr. — is the Isocrates of our days; and I perceive that by showing the defects of that ancient orator, you condemn all those who imitate his florid, effeminate rhetoric.

A. I am now speaking of Isocrates only. In the beginning of his encomium he magnifies the love that Theseus had for Helen, and fancied that he should give a lofty idea of her, by describing the heroic qualities of that great man who fell in love with her; as if Theseus, (whom the ancients always represent as weak and inconstant in his amours,) could not have been smitten with a woman of a moderate beauty. Then he comes to the judgment that Paris formed of her. He says that a dispute having arisen among the goddesses concerning their beauty, they agreed to make Paris judge of it; upon which occasion Juno proffered him the empire of Asia; Minerva assured him of constant victory in battles; and Venus tempted him with the beautiful Helen. Now seeing Paris, when he was to determine this matter, could not behold the faces of those goddesses because of their dazzling splendor, he could only judge of the worth of the three things that they offered, and upon the comparison he preferred Helen to empire and to victory. Then the orator praises the judgment of Paris, in whose determination the goddesses themselves acquiesced; and adds these remarkable words,¹ “I wonder that any one should think Paris indiscreet in choosing to live with her, for whom many demigods would have been willing to die.”

C. This puts me in mind of our preachers, who are so full of antitheses and turns of wit. There are a great many such orators as Isocrates.

A. He is their master! all the rest of his panegyric is of the same strain. It is founded on the long war of Troy;

¹ Θαυμάζω δ' εἴ τις οἶεται κακῶς βεβουλεῦσθαι τὸν μετὰ ταύτης ζῆν ἐλόμενον, ἧς ἕνεκα πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμιθέων ἀποθνῆσκειν ἠθέλησαν.—*Isocr. Hel. Laud.*

the calamities that the Greeks suffered for the rape of Helen, and the praise of beauty, which has so much power over men. There is nothing in the whole discourse solidly proved, nor the least point of moral instruction. He judges of the worth of things only according to men's extravagant passions. And as his proofs are weak, so his style is flourished and finical. I quoted this passage, profane as it is, because it is a very famous one, and because this affected manner is very much in fashion. The more grave discourses of Isocrates are composed in the same spruce, effeminate way, and are full of such false beauties as that I have now mentioned.

C. I find you like none of those witty turns, which have nothing in them that is either solid, natural, or affecting, and tend neither to convince, nor paint, nor persuade. The example you have brought from Isocrates, though it be upon a trifling subject, is yet very pertinent, for all such tinsel wit must appear still more ridiculous when it is applied to grave and serious matters.

A. But, Sir, as to Isocrates, do not you think I had reason to censure him as freely as Tully assures us Aristotle did?

B. What says Tully?

A. That Aristotle,¹ perceiving Isocrates had perverted eloquence from its proper use, to amusement and ostentation, and thereby drawn to himself the most considerable disciples, applied to him a verse of Philoctetes, to show how much he was ashamed of being silent, while that vain declaimer carried all before him. But I have done now; it is time for me to be going.

B. We cannot part with you so soon, Sir; will you allow of no antitheses?

A. Yes; when the things we speak of are naturally opposite one to another, it may be proper enough to show their opposition. Such antitheses are just and have a solid beauty, and a right application of them is often the most easy and concise manner of explaining things. But it is extremely childish to use artificial turns and windings to make words clash and play one against another. At first, this may happen to dazzle those who have no taste, but they soon grow weary of such a silly affectation. Did you ever observe the Gothic architecture of our old churches?

B. Yes; it is very common.

¹ Lib. iii. § 35.

A. Did you take notice of the roses, holes, unconnected ornaments, and disjointed little knacks that these Gothic buildings are full of? These odd conceits are just such beauties in architecture, as forced antitheses and quibbles are in eloquence. The Grecian architecture is far more simple, and admits of none but natural, solid and majestic ornaments; we see nothing in it but what is great, proportioned, and well placed. But the Gothic kind was invented by the Arabians, who being a people of a quick, sprightly fancy, and having no rule nor culture, could scarce avoid falling into these whimsical niceties. And this vivacity corrupted their taste in all other things. For, they used sophisms in their logic, they loved little knacks in architecture, and invented witticisms in poetry and eloquence. All these are of the same kind.

B. This is curious, indeed. You think then that a sermon, full of forced antitheses, and such kind of ornaments, is like a church built in the Gothic way.

A. Yes; I think the comparison is just.

B. Let me ask you but one question more, and then you shall go.

A. What is it?

B. It seems very difficult to give a particular account of facts in a noble style; and yet we ought to do so, if we talk solidly as you require. Pray, what is the proper style for expatiating in such cases?

A. We are so much afraid of a low strain, that our expressions are usually dry, lifeless and indeterminate. They who praise a saint, pitch on the most magnificent phrases. They tell us he was an admirable person, that his virtues were celestial, that he was rather an angel than a man. And thus the whole encomium is a mere declamation, without any proof, and without drawing a just character. On the contrary, the ancient Greeks made little use of these general terms, which prove nothing, but they insisted much on facts, and the particulars of a character. For instance, Xenophon does not once say in all his *Cyropaedia*, that Cyrus was an admirable man, but throughout the work he makes us really admire him. Thus it is, that we ought to praise holy persons, by entering into the particular detail of their sentiments and actions. But there prevails an affected politeness among the pedantic and conceited part of all ranks and professions, who value themselves upon their wit or learning. They

never venture to use any expression, but what they reckon fine and uncommon. They talk always in a high strain;¹ and would think it beneath them to call things by their proper names. Now in true eloquence almost everything may be introduced. The perfection of poetry itself, (which is the loftiest kind of composure,) depends on a full and lively description of things in all their circumstances. When Virgil represents the Trojan fleet leaving the African shore, or arriving on the coast of Italy, you see every proper circumstance exactly described. But we must own that the Greeks entered still further into the particular detail of things, and followed nature more closely in representing the smallest circumstances. For which reason, many people would be apt (if they dared) to reckon Homer too plain and simple in his narrations. In this ancient, beautiful simplicity, (which few are able to relish,) this poet very much resembles the Holy Scripture; but in many places the sacred writings surpass his, as much as he excels all the other ancients, in a natural and lively representation of things.

B. In relating facts, then, ought, we to describe every individual circumstance that belongs to them?

A. No; we should represent nothing to the hearers but what deserves their attention, and helps to give a clear and just idea of the things we describe; so that it requires great judgment to make a right choice of circumstances.² But we must not be afraid of mentioning such as can be any way serviceable; for it is a false politeness that leads us to suppress some useful things, because we do not think them capable of any ornament. Besides, Homer has shown us by his example that we might give a proper grace and embellishment to every subject.³

¹ Prima est eloquentiae virtus perspicuitas; et quo quis ingenio minus valet, hoc se magis attollere et dilatare conatur; ut statura breves in digitos eriguntur, et plura infirmi minantur. Nam tumidos, et corruptos, et tinnulos et quocumque alio cacozelie genere peccantes, certum habeo, non virium, sed infirmitatis vitio laborare; ut corpora non robore, sed valetudine, inflantur.—*Quint. lib. ii. c. 3.*

² See Longinus, § x.

³ First follow nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same;
Unerring nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of art.

B. Seeing you condemn the florid, swelling style, what kind do you reckon fittest for public use?

A. There ought to be a variety of style in every discourse. We should rise in our expression when we speak of lofty subjects, and be familiar in common ones, without being coarse or grovelling.¹ In most cases, an easy simplicity and exactness is sufficient, though some things require vehemence and sublimity. If a painter should draw nothing but magnificent palaces, he could not follow truth, but must paint his own fancies, and by that means soon cloy us. He ought to copy nature in its agreeable varieties, and after drawing a stately city, it might be proper to represent a desert and the huts of shepherds. Most of those who aim at making fine harangues, injudiciously labor to clothe all their thoughts in a pompous, gaudy dress;² and they fancy that they have

Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides.
Those rules of old discover'd, not devised,
Are nature still, but nature methodiz'd;
Nature, like monarchy, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordained.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

¹ Ἔστιν ἄρ' ὁ ἰδιωτισμὸς ἐνίοτε τοῦ κόσμου παραπολὺ ἐμφανιστικώτερον· ἐπεγινώσκεται γὰρ αὐτόθεν ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ βίου· τὸ δὲ σύνηδες ἤδη πιστότορον—Ταῦτα γὰρ ἐγγυὲς παραξύνει τὴν ἰδιώτην, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἰδιωτεύει τῷ σημαντικῷ.—*Longinus*, § xxxi.

“Affectation of every sort is odious, and more especially an affectation that betrays a minister into expressions fit only for the mouths of the illiterate. Truth, indeed, needs no ornament, neither does a beautiful person; but to clothe it therefore in rags, when a decent habit is at hand, would be esteemed proposterous and absurd. The best proportioned figure may be made offensive by beggary and filth; and even truths, which came down from Heaven, though they cannot forego their nature, may be disguised and disgraced by unsuitable language. He that speaks to be understood by a congregation of rustics, and yet in terms that would not offend academic ears, has found the happy medium. This is certainly practicable to men of taste and judgment, and the practice of a few proves it.”—*Cowper*.

² Namque illud genus ostentationi compositum, solam petit audientium voluptatem; ideoque omnes dicendi artes aperit, ornatumque orationis exponit—Mala affectatio, per omne dicendi genus peccat. Nam et tumida, et exilia, et praedulcia, et abundantia, et accessita, et exultantia sub idem nomen cadunt. Denique κακόζηλον vocatur, quicquid est ultra virtutem; quoties ingenium judicio caret, et specie boni fallitur; omnium in eloquentia vitiorum pessimum, nam caetera parum vitantur, hoc petitur.—*Quint. lib. viii. c. 3.*

succeeded happily, when they express some general remarks in a florid, lofty style. Their only care is to fill their discourse with abundance of ornaments, to please the vitiated taste of their audience; like ignorant cooks, who know not how to season dishes, in a proper, natural way, but fancy they must give them an exquisite relish by mixing excessive quantities of the most seasoning things. But the style of a true orator has nothing in it that is swelling or ostentatious; he always adapts it to the subjects he treats of, and the persons he instructs, and manages it so judiciously that he never aims at being sublime and lofty, but when he ought to be so.¹

¹ The style most fit for the pulpit is thus defined by Dr. FORDYCE. "I would call it, in a few words, simple, yet great; adorned, yet chaste; animated and strong, at the same time easy, and somewhat diffuse; and, in fine, numerous and flowing, without running into the poetical, or swelling into bombast."—*Eloquence of the Pulpit*.

I have been curious enough to take a list of several hundred words in a sermon of a new beginner, which not one of his hearers among a hundred could possibly understand; neither can I easily call to mind any clergyman of my own acquaintance, who is wholly exempt from this error, although many of them agree with me in the dislike of the thing. But I am apt to put myself in the place of the vulgar, and think many words difficult or obscure, which the preacher will not allow to be so, because those words are obvious to scholars. I believe the method observed by the famous Lord Falkland, in some of his writings, would not be an ill one for young divines; I was assured by an old person of quality, who knew him well, that when he doubted whether a word was perfectly intelligible or not, he used to consult one of his lady's chambermaids, (not the waiting woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in romances,) and by her judgment was guided whether to receive or reject it. And if that great person thought such a caution necessary in treatises offered to the learned world, it will be sure at least as proper in sermons, where the meanest hearer is supposed to be concerned, and where very often a lady's chambermaid may be allowed to equal half the congregation, both as to quality and understanding. But I know not how it comes to pass, that professors in most arts and sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain their meanings to those who are not of their tribe; a common farmer shall make you understand in three words, that his foot is out of joint, or his collar-bone broken; wherein a surgeon, after a hundred terms of art, if you are not a scholar, shall leave you to seek. It is frequently the same case in law, physic, and even many of the meaner arts.—*Swift's Letter to a Young Clergyman*.

A man of merit and breeding you may disguise, by putting him in the apparel of a clown, but you cannot justly find fault, that in that garb he meets not with the same reception in good company, that he would meet with if more suitably habited. The outward appearance is the first thing that strikes us in a person; the expression is the

B. What you said concerning the language of Scripture, makes me wish earnestly that you would show us the beauty of it. May we not see you some time to-morrow?

A. I shall hardly have time to-morrow, but I will endeavor to wait on you this evening. And since you seem so desirous of it, we will talk of the word of God, for hitherto we have only spoken of the language of men.

C. Farewell, Sir, I beg of you to be punctual; otherwise we must come and find you out.

THIRD DIALOGUE.

C. I began to fear, Sir, that you would not come; and was very near going to seek for you at Mr. —.

A. I was detained by a perplexing affair I had upon my hands, but I have got rid of it to my satisfaction.

B. I am very glad of it, for we wanted you extremely to finish the subject we were talking of in the morning.

C. Since I parted with you, Sir, I heard a sermon at —, and I thought of you. The preacher spoke in a very edifying manner, but I question whether the common people understood him.

A. It happens but too often, (as I heard an ingenious lady observe,) that our preachers speak Latin in (English). The most essential quality of a good preacher is to be instructive,¹

first thing that strikes us in a discourse. Take care at least, that in neither, there be anything to make an unfavourable impression, which may preclude all further inquiry and regard. It was extremely well said by a very popular preacher in our own days, who when consulted by a friend that had a mind to publish, whether he thought it befitting a writer on religion to attend to such little matters as grammatical correctness, answered, "by all means. It is much better to write so as to make a critic turn Christian, than so as to make a Christian turn critic."—*Campbell on Pulpit Eloquence.*

¹ As I take it, the two principal branches of preaching are, first, to tell the people what is their duty, and then to convince them that it is so. The topics for both these, we know, are brought from Scripture and reason. Upon the former, I wish it were often practised to instruct the hearers in the limits, extent and compass of every duty; which requires a good deal of skill and judgment; the other branch

but he must have great abilities and experience to make him so.¹ On the one hand, he must be perfectly acquainted with the force of Scripture expressions; on the other, he must understand the capacity of those to whom he preaches, and adapt himself to it. Now this requires a solid knowledge, and great discernment. Preachers speak every day to people of the Scripture, the church, the Mosaic law, the gospel; of sacrifices; of Moses and Aaron, and Melchisedec; of the prophets and apostles; but there is not sufficient care taken to instruct the people in the true meaning of these things, and in the characters of those holy persons. One might fol-

is, I think, not so difficult. But what I would offer upon both is this, that it seems to be in the power of a reasonable clergyman, if he will be at the pains, to make the most ignorant man comprehend what is his duty, and convince him by arguments drawn to the level of his understanding, that he ought to perform it.—*Swift*.

¹ At the bar, in the senate, on the bench of justice, and in the chair of State, it is admitted that a sound and cultivated understanding is necessary. Shall a weak, honest man then, be deemed adequate to the discharge of duties which made the chiefest of the apostles exclaim, "who is sufficient for these things?" An illiterate physician injures our health, an unskilful advocate sacrifices our money, a weak general frustrates a campaign. What then? An incompetent spiritual guide endangers our *souls*. Talent and science are far, far less necessary to the *emperor*, than to the preacher. The former may do his business by proxy; or if not done, still only temporal interests suffer. But the preacher's work is to be done by *himself*, and if done unskilfully, the evil is irreparable and eternal. Next to piety, he needs sound, practical good sense. He needs this, among a thousand reasons, to preserve him from mistaking affectation of originality, for great genius; rhapsody, for eloquence; and turgid declamation, for powerful instruction. To secure the respect of intelligent hearers, he needs a deep and steady judgment, and a thorough knowledge of men. Erasmus, who has been regarded as a sort of oracle on this subject, says; "It is not enough to know what should be spoken, without knowing when, to whom, how, with what words, in what order, with what ornament, with what action." God forbid, that talent or learning should be exalted at the expense of piety. "Let the collected wisdom of Greece and Rome bow before the cross. At the altar of God we would kindle the torch of science, and when kindled let it be quenched without scruple, if it does not, like the star of Bethlehem, conduct to the Saviour." But surely, he will be most likely to be an able instructor, who is himself wise and well instructed. With a good understanding, replenished by extensive reading, he can make his knowledge of languages, of oriental antiquities and usages, philosophy, logic, history, criticism and eloquence, all tributary to the grand purpose of explaining and enforcing the sacred truths of the bible.—*Dr. Porter*.

low some preachers twenty years, without getting sufficient knowledge of religion.

B. Do you think that people are really ignorant of those things you mentioned.

C. For my part I believe they are, and that few or none understand them enough to receive any benefit from sermons.

B. That may be true of the lowest rank of people.

C. Well; ought not they to be instructed as well as others? Do not they make up the bulk of mankind?

A. The truth is, persons of rank and fashion have but little more knowledge of religion than the common people. There are always three fourth parts of an ordinary audience, who do not know those first principles of religion, in which the preacher supposes every one to be fully instructed.

B. Would you then have him explain the catechism in his sermons to a polite congregation?

A. I grant there is a due regard to be had to an audience, and discretion to be used in adapting a discourse to their capacity. But still, without giving the least offence, a preacher might remind the most discerning hearers of those passages of the sacred history, which explain the origin and institution of holy things. This way of having recourse to the first foundations of religion, would be so far from seeming low, that it would give most discourses that force and beauty which they generally want. This is particularly true with regard to the mysteries of religion; for the hearers can never be instructed, nor persuaded, if you do not trace things back to their source. For example, how can you make them understand what the church says, after St. Paul,¹ that Jesus Christ is our Passover, if you do not explain to them the Jewish Passover, which was appointed to be a perpetual memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, and to typify a more important redemption that was reserved for the Messiah. It is for this reason I said, that almost everything in religion is historical. And if preachers would have a full knowledge of this truth, they must be very conversant in the Scripture.

B. You must excuse my interrupting you on this subject; Sir, you told us in the morning, that the Scriptures are eloquent, and I was glad to hear you say so. Let me intreat you to show us how we may discern the beauties of Scripture, and in what its eloquence consists. The Latin

¹ 1 Cor. 5: 7.

Bible seems to me most vulgar and inaccurate. I see no delicacy in it. What is it, then, that you so much admire?

A. The Latin is only a literal version, in which, out of respect to the original, there are many Greek and Hebrew phrases retained. Do you despise Homer because he has been sorrily translated into French?

B. But the Greek itself, (which is the original language of the New Testament,) appears to me very coarse and unpolite.

A. The apostles were not acquainted with the genuine Greek, but used that corrupted kind which prevailed among the Hellenistical Jews. For this reason St. Paul says,¹ 'I am rude in speech, but not in knowledge.' It is very obvious that the apostle here only meant, he was not a master of the Greek tongue, though he solidly explained the doctrine of the Holy Scripture.

C. Had not the apostles the gift of speaking unknown tongues?

A. Undoubtedly; and they even conveyed that gift to great numbers of their illiterate converts. But as for the languages that the apostles had learned in a natural way, we have reason to believe that the Spirit of God permitted them to speak as they did before. St. Paul, who was a citizen of Tarsus, in Cilicia, naturally spoke the corrupted Greek used among the Jews there; and we find that this is the language he wrote in. St. Luke seems to have understood Greek a little better.

C. But I always thought that in the passage you mentioned, St. Paul gave up all pretences to oratory, and regarded nothing but the simplicity of the evangelical doctrine. Nay, I have heard several persons of worth and good judgment affirm, that the Holy Scripture is not eloquent. St. Jerome was punished for being disgusted at the simplicity of Scripture, and liking Tully better. St. Austin (in his Confessions) seems to have fallen into the same fault. Did not God intend to try our faith by the obscurity, and even by the lowness of the Scripture style, as well as by the poverty of our Redeemer?

A. You seem, Sir, to carry this point too far. Whom do you choose to believe; St. Jerome when he was punished for having followed his youthful studies too closely in his retreat, or St. Jerome when he had made the greatest progress both

¹ 2 Cor. 11: 16.

in sacred and profane learning, and, in an epistle to Paulinus, invited him to study the Scripture, assuring him that he would find more charms in the prophets than he had discovered in the heathen poets? Or, was St. Austin's judgment better in his youth, when the seeming meanness of the sacred style disgusted him, than when he composed his books of the Christian Doctrine? There he often says, that St. Paul was powerfully persuasive, and that the torrent of his eloquence must be perceived by the most inattentive reader. He adds, that in the apostle, wisdom did not seek after the beauty of language, but that the beauties of language offered themselves, and attended his wisdom. He quotes many lofty passages of his epistles, wherein he shows all the art and address of the heathen orators far outdone. St. Austin excepts only two things in this comparison; he says, that these orators studied the ornaments of eloquence, but that the beauties of oratory naturally followed St. Paul, and others of the sacred writers. And then he owns that he did not sufficiently understand the delicacies of the Greek tongue, to be a competent judge, whether there be the same numbers and cadence of periods in the sacred text, that we meet with in profane authors. I forgot to tell you that he quotes that passage of the prophet Amos which begins thus, 'Wo to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria,'¹ and assures us that in this place the prophet has surpassed everything that is sublime in the heathen orators.

C. But how do you understand these words of St. Paul,² "My speech and my preaching was not with the enticing (persuasive) words of man's wisdom?" Does he not tell the Corinthians that he came not to preach Christ to them, with the sublimity of discourse and of wisdom; that he "knew nothing among them but Jesus, and him crucified;" that his preaching was founded, not upon the persuasive language of human wisdom and learning, but upon the sensible effects of the Spirit and the power of God; to the end (as he adds) "that their faith should not depend upon the wisdom of men, but on the power of God?" What is the meaning of these words, Sir? What stronger expressions could the apostle use to condemn this art of persuasion that you would establish? For my part, I freely own that at first I was glad when you censured all those affected ornaments of discourse that

¹ Ch. vi.

² 1 Cor. 11: 4.

vain declaimers are so fond of, but the sequel of your scheme does not answer the pious beginning of it. I find that you would still make preaching a human art, and banish apostolical simplicity from the pulpit.

A. Though you judge very unfavorably of my esteem for eloquence, I am not dissatisfied at the zeal with which you censure it. However, Sir, let us endeavor to understand one another aright. There are several worthy persons who judge with you, that eloquent preaching is repugnant to the simplicity of the gospel. But when we have mutually explained our sentiments, perhaps they may be found to agree. What then do you mean by simplicity? And what do you call eloquence?

C. By simplicity, I mean a discourse without any artifice or magnificence. By eloquence, I mean a discourse full of art and ornaments.

A. When you require an artless, simple discourse, would you have it without order and connection, without solid and convincing proofs, and without a proper method for instructing the ignorant? Would you have a preacher say nothing that is pathetic, and never endeavor to affect the heart?

C. Far from it; I would have a discourse that both instructs and moves people.

A. That would make it eloquent; for we have seen before, that eloquence is the art of instructing and persuading men by moving their passions.

C. I grant that preachers ought to convince and affect their hearers, but I would have them to do it without art, by an apostolical simplicity.

A. The more artless and natural such a convincing, persuasive eloquence is, it must be the more powerful. But let us inquire whether the art of persuasion be inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel? What mean you by art?

C. I mean a system of rules that men have invented, and usually observe in their discourses, to make them more beautiful, elegant and pleasing.

A. If by art you only mean this invention to render a discourse more handsome and polished in order to please people, I will not dispute with you about words, but will readily acknowledge that this art ought not to be admitted into sermons; for, (as we agreed before,) this vanity is unworthy of eloquence, and far more unbecoming the sacred function.

This is the very point about which I reasoned so much with Mr. B. But if by art and eloquence, you mean what the most judicious writers among the ancients understood, we must then set a just value upon eloquence.

C. What did they understand by it?

A. According to them the art of eloquence comprehends those means, that wise reflection and experience have discovered, to render a discourse proper to persuade men of the truth, and to engage them to love and obey it. And this is what you think every preacher should be able to do. For did you not say that you approved of order, and a right manner of instruction; solidity of reasoning, and pathetic movements; I mean such as can touch and affect people's hearts? Now this is what I call eloquence; you may give it what name you please.

C. Now I comprehend your notion of eloquence; and I cannot but acknowledge that such a manly, grave, serious manner of persuasion would much become the pulpit, and that it seems even necessary to instruct people with success. But how do you understand those words of St. Paul that I quoted before? Do they not expressly condemn eloquence?

A. In order to explain the apostle's words, let me ask you a few questions.

C. As many as you please, Sir.

A. Is it not true that the apostle argues with wonderful strength in his epistles? Does he not reason finely against the heathen philosophers, and the Jews, in his epistle to the Romans? Is there not great force in what he says concerning the inability of the Mosaic law to justify men?

C. Certainly.

A. Is there not a chain of solid reasoning in his epistle to the Hebrews, about the insufficiency of the ancient sacrifices; the rest that David promised to the children of God, besides that which the Israelites enjoyed in Palestine after Joshua's days; concerning the order of Aaron, and that of Melchisedec; and the spiritual and eternal covenant that behoved to succeed the carnal and earthly one, which was established by the mediation of Moses for a time only? Are not the apostle's arguments on these several subjects very strong and conclusive?¹

¹ The eloquence of St. Paul, in most of his speeches and argumen-

C. I think they are.

A. When St. Paul, therefore, disclaimed the use of "the persuasive words of man's wisdom," he did not mean to condemn true wisdom, and the force of reasoning.

C. That appears plainly from his own example.

A. Why then do you think that he meant to condemn solid eloquence, any more than true wisdom?

C. Because he expressly rejects eloquence in that passage, which I desired you to explain.

A. But doth he not likewise disclaim wisdom? The place seems to be more express against wisdom, and human reasoning, than against eloquence. And yet he himself reasoned frequently, and was very eloquent. You grant that he argued well, and St. Austin assures you that the apostle was an orator.

C. You plainly point out the difficulty, but you do not answer it. Pray, show us how it is to be solved.

A. St. Paul reasoned much, he persuaded effectually, so that he was really an excellent philosopher and an orator. But as he tells us in the place you quoted, his preaching was not founded on human reasoning, nor on the art of persuasion. It was a ministry of divine institution, that owed its efficacy to God alone.¹ The conversion of the whole world

tations, bears a very great resemblance to that of Demosthenes. Some important point being always uppermost in his view, he often leaves his subject, and flies from it with brave irregularity, and as unexpectedly again returns to his subject, when one would imagine that he had entirely lost sight of it. For instance, in his defence before king Agrippa, *Acts, Chap. xxvi.*, when, in order to wipe off the aspersions thrown upon him by the Jews, that *he was a turbulent and seditious person*, he sets out with clearing his character, proving the integrity of his morals, and his inoffensive, unblamable behavior, as one who hoped, by those means, to attain that happiness of another life for which the *twelve tribes served God continually in the temple*; on a sudden he drops the continuation of his defence, and cries out, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" It might be reasonably expected, that this would be the end of his argument; but by flying to it, in so quick and unexpected a *transition*, he catches his audience before they are aware, and strikes dumb his enemies, though they will not be convinced. And this point being once carried, he comes about again as unexpectedly, by, *I verily thought*, etc., and goes on with his defence, till it brings him again to the same point, of the Resurrection, in verse 23. —*Smith's Longinus.*

¹ On the one hand, it deserves attention, that the most eminent and



was, according to the ancient prophecies to be the great and standing miracle of the Christian religion. This was the kingdom of God that came from heaven, and was to convert and reduce all the nations of the earth to the worship and service of the true God. Jesus Christ crucified, by his being declared to them, was to draw them all to himself, merely by the power of his cross. The philosophers had reasoned and disputed, without converting either themselves or others. The Jews had been intrusted with a law that showed them their miseries, but could not relieve them. All mankind were convinced of the general disorder and corruption that reigned among them. Jesus Christ came with his cross, that is, he came poor, humble and suffering for us. To silence our vain, presumptuous reason, he did not argue like the philosophers, but he determined with authority. By his miracles, and his grace, he showed that he was above all. That he might confound the false wisdom of men, he sets before them the seeming folly and scandal of his cross, that is, the example of his profound humiliation. That, which mankind reckoned folly,¹ and at which they were most offended, was the very thing, that should convert and lead them to God. They wanted to be cured of their pride, and their excessive love of sensible objects, and to affect them the more, God showed them his Son crucified. The apostles preached him, and walked in his steps. They had not recourse to any human means, neither to philosophy, nor rhetoric, nor policy,

successful preachers of the gospel in different communities, a Brainerd, a Baxter, and a Schwartz, have been the most conspicuous for a simple dependence upon spiritual aid; and, on the other, that no success whatever has attended the ministrations of those by whom this doctrine has been either neglected or denied. They have met with such a rebuke of their presumption, in the total failure of their efforts that none will contend for the reality of divine interposition, as far as *they* are concerned; for when has the arm of the Lord been revealed to those pretended teachers of Christianity, who believe there is no such arm? We must leave them to labor in a field, respecting which God has commanded the clouds not to rain upon it. As if conscious of this, of late they have turned their efforts into a new channel, and, despairing of the conversion of sinners, have confined themselves to the seduction of the faithful; in which, it must be confessed, they have acted in a manner perfectly consistent with their principles; the propagation of heresy requiring, at least, no *divine* assistance.—*Hall on the discouragements and supports of the Christian ministry.*

¹ 1 Cor. 1: 23, 25.

nor wealth, nor authority. God would have the sole glory of his work, and the success of it, to depend entirely on himself; he therefore chose what is weak and rejected what is strong, in order to display his power in the most sensible manner. He brought all out of nothing in the conversion of the world as well as at the creation of it. That work therefore had this divine character stamped upon it, that it was not founded upon anything that the world admired or valued. It would only have weakened and frustrated the wonderful power of the cross, (as St. Paul says,¹) to ground the preaching of the gospel upon natural means. It was necessary that without human help, the gospel should of itself open people's hearts, and by that prodigious efficacy show mankind that it came from God. Thus was human wisdom confounded and rejected. Now, what must we conclude from hence? This only; that the conversion of the nations, and the establishment of the Christian church, were not owing to the learned reasonings and persuasive words of man's wisdom. It does not imply that there was no eloquence, nor wisdom in several of those who first preached the gospel; but only, that they did not depend on this eloquent wisdom, nor did they study it as a thing that was to give an efficacy to their doctrine. It was founded, (as the apostle tells us,²) not upon the persuasive discourses of human philosophy, but solely upon the effects of the Spirit and the power of God; that is, upon the miracles that struck the eyes and minds of men, and upon the inward operation of the divine grace.

C. According to your reasoning, then, they make void the efficacy of our Saviour's cross, who ground their preaching upon human wisdom and eloquence.

A. Undoubtedly. The ministry of the word is entirely built upon faith, and the preachers of it ought to pray and purify their hearts, and expect all their success from heaven. They should arm themselves with 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' and not depend on their own abilities.³ This is the necessary preparation for preaching the

¹ 1 Cor. 1: 17.

² 1 Cor. 2: 4.

³ The preacher peculiarly needs assistance from heaven. He can neither rely on his own talents, nor trust his own heart. He cannot rely on his fellow-men. Whither then shall he look? Who shall make him able, or faithful, or successful in his work? Who shall open to him the treasures of divine truth? Who shall give him access to the hearts of his hearers, and enable him to speak in demon-

gospel. But though the inward fruit and success of it must be ascribed to grace alone, and the efficacy of God's word, there are yet some things that man is to do on his part.

C. Hitherto you have talked very solidly; but I see plainly you are now returning to your first opinion.

A. I did not change it. Do not you believe that the work of our salvation depends upon God's grace?

C. Yes; it is an article of faith.

A. You own, however, that we ought to use great prudence in choosing a right station and conduct in life, and in avoiding dangerous temptations. Now, do we make void the grace of God, and its efficacy, by watching and prayer, and a prudent circumspection? Certainly not. We owe all to God, and yet he obliges us to comply with an external order of human means. The apostles did not study the vain pomp and trifling ornaments of the heathen orators. They did not fall into the subtile reasonings of the philosophers, who made all to depend upon those airy speculations in which they lost themselves. The apostles only preached Jesus Christ with all the force, and magnificent simplicity of the scripture language. It is true they had no need of any preparation for their ministry, because the Spirit, who descended upon them in a sensible manner, supplied them with words in preaching the gospel. The difference then betwixt the apostles and their successors in the ministry is, that these, not being miraculously inspired like the apostles, have need to prepare themselves, and to fill their minds with the doctrine and spirit of the Scripture, to form their discourses. But this preparation should never lead them to preach in a more artless manner than the apostles. Would

stration of the Spirit, and with power? Who shall soothe the anxieties that agitate his bosom, cheer his trembling spirit, and guide his footsteps, in seasons of despondence? Who shall give him that knowledge of his own heart, that control of his temper and actions, that meekness, fortitude and exemplary holiness, which become his sacred office? In short, who shall secure him against falling into foul immorality, or fatal apostacy from the truth? Blessed be God, that a poor worm may ask and receive help from him, in whom is everlasting strength. Weakness itself may look up with courage to the throne of grace, and venture forward in the greatest work, relying on a Saviour's all-sufficient aid. Yes, blessed be God, that the humble minister, while he feels himself to be less than nothing, may yet say without presumption, "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Dr. Porter.*

you not be satisfied, if preachers used no more ornaments in their sermons than St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James, St. Jude, and St. John did?

C. I think I ought to require no more. And I must confess that since (as you say) eloquence consists chiefly in the order, force, and propriety of the words by which men are persuaded and moved, it does not give me so much offence as it did. I always reckoned eloquence to be an art that is inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel.

A. There are two sorts of people that have this notion of it; the false orators, who are widely mistaken in seeking after eloquence amidst a vain pomp of words; and some pious persons, who have no great depth of knowledge; but who, though out of humility they avoid that false rhetoric, which consists in a gaudy, ostentatious style, yet themselves aim at true eloquence, by striving to persuade and move their hearers.

C. I now understand your notions exactly; let us now return to the eloquence of the Scripture.

A. In order to perceive it, nothing is more useful than to have a just taste of the ancient simplicity; and this may best be obtained by reading the most ancient Greek authors.¹ I say the most ancient; for those Greeks whom the Romans so justly despised, and called Græculi, were altogether degenerate. As I told you before, you ought to be perfectly acquainted with Homer, Plato, Xenophon, and the other earliest writers. After that, you will be no more surprised at the plainness of the scripture style; for in them you will find almost the same kind of customs, the same artless narrations, the same images of great things, and the same movements. The difference between them upon comparison is much to the honor of the Scripture. It surpasses them vastly in native simplicity, liveliness and grandeur. Homer himself never reached the sublimity of Moses' songs, especially the last, which all the Israelitish children were to learn by heart. Never did any ode, either Greek or Latin, come up to the loftiness of the Psalms. That, for example, which begins

¹ Ενδείκνυται δ' ἡμῖν οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ (ΠΛΑΤΩΝ), εἰ βουλοίμεθα μὴ καταλιγωρεῖν, ὡς καὶ ἄλλη τις παρὰ τὰ εἰρημένα ὁδοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλὰ τείνει. Ποία δὲ καὶ τίς αὐτῆ; ἢ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν μεγάλων συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις. Καὶ τούτου γε, φίλτατε, ἀπρὶς ἐχώμεθα τοῦ σκοποῦ.—Longinus, § xiii.

thus;¹ "The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken," surpasses the utmost stretch of human invention. Neither Homer nor any other poet ever equalled Isaiah² describing the majesty of God, in whose sight the 'nations of the earth are as the small dust, yea, less than nothing and vanity;' seeing it is 'he that stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.' Sometimes this prophet has all the sweetness of an eclogue, in the smiling images he gives us of peace; and sometimes he soars so high as to leave everything below him. What is there in antiquity that can be compared to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, when he tenderly deplores the miseries of his country? or to the prophecy of Nahum, when he foresees, in spirit, the proud Nineveh fall under the rage of an invincible army? We fancy that we see the army, and hear the noise of arms and chariots. Everything is painted in such a lively manner as strikes the imagination. The prophet far outdoes Homer. Read likewise Daniel denouncing to Belshazzar the divine vengeance ready to overwhelm him; and try if you can find anything in the most sublime originals of antiquity, that can be compared to those passages of sacred writ. As for the rest of Scripture, every portion of it is uniform and consistent; every part bears the peculiar character that becomes it; the history, the particular detail of laws, the descriptions, the vehement and pathetic passages, the mysteries, and moral discourses; in all these there appears a natural and beautiful variety.³ In short, there is as great a difference between the

¹ Psal. 50: 1—6.

² Isaiah, 40: 9—28.—See chapters, xi. and xxxv. Lam. 1: 1, 2, 16, 20; 2: 1, 8, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21; 3: 39. Nahum, 1: 3, 5, 6; 2: 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10; 3: 3, 13, 17, 18. Daniel, chap. 5: 15—29.

³ Any reader will observe, that there is a poetical air in the predictions of Balaam in the twenty-third chapter of *Numbers*, and that there is particularly an uncommon *grandeur* in verse 19.

"God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

What is the cause of this *grandeur* will immediately be seen, if the sense be preserved, and the words thrown out of interrogation:

"God is not man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. What he hath said, he will do; and what he has spoken, he will make good." The difference is so visible, that it is needless to enlarge upon it.

How artfully does St. Paul, in *Acts*, xxvi. transfer his discourse

heathen poets and the prophets, as there is between a false enthusiasm and the true. The sacred writers, being truly inspired, do in a sensible manner express something divine; while the others, striving to soar above themselves, always show human weakness in their loftiest flights. The second book of Maccabees, the book of Wisdom, especially at the end, and Ecclesiasticus in the beginning, discover the gaudy, swelling style that the degenerate Greeks had spread over the East, where their language was established with their dominion. But it would be in vain to enlarge upon all these particulars; it is by reading that you must discover the truth of them.

B. I long to set about it; we ought to apply ourselves to this kind of study more than we do.

C. I easily conceive that the Old Testament is written with that magnificence, and those lively images you speak of. But you say nothing of the simplicity of Christ's words.

A. That simplicity of style is entirely according to the ancient taste. It is agreeable both to Moses and the prophets, whose expressions Christ often uses. But though his language be plain and familiar, it is however figurative and sublime in many places. I could easily show by particular instances, (if we had the books here to consult,) that we have not a preacher of this age, who is so figurative in his most studied sermons, as Jesus Christ was in his most popular discourses. I do not mean those that St. John relates, where almost everything is sensibly divine; I speak of his most familiar discourses recorded by the other evangelists. The apostles wrote in the same manner; with this difference, that

from *Festus to Agrippa*. In ver. 26, he speaks of him in the third person. "The King (says he) knoweth of these things, before whom I also speak freely—." Then in the following, he turns short upon him; "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" and immediately answers his own question, "I know that thou believest." The smoothest eloquence, the most insinuating complaisance, could never have made such impression on Agrippa, as this unexpected and pathetic address.

To these instances may be added the whole xxxviii. chapter of *Job*; where we behold the Almighty Creator expostulating with his creature, in terms which express at once the majesty and perfection of the one, the meanness and frailty of the other. There we see how vastly useful the figure of *interrogation* is, in giving us a lofty idea of the Deity, while every *question* awes us into silence, and inspires a sense of our own insufficiency.—*Smith's Longinus*.

Jesus Christ being master of his doctrine, delivers it calmly. He says just what he pleases, and speaks, with the utmost easiness, of the heavenly kingdom and glory, as of his father's house.¹ All those exalted things that astonish us, were natural and familiar to him; he was born there, and only tells us what he saw,² as he himself declares. On the contrary, the apostles³ sunk under the weight of the truths that were revealed to them; they want words, and are not able to express their ideas.⁴ Hence flow those digressions and obscure passages in St. Paul's writings, and those transpositions of his thoughts, which show his mind was transported with the abundance and greatness of the truths that offered themselves to his attention. All this irregularity of style shows that the Spirit of God forcibly guided the minds of the apostles. But notwithstanding these little disorders of their style, everything in it is noble, lively and moving. As for St. John's Revelation, we find in it the same grandeur and enthusiasm that there is in the prophets. The expressions are oftentimes the same, and sometimes this resemblance of style gives a mutual light to them both. You see therefore that the eloquence of Scripture is not confined to the books of the Old Testament, but is likewise to be found in the New.

C. Supposing the Scripture to be eloquent, what will you conclude from it?

A. That those who preach it, may without scruple imitate, or rather borrow its eloquence.

C. We find that preachers do choose those passages they think most beautiful.

A. But it mangles the Scripture thus to show it to Christians only in separate passages. And however great the beauty of such passages may be, it can never be fully perceived, unless one knows the connection of them, for everything in Scripture is connected, and this coherence is the most great and wonderful thing to be seen in the sacred writings. For want of a due knowledge of it, preachers mistake

¹ John, 14: 2.

² Chap. 8: 38

³ 2 Cor. 12: 2, 4, 7.

⁴ Yet, after all, there is often found in the *apostolic* manner, a sublimity of sentiment, a pomp of description, a clearness, strength, and brevity of precept, a closeness of appeal, a force and abruptness of interrogation, a simplicity of words, and pathos of address, that are admirable in themselves, and worthy the imitation of every preacher.—*Fordyce, Art of Preaching.*

those beautiful passages, and put upon them what sense they please. They content themselves with some ingenious interpretations, which, being arbitrary, have no force to persuade men, or to reform their manners.

B. What would you have preachers to do? Must they use only the language of Scripture?

A. I would have them, at least, not think it enough to join together a few passages of Scripture that have no real connection. I would have them explain the principles, and the series of the Scripture doctrine, and take the spirit, the style and the figures of it, that all their discourses may serve to give people a right understanding and true relish of God's word. There needs no more to make preachers eloquent; for by doing this, they would imitate the best model of ancient eloquence.

B. But in this case we behaved, (as I said before,) to explain the several parts of Scripture as they lie.

A. I would not confine all preachers to this. One might make sermons upon the Scripture without explaining the several parts of it as they lie. But it must be owned that preaching would be quite another thing, if, according to ancient custom, the sacred books were thus explained to the people in a connected, judicious manner. Consider what authority a man must have, who should say nothing from his own invention, but only follow and explain the thoughts and words of God. Besides, he would do two things at once. By unfolding the truths of Scripture, he would explain the text, and accustom the people to join always the sense and the letter together. What advantage must they not reap, if they were used to nourish themselves with this spiritual bread? An audience, who had heard the chief points of the Mosaic law explained, would be able to receive far more benefit from an explication of the truths of the gospel, than the greatest part of Christians are now. The preacher we spoke of before, has this failing among many great qualities, that his sermons are trains of fine reasoning about religion, but they are not religion itself. We apply ourselves too much to the drawing of moral characters, and inveighing against the general disorders of mankind, and we do not sufficiently explain the principles and precepts of the gospel.¹

¹ A loose and indiscriminate manner of applying the promises and threatenings of the gospel, is ill judged and pernicious; it is not pos-

C. Preachers choose this way, because it is far easier to declaim against the follies and disorders of mankind, than to explain the fundamental truths and duties of religion judi-

sible to conceive a more effectual method of depriving the sword of the Spirit of its edge, than adopting that lax generality of representation, which leaves its hearer nothing to apply, presents no incentive to self-examination, and besides its utter inefficiency, disgusts by the ignorance of human nature, or the disregard to its best interests, it infallibly betrays. Without descending to such a minute specification of circumstances, as shall make our addresses personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic, that the conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where to class himself. The preacher who aims at doing good, will endeavor, above all things, to insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in the crowd. At the day of judgment, the attention excited by the surrounding scene, the strange aspect of nature, the dissolution of the elements, and the last trump, will have no other effect than to cause the reflections of the sinner to return with a more overwhelming tide on his own character, his sentence, his unchanging destiny; and, amid the innumerable millions who surround him, he will *mourn apart*. It is thus the Christian minister should endeavor to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of every one of his hearers on himself.—*Hall on the discouragements and supports of the Christian ministry.*

If I should read to a sick person a learned lecture on the benefit of health, and exhort him to take care to recover it, but never inquire into the nature of his disease, or prescribe proper methods and medicines for the cure, he would hardly acquiesce in me for his physician, or resign to me the care of his bodily health. Nor is it a more likely way to the soul's health, to rest in mere *general* exhortations to holiness, without distinctly handling the several branches thereof and the opposite sins. If a man, professing physic, should administer or prescribe one constant medicine for fevers, and another for consumptions and so for other distempers, without considering the age, constitution, strength and way of living of his patient, and not vary his method and medicines as those vary, we should hardly call this the regular practice of physic. Nor can I think this general and undistinguished way will be more safe, or likely to answer its end, in divinity than in medicine.—*Jennings.*

We do not warn the man whose house is on fire, by the abstract assurance that "fire is dangerous;" by introducing a third person to say, "he is in danger;" by continually adverting to those noble public institutions, the general fire insurance companies. Nor must the delegated apostle of Christianity fail to discriminate, to individualize, to strike home, to draw the line between the form and spirit of religion; to show that the best church cannot of itself sanctify those who enter it; 'to speak,' as old Baxter says, 'like a dying man, to dying men;' to 'warn, rebuke, exhort,' like one who expects

ciously. To be able to describe the corruptions of the age, they need only have some knowledge of men and things, with proper words to paint them. But to set the great duties of the gospel in a just light, requires an attentive meditation and study of the Holy Scriptures. There are but few preachers who have such a solid, comprehensive knowledge of religion as can enable them to explain it clearly to others. Nay, there are some who make pretty discourses, and yet could not catechise the people, and far less make a good homily.

A. Very true; it is here that our preachers are most defective. Most of their fine sermons contain only philosophical reasonings. Sometimes they preposterously quote Scripture only for the sake of decency or ornament, and it is not then regarded as the word of God, but as the invention of men.

C. You will grant, I hope, that the labors of such men tend to make void the cross of Christ.

A. I give them up; and contend only for the eloquence of Scripture, which evangelical preachers ought to imitate. So that we are agreed on this point; provided you will not excuse some zealous preachers, who, under pretence of apostolical simplicity, do not effectually study either the doctrine of Scripture, or the powerful manner of persuasion that we are taught there. They imagine that they need only bawl, and speak often of hell and the devil. Now without doubt a preacher ought to affect people by strong, and sometimes even by terrible images; but it is from the Scripture that he should learn to make powerful impressions. There he may clearly discover the way to make sermons plain and popular, without losing the force and dignity they ought always to have. For want of this knowledge, a preacher oftentimes doth but stun and frighten people, so that they remember but few clear notions; and even the impressions of terror they received are not lasting. This mistaken simplicity that some affect, is too often a cloak for ignorance; and at best it is such an unedifying manner of address, as cannot be acceptable either to God or men. Nothing can excuse such homely preachers, but the sincerity of their intentions. They ought to have studied and meditated much upon the word of

to meet his congregation next at the bar of God.—*Christian Observer.*

God, before they undertook to preach. A priest who understands the Scripture fully, and has the gift of speaking, supported by the authority of his function, and of a good life, might make excellent discourses without great preparation. For one speaks easily of such truths as make a clear and strong impression on his mind. Now above all things, such a subject as religion must furnish exalted thoughts, and excite the noblest sentiments, and this is the design of eloquence. But a preacher ought to speak to his audience as a father would talk to his children, with an affectionate tenderness;¹ and not like a declaimer, pronouncing an ha-

¹ In the most awful denunciations of the divine displeasure, an air of unaffected tenderness should be preserved, that while with unsparing fidelity we declare the whole counsel of God, it may appear we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burden of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, it will be when it is delivered with a trembling hand and faltering lips; and we may then expect them to realize its solemn import, when they perceive that we ourselves are ready to sink under it. "Of whom I have told you before," said St. Paul, "and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." What force does that affecting declaration derive from these tears! An affectionate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments and follow the impulse of the speaker. Whoever has attended to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of their impression depends upon this quality, which gives to sentiments comparatively trite, a power over the mind beyond what the most striking and original conceptions possess without it.—*Hull on the discouragements and supports of the Christian ministry.*

There is another strain of preaching, which, though it wears the garb of zeal, is seldom a proof of any power but the power of self; I mean angry and scolding preaching. The Gospel is a benevolent scheme, and whoever speaks in the power of it, will assuredly speak in love. In the most faithful rebukes of sin, in the most solemn declarations of God's displeasure against it, a preacher may give evidence of a disposition of good-will and compassion to sinners, and assuredly will, if he speaks under the influence of the power of truth. If we can indulge invective and bitterness in the pulpit, we know not what spirit we are of; we are but gratifying our own evil tempers, under the pretence of a concern for the cause of God and truth. A preacher of this character, instead of resembling a priest bearing in his censer hallowed fire taken from God's altar, may be compared to the madman described in the Proverbs, who scattereth at random fire-brands and arrows and death, and saith, Am not I in sport? Such persons may applaud their own faithfulness and courage, and

range with stiffness, and an affected delicacy. It were to be wished indeed that, generally speaking, none were allowed to feed the Christian flocks but their respective shepherds, who ought best to know their wants. In order to this, none should be chosen for pastors, but such as have the gift of preaching. The neglect of this occasions two evils; one is, that dumb pastors, and such as speak without abilities, are little esteemed. Another evil is, that the function of voluntary preachers allures many vain, ambitious spirits, that endeavor to distinguish themselves in this way. You know that in former ages the ministry of the word was reserved for the bishops, especially in the western church. You must have heard of St. Austin's case; that, contrary to the established rule, he was obliged to preach while he was only a presbyter, because Valerius, his bishop and predecessor, was a stranger who could not talk easily; this was the beginning of that custom in the western parts. In the east, priests sooner began to preach; as appears from St. Chrysostom's sermons, which he made at Antioch, when he was only a presbyter.

C. I grant that, generally speaking, the office of preaching should be reserved for the parochial clergy. This would be the way to restore to the pulpit that simplicity and dignity that ought to adorn it. For if pastors joined the knowledge of the Scriptures to their experience in the ministerial function, and the conduct of souls, they would speak in such a way as is best adapted to the wants of their flocks. Whereas those preachers who give up themselves chiefly to study and speculation, are less able to obviate people's prejudices and mistakes; they do not suit their discourses to vulgar capacities, and insist chiefly on such general points as do not instruct nor affect men; to say nothing of the weight and influence that the shepherd's own voice must have among his flock, above a stranger's. These, methinks, are convincing reasons for preferring a pastor's sermons before other people's. Of what use are so many young preachers, without experience, without knowledge and without piety? It were better to have fewer sermons, and more judicious ones.

think it a great attainment that they can so easily and constantly set their congregation at defiance; but they must not expect to be useful, so long as it remains a truth, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.—*Newton.*

B. But there are many priests who are not pastors, and who preach with great success. How many persons are there of the religious orders, who fill the pulpit to advantage?

C. I own there are many; and such men ought to be made pastors of parishes, and even be constrained to undertake the care of souls. Were not anchorets of old forced from their beloved solitude, and raised to public stations, that the light of their piety might shine in the church, and edify the faithful?

A. But it does not belong to us to regulate the discipline of the church. Every age has its proper customs, as the circumstances of things require. Let us show a regard to whatever the church tolerates, and, without indulging a censorious humor, let us finish our character of a worthy preacher.

C. What you have said already gives me, I think, an exact idea of it.

A. Let us hear then what you reckon necessary to make a complete preacher.

C. I think that he ought to have studied solidly, during his younger days, whatever is most useful in the poetry and eloquence of the ancients.¹

A. That is not necessary. It is true when one has finished such studies successfully, they may be of use to him, even towards a right understanding of the Scriptures; as St. Basil has shown in a treatise he composed on this very subject. But after all, this sort of study is rather useful than necessary. In the first ages of the church, the clergy found a want of this kind of learning. Those indeed who had applied themselves to it in their youth, turned it to the service of religion, when they became pastors; but such as had neglected these before, were not permitted to follow them, when they had once engaged themselves in the study of the sacred writings, which were then reckoned to be sufficient. Hence came that passage in the Apostolical Constitutions,²

¹ The Greek and Roman authors have a spirit in them, a force, both of thought and expression, that latter ages have not been able to imitate, Buchanan only excepted; in whom, more particularly in his Psalms, there is a beauty, and life, an exactness as well as a liberty, that cannot be imitated, and scarce enough commended.—*Discourse of the pastoral care, ch. viii.*

² B. i. c. 6.

which exhorts Christians not to read the heathen authors. 'If you want history, (says the book,) or laws, or moral precepts, or eloquence, or poetry, you will find them all in the Scriptures.' In effect, we have already seen that it is needless to seek elsewhere, for anything that is necessary to form our taste and judgment of true eloquence. St. Austin says that the smaller stock we have of other learning, we ought so much the more to enrich ourselves out of that sacred treasure; and that seeing our notions are too scanty to express divine things in a proper way, we have need to exalt and improve our knowledge by the authority of Scripture, and our language by the dignity of its expressions. But I ask your pardon for interrupting you. Go on, Sir, if you please.

C. Well then; let us be content with the sufficiency of Scripture. But shall we not add the fathers?

A. Without doubt; they are the channels of tradition. It is by their writings that we learn the manner in which the church has interpreted the Scripture in all ages.

C. But are preachers obliged to explain every passage of Scripture, according to the interpretations that the fathers have given us? We find that one father gives a spiritual or mystical sense, and another gives a literal one. Now which must we choose? for there would be no end of mentioning them all.

A. When I affirm that we ought to interpret the Scripture according to the doctrine of the fathers, I mean, their constant and uniform doctrine. They frequently gave pious interpretations that differed very much from the literal sense, and were not founded on the prophetic allusions, and the mysterious doctrines of religion. Now seeing these interpretations are arbitrary, we are not obliged to follow them; 'seeing they did not follow one another.' But in those places where they explain the sentiments of the church concerning points of faith or practice, it is not allowable to explain the Scripture in a sense contrary to the doctrine of the fathers. This is the authority that we ought to ascribe to them.

C. This seems clear enough. I would therefore have a clergyman (before he begin to preach) be thoroughly acquainted with the doctrine of the fathers, that he may follow it. I would even have him study the principles they laid down for their conduct, their rules of moderation, and their method of instruction.

A. Right; they are our masters. They had an exalted

genius, they had great and pious souls, full of heroical sentiments. They had a singular knowledge of the tempers and manners of men, and acquired a great repute, and a very easy way of preaching. We even find that many of them were very polite, and knew whatever is decent, either in writing or speaking in public, and what is handsome both in familiar conversation, and in discharging the common duties of life. Doubtless all this must have conduced to render them eloquent, and fit to gain upon people's minds. Accordingly, we find in their writings a politeness not only of language, but of sentiments and manners, which is not to be seen in the writers of the following ages. This just taste and discernment, which agrees perfectly well with simplicity, and rendered their persons acceptable, and their behaviour engaging, was highly serviceable to religion. And in this point we can scarce imitate them enough. So that after the Scriptures, the knowledge of the fathers will help a preacher to compose good sermons.

C. When one has laid such a solid foundation, and edified the church by his exemplary virtues, he would then be fit to explain the gospel with great authority and good effect. For by familiar instructions and useful conferences, (to which we suppose him to have been accustomed betimes,) he must have attained a sufficient freedom and easiness of speaking. Now if such pastors applied themselves to all the particular duties of their function, as administering the sacraments, directing pious souls, and comforting afflicted, or dying persons; it is certain they could not have much time to make elaborate sermons, and learn them word for word. "The mouth behoved to speak from the abundance of the heart;¹ and communicate to the people the fulness of gospel knowledge, and the affecting sentiments of the preacher. As for what you said yesterday, about getting sermons by heart, I had the curiosity to seek out a passage in St. Austin that I had read before; it is to this effect,—he thinks that a preacher ought to speak in a more plain and sensible manner than other people; for, seeing custom and decency will not permit his hearers to ask him any questions, he should be afraid of not adapting his discourse to their capacity. "Wherefore," says he, "they, who get their sermons by heart, word for word, and so cannot repeat and explain a

¹ Matth. 12: 34.

truth till they see that their hearers understand it, must lose one great end and benefit of preaching." You see by this, Sir, that St. Austin only prepared his subject, without burdening his memory with all the words of his sermons. Though the precepts of true eloquence should require more, yet the rules of the gospel ministry will not permit us to go farther. As for my own part, I have been long of your opinion concerning this matter, because of the many pressing necessities in the Christian church, that require a pastor's continual application. While a priest, who ought to be 'a man of God,¹ thoroughly furnished unto all good works,' should be diligent in rooting out ignorance and offences from the field of the church; I think it unworthy of him to waste his time in his closet, in the smoothing of periods, in giving delicate touches to his descriptions, and inventing quaint divisions. When one falls into the method and employment of these pretty preachers, he can have no time to do anything else; he applies himself to no other business, or useful kind of study; nay, to refresh himself, he is oftentimes forced to preach the same sermons over and over again. But what kind of eloquence can a preacher attend to, when his hearers know beforehand all the expressions and pathetic figures he will use? This is a likely way indeed, to surprise and astonish; to soften, and move, and persuade them. This must be a strange manner of concealing one's art, and of letting nature speak. To tell you freely, Sir, this gives me great offence. What! shall a dispenser of the divine mysteries be an idle declaimer, jealous of his reputation and fond of vain pomp?² Shall he not dare to speak of God to his people, without having ranged all his words, and learned his lesson by heart like a school boy?

A. I am very much pleased with your zeal. What you say is true. But we must not however inveigh against this

¹ 2 Tim. 3: 17.

² Sed hic ornatus (repetam enim) virilis, fortis et sanctus sit—Non debet quisquam ubi *maxima* rerum *momenta* versantur, de verbis esse sollicitus—Prima virtus est vitio carere. Igitur ante omnia, ne speremus ornatam orationem fore, quae probabilis non erit. *Probabile* autem Cicero id genus dicit, quod non plus, minusve est quam decet. Non quia comi expoliri non debeat, nam et haec ornatus pars est; sed quia vitium est ubique, quod nimium est. Itaque vult esse auctoritatem et pondus in verbis: sententias vel graves, vel aptas opinionibus hominum ac moribus.—*Quint. lib. viii. c. 3.*

abuse with too much violence; for we ought to show a regard to persons of worth and piety, who, out of deference to custom, or being prepossessed by example, have with a good design fallen into the method that you justly censure. But I am ashamed to interrupt you so often. Go on, I beseech you.

C. I would have a preacher explain the whole plan of religion; and unfold every part of it, in the most intelligible manner; by showing the primitive institution of things; and pointing out the sequel and tradition of them: that, by showing the origin and establishment of religion, he might destroy the objections of unbelievers, without offering to attack them openly: lest he should thereby lay a stumbling block in the way of illiterate, well meaning Christians.¹

¹ Particular care ought to be taken in expounding the Scriptures to the people, not to appear over-learned and over-critical in one's explications. There is no occasion to obtrude on an audience, as some do, all the jarring interpretations given by different commentators, of which it is much better that the people should remain ignorant, than that they should be apprized. For this knowledge can serve no other purpose, than to distract their thoughts and perplex their judgment. Before you begin to build, it is necessary to remove such impediments, as lie directly in your way; but you could not account him other than a very foolish builder, who should first collect a deal of rubbish, which was not in his way, and consequently could not have obstructed his work, that he might have the pleasure and merit of removing it. And do the fantastic, absurd, and contradictory glosses of commentators deserve a better name than rubbish? No, surely. But if such absurd glosses are unknown to your congregation, they are rubbish which lies not in your way. No interpretation, therefore, or gloss should ever be mentioned in order to be refuted, unless it be such as the words themselves, on a superficial view, might seem to countenance, or such as is generally known to the people to be put upon them by some interpreters, or sects of Christians. Where a false gloss cannot be reasonably supposed to be either known or thought of by the audience, it is in the preacher worse than being idly ostentatious of his learning, to introduce such erroneous gloss or comment. And as to an excess of criticism in this exercise, it ought also doubtless carefully to be avoided. We must always remember the difference between a church and a college. In most Christian congregations there are very few, if any linguists. I do not say that in our lectures we ought never to mention the original or recur to it. Justice to the passage we explain may sometimes require it. Nor is it necessary, that our translators should be deemed infallible even by the multitude. It is enough, that we consider as the pure dictates of the Spirit those intimations, with which the prophets and apostles were inspired. But then, on the other hand, it is neither modest nor prudent in the preacher, especially if a young man, to be at every turn censuring the translators, and pretending to

A. That is very right. The best way of proving the truth of religion, is to explain it justly; for it carries its own evidence along with it, when we represent it in its native purity. All other proofs that are not drawn from the very foundation of religion itself, and the manner of its propagation, are but foreign to it. Thus, for instance, the best proof of the creation of the world, of the deluge, and the miracles of Moses, may be drawn from the nature of those miracles, and the artless, impartial manner in which the Mosaic history is written. A wise, unprejudiced person needs only to read it, to be fully convinced of its truth.

C. I would likewise have a preacher assiduously explain to the people, in a connected train, not only all the particular

mend their version. It is not modest, as they, over whom the corrector assumes a superiority, are allowed on all hands to have been men of eminent talents and erudition. And it is not prudent, as this practice never fails to produce in the minds of the people a want of confidence in their Bible, which tends greatly to lessen its authority. Therefore, though I am by no means for ascribing infallibility to any human expositors, propriety requires, that we should neither too often, nor too abruptly tax with blundering, before such a promiscuous audience as our congregations commonly are, men of so respectable memory. Manly freedom of inquiry, becoming a protestant, becoming a Briton, tempered with that decent reserve which suits the humble Christian, will guard the judicious against both extremes, an overweening conceit of his own abilities, and an implicit faith in those of others. And indeed, in regard to everything, which may be introduced either in the way of criticism or comment, it ought ever to be remembered, that it is not enough, that such an observation is just, that such an interpretation hath actually been given, or that such an opinion hath been maintained; the previous inquiry, which the preacher ought to make by himself is, whether it be of any consequence to the people to be informed of the observation, comment, or opinion. This inquiry, impartially made, will prove a check against the immoderate indulgence of what is perhaps the natural bent of his own genius, whether it be to critical or controversial disquisition, and which it is not always easy for youth, commonly impetuous and opinionative, duly to restrain. If on other occasions, more especially on this, the apostolical admonition ought to be sacredly observed, that "nothing proceed out of the speaker's mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." But for our direction in this kind of discernment, no precepts, it must be acknowledged, will suffice. A fund of good sense is absolutely necessary, enlightened by a knowledge of mankind. In this, as in every other kind of composition, the maxim of the poet invariably holds:

Scribendi recte sapere est principium et fons.

Campbell on Pulpit Eloquence.

precepts and mysteries of the gospel, but likewise the origin and institution of the sacraments; the traditions, discipline, the liturgy, and ceremonies of the church. By these instructions he would guard the faithful against the objections of heretics, and enable them to give an account of their faith, and even to affect such heretics as are not obstinate; he would strengthen people's faith, give them an exalted notion of religion, and make them receive some edification and benefit from what they see in the church. Whereas, with the superficial instruction that is generally given them at present, they comprehend little or nothing of what they see, and have but a very confused idea of what they hear from the preacher. It is chiefly for the sake of this connected scheme of instruction that I would have fixed persons, such as pastors, to preach in every parish. I have often observed that there is no art, nor science, that is not taught coherently by principles and method, in a connected train of instructions. Religion is the only thing that is not taught thus to Christians. In their childhood they have a little, dry catechism put into their hands, which they learn by rote, without understanding the sense of it. And after that, they have no other instruction but what they can gather from sermons upon unconnected, general subjects. I would therefore, (as you said,) have preachers teach people the first principles of their religion, and, by a due method, lead them on to the highest mysteries of it.

A. That was the ancient way. They began with catechising; after which, pastors taught their people the several doctrines of the gospel, in a connected train of homilies. This instructed Christians fully in the word of God. You know St. Austin's book of 'catechising the ignorant,' and St. Clement's tract, which he composed to show the heathen whom he converted, what were the doctrines and manners of the Christian philosophy. In those days the greatest men were employed in these catechetical instructions, and accordingly, they produced such wonderful effects, as seem quite incredible to us.

C. In fine, I would have every preacher make such sermons as should not be too troublesome to him; that so he might be able to preach often. They ought therefore to be short; that without fatiguing himself or wearying the people, he might preach every Sunday after the gospel. As far as we can judge, those aged bishops who lived in former times,

and had constant labors to employ them, did not make such a stir as our modern preachers do in talking to the people in the midst of the service, which the bishops themselves read solemnly every Lord's day. A preacher now-a-days gets little credit, unless he comes out of the pulpit sweating and breathless, and unable to do anything the rest of the day. The bishop's upper vestment, (which was not then opened at the shoulders as it is now, but hung equally down on all sides,) probably hindered him from moving his arms, as some preachers do. So that as their sermons were short, so their action must have been grave and moderate. Now Sir, is not all this agreeable to your principles? is not this the idea you gave us of good preaching?

A. It is not mine: it is the current notion of all antiquity. The farther I inquire into this matter, the more I am convinced that the ancient form of sermons was the most perfect. The primitive pastors were great men; they were not only very holy, but they had a complete, clear knowledge of religion, and of the best way to persuade men of its truth, and they took care to regulate all the circumstances of it. There is a great deal of wisdom, hidden under this air of simplicity, and we ought not to believe that a better method could have been afterwards found out. You have set this whole matter in the best light, and have left me nothing to add; indeed you have explained my thoughts better than I should have done myself.

B. You magnify the eloquence and the sermons of the fathers mightily.

A. I do not think that I commend them too much.

B. I am surprised to see, that after you have been so severe against those orators, who mix turns of wit with their discourses, you should be so indulgent to the fathers, whose writings are full of jingling antitheses, and quibbles, entirely contrary to all your rules. I wish you would be consistent with yourself. Pray, Sir, unfold all this to us. Particularly, what do you think of Tertullian?

A. There are many excellent things in him. The loftiness of his sentiments is oftentimes admirable. Besides, he should be read for the sake of some principles concerning tradition, some historical facts, and the discipline of his time. But as for his style, I do not pretend to justify it. He has many false and obscure notions, many harsh and perplexed metaphors, and the generality of readers are most fond of his

faults. He has spoiled many preachers.¹ For, the desire of saying something that is singular, leads them to study his works;² and his uncommon, pompous style dazzles them. We must, therefore, beware of imitating his thoughts or expressions, and only pick out his noble sentiments, and the knowledge of antiquity.

¹ One of the greatest and most remarkable proofs of the strong influence that some imaginations have over others, is the power that some authors have to persuade, without any proof. For example, the turn of words that we find in Tertullian, Seneca, Montaigne, and some other authors, has so many charms, and so much lustre, that they dazzle most readers.—Their *words*, however insignificant, have more force than the *reasons* of other people.—I protest, I have a great value for some of Tertullian's works, and chiefly for his *Apology* against the *Gentiles*, his book of *Prescriptions* against heretics; and for some passages of Seneca, though I have very little esteem for Montaigne. Tertullian was indeed a man of great learning, but he had more memory than judgment.—The regard he showed to the visions of Montanus, and his prophetesses, is an unquestionable proof of his weak judgment. The disorder of his imagination sensibly appears in the heat, the transports, and enthusiastic flights he falls into upon trifling subjects.—What could he infer from his pompous descriptions of the changes that happen in the world? Or how could they justify his laying aside his usual dress to wear the philosophical cloak? The moon has different phases; the year has several seasons; the fields change their appearance in summer and winter; whole provinces are drowned by inundations, or swallowed up by earthquakes—in fine, all nature is subject to changes; therefore, he had reason to wear the cloak rather than the common robe!—Nothing can excuse the silly arguments and wild fancies of this author, who, in several others of his works, as well as in that *de Pullio*, says everything that comes into his head, if it be a far-fetched conceit, or a bold expression; by which he hoped to show the vigor, (we must rather call it, the disorder) of his imagination.—*Malebranche's Recherche de la verite*, Liv. ii. p. 3. c. 3.

² Eccentricity is sometimes found connected with genius, but it does not coalesce with true wisdom. Hence, men of the first order of intellect, have never betrayed it; and hence also, men of secondary talents drop it as they grow wiser; and are satisfied to found their consequence on real and solid excellency, not on peculiarity and extravagance. They are content to awaken regard and obtain applause by the rectitude and gracefulness of their going, rather than to make passengers stare and laugh by leaping over the wall or stumbling along the road. True greatness is serious, trifling is beneath its dignity. We are more indebted to the regular, sober, constant course of the sun, than to the glare of the comet; the one indeed occupies our papers, but the other enriches our fields and gardens; we gaze at the strangeness of the one, but we live by the influence of the other.—*Jay*.

B. What say you of St. Cyprian? Is not his style too swelling?

A. I think it is; and it could scarce be otherwise in his age and country. But though his language has a tang of the African roughness, and the bombast which prevailed in his days; yet there is great force and eloquence in it. Everywhere we see a great soul, who expresseth his sentiments in a very noble, moving manner. In some places of his works we find affected ornaments, especially in his epistle to Donatus; which St. Austin quotes, however, as a letter full of eloquence. He says, that God permitted those strokes of vain oratory to fall from St. Cyprian's pen, to show posterity how much the spirit of Christian simplicity had, in his following works, retrenched the superfluous ornaments of his style, and reduced it within the bounds of a grave and modest eloquence. This, says St. Austin, is the distinguishing character of all the letters which St. Cyprian wrote afterwards; which we may safely admire and imitate, as being written according to the severest rules of religion; though we cannot hope to come up to them without a great application. In fine, though his letter to Donatus, even in St. Austin's opinion, be too elaborately adorned, it still deserves to be called eloquent. For, notwithstanding its many rhetorical embellishments, we cannot but perceive, that a great part of the epistle is very serious and lively, and most proper to give Donatus a noble idea of Christianity. In those passages where he is very earnest, he neglects all turns of wit, and falls into a sublime and vehement strain.

B. But what do you think of St. Austin? Is he not the most jingling quibbler that ever wrote? Will you defend him?

¹ Misi nuncios meos omnes sensus interiores, ut quaererem te, et non inveni, quia male quaerebam. Video enim, lux mea, Deus qui illuminasti me, quia male te per illos quaerebam, quia tu es intus, et tamen ipsi ubi intraveris, nesciverunt.—Et tamen cum Deum meum quaero, quaero nihilominus quandam lucem super omnem lucem quam non capit oculus; quandam vocem super omnem vocem, quam non capit auris; quandam odorem super omnem odorem, quem non capit naris; quandam dulcorem super omnem dulcorem, quem non sapit gustus; quandam amplexum super omnem amplexum, quem non capit tactus. Ista lux fulget ubi locus non capit; ista vox sonat, ubi tempus non rapit; odor iste redolet, ubi flatus non spargit; sapor iste sapit, ubi non est edacitas; amplexus iste tangitur, ubi non divellitur.—Aug. *Solil.* § 31.

O dies praeclara nesciens vesperum, non habens occasum—ubi non

A. No ; I cannot vindicate him in that. It was the reigning fault of his time, to which his quick, lively fancy naturally inclined him. This shows that he was not a perfect orator. But notwithstanding this defect, he had a great talent for persuasion. He reasoned generally with great force, and he is full of noble notions. He knew the heart of man entirely well, and was so polite, that he carefully observed the strictest decency in all his discourses. In short, he expressed himself almost always in a pathetic, gentle, insinuating manner. Now ought not the fault we observe in so great a man, to be forgiven ?

C. I must own there is one thing in him that I never observed in any other writer ; I mean, that he has a moving way, even when he quibbles. None of his works are more full of jingling turns, than his confessions, and soliloquies, and yet we must own they are tender,¹ and apt to affect the reader.

A. It is because he checks the turns of his fancy as much as he can, by the ingenuous simplicity of his pious, affecting sentiments. All his works plainly show his love of God. He was not only conscious of it, but knew well how to express to others the strong sense he had of it. Now this tender, affecting way is a part of eloquence. But we see, besides, that St. Austin knew exactly all the essential rules of it. He tells us² that a persuasive discourse must be simple and natural, that art must not appear in it, and that if it be too fine and elaborate, it puts the hearers upon their guard.³

erit hostis impugnans, nec ulla illecebra, sed summa et certa securitas, secura tranquillitas, et tranquilla jocunditas, jocunda felicitas, felix aeternitas, aeterna beatitudo, et beata Trinitas, et Trinitatis unitas, et unitatis Deitas, et Deitatis beata visio, quae est gaudium Domini mei.—Aug. *Solil.* § 35.

¹ Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. Sitivit anima mea ad Deum, fontem vivum ; quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei mei ? O fons vitae, vena aquarum viventium ; quando veniam ad aquas dulcedinis tuae de terra deserta, in via et in aquosa ; ut videam virtutem tuam, et gloriam tuam, et *satiem* ex aquis misericordiae tuae *sitim* meam ? *sitio*, Domine, fons vitae, *satia* me. Sitio, Domine, sitio Deum vivum ; O quando veniam et apparebo, Domine, ante faciem tuam ?—Aug. *Solil. cap.* xxxv.

² De Doct. Chr. 1, 2.

³ “ There is a false eloquence, in being ambitious to say everything with spirit, and turn all things with delicacy.—If you would attain to true eloquence, you must first lay aside the passion for appearing elo-

To this purpose he applies these words which you cannot but remember: 'qui sophisticè loquitur odibilis est.' He talks likewise very judiciously of the mixing different kinds of style in a discourse; of ranging the several parts of it in such a manner as to make it increase gradually in strength and evidence; of the necessity of being plain and familiar, even as to the tones of the voice, and our actions in particular passages, though everything we say should still have a dignity, when we preach religion. In fine, he likewise shows the way to awaken and move people. These are St. Austin's notions of eloquence. But if you would see with how much art he actually influenced people's minds, and with what address he moved their passions, according to the true design of eloquence, you must read the account he gives of a discourse he made to the people of Caesarea, in Mauritania, in order to abolish a barbarous practice. It seems, there prevailed among them an ancient custom, which they had carried to a monstrous pitch of cruelty. His business therefore was to draw off the people from a spectacle that delighted them extremely. Judge now what a difficult enterprise this was. However, he tells us that after he had talked to them for some time, they spoke aloud and applauded him.

But he concluded that his discourse had not persuaded them, seeing they amused themselves in commending him. He thought he had done nothing while he only raised delight and admiration in his hearers, nor did he begin to hope for any good effect from his discourse, till he saw them weep. "In effect," says he, "the people were at length prevailed on to give up this delightful spectacle, nor has it been renewed these eight years." Is not St. Austin then a true orator? Have we any preachers that are able to talk so powerfully now? As for St. Jerome, he has some faults in his style, but his expressions are manly and great. He is not regular, but he is far more eloquent than most of those who value themselves upon their oratory. We should judge like mere grammarians, if we examined only the style and language of the fathers. You know there is a great difference between eloquence, and what we call elegance, or purity of style. St. Ambrose likewise fell into the fashionable defects of his time,

quent. So long as you have vain, ambitious views, you will never preach well, and you will never become truly eloquent."—*Ostervald's Lect. iv.*

and gives his discourse such ornaments as were then in vogue. Perhaps these great men, (who had higher views than the common rules of rhetoric,) conformed themselves to the prevailing taste of the age they lived in, that they might the better insinuate the truths of religion upon people's minds, by engaging them to hear the word of God with pleasure. But notwithstanding the puns and quibbles that St. Ambrose sometimes uses, we see that he wrote to Theodosius with an inimitable force and persuasion. How much tenderness does he express, when he speaks of the death of his brother Satyrus? In the Roman breviary we have a discourse of his, concerning John the Baptist's head, which, he says, Herod respected and dreaded even after his death. If you observe that discourse, you will find the end of it very sublime. St. Leo's style is swelling, but truly noble. Pope Gregory lived still in a worse age, and yet he wrote several things with much strength and dignity. We ought to distinguish those failings into which the degeneracy of arts and learning led these great men, in common with other writers of their several ages; and at the same time observe what their genius and sentiments furnished them with to persuade their hearers.

C. But do you think, then, that the taste of eloquence was quite lost in those ages that were so happy for religion?

A. Yes; within a little time after the reign of Augustus, eloquence and the Latin tongue began to decline apace. The fathers did not live till after this corruption, so that we must not look on them as complete models. We must even acknowledge that most of the sermons they have left us, are composed with less skill and force, than their other works. When I showed you from the testimony of the fathers that the Scripture is eloquent, (which you seemed to believe upon their credit,) I knew very well that the oratory of these witnesses, is much inferior to that of the sacred writings themselves. But there are some persons of such a depraved taste, that they cannot relish the beauties of Isaiah; and yet they will admire Chrysologus, in whom, (notwithstanding his fine name,) there is little to be found besides abundance of evangelical piety, couched under numberless quibbles and low witticisms. In the East, the just way of speaking and writing was better preserved, and the Greek tongue continued for some time, almost in its ancient purity. St. Chrysostom

spoke it very well. His style, you know, is copious, but he did not study false ornaments. All his discourse tends to persuasion; he placed everything with judgment, and was well acquainted with the Holy Scripture, and the manners of men. He entered into their hearts, and rendered things familiarly sensible to them. He had sublime and solid notions, and is sometimes very affecting. Upon the whole, we must own he is a great orator.¹ St. Gregory Nazianzen is more concise, and more poetical, but not quite so persuasive. And yet he has several moving passages, particularly in his funeral oration upon his brother St. Basil, and in his last discourse at taking leave of Constantinople. St. Basil is grave, sententious and rigid even in his style. He had meditated profoundly on all the truths of the gospel, he knew exactly all the disorders and weaknesses of human nature, and he

¹ What are you doing, wicked wretch? You require an oath on the holy table; and you sacrifice cruelly your brother on the same altar where Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for you, lies? Thieves assassinate, but then they do it in secret; but you, in presence of the church, our common parent, murder one of her children, in which you are more wicked than Cain; for he concealed his guilt in the desert, and only deprived his brother of a transitory life; but you plunge your neighbor into everlasting death, and that in the midst of the temple, and before the face of the Creator? Was then the Lord's house built for swearing, and not for prayer? Is the sacred altar to occasion the committing of crimes, instead of expiating them? But if every other religious sentiment is extinguished in you, revere, at least, the holy book with which you present your brother to swear upon. Open the holy gospel, on which you are going to make him swear, and upon hearing what Christ Jesus says of swearing, tremble and withdraw. And what does Christ say there? "It has been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself. . . . But I say unto you, swear not at all." How! you make people swear on that very book which forbids the taking of oaths! Impious procedure! Horrid sacrilege! This is making the legislator, who condemns murder, an accomplice in the guilt of it.

I shed fewer tears when I hear that a person has been murdered on the highway, than when I see a man go up to the altar, lay his hand on the holy book of the gospels, and take his oath aloud. On this occasion, it is impossible for me to keep from changing color, from trembling and shivering both for him who administers, and for him who takes the oath. Miserable wretch! to secure to thyself a doubtful sum of money, thou lovest thy soul? Can the benefit thou reapest, be put in competition with thine and thy brother's loss? If thou knowest, that he from whom thou exactest an oath is a good man, why then art thou not contented with his word? But if he is not, why dost thou force him to forswear himself?—*Chrysostom against oaths. Homil. xv. ad Pop. Antioch.*

had a great sagacity in the conduct of souls. There is nothing more eloquent than his epistle to a virgin that had fallen; in my opinion it is a master-piece. But now if a preacher should not have formed his taste in these matters before he studies the fathers, he will be in danger of copying the most inaccurate parts of their works, and may perhaps imitate their chief defects in the sermons he composes.

C. But how long continued this false eloquence which succeeded the true kind?

A. Till now.

C. What do you mean? Till now?

A. Yes, till now: for we have not yet corrected our taste of eloquence, so much as we imagine. You will soon perceive the reason of it. The barbarous nations that overran the Roman empire, did spread ignorance and a bad taste everywhere. Now, we descended from them. And though learning began to revive in the fifteenth century, it recovered then but slowly. It was with great difficulty that we were brought by degrees to have any relish of a right manner, and even now, how many are there who have no notion of it. However, we ought to show a due respect not only to the fathers, but to other pious authors, who wrote during this long interval of ignorance. From them we learn the traditions of their time, and several other useful instructions. I am quite ashamed of giving my judgment so freely on this point, but, gentlemen, you desired me. And I shall be very ready to own my mistakes, if any one will undeceive me. But it is time to put an end to this conversation.

C. We cannot part with you, till you give us your opinion about the manner of choosing a text.

A. You know very well that the use of texts arose from the ancient custom that preachers observed, in not delivering their own reflections to the people, but only explaining the words of the sacred text. However, by degrees they came to leave off this way of expounding the whole words of the gospel that was appointed for the day; and discoursed only upon one part of it, which they called the text of the sermon. Now if a preacher does not make an exact explication of the whole gospel, or epistle, he ought at least to choose those words that are most important, and best suited to the wants and capacities of the people. He ought to explain them well; and to give a right notion of what is meant by a single word, it is oftentimes necessary to expound many others in the

context. But there should be nothing refined or far-fetched in such instructions. It must look very strange and awkward in a preacher to set up for wit and delicacy of invention, when he ought to speak with the utmost seriousness and gravity; out of regard to the authority of the Holy Spirit, whose words he borrows.

C. I must confess I always disliked a forced text. Have you not observed that a preacher draws from a text, whatever sermon he pleases? He insensibly warps and bends his subject, to make the text fit the sermon that he has occasion to preach. This is frequently done in the time of Lent. I cannot approve of it.

B. Before we conclude, I must beg of you to satisfy me as to one point that still puzzles me, and after that we will let you go.

A. Come, then; let us hear what it is. I have a great mind to satisfy you if I can. For I heartily wish you would employ your parts in making plain and persuasive sermons.

B. You would have a preacher explain the Holy Scriptures with connection, according to the obvious sense of them.

A. Yes; that would be an excellent method.

B. Whence then did it proceed that the fathers interpreted the Scripture quite otherwise? They usually give a spiritual, and allegorical meaning to the sacred text. Read St. Austin, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Origen and others of the fathers; they find mysteries everywhere, and seldom regard the letter of the Scripture.

A. The Jews that lived in our Saviour's days abounded in these mysterious, allegorical interpretations. It seems that the Therapeutae, who lived chiefly at Alexandria, (and whom Philo reckoned to be philosophical Jews, though Eusebius supposes they were primitive Christians,) were extremely addicted to these mystical interpretations. And indeed it was in the city of Alexandria, that allegories began to appear with credit among Christians. Origen was the first of the fathers who forsook the literal sense of Scripture. You know what disturbance he occasioned in the church. Piety itself seemed to recommend these allegorical interpretations. And besides, there is something in them very agreeable, ingenious and edifying. Most of the fathers, to gratify the humor of the people, (and probably their own too,) made great use of

them. But they kept faithfully to the literal and the prophetic sense, (which in its kind is literal too,) in all points where they had occasion to show the foundations of the Christian doctrine. When the people were fully instructed in everything they could learn from the letter of Scripture, the fathers gave them those mystical interpretations, to edify and comfort them. These explications were exactly adapted to the relish of the Eastern people, among whom they first arose; for they are naturally fond of mysterious and allegorical language. They were the more delighted with this variety of interpretations, because of the frequent preaching, and almost constant reading of Scripture, which was used in the church. But among us the people are far less instructed; we must do what is most necessary, and begin with the literal sense, without despising the pious explications that the fathers gave. We must take care of providing our daily bread, before we seek after delicacies. In interpreting Scripture, we cannot do better than to imitate the solidity of St. Chrysostom. Most of our modern preachers do not study allegorical meanings, because they have sufficiently explained the literal sense; but they forsake it, because they do not perceive its grandeur, and reckon it dry and barren in comparison of their way of preaching. But we have all the truths and duties of religion in the letter of the Scripture, delivered not only with authority, and a singular beauty, but with an inexhaustible variety; so that, without having recourse to mystical interpretations, a preacher may always have a great number of new and noble things to say. It is a deplorable thing to see how much this sacred treasure is neglected, even by those who have it always in their hands. If the clergy applied themselves to the ancient way of making homilies, we should then have two different sorts of preachers. They who have no vivacity, or a poetical genius, would explain the Scriptures clearly, without imitating its lively, noble manner; and if they expounded the word of God judiciously, and supported their doctrine by an exemplary life, they would be very good preachers. They would have what St. Ambrose requires, a chaste, simple, clear style, full of weight and gravity; without affecting elegance, or despising the smoothness and graces of language. The other sort, having a poetical turn of mind, would explain the Scripture in its own style and figure, and by that means become accomplished preachers. One sort would instruct people with clearness, force

and dignity; and the other would add to this powerful instruction, the sublimity, the enthusiasm, and vehemence of Scripture; so that it would (if I may so say) be entire and living in them, as much as it can be in men who are not miraculously inspired from above.

B. Oh, Sir; I had almost forgotten an important article. Have a moment's patience, I beseech you; a few words will satisfy me.

A. What now? Have you anybody else to censure?

B. Yes; the panegyrists. Do you think that when they praise a saint, they ought so to give his character, as to reduce all his actions and all his virtues to one point?

A. That shows the orator's invention and refined sense.

B. I understand you. It seems you do not like that method.

A. I think it wrong in most cases. He must put a force upon things, who reduces them all to a single point. There are many actions of one's life that flow from divers principles, and plainly show that he possessed very different qualities. The way of referring all the steps of a man's conduct to one cause, is but a scholastic subtilty, which shows that the orator is far from knowing human nature. The true way to draw a just character, is to paint the whole man, and to set him before the hearer's eyes, speaking and acting. In describing the course of his life, the preacher should chiefly point out those passages wherein either his natural temper or his piety best appeared. But there should always be something left to the hearer's own observation. The best way of praising holy persons is to recount their laudable actions. This gives a body and force to a panegyric; this is what instructs people, and makes an impression upon their minds. But it frequently happens that they return home without knowing anything of a person's life, about whom they have heard an hour's discourse; or at least, they have heard many remarks upon a few separate facts, related without any connection. On the contrary, a preacher ought to paint a person to the life, and show what he was in every period, in every condition, and in the most remarkable junctures of his life. This could not hinder one from forming a character of him; nay, it might be better collected from his actions, and his words, than from general thoughts, and imaginary designs.

B. You would choose then to give the history of a holy person's life, and not make a panegyric.

A. No; you mistake me. I would not make a simple narration. I should think it enough to give a coherent view of the chief facts in a concise, lively, close, pathetic manner. Everything should help to give a just idea of the holy person I praised, and at the same time to give proper instruction to the hearers. To this I would add such moral reflections, as I should think most suitable. Now do not you think that such a discourse as this would have a noble and amiable simplicity? Do not you believe that the lives of holy people would be better understood this way, and an audience be more edified than they generally are? Do you not think that according to the rules of eloquence we laid down, such a discourse would even be more eloquent than those overstrained panegyrics that are commonly made?

B. I am of opinion that such sermons as you speak of would be as instructive, as affecting, and as agreeable as any other. I am now satisfied, Sir; it is time to release you. I hope the pains you have taken with me will not be lost; for I have resolved to part with all my modern collections and Italian wits, and in a serious manner to study the whole connection and principles of religion, by tracing them back to their source.

C. Farewell, Sir; the best acknowledgment I can make, is to assure you that I will have a great regard to what you have said.

A. Gentlemen, good night. I will leave you with these words of St. Jerome to Nepotian: 'When you teach in the church, do not endeavor to draw applause, but rather sighs and groans from the people; let their tears praise you.¹ The discourses of a clergyman should be full of the Holy Scripture. Be not a declaimer, but a true teacher of the mysteries of God.

¹ "When you observe a hearer in silence, not uttering a word, but sorrowful, dejected, thoughtful, and in this condition returning straight home, and by his conduct, displaying the fruits of preaching, you ought to make more account of such a one, than of him who crowns the preacher with praise and applause."—*Ostervald's Lect.* vi.

THE

COUNTRY PARSON:

HIS

CHARACTER AND RULE OF HOLY LIFE.

THE AUTHOR, MR. GEORGE HERBERT.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

BEING desirous, through the mercy of God, to please him, for whom I am and live, and who giveth me my desires and performances; and considering with myself, that the way to please him is to feed my flock diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a pastor's love; I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor, that I may have a mark to aim at: which also I will set as high as I can, since he shoots higher that threatens the moon, than he that aims at a tree. Not that I think, if a man do not all which is here expressed, he presently sins, and displeases God; but that it is a good strife to go as far as we can in pleasing of him, who hath done so much for us. The Lord prosper the intention to myself, and others, who may not despise my poor labors, but add to those points which I have observed, until the book grow to a complete pastoral.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE COUNTRY PARSON.

CHAPTER I.

OF A PASTOR.

A PASTOR is the deputy of Christ, for the reducing of man to the obedience of God. This definition is evident, and contains the direct steps of pastoral duty and authority. For first, man fell from God by disobedience. Secondly, Christ is the glorious instrument of God for the revoking of man. Thirdly, Christ being not to continue on earth, but, after he had fulfilled the work of reconciliation, to be received up into heaven, he constituted deputies in his place, and these are priests. And therefore St. Paul in the beginning of his epistles, professeth this; and, in the first to the Colossians plainly avoucheth, that he *fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church*; wherein is contained the complete definition of a minister.

Out of this charter of the priesthood may be plainly gathered both the dignity thereof, and the duty. The dignity, in that a priest *may* do that which Christ did, and by his authority, and as his vicegerent. The duty, in that a priest *is* to do that which Christ did, and after his manner, both for doctrine and life.

CHAPTER II.

THEIR DIVERSITIES.

OF Pastors, (intending mine own nation only, and also therein setting aside the Right Reverend Prelates of the church, to whom this discourse ariseth not,) some live in the

universities, some in noble houses, some in parishes, residing on their cures.

Of those that live in the universities, some live there in office, whose rule is that of the apostle, Rom. 12: 6; *Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching, etc., he that ruleth, let him do it with diligence, etc.* Some in a preparatory way, whose aim and labor must be not only to get knowledge, but to subdue and mortify all lusts and affections; and not to think that, when they have read the fathers or schoolmen, a minister is made and the thing done. The greatest and hardest preparation is within; for: *unto the ungodly saith God, why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth? Ps. 50: 16.*

Those that live in noble houses are called chaplains, whose duty and obligation being the same to the houses they live in, as a parson's to his parish, in describing the one, (which is indeed the bent of my discourse,) the other will be manifest. Let not chaplains think themselves so free as many of them do, and, because they have different names, think their office different. Doubtless they are parsons of the families they live in, and are entertained to that end, either by an open or implicit covenant. Before they are in orders, they may be received for companions or discoursers; but after a man is once minister, he cannot agree to come into any house where he shall not exercise what he is, unless he forsake his plough and look back. Wherefore they are not to be over-submissive, and base but to keep up with the lord and lady of the house, and to preserve a boldness with them and all, even so far as reproof to their very face, when occasion calls, but seasonably and discreetly. They who do not thus, while they remember their earthly lord, do much forget their heavenly; they wrong the priesthood, neglect their duty, and shall be so far from that which they seek with their over-submissiveness and cringing that they shall ever be despised. They who for the hope of promotion neglect any necessary admonition or reproof, sell with Judas their Lord and Master.

CHAPTER III.

THE PARSON'S LIFE.

THE Country Parson is exceeding exact in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his ways. And because the two highest points of life, wherein a Christian is most seen, are patience and mortification; patience in regard of afflictions, mortification in regard of lusts and affections, and the stupefying and deadening of all the clamorous powers of the soul; therefore he hath thoroughly studied these, that he may be an absolute master and commander of himself, for all the purposes which God hath ordained him.

Yet in these points he labors most in those things which are most apt to scandalize his parish. And first, because country people live hardly and therefore, as feeling their own sweat and consequently knowing the price of money, are offended much with any who by hard usage increase their travail, the country parson is very circumspect in avoiding all covetousness, neither being greedy to get, nor niggardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly wealth; but in all his words and actions slighting and disesteeming it, even to a wondering that the world should so much value wealth, which in the day of wrath hath not one drachm of comfort for us. Secondly, because luxury is a very visible sin, the parson is very careful to avoid all the kinds thereof, but especially that of drinking, because it is the most popular vice; into which if he come, he prostitutes himself both to shame and sin, and, by having *fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, he disableth himself of authority to *reprove them*; for sins make all equal whom they find together, and then *they* are worst, who ought to be best. Neither is it for the servant of Christ to haunt inns or taverns or alehouses, to the dishonor of his person and office. The parson doth not so, but orders his life in such a fashion, that, when death takes him, as the Jews and Judas did Christ, he may say as *he did, I sat daily with you teaching in the temple*. Thirdly, because country people, as indeed all honest men, do much esteem their word, it being the life of buying and selling and dealing in the world; therefore the parson is very strict in keeping his word, though it be to his own hindrance; as knowing that, if he be not so, he will quickly be discover-

ed and disregarded ; neither will they believe him in the pulpit, whom they cannot trust in his conversation. As for oaths, and apparel, the disorders thereof are also very manifest. The parson's yea is yea, and nay, nay ; and his apparel plain, but reverend, and clean, without spots or dust or smell ; the purity of his mind breaking out, and dilating itself even to his body, clothes and habitation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARSON'S KNOWLEDGE.

THE Country Parson is full of all knowledge. They say, it is an ill mason that refuseth any stone ; and there is no knowledge, but, in a skilful hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate some other knowledge. He condescends even to the knowledge of tillage and pasturage, and makes great use of them in teaching ; because people by what they understand, are best led to what they understand not.

But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book of books, the storehouse and magazine of life and comfort, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. There he sucks, and lives. In the Scriptures he finds four things ; precepts for life, doctrines for knowledge, examples for illustration, and promises for comfort. These he hath digested severally.

But for the understanding of these, the means he useth are first, A HOLY LIFE ; remembering what his Master saith, that *if any do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine*, John vii. ; and assuring himself, that wicked men, however learned, do not know the Scriptures, because they feel them not, and because they are not understood but with the same Spirit that writ them. The second means is PRAYER ; which, if it be necessary even in temporal things, how much more in things of another world, where *the well is deep, and we have nothing of ourselves to draw with?* Wherefore he ever begins the reading of the Scripture with some short inward ejaculation ; as, *Lord open mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law.* The third means is A DILIGENT COLLATION of Scripture with Scripture. For, all truth being consonant to itself, and all being penned by one and the self-same Spirit, it cannot be but that an industrious and

judicious comparing of place with place, must be a singular help for the right understanding of the Scriptures. To this may be added, the consideration of any text with the coherence thereof, touching what goes before, and what follows after; as also the scope of the Holy Ghost. When the apostles would have called down fire from heaven, they were reproved, as ignorant of what spirit they were. For the law required one thing, and the gospel another, yet as diverse, not as repugnant; therefore the spirit of both is to be considered and weighed. The fourth means are COMMENTERS AND FATHERS, who have handled the places controverted; which the parson by no means refuseth. As he doth not so study others as to neglect the grace of God in himself, and what the Holy Spirit teacheth him, so doth he assure himself, that God in all ages hath had his servants, to whom he hath revealed his truth, as well as to him; and that as one country doth not bear all things, that there may be a commerce, so neither hath God opened, or will open, all to one, that there may be a traffic in knowledge between the servants of God, for the planting both of love and humility. Wherefore he hath one comment, at least, upon every book of Scripture, and, ploughing with this and his own meditations, he enters into the secrets of God treasured in the Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER V.

THE PARSON'S ACCESSARY KNOWLEDGES.

THE Country Parson hath read the fathers also, and the schoolmen, and the later writers, or a good proportion of all, out of all which he hath compiled a book, and body of divinity, which is the storehouse of his sermons, and which he preacheth all his life, but diversely clothed, illustrated and enlarged. For though the world is full of such composures, yet every man's own is fittest, readiest and most savory to him. Besides, this being to be done in his younger and preparatory times, it is an honest joy ever after to look upon his well-spent hours.

This body he made, by way of expounding the church catechism, to which all divinity may easily be reduced. For, it being indifferent in itself to choose any method, that is best to be chosen of which there is likeliest to be most use.

Now catechising being a work of singular and admirable benefit to the church of God, and a thing required under canonical obedience, the expounding of our catechism must needs be the most useful form. Yet hath the parson, besides this laborious work, a slighter form of catechising, fitter for country people; according as his audience is, so he useth one, or other; or sometimes both, if his audience be intermixed.

He greatly esteems also of cases of conscience; wherein he is much versed. And indeed, herein is the greatest ability of a parson; to lead his people exactly in the ways of truth, so that they neither decline to the right hand nor to the left. Neither let any think this a slight thing. For every one hath not digested, when it is a sin to take something for money lent, or when not; when it is fault to discover another's fault, or when not; when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means or honor, be a sin of covetousness or ambition, and when not; when the appetites of the body in eating, drinking, sleep, and the pleasure that comes with sleep, be sins of gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, lust, and when not; and so in many circumstances of actions. Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, or which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the parson hath thoroughly canvassed all the particulars of human actions; at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his parish.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PARSON PRAYING.

THE Country Parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himself to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart, and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty and unfeigned devotion. This he doth, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the majesty of God, before whom he then presents himself; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole congregation, whose sins he then bears, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar, to be bathed and washed in the sacred laver of Christ's blood. Secondly, as this is

the true reason of his inward fear, so he is content to express this outwardly to the utmost of his power; that, being first affected himself, he may affect also his people; knowing that no sermon moves them so much to a reverence (which they forget again when they come to pray), as a devout behavior in the very act of praying. Accordingly his voice is humble, his words treatable and slow; yet not so slow neither, as to let the fervency of the supplicant hang and die between speaking; but, with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his duty.

Besides his example, he, having often instructed his people how to carry themselves in divine service, exacts of them all possible reverence; by no means enduring either talking or sleeping or gazing or leaning or half-kneeling or any undutiful behavior in them, but causing them, when they sit or stand or kneel, to do all in a straight and steady posture, as attending to what is done in the church, and every one, man and child, answering aloud, both Amen, and all other answers which are on the clerk's and people's part to answer. Which answers also are to be done, not in a huddling or slubbering fashion, gaping or scratching the head or spitting, even in the midst of their answer, but gently and pausably, thinking what they say; so that while they answer "As it was in the beginning," etc., they meditate as they speak, that God hath ever had his people that have glorified him, as well as now, and that he shall have so for ever. And the like in other answers. This is that which the apostle calls a *reasonable service*, Rom. xii, when we speak not as parrots without reason, or offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoid of reason; but when we use our reason, and apply our powers to the service of him that gives them.

If there be any of the gentry or nobility of the parish, who sometimes make it a piece of state not to come at the beginning of service with their poor neighbors, but at mid-prayers, both to their own loss, and of theirs also who gaze upon them when they come in, and neglect the present service of God; he by no means suffers it, but after divers gentle admonitions, if they persevere, he causes them to be presented. Or if the poor church-wardens be affrighted with their greatness, (notwithstanding his instruction that they ought not to be so, but even to let the world sink, so they do their duty,) he presents them himself; only protesting to them, that not

any ill-will draws him to it, but the debt and obligation of his calling, being to obey God rather than men.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARSON PREACHING.

THE Country Parson preacheth constantly. The pulpit is his joy and his throne. If he at any time intermit, it is either for want of health; or against some festival, that he may the better celebrate it; or for the variety of the hearers, that he may be heard at his return more attentively. When he intermits, he is ever very well supplied by some able man; who treads in his steps, and will not throw down what he hath built; whom also he entreats to press some point that he himself hath often urged with no great success, that so *in the mouth of two or three witnesses the truth may be more established.*

When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestness of speech, it being natural to men to think, that where is much earnestness, there is somewhat worth hearing, and by a diligent and busy cast of his eye on his auditors; with letting them know that he observes who marks and who not; and with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich—"This is for you, and this is for you;"—for particulars ever touch and awake, more than generals. Herein also he serves himself of the judgments of God; as of those of ancient times, so especially of the late ones, and those most, which are nearest to his parish; for people are very attentive at such discourses, and think it behoves them to be so, when God is so near them, and even over their heads. Sometimes he tells them stories and sayings of others, according as his text invites him; for them also men heed, and remember better than exhortations; which, though earnest, yet often die with the sermon, especially with country people; which are thick and heavy and hard to raise to a point of zeal and fervency, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember. He often tells them, that sermons are dangerous things; that none goes out of church as he came in, but either better or worse;

that none is careless before his judge, and that the word of God shall judge us.

By these and other means the parson procures attention; but the character of his sermon is HOLINESS. He is not witty or learned or eloquent, but HOLY:—a character that Hermogenes never dreamed of, and therefore he could give no precepts thereof. But it is gained, first, by choosing texts of devotion, not controversy; moving and ravishing texts, whereof the Scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts before they come into our mouths; truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that we say: so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is heart deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many apostrophes to God; as, “O Lord! bless my people, and teach them this point!” or, “O my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and do thou speak thyself; for thou art love, and when thou teachest, all are scholars.” Some such irradiations scatteringly in the sermon, carry great holiness in them. The prophets are admirable in this. So Isa. lxiv.; *Oh, that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down,* etc. And Jeremiah, chap. x, after he had complained of the desolation of Israel, turns to God suddenly, *O Lord! I know that the way of man is not in himself,* etc. Fourthly, by frequent wishes of the people’s good, and joying therein; though he himself were, with St. Paul, *even sacrificed upon the service of their faith.* For there is no greater sign of holiness, than the procuring and rejoicing in another’s good. And herein St. Paul excelled, in all his epistles. How did he put the Romans *in all his prayers*, Rom. 1: 9; and *ceased not to give thanks* for the Ephesians, Eph. 1: 16; and for the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 1: 4; and for the Philippians *made request with joy*, Phil. 1: 4; and is in contention for them whether to live or die, be with them or Christ, ver. 23; which, setting aside his care of his flock, were a madness to doubt of. What an admirable epistle is the second to the Corinthians! How full of affections! He joys, and he is sorry; he grieves, and he glories! Never was there such a care of a flock expressed, save in the great Shepherd of the fold, who first shed tears over Jerusalem, and afterwards blood. Therefore this care may be learned there, and then woven into sermons; which will make them appear exceeding reverend and holy. Lastly, by an often urging of the

presence and majesty of God, by these, or such like speeches —“ Oh, let us take heed what we do! God sees us; he sees whether I speak as I ought, or you hear as you ought; he sees hearts, as we see faces. He is among us; for if we be here, he must be here; since we are here by him, and without him could not be here.” Then, turning the discourse to his majesty,—“ and he is a great God, and terrible; as great in mercy, so great in judgment! There are but two devouring elements, fire and water; he hath both in him. *His voice is as the sound of many waters,* Rev. i.; and he himself *is a consuming fire,*” Heb. xii. Such discourses show very holy.

The parson’s method in handling of a text consists of two parts; first, a plain and evident declaration of the meaning of the text; and secondly, some choice observations, drawn out of the whole text, as it lies entire and unbroken in the Scripture itself. This he thinks natural and sweet and grave. Whereas the other way, of crumbling a text into small parts, (as, the person speaking or spoken to, the subject, and object, and the like,) hath neither in it sweetness nor gravity nor variety; since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary, and may be considered alike in all the Scripture.

The parson exceeds not an hour in preaching, because all ages have thought that a competency, and he that profits not in that time, will less afterwards; the same affection which made him not profit before, making him then weary, and so he grows from not relishing, to loathing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARSON ON SUNDAYS.

THE Country Parson, as soon as he awakes on Sunday morning, presently falls to work, and seems to himself so as a market-man is, when the market-day comes; or a shop-keeper, when customers use to come in. His thoughts are full of making the best of the day, and contriving it to his best gains. To this end, besides his ordinary prayers, he makes a peculiar one for a blessing on the exercises of the day; “ that nothing befall him unworthy of that Majesty be-

fore which he is to present himself, but that all may be done with reverence to his glory, and with edification to his flock; humbly beseeching his master, that how or whenever he punish him, it be not in his ministry." Then he turns to request for his people, "that the Lord would be pleased to sanctify them all; that they may come with holy hearts and awful minds, into the congregation; and that the good God would pardon all those who come with less prepared hearts than they ought."

This done, he sets himself to the consideration of the duties of the day; and if there be any extraordinary addition to the customary exercises, either from the time of the year, or from the State, or from God by a child born, or dead, or any other accident, he contrives how and in what manner to induce it to the best advantage. Afterwards, when the hour calls, with his family attending him, he goes to church; at his first entrance humbly adoring and worshipping the invisible majesty and presence of Almighty God, and blessing the people, either openly, or to himself. Then, having read divine service twice fully, and preached in the morning, and catechised in the afternoon, he thinks he hath in some measure, according to poor and frail man, discharged the public duties of the congregation. The rest of the day he spends either in reconciling neighbors that are at variance, or in visiting the sick, or in exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his sermons cannot, or do not reach. And every one is more awaked, when we come and say, *Thou art the man*. This way he finds exceeding useful and winning; and these exhortations he calls his privy purse, even as princes have theirs, besides their public disbursements. At night he thinks it a very fit time, both suitable to the joy of the day, and without hindrance to public duties, either to entertain some of his neighbors, or to be entertained of them; where he takes occasion to discourse of such things as are both profitable and pleasant, and to raise up their minds to apprehend God's good blessing to our church and State; that order is kept in the one, and peace in the other, without disturbance or interruption of public divine offices.

As he opened the day with prayer, so he closeth it; humbly beseeching the Almighty "to pardon and accept our poor services, and to improve them, that we may grow therein; and that our feet may be like hind's feet, ever climbing up higher and higher unto him."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PARSON'S STATE OF LIFE.

THE Country Parson, considering that virginity is a higher state than matrimony, and that the ministry requires the best and highest things, is rather unmarried than married. But yet, as the temper of his body may be, or as the temper of his parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that amongst suspicious men, and other like circumstances considered, he is rather married than unmarried. Let him communicate the thing often by prayer unto God; and as his grace shall direct him, so let him proceed.

If he be unmarried, and keep house, he hath not a woman in his house; but finds opportunities of having his meat dressed and other services done by men servants at home, and his linen washed abroad. If he be unmarried and sojourn, he never talks with any woman alone, but in the audience of others; and that seldom, and then also in a serious manner, never jestingly or sportfully. He is very circumspect in all companies, both of his behavior, speech, and very looks; knowing himself to be both suspected and envied. If he *stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep himself a virgin*, he spends his days in fasting and prayer, and blesseth God for the gift of continency; knowing that it can no way be preserved, but only by those means by which at first it was obtained. He therefore thinks it not enough for him to observe the fasting days of the church, and the daily prayers enjoined him by authority, which he observeth out of humble conformity and obedience; but adds to them, out of choice and devotion, some other days for fasting and hours for prayer. And by these he keeps his body tame, serviceable and healthful; and his soul fervent, active, young and lusty as an eagle. He often readeth the lives of the primitive monks, hermits and virgins; and wondereth not so much at their patient suffering, and cheerful dying under persecuting emperors (though that indeed be very admirable), as at their daily temperance, abstinence, watchings and constant prayers and mortifications, in the times of peace and prosperity. To put on the profound humility and the

exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary virtues of that sort, and to keep them on in the sunshine and noon of prosperity, he findeth to be as necessary and as difficult, at least, as to be clothed with perfect patience and Christian fortitude in the cold midnight storms of persecution and adversity. He keepeth his watch and ward, night and day, against the proper and peculiar temptations of his state of life; which are principally these two, spiritual pride and impurity of heart. Against these ghostly enemies he girdeth up his loins, keeps the imagination from roving, puts on the whole armor of God; and, by the virtue of the shield of faith he is *not afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, (carnal impurity,) *nor of the sickness that destroyeth at noon-day*, (ghostly pride and self-conceit). Other temptations he hath, which, like mortal enemies, may sometimes disquiet him likewise; for the human soul, being bounded and kept in her sensitive faculty, will run out more or less in her intellectual. Original concupiscence is such an active thing, by reason of continual inward or outward temptations, that it is ever attempting or doing one mischief or other. Ambition, or untimely desire of promotion to an higher state, under color of accommodation or necessary provision, is a common temptation to men of any eminency, especially being single men. Curiosity in prying into high, speculative and unprofitable questions, is another great stumbling-block to the holiness of scholars. These, and many other *spiritual wickednesses in high places* doth the parson fear, or experiment, or both; and that much more being single, than if he were married; for then commonly the stream of temptations is turned another way, into covetousness, love of pleasure or ease, or the like. If the parson be unmarried, and means to continue so, he doth at least as much as hath been said.

If he be married, the choice of his wife was made rather by his ear than by his eye; his judgment, not his affection, found out a fit wife for him, whose humble and liberal disposition he preferred before beauty, riches or honor. He knew that (the good instrument of God to bring women to heaven) a wise and loving husband could, out of humility, produce any special grace of faith, patience, meekness, love, obedience, etc.; and, out of liberality, make her fruitful in all good works. As he is just in all things, so is he to his wife also; counting nothing so much his own, as that he may be unjust unto it. Therefore he gives her respect both before

her servants and others, and half at least of the government of the house; reserving so much of the affairs as serve for a diversion for him, yet never so giving over the reins, but that he sometimes looks how things go, demanding an account, but not by the way of an account. And this must be done the oftener or the seldomer, according as he is satisfied of his wife's discretion.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARSON IN HIS HOUSE.

THE Parson is very exact in the governing of his house, making it a copy and model for his parish. He knows the temper and pulse of every person in his house; and, accordingly, either meets with their vices, or advanceth their virtues. His wife is either religious, or night and day he is winning her to it. Instead of the qualities of the world he requires only three of her. First, a training up of her children and maids in the fear of God; with prayers, and catechising, and all religious duties. Secondly, a curing and healing of all wounds and sores with her own hands; which skill either she brought with her, or he takes care she shall learn it of some religious neighbor. Thirdly, a providing for her family in such sort, as that neither they want a competent sustentation, nor her husband be brought in debt.

His children he first makes Christians, and then commonwealth's men; the one he owes to his heavenly country, the other to his earthly, having no title to either, except he do good to both. Therefore, having seasoned them with all piety—not only of words, in praying and reading; but in actions, in visiting other sick children and tending their wounds, and sending his charity by them to the poor, and sometimes giving them a little money to do it of themselves, that they get a delight in it, and enter favor with God, who weighs even children's actions, 1 Kings, 14: 12, 13,—he afterwards turns his care to fit all their dispositions with some calling; not sparing the eldest, but giving him the prerogative of his father's profession, which happily for his other children he is not able to do. Yet in binding them apprentices, (in case he think fit to do so,) he takes care not to put them into vain

trades, unbefitting the reverence of their father's calling, such as are taverns for men, and lace-making for women; because those trades, for the most part, serve but the vices and vanities of the world, which he is to deny and not augment. However, he resolves with himself never to omit any present good deed of charity, in consideration of providing a stock for his children; but assures himself that money thus lent to God, is placed surer for his children's advantage, than if it were given to the chamber of London. Good deeds and good breeding are his two great stocks for his children; if God give anything above those, and not spent in them, he bleaseth God, and lays it out as he sees cause.

His servants are all religious; and were it not his duty to have them so, it were his profit; for none are so well served, as by religious servants; both because they do best, and because what they do is blessed, and prospers. After religion, he teaches them that three things make a complete servant:—truth, diligence, and neatness or cleanliness. Those that can read, are allowed times for it; and those that cannot, are taught; for all in his house are either teachers or learners or both; so that his family is a school of religion, and they all account, that to teach the ignorant is the greatest alms. Even the walls are not idle; but something is written or painted there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety; especially the 101st Psalm, which is expressed in a fair table, as being the rule of a family. And when they go abroad, his wife among her neighbors is the beginning of good discourses; his children, among children; his servants, among other servants. So that as in the house of those that are skilled in music, all are musicians; so in the house of a preacher, all are preachers. He suffers not a lie or equivocation by any means in his house, but counts it the art and secret of governing, to preserve a directness and open plainness in all things; so that all his house knows that there is no help for a fault done, but confession. He himself, or his wife, takes account of sermons, and how every one profits, comparing this year with the last. And, besides the common prayers of the family, he straitly requires of all to pray by themselves, before they sleep at night and stir out in the morning; and knows what prayers they say, and, till they have learned them, makes them kneel by him; esteeming that this private praying is a more voluntary act in them than when they are called to others' prayers, and that which, when

they leave the family, they carry with them. He keeps his servants between love and fear, according as he finds them. But, generally, he distributes it thus; to his children he shows more love than terror; to his servants, more terror than love; but an old good servant boards a child.

The furniture of his house is very plain, but clean, whole and sweet;—as sweet as his garden can make; for he hath no money for such things, charity being his only perfume, which deserves cost when he can spare it. His fare is plain, and common, but wholesome. What he hath is little, but very good. It consisteth most of mutton, beef and veal; if he adds anything for a great day or a stranger, his garden or orchard supplies it, or his barn and backside. He goes no further for any entertainment, lest he go into the world; esteeming it absurd, that *he* should exceed, who teacheth others temperance. But [those which his home produceth, he refuseth not; as coming cheap and easy, and arising from the improvement of things which otherwise would be lost. Wherein he admires and imitates the wonderful providence and thrift of the great Householder of the world. For, there being two things which, as they are, are unuseful to man, the one for smallness, as crumbs and scattered corn, and the like; the other for the foulness, as wash, and dirt, and things thereinto fallen,—God hath provided creatures for both; for the first, poultry; for the second, swine. These save man the labor; and, doing that which either he could not do, or was not fit for him to do, by taking both sorts of food into them, do as it were dress and prepare both for man in themselves, by growing themselves fit for his table.

The parson in his house observes fasting days. And particularly as Sunday is his day of joy, so Friday his day of humiliation; which he celebrates not only with abstinence of diet, but also of company, recreation and all outward contentments, and besides, with confession of sins, and all acts of mortification. Now fasting days contain a treble obligation; first, of eating less that day than on other days; secondly, of eating no pleasing or over-nourishing things, as the Israelites did eat sour herbs; thirdly, of eating no flesh,—which is but the determination of the second rule, by authority, to this particular. The two former obligations are much more essential to a true fast, than the third and last; and fasting days were fully performed by keeping of the two former, had not authority interposed. So that to eat little, and

that unpleasant, is the natural rule of fasting, although it be flesh. For, since fasting, in Scripture language, is an afflicting of our souls, if a piece of dry flesh at my table be more unpleasant to me, than some fish there, certainly to eat the flesh and not the fish, is to keep the fasting-day naturally. And it is observable, that the prohibiting of flesh came from hot countries, where both flesh alone, and much more with wine, is apt to nourish more than in cold regions; and where flesh may be much better spared, and with more safety, than elsewhere, where (both the people and the drink being cold and phlegmatic) the eating of flesh is an antidote to both. For it is certain that a weak stomach being prepossessed with flesh, shall much better brook and bear a draught of beer, than if it had taken before either fish or roots or such things, which will discover itself by spitting, and rheum or phlegm. To conclude, the parson, if he be in full health, keeps the three obligations; eating fish or roots; and *that*, for quantity little, for quality unpleasant. If his body be weak and obstructed, as most students are, he cannot keep the last obligation, nor suffer others in his house, that are so, to keep it; but only the two former, which also, in diseases of exinanition (as consumptions), must be broken, for meat was made for man, not man for meat. To all this may be added, not for emboldening the unruly, but for the comfort of the weak, that not only sickness breaks these obligations of fasting, but sickliness also. For it is as unnatural to do anything that leads me to a sickness to which I am inclined, as not to get out of that sickness when I am in it, by any diet. One thing is evident; that an English body, and a student's body, are two great obstructed vessels; and there is nothing that is food, and not physic, which doth less obstruct, than flesh moderately taken; as, being immoderately taken, it is exceeding obstructive. And obstructions are the cause of most diseases.

 CHAPTER XI.

THE PARSON'S COURTESY.

THE Country Parson owing a debt of charity to the poor, and of courtesy to his other parishioners, he so distinguisheth,

that he keeps his money for the poor, and his table for those that are above alms. Not but that the poor are welcome also to his table; whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility, and their comfort, who are much cheered with such friendliness. But since both is to be done, the better sort invited, and meaner relieved, he chooseth rather to give the poor, money; which they can better employ to their own advantage, and suitably to their needs, than so much given in meat at dinner. Having then invited some of his parish, he taketh his times to do the like to the rest, so that, in the compass of the year, he hath them all with him; because country people are very observant of such things, and will not be persuaded but, being not invited, they are hated. Which persuasion, the parson by all means avoids; knowing that, where there are such conceits, there is no room for his doctrine to enter. Yet doth he oftenest invite those, whom he sees take best courses; that so both they may be encouraged to persevere, and others spurred to do well, that they may enjoy the like courtesy. For though he desire that all should live well and virtuously, not for any reward of his, but for virtue's sake; yet that will not be so. And therefore as God, although we should love him only for his own sake, yet out of his infinite pity hath set forth heaven for a reward to draw men to piety, and is content if, at least *so*, they will become good; so the country parson, who is a diligent observer and tracker of God's ways, sets up as many encouragements to goodness as he can, both in honor and profit and fame; that he may, if not the best way, yet *any* way make his parish good.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PARSON'S CHARITY.

THE Country Parson is full of charity; it is his predominant element. For many and wonderful things are spoken of thee, thou great virtue. To charity is given the covering of sins, 1 Pet. 4: 8; and the forgiveness of sins, Matt. 6: 14; Luke 7: 47; the fulfilling of the law, Rom. 13: 10; the life of faith, James 2: 26; the blessings of this life, Prov. 22: 9; Ps. 41: 2; and the reward of the next, Matt. 25: 35. In

brief, it is the body of religion, John 13: 35, and the top of Christian virtues, 1 Cor. xiii. Wherefore all his works relish of charity. When he riseth in the morning, he bethinketh himself what good deeds he can do that day, and presently doth them; counting that day lost, wherein he hath not exercised his charity.

He first considers his own parish; and takes care, that there be not a beggar or idle person in his parish, but that all be in a competent way of getting their living. This he effects either by bounty or persuasion or by authority; making use of that excellent statute, which binds all parishes to maintain their own. If his parish be rich, he exacts this of them; if poor, and he able, he easeth them therein. But he gives no set pension to any; for this in time will lose the name and effect of charity with the poor people, though not with God; for then they will reckon upon it, as on a debt, and if it be taken away, though justly, they will murmur and repine as much, as he that is disseized of his own inheritance. But the parson, having a double aim, and making a hook of his charity, causeth them still to depend on him; and so, by continual and fresh bounties, unexpected to them but resolved to himself, he wins them to praise God more, to live more religiously, and to take more pains in their vocation, as not knowing when they shall be relieved; which otherwise they would reckon upon, and turn to idleness. Besides this general provision, he hath other times of opening his hand, as at great festivals and communions; not suffering any, that day he receives, to want a good meal suiting to the joy of the occasion. But specially at hard times and dearths, he even parts his living and life among them; giving some corn outright, and selling other at under rates; and, when his own stock serves not, working those that are able to the same charity, still pressing it, in the pulpit and out of the pulpit, and never leaving them till he obtain his desire. Yet in all his charity, he distinguisheth; giving them most who live best, and take most pains, and are most charged; so is his charity in effect a sermon.

After the consideration of his own parish, he enlargeth himself, if he be able, to the neighborhood; for that also is some kind of obligation. So doth he also to those at his door; whom God puts in his way, and makes his neighbors. But these he helps not without some testimony, except the evidence of the misery bring testimony with it. For though

these testimonies also may be falsified, yet—considering that the law allows these in case they be true, but allows by no means to give without testimony—as he obeys authority in the one, so, *that* being once satisfied, he allows his charity some blindness in the other; especially since, of the two commands, we are more enjoined to be charitable than wise. But evident miseries have a natural privilege and exemption from all law. Whenever he gives anything, and sees them labor in thanking of him, he exacts of them to let him alone, and say rather, “God be praised! God be glorified!” that so the thanks may go the right way, and thither only, where they are only due. So doth he also, before giving, make them say their prayers first, or the creed and ten commandments; and, as he finds them perfect, rewards them the more. For other givings are lay and secular, but this is to give like a priest.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARSON'S CHURCH.

THE Country Parson hath a special care of his church, that all things there be decent, and befitting His name by which it is called. Therefore, first, he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plastered, windows glazed, floor paved, seats whole, firm and uniform, especially that the pulpit and desk and communion table and font be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the church be swept and kept clean, without dust or cobwebs; and, at great festivals, strewed and stuck with boughs and perfumed with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit and proper texts of Scripture everywhere painted; and that all the paintings be grave and reverend, not with light colors or foolish antics. Fourthly, that all the books appointed by authority be there; and those, not torn or fouled, but whole and clean, and well bound; and that there be a fitting and sightly communion cloth “of fine linen, with a handsome and seemly carpet of good and costly stuff or cloth, and all kept sweet and clean in a strong and decent chest; with a chalice and cover, and a stoop or flagon; and a bason for alms and offerings; besides which, he hath a poor man's

box conveniently seated, to receive the charity of well-minded people, and to lay up treasure for the sick and needy."

And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desirous to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness, and as following the apostle's two great and admirable rules in things of this nature; the first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently and in order*; the second, *Let all things be done to edification*, I Cor. xiv. For these two rules comprise and include the double object of our duty, God and our neighbor; the first being for the honor of God, the second for the benefit of our neighbor. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully and exactly contain, even in external and indifferent things, what course is to be taken; and put them to great shame, who deny the Scripture to be perfect.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARSON IN CIRCUIT.

THE Country Parson, upon the afternoons in the week-days, takes occasion sometimes to visit in person, now one quarter of his parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs; whereas on Sundays it is easy for them to compose themselves to order, which they put on as their holiday clothes, and come to church in frame, but commonly the next day put off both.

When he comes to any house, first he blesseth it; and then, as he finds the persons of the house employed, so he forms his discourse. Those that he finds religiously employed, he both commends them much, and furthers them, when he is gone, in their employment; as, if he finds them reading, he furnisheth them with good books; if curing poor people, he supplies them with receipts, and instructs them further in that skill, showing them how acceptable such works are to God, and wishing them ever to do the cures with their own hands, and not to put them over to servants.

Those that he finds busy in the works of their calling, he commendeth them also; for it is a good and just thing for every one to do their own business. But then he admon-

isheth them of two things; first, that they dive not too deep into worldly affairs, plunging themselves over head and ears into carking and caring; but that they so labor, as neither to labor anxiously, nor distrustfully, nor profanely. "Then they labor anxiously, when they overdo it, to the loss of their quiet and health. Then distrustfully, when they doubt God's providence, thinking their own labor is the cause of their thriving, as if it were in their own hands to thrive or not to thrive. Then they labor profanely, when they set themselves to work like brute beasts, never raising their thoughts to God, nor sanctifying their labor with daily prayer; when on the Lord's day they do unnecessary servile work, or in time of divine service on other holy days, except in the cases of extreme poverty, and in the seasons of seed time and harvest." Secondly, he adviseth them so to labor for wealth and maintenance, as that they make not that the end of their labor, but that they may have wherewithal to serve God better, and do good deeds. After these discourses, if they be poor and needy whom he thus finds laboring, he gives them somewhat, and opens not only his mouth, but his purse to their relief, that so they go on more cheerfully in their vocation, and himself be ever the more welcome to them.

Those that the parson finds idle or ill-employed, he chides not at first, for that were neither civil nor profitable; but always in the close, before he departs from them. Yet in this he distinguisheth. For if he be a plain countryman, he reproves him plainly; for they are not sensible of fineness. If they be of higher quality, they commonly are quick, and sensible, and very tender of reproof; and therefore he lays his discourse so, that he comes to the point very leisurely, and oftentimes, as Nathan did, in the person of another making them to reprove themselves. However, one way or other, he ever reproves them, that he may keep himself pure, and not be entangled in others' sins. Neither in this doth he forbear, though there be company by. For as, when the offence is particular, and against *me*, I am to follow our Saviour's rule, and to take my brother aside and reprove him; so, when the offence is public, and against God, I am then to follow the apostle's rule, 1 Tim. 5: 20, and to *rebuke openly* that which is done openly.

Besides these occasional discourses, the parson questions what order is kept in the house; as about prayers morn-

ing and evening on their knees, reading of Scripture, catechising, singing of psalms at their work and on holidays,—who can read, who not; and sometimes he hears the children read himself, and blesseth them; encouraging also the servants to learn to read, and offering to have them taught on holidays by his servants. If the parson were ashamed of particularizing in these things, he were not fit to be a parson. But he holds the rule, that nothing is little in God's service; if it once have the honor of *THAT NAME*, it grows great instantly. Wherefore, neither disdaineth he to enter into the poorest cottage, though he even creep into it, and though it smell never so loathsomely. For both God is there also, and those for whom God died. And so much the rather doth he so, as his access to the poor is more comfortable, than to the rich; and, in regard of himself, it is more humiliation.

These are the parson's general aims in his circuit; but with these he mingles other discourses for conversation sake, and to make his higher purposes slip the more easily.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PARSON COMFORTING.

THE Country Parson when any of his cure is sick or afflicted with loss of friend or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts; and rather goes to them than send for the afflicted, though they can, and otherwise ought to come to him. To this end he hath thoroughly digested all the points of consolation, as having continual use of them; such as are from God's *general* providence, extended even to lilies; from his *particular*, to his church; from his promises; from the examples of all saints that ever were; from Christ himself, perfecting our redemption no other way than by sorrow; from the benefit of affliction, which softens and works the stubborn heart of man; from the certainty both of deliverance and reward, if we faint not; from the miserable comparison of the moment of griefs here, with the weight of joys hereafter. "Besides this, in his visiting the sick or otherwise afflicted, he followeth the church's counsel, namely, in persuading them to particular confession; laboring to make them understand the great good use of this an-

cient and pious ordinance, and how necessary it is in some cases. He also urgeth them to do some pious charitable works, as a necessary evidence and fruit of their faith; at that time especially, to the participation of the holy sacrament, showing them how comfortable and sovereign a medicine it is to all sin-sick souls; what strength and joy and peace it administers against all temptations, even in death itself. He plainly and *generally* intimateth all this to the disaffected or sick person, that so the hunger and thirst after it may come rather from themselves, than from his persuasion."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PARSON A FATHER.

THE Country Parson is not only a father to his flock, but also professeth himself throughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as fully as if he had begot his whole parish. And of this he makes great use. For by this means, when any sins, he hateth him not as an officer, but pities him as a father. And even in those wrongs which either in tithing or otherwise are done to his own person, he considers the offender as a child, and forgives, so he may have any sign of amendment. So also when, after many admonitions, any continues to be refractory, yet he gives him not over, but is long before he proceed to disinheriting, or perhaps never goes so far, knowing that some are called at the eleventh hour; and therefore he still expects and waits, lest he should determine God's hour of coming; which, as he cannot, touching the last day, so neither touching the intermediate days of conversion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PARSON IN JOURNEY.

THE Country Parson, when a just occasion calleth him out of his parish, (which he diligently and strictly weigheth, his parish being all his joy and thought,) leaveth not his

ministry behind him, but is himself wherever he is. Therefore those he meets on the way he blesseth audibly; and with those he overtakes, or that overtake him, he begins good discourses, such as may edify; interposing sometimes some short and honest refreshments, which may make his other discourses more welcome and less tedious. And when he comes to his inn, he refuseth not to join, that he may enlarge the glory of God to the company he is in, by a due blessing of God for their safe arrival, and saying grace at meat; and at going to bed, by giving the host notice that he will have prayers in the hall, wishing him to inform his guests thereof, that if any be willing to partake they may resort thither. The like he doth in the morning; using pleasantly the outlandish proverb, that "prayers and provender never hinder journey." When he comes to any other house, where his kindred or other relations give him any authority over the family, if he be to stay for a time, he considers diligently the state thereof to God-ward, and that in two points; first, what disorders there are either in apparel, or diet, or too open a buttery, or reading vain books, or swearing, or breeding up children to no calling, but in idleness, or the like. Secondly, what means of piety, whether daily prayers be used, grace, reading of Scriptures, and other good books; how Sundays, holidays, and fasting days are kept. And, accordingly as he finds any defect in these, he first considers with himself what kind of remedy fits the temper of the house best, and then he faithfully and boldly applieth it; yet seasonably and discreetly, by taking aside the lord or lady, or master and mistress of the house, and showing them clearly, that *they* respect them most who wish them best, and that not a desire to meddle with others' affairs, but the earnestness to do all the good he can, moves him to say thus and thus.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PARSON IN SENTINEL.

THE Country Parson, wherever he is, keeps God's watch; that is, there is nothing spoken or done in the company where he is, but comes under his test and censure. If it be well spoken or done, he takes occasion to commend and en-

large it; if ill, he presently lays hold of it, lest the poison steal into some young and unwary spirits, and possess them even before they themselves heed it. But this he doth discreetly, with mollifying and suppling words;—"this was not so well said, as it might have been foreborne;"—"we cannot allow this." Or else, if the thing will admit interpretation,—“your meaning is not thus, but thus;”—or, “so far indeed what you say is true, and well said; but *this* will not stand.” This is called keeping God’s watch, when the baits which the enemy lays in company are discovered and avoided. This is to be on God’s side, and be true to his party. Besides, if he perceive in company any discourse tending to ill, either by the wickedness or quarrelsomeness thereof, he either prevents it judiciously, or breaks it off seasonably by some diversion. Wherein a pleasantness of disposition is of great use, men being willing to sell the interest and engagement of their discourses for no price sooner than that of mirth; whither the nature of man, loving refreshment, gladly betakes itself, even to the loss of honor.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PARSON IN REFERENCE.

THE Country Parson is sincere and upright in all his relations. And, first, he is just to his country; as when he is set at an armor or horse, he borrows them not to serve the turn, nor provides slight and unuseful, but such as are every way fitting to do his country true and laudable service, when occasion requires. To do otherwise, is deceit; and therefore not for him who is hearty and true in all his ways, as being the servant of Him in whom there was no guile. Likewise in any other country-duty, he considers what is the end of any command, and then he suits things faithfully according to that end. Secondly, he carries himself very respectfully, as to all the fathers of the church, so especially to his diocesan, honoring him both in word and behavior, and resorting unto him in any difficulty, either in his studies or in his parish. He observes visitations; and, being there, makes due use of them, as of clergy councils for the benefit of the diocese. And therefore before he comes, having ob-

served some defects in the ministry, he then either in sermon, if he preach, or at some other time of the day, propounds among his brethren what were fitting to be done. Thirdly, he keeps good correspondence with all the neighboring pastors round about him, performing for them any ministerial office, which is not to the prejudice of his own parish. Likewise he welcomes to his house any minister, how poor or mean soever, with as joyful a countenance, as if he were to entertain some great lord. Fourthly, he fulfils the duty and debt of neighborhood, to all the parishes which are near him. For, the apostle's rule, Phil. iv, being admirable and large, that we should do *whatsoever things are honest, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue, or any praise*; and neighborhood being ever reputed, even among the heathen, as an obligation to do good, rather than to those that are further, where things are otherwise equal; therefore he satisfies this duty also. Especially, if God have sent any calamity, either by fire or famine, to any neighboring parish, then he expects no brief, but taking his parish together the next Sunday or holyday, and exposing to them the uncertainty of human affairs, none knowing whose turn may be next, and then, when he hath affrighted them with this, exposing the obligation of charity and neighborhood, he first gives liberally himself, and then incites them to give; making together a sum either to be sent, or, which were more comfortable, all together choosing some fit day to carry it themselves, and cheer the afflicted. So, if any neighboring village be overburdened with poor, and his own less charged, he finds some way of relieving it, and reducing the manna and bread of charity to some equality; representing to his people, that the blessing of God to them ought to make them the more charitable, and not the less, lest he cast their neighbor's poverty on them also.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PARSON IN GOD'S STEAD.

THE Country Parson is in God's stead to his parish, and dischargeth God what he can of his promises. Wherefore there is nothing done either well or ill, whereof he is not the

rewarder or punisher. If he chance to find any reading in another's Bible, he provides him one of his own. If he find another giving a poor man a penny, he gives him a tester for it, if the giver be fit to receive it; or if he be of a condition above such gifts, he sends him a good book, or easeth him in his tithes, telling him, when he hath forgotten it, "This I do, because at such and such a time you were charitable." This is in some sort a discharging of God as concerning this life, who hath promised that godliness shall be gainful; but in the other, God is his own immediate paymaster, rewarding all good deeds to their full proportion. "The parson's punishing of sin and vice, is rather by withdrawing his bounty and courtesy from the parties offending, or by private or public reproof, as the case requires, than by causing them to be presented or otherwise complained of. And yet as the malice of the person, or heinousness of the crime may be, he is careful to see condign punishment inflicted, and with truly godly zeal, without hatred to the person, hungereth and thirsteth after righteous punishment of unrighteousness. Thus both in rewarding virtue, and in punishing vice, the parson endeavoreth to be in God's stead; knowing that country people are drawn or led by sense, more than by faith; by present rewards or punishments, more than by future."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PARSON CATECHISING.

THE Country Parson values catechising highly. For, there being three points of his duty—the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation into every one of his flock; the other, to multiply and build up this knowledge to a spiritual temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to press and drive it to practice, turning it to reformation of life, by pithy and lively exhortations;—catechising is the first point, and, but by catechising, the other cannot be attained. Besides, whereas in sermons there is a kind of state, in catechising there is a humbleness very suitable to Christian regeneration; which exceedingly delights him, as by way of exercise upon himself, and by way of preaching to himself,

for the advancing of his own mortification; for in preaching to others, he forgets not himself, but is first a sermon to himself, and then to others; growing with the growth of his parish.

He useth and preferreth the ordinary church catechism; partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be everywhere professed; especially since many remove from parish to parish, who like Christian soldiers are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation by their catholic answers. He exacts of all the doctrine of the catechism; of the younger sort, the very words; of the elder, the substance. Those he catechiseth publicly; these privately, giving age honor, according to the apostle's rule, 1 Tim. 5: 1. He requires all to be present at catechising: first, for the authority of the work; secondly, that parents and masters, as they hear the answers prove, may when they come home either commend or reprove, either reward or punish; thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then by an honorable way take occasion to be better instructed; fourthly, that those who are well grown in the knowledge of religion, may examine their grounds, renew their vows, and, by occasion of both, enlarge their meditations.

When once all have learned the words of the catechism, he thinks it the most useful way that a pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other words; for many say the catechism by rote, as parrots, without ever piercing into the sense of it. In this course the order of the catechism would be kept, but the rest varied; as thus, in the creed—"How came this world to be as it is? Was it made, or came it by chance? Who made it? Did you see God make it? Then are there some things to be believed that are not seen? Is this the nature of belief? Is not Christianity full of such things as are not to be seen, but believed? You said, God made the world; who is God?"—and so forward, requiring answers to all these, and helping and cherishing the answerer, by making the question very plain with comparisons, and making much even of one word of truth contained in the answer given by him. This order, being used to one, would be a little varied to another. And this is an admirable way of teaching, wherein the catechised will at length find delight; and by which the catechiser, if he once get the skill of it, will draw out of ignorant and silly souls even the dark

and deep points of religion. Socrates did thus in philosophy, who held that the seeds of all truths lay in every body; and accordingly, by questions well ordered, he found philosophy in silly tradesmen. That position will not hold in Christianity, because it contains things above nature; but after that the catechism is once learned, that which nature is towards philosophy, the catechism is towards divinity. To this purpose, some dialogues in Plato were worth the reading, where the singular dexterity of Socrates in this kind may be observed and imitated. Yet the skill consists but in these three points; first, an aim and mark of the whole discourse, whither to drive the answerer, which the questionist must have in his mind before any question be propounded, upon which and to which the questions are to be chained. Secondly, a most plain and easy framing the question even containing, in virtue, the answer also, especially to the more ignorant. Thirdly, when the answerer sticks, an illustrating the thing by something else, which he knows; making what he knows to serve him in that which he knows not. As when the parson once demanded, after other questions about man's misery, "Since man is so miserable, what is to be done?" and the answerer could not tell; he asked him again, what he would do if he were in a ditch. This familiar illustration made the answer so plain, that he was even ashamed of his ignorance; for he could not but say, he would haste out of it as fast as he could. Then he proceeded to ask, whether he could get out of the ditch alone, or whether he needed a helper, and who was that helper. This is the skill, and doubtless the Holy Scripture intends thus much, when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushel, leaven, boys piping and dancing; showing that things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed and cleansed, and serve for lights even of heavenly truths. This is the practice which the parson so much commends to all his fellow-laborers; the secret of whose good consists in this, that at sermons and prayers men may sleep or wander, but when one is asked a question, he must discover what he is. This practice exceeds even sermons in teaching; but, there being two things in sermons, the one informing, the other inflaming, as sermons come short of questions in the one, so they far exceed them in the other. For questions cannot inflame or ravish; that must be done by a set and labored and continued speech.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PARSON IN SACRAMENTS.

THE Country Parson, being to administer the sacraments, is at a stand with himself, how or what behavior to assume for so holy things. Especially at communion times he is in great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break and administer him. Neither finds he any issue in this, but to throw himself down at the throne of grace, saying, "Lord, thou knowest what thou didst, when thou appointedst it to be done thus; therefore do thou fulfil what thou didst appoint, for thou art not the feast, but the way to it."

At baptism; being himself in white, he requires the presence of all, and baptizeth not willingly, but on Sundays or great days. He admits no vain or idle names, but such as are usual and accustomed. He says that prayer with great devotion, where God is thanked for calling us to the knowledge of his grace; baptism being a blessing, that the world hath not the like. He willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the ceremony not only innocent, but reverend. He instructeth the godfathers and godmothers, that it is no complimentary or light thing to sustain that place, but a great honor and no less burden; as being done both in the presence of God and his saints, and by way of undertaking for a Christian soul. He adviseth all to call to mind their baptism often. For if wise men have thought it the best way of preserving a State, to reduce it to its principles by which it grew great; certainly it is the safest course for Christians also to meditate on their baptism often, (being the first step into their great and glorious calling,) and upon what terms, and with what vows they were baptized.

At the times of the holy communion, he first takes order with the church wardens, that the elements be of the best; not cheap or coarse, much less ill-tasted or unwholesome. Secondly, he considers and looks into the ignorance or carelessness of his flock, and accordingly applies himself with catechising and lively exhortations, not on the Sunday of the communion only (for then it is too late), but the Sunday or Sundays before the communion, or on the eves of all those days. If there be any who, having not yet received, are to

enter into this great work, he takes the more pains with them, that he may lay the foundation of future blessings. The time of every one's first receiving is not so much by years, as by understanding. Particularly the rule may be this; when any one can distinguish the sacramental from common bread, knowing the institution and the difference, he ought to receive, of what age soever. Children and youth are usually deferred too long, under pretence of devotion to the sacrament; but it is for want of instruction; their understandings being ripe enough for ill things, and why not then for better? But parents and masters should make haste in this, as to a great purchase for their children and servants; which while they defer both sides suffer; the one, in wanting many excitings of grace; the other, in being worse served and obeyed. The saying of the catechism is necessary, but not enough, because to answer in form may still admit ignorance. But the questions must be propounded loosely and widely, and then the answerer will discover what he is. Thirdly, for the manner of receiving, as the parson useth all reverence himself, so he administers to none but to the reverent. The feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a feast; but man's unpreparedness asks kneeling. He that comes to the sacrament, hath the confidence of a guest; and he that kneels, confesseth himself an unworthy one and therefore differs from other feasters; but he that sits or lies, puts up to an apostle. Contentiousness in a feast of charity is more scandal than any posture. Fourthly, touching the frequency of the communion, the parson celebrates it, if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year; as, at Easter, Christmas, Whitsuntide, afore and after harvest, and the beginning of Lent. And this he doth, not only for the benefit of the work, but also for the discharge of the church-wardens; who being to present all who receive not thrice a year, if there be but three communions, neither can all the people so order their affairs as to receive just at those times, nor the church-wardens so well take notice, who receive thrice, and who not.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PARSON'S COMPLETENESS.

THE Country Parson desires to be all to his parish, and not only a pastor, but a lawyer also and a physician. Therefore he endures not that any of his flock should go to law, but, in any controversy, that they should resort to him as their judge. To this end, he hath gotten to himself some insight in things ordinarily incident and controverted, by experience, and by reading some initiatory treatise in the law, with Dalton's Justice of Peace, and the Abridgments of the Statutes; as also by discourse with men of that profession, whom he hath ever some cases to ask, when he meets with them; holding that rule, that to put men to discourse of that wherein they are most eminent, is the most gainful way of conversation. Yet whenever any controversy is brought to him, he never decides it alone, but sends for three or four of the ablest of the parish to hear the cause with him, whom he makes to deliver their opinion first; out of which he gathers, in case he be ignorant himself, what to hold, and so the thing passeth with more authority and less envy. In judging, he follows that which is altogether right; so that if the poorest man of the parish detain but a pin unjustly from the richest, he absolutely restores it as a judge; but when he hath so done, then he assumes the parson and exhorts to charity. Nevertheless, there may happen sometimes some cases, wherein he chooseth to permit his parishioners rather to make use of the law, than himself; as in cases of an obscure and dark nature, not easily determinable by lawyers themselves, or in cases of high consequence, as establishing of inheritances; or lastly, when the persons in difference are of a contentious disposition, and cannot be gained, but that they still fall from all compromises that have been made. But then he shows them how to go to law, even as brethren and not as enemies, neither avoiding therefore one another's company, much less defaming one another.

Now as the parson is in law, so is he in sickness also. If there be any of his flock sick, he is their physician, or at least his wife; of whom, instead of the qualities of the world, he asks no other, but to have the skill of healing a wound or helping the sick. But if neither himself nor his wife have

the skill, and his means serve, he keeps some young practitioner in his house for the benefit of his parish; whom yet he ever exhorts not to exceed his bounds, but in ticklish cases to call in help. If all fail, then he keeps good correspondence with some neighbor physician, and entertains him for the cure of his parish. Yet it is easy for any scholar to attain to such a measure of physic, as may be of much use to him, both for himself and others. This is done by seeing one anatomy, reading one book of physic, having one herbal by him. And let Fernelius be the physic author, for he writes briefly, neatly and judiciously; especially let his Method of physic be diligently perused, as being the practical part and of most use. Now both the reading of him and the knowing of herbs may be done at such times, as they may be a help and a recreation to more divine studies, nature serving grace both in comfort of diversion, and the benefit of application when need requires; as also by way of illustration, even as our Saviour made plants and seeds to teach the people. For he was the true *householder, who bringeth out of his treasure, things new and old*,—the old things of philosophy, and the new of grace, and maketh the one to serve the other. And, I conceive, our Saviour did this for three reasons. First, that by familiar things he might make his doctrine slip the more easily into the hearts even of the meanest. Secondly, that laboring people, whom he chiefly considered, might have everywhere monuments of his doctrine; remembering, in gardeus, his mustard-seed and lilies; in the field, his seed-corn and tares; and so not be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in the midst of their pains. Thirdly, that he might set a copy for parsons.—In the knowledge of simples, wherein the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen, one thing would be carefully observed; which is, to know what herbs may be used instead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop. For home-bred medicines are both more easy for the parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies. So, where the apothecary useth, either for loosing, rhubarb; or for binding, bolearmena; the parson useth damask or white roses for the one, and plaintain, shepherds-purse, knotgrass, for the other; and that with better success. As for spices, he doth not only prefer home-bred things before them, but condemns them for vanities, and so shuts them out of his

family; esteeming that there is no spice comparable, for herbs, to rosemary, thyme, savory, mints; and for seeds, to fennel, and caraway-seeds. Accordingly for salves, his wife seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adders-tongue, yerrow, melilot, and St. John's-wort made into a salve; and elder, camomile, mallows, comfrey, and smallage made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures. In curing of any, the parson and his family use to premise prayers; for this is to cure like a parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop to the church. But though the parson sets forward all charitable deeds, yet he looks not in this point of curing beyond his own parish; except the person be so poor, that he is not able to reward the physician. For, as he is charitable, so he is just also. Now it is a justice and debt to the commonwealth he lives in, not to encroach on others' professions, but to live on his own. And justice is the ground of charity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PARSON ARGUING.

THE Country Parson, if there be any of his parish that hold strange doctrines, useth all possible diligence to reduce them to the common faith. The first means he useth is prayer; beseeching the Father of lights to open their eyes, and to give him power so to fit his discourse to them, that it may effectually pierce their hearts and convert them. The second means is a very loving and sweet usage of them, both in going to, and sending for them often, and in finding out courtesies to place on them; as in their tithes or otherwise. The third means is the observation what is the main foundation and pillar of their cause, whereon they rely; as, if he be a papist, the church is the hinge he turns on; if a schismatic, scandal. Wherefore the parson hath diligently examined these two with himself. As, what the church is; how it began; how it proceeded; whether it be a rule to itself; whether it hath a rule; whether, having a rule, it ought not to be guided by it; whether any rule in the world be obscure; and how then should the best be so? at least in

fundamental things;—the obscurity in some points being the exercise of the church, the light in the foundations being the guide; the church needing both an evidence and an exercise. So, for scandal: what scandal is; when given or taken; whether, there being two precepts, one of obeying authority, the other of not giving scandal, *that* ought not to be preferred,—especially since in disobeying there is scandal also; whether, things once indifferent, being made by the precept of authority more than indifferent, it be in our power to omit or refuse them. These and the like points he hath accurately digested; having ever, besides, two great helps and powerful persuaders on his side. The one, a strict religious life; the other, a humble and ingenuous search of truth, being unmoved in arguing, and void of all contentiousness: which are two great lights able to dazzle the eyes of the misled, while they consider, that God cannot be wanting to them in doctrine, to whom he is so gracious in life.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PARSON PUNISHING.

WHENSOEVER the Country Parson proceeds so far as to call in authority, and do such things of legal opposition, either in the presenting or punishing of any, as the vulgar ever construes for signs of ill will, he forbears not in any wise to use the delinquent as before, in his behavior and carriage towards him, not avoiding his company, or doing anything of averseness, save in the very act of punishment. Neither doth he esteem him for an enemy, but as a brother still; except some small and temporary estranging may corroborate the punishment to a better subduing and humbling of the delinquent. Which, if it happily take effect, he then comes on the faster, and makes so much the more of him, as before he alienated himself; doubling his regards, and showing, by all means, that the delinquent's return is to his advantage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PARSON'S EYE.

THE Country Parson, at spare times from action, standing on a hill and considering his flock, discovers two sorts of vices, and two sorts of vicious persons. There are some vices, whose natures are always clear and evident; as adultery, murder, hatred, lying, etc. There are other vices, whose natures, at least in the beginning, are dark and obscure; as covetousness and gluttony. So likewise there are some persons, who abstain not even from known sins; there are others, who when they know a sin evidently, they commit it not. It is true indeed, they are long a knowing it, being partial to themselves, and witty to others who shall reprove them for it. A man may be both covetous and intemperate, and yet hear sermons against both, and himself condemn both in good earnest. And the reason hereof is, because, the natures of these vices being not evidently discussed or known commonly, the beginnings of them are not easily observable; and the beginnings of them are not observed, because of the sudden passing from that which was just now lawful, to that which is presently unlawful even in one continued action. So a man dining eats at first lawfully; but, proceeding on, comes to do unlawfully, even before he is aware; not knowing the bounds of the action, nor when his eating begins to be unlawful. So, a man storing up money for his necessary provisions, both in present for his family and in future for his children, hardly perceives when his storing becomes unlawful; yet is there a period for his storing, and a point or centre when his storing, which was even now good, passeth from good to bad.—Wherefore the parson, being true to his business, hath exactly sifted the definitions of all virtues and vices; especially canvassing those, whose natures are most stealing, and beginnings uncertain. Particularly, concerning these two vices; not because they are all that are of this dark and creeping disposition, but for example sake, and because they are most common; he thus thinks:—

First, for covetousness, he lays this ground. Whosoever when a just occasion calls, either spends not at all, or not in some proportion to God's blessing upon him, is covetous.

The reason of the ground is manifest; because wealth is given to that end, to supply our occasions. Now, if I do not give everything its end, I abuse the creature; I am false to my reason, which should guide me; I offend the supreme Judge, in perverting that order which he hath set both to things and to reason. The application of the ground would be infinite. But, in brief, a poor man is an occasion; my country is an occasion; my friend is an occasion; my table is an occasion; my apparel is an occasion. If in all these, and those more which concern me, I either do nothing, or pinch, and scrape, and squeeze blood, undecently to the station wherein God hath placed me, I am covetous. More particularly, and to give one instance for all; if God hath given me servants, and I either provide too little for them, or that which is unwholesome, being sometimes baned meat, sometimes too salt, and so not competent nourishment, I am covetous. I bring this example, because men usually think, that servants for their money are as other things that they buy; even as a piece of wood, which they may cut or hack, or throw into the fire; and, so they pay them their wages, all is well. Nay, to descend yet more particularly; if a man hath wherewithal to buy a spade, and yet he chooseth rather to use his neighbor's and wear out that, he is covetous. Nevertheless, few bring covetousness thus low, or consider it so narrowly; which yet ought to be done, since there is a justice in the least things, and for the least there shall be a judgment. Country people are full of these petty injustices, being cunning to make use of another, and spare themselves. And scholars ought to be diligent in the observation of these, and driving of their general school-rules ever to the smallest actions of life; which, while they dwell in their books, they will never find; but, being seated in the country, and doing their duty faithfully, they will soon discover; especially if they carry their eyes ever open, and fix them on their charge and not on their preferment.

Secondly, for gluttony, the parson lays this ground. He that either for quantity eats more than his health or employment will bear, or for quality, is lickerous after dainties, is a glutton;—as he that eats more than his estate will bear, is a prodigal; and he that eats offensively to the company, either in his order or length of eating, is scandalous and uncharitable. These three rules generally comprehend the faults of eating; and the truth of them needs no proof. So that men

must eat, neither to the disturbance of their health, nor of their affairs (which, being over-burdened, or studying dainties too much, they cannot well despatch), nor of their estate, nor of their brethren. One act in these things is bad; but it is the custom and habit that names a glutton. Many think they are at more liberty than they are, as if they were masters of their health; and, so they will stand to the pain, all is well. But to eat to one's hurt comprehends, besides the hurt, an act against reason, because it is unnatural to hurt one's self; and this they are not masters of. Yet, of hurtful things, I am more bound to abstain from those, which by mine own experience I have found hurtful, than from those which by a common tradition and vulgar knowledge are reputed to be so. That which is said of hurtful meats, extends to hurtful drinks also. As for the quantity, touching our employments, none must eat so as to disable themselves from a fit discharging either of divine duties, or duties of their calling. So that, if after dinner they are not fit (or unwieldy) either to pray or work, they are gluttons. Not that all must presently work after dinner; for they rather must not work, especially students, and those that are weakly; but that they must rise so, as that it is not meat or drink that hinders them from working. To guide them in this, there are three rules. First, the custom and knowledge of their own body, and what it can well digest; the second, the feeling of themselves in time of eating; which because it is deceitful, for one thinks in eating, that he can eat more than afterwards he finds true; the third is the observation with what appetite they sit down. This last rule, joined with the first, never fails. For, knowing what one usually can well digest, and feeling when I go to meat in what disposition I am, either hungry or not; according as I feel myself, either I take my wonted proportion, or diminish of it. Yet physicians bid those that would live in health, not keep a uniform diet, but to feed variously; now more, now less. And Gerson, a spiritual man, wisheth all to incline rather to too much than to too little; his reason is, because diseases of exiniation are more dangerous than diseases of repletion. But the parson distinguisheth according to his double aim; either of abstinence a moral virtue, or mortification a divine. When he deals with any that is heavy and carnal, he gives him those freer rules. But when he meets with a refined and heavenly disposition, he carries them higher, even sometimes to a for-

getting of themselves; knowing that there is one who, when they forget, remembers for them. As when the people hungered and thirsted after our Saviour's doctrine, and tarried so long at it, that they would have fainted had they returned empty, he suffered it not; but rather made food miraculously, than suffered so good desires to miscarry.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PARSON IN MIRTH.

THE Country Parson is generally sad, because he knows nothing but the cross of Christ; his mind being defixed on it with those nails wherewith his Master was. Or, if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two most sad spectacles—sin and misery; God dishonored every day, and man afflicted. Nevertheless, he sometimes refresheth himself, as knowing that nature will not bear everlasting droopings, and that pleasantness of disposition is a great key to do good; not only because all men shun the company of perpetual severity, but also for that, when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantness both enter sooner and root deeper. Wherefore he condescends to human frailties, both in himself and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the hearer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PARSON IN CONTEMPT.

THE Country Parson knows well, that,—both for the general ignominy which is cast upon the profession, and much more for those rules which out of his choicest judgment he hath resolved to observe, and which are described in this book,—he must be despised. Because this hath been the portion of God his Master, and of God's saints his brethren; and this is foretold, that it shall be so still, until things be no more. Nevertheless, according to the apostle's rule, he en-

deavors that none shall despise him ; especially in his own parish he suffers it not, to his utmost power, for that, where contempt is, there is no room for instruction. This he procures, first, by his holy and unblamable life ; which carries a reverence with it, even above contempt. Secondly, by a courteous carriage and winning behavior. He that will be respected, must respect ; doing kindnesses, but receiving none, at least of those who are apt to despise ; for this argues a height and eminency of mind which is not easily despised, except it degenerate to pride. Thirdly, by a bold and impartial reproof, even of the best in the parish, when occasion requires ; for this may produce hatred in those that are reprov'd, but never contempt, either in them or others. Lastly, if the contempt shall proceed so far as to do anything punishable by law, as contempt is apt to do if it be not thwarted, the parson, having a due respect both to the person and to the cause, referreth the whole matter to the examination and punishment of those which are in authority ; that so, the sentence lighting upon one, the example may reach to all.

But if the contempt be not punishable by law ; or, being so, the parson think it in his discretion either unfit or bootless to contend ; then, when any despises him, he takes it either in an humble way, saying nothing at all ; or else in a slighting way, showing that reproaches touch him no more than a stone thrown against heaven, where he is and lives ; or in a sad way, grieved at his own and others' sins, which continually break God's laws, and dishonor him with those mouths which he continually fills and feeds ; or else in a doctrinal way, saying to the contemner, " Alas, why do you thus ? you hurt yourself, not me ; he that throws a stone at another, hits himself ;" and so, between gentle reasoning and pitying, he overcomes the evil ; or, lastly, in a triumphant way, being glad and joyful that he is made conformable to his Master, and, being in the world as *he* was, hath this undoubted pledge of his salvation. These are the five shields, wherewith the godly receive the darts of the wicked ; leaving anger and retorting and revenge to the children of the world ; whom another's ill mastereth and leadeth captive, without resistance, even in resistance, to the same destruction. For while they resist the person that reviles, they resist not the evil which takes hold of them, and is far the worse enemy.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PARSON WITH HIS CHURCH-WARDENS.

THE Country Parson doth often, both publicly and privately, instruct his church-wardens, what a great charge lies upon them; and that, indeed, the whole order and discipline of the parish is put into their hands. If himself reform anything, it is out of the overflowing of his conscience; whereas they are to do it by command and by oath. Neither hath the place its dignity from the ecclesiastical laws only; since even by the common statute-law they are taken for a kind of corporation, as being persons enabled by that name to take moveable goods or chattels, and to sue and to be sued at the law concerning such goods, for the use and profit of their parish; and by the same law, they are to levy penalties for negligence in resorting to church, or for disorderly carriage in time of divine service. Wherefore the parson suffers not the place to be vilified or debased, by being cast on the lower rank of people; but invites and urges the best unto it, showing that they do not lose or go less, but gain, by it;—it being the greatest honor of this world, to do God and his chosen service; or, as David says, *to be even a door-keeper in the house of God*. Now, the canons being the church-wardens' rule, the parson adviseth them to read or hear them read often, as also the visitation articles, which are grounded upon the canons; that so they may know their duty and keep their oath, the better. In which regard, considering the great consequence of their place and more of their oath, he wisheth them by no means to spare any, though never so great; but if, after gentle and neighborly admonitions, they still persist in ill, to present them; yea, though they be tenants, or otherwise engaged to the delinquent; for their obligation to God and their own soul is above any temporal tie. "Do well and right, and let the world sink."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PARSON'S CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDENCE.

THE Country Parson,—considering the great aptness country people have to think that all things come by a kind

of natural course; and that if they sow and soil their grounds; they must have corn; if they keep and fodder well their cattle, they must have milk and calves,—labors to reduce them to see God's hand in all things; and to believe, that things are not set in such an inevitable order, but that God often changeth it according as he sees fit, either for reward or punishment. To this end he represents to his flock, that God hath and exerciseth a threefold power, in everything which concerns man. The first is a sustaining power; the second, a governing power; the third, a spiritual power. By his *sustaining power* he preserves and actuates everything in his being. So that corn doth not grow by any other virtue, than by that which he continually supplies as the corn needs it; without which supply, the corn would instantly dry up, as a river would if the fountain were stopped. And it is observable, that, if anything could presume of an inevitable course and constancy in its operations, certainly it should be either the sun in heaven, or the fire on earth; by reason of their fierce, strong and violent natures. Yet when God pleased, the sun stood still, the fire burned not. By God's *governing power*, he preserves and orders the references of things one to the other. So that, though the corn do grow, and be preserved in that act by his sustaining power, yet if he suit not other things to the growth (as seasons and weather, and other accidents), by his governing power, the fairest harvests come to nothing. And it is observable, that God delights to have men feel, and acknowledge, and reverence his power; and therefore he often overturns things, when they are thought past danger. That is his time of interposing. As when a merchant hath a ship come home, after many a storm which it hath escaped, he destroys it sometimes in the very haven; or, if the goods be housed, a fire hath broken forth and suddenly consumed them. Now this he doth, that men should perpetuate, and not break off, their acts of dependence; how fair soever the opportunities present themselves. So that if a farmer should depend upon God all the year, and, being ready to put hand to the sickle, shall then secure himself, and think all cocksure; then God sends such weather, as lays the corn and destroys it. Or if he depend on God further, even till he imbarn his corn, and then think all sure; then God sends a fire and consumes all that he hath. For that he ought not to break off, but to continue, his dependence on God; not only before the corn is inned, but after

also; and, indeed, to depend and fear continually. The third *power* is *spiritual*, by which God turns all outward blessings to inward advantages. So that if a farmer hath both a fair harvest, and that also well inned and imbarnd, and continuing safe there; yet if God give him not grace to use and utter this well, all his advantages are to his loss. Better were his corn burnt, than not spiritually improved. And it is observable in this, how God's goodness strives with man's refractoriness. Man would sit down at *this* world; God bids him sell it, and purchase a better. Just as a father, who hath in his hand an apple, and a piece of gold under it; the child comes, and with pulling gets the apple out of his father's hand; his father bids him throw it away, and he will give him the gold for it; which the child utterly refusing, eats it, and is troubled with worms,—so is the carnal and wilful man with the worm of the grave in this world, and the worm of conscience in the next.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PARSON IN LIBERTY.

THE Country Parson, observing the manifold wiles of Satan (who plays his part sometimes in drawing God's servants from him, sometimes in perplexing them in the service of God), stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This liberty he compasseth by one distinction; and that is, of what is necessary, and what is additional. As for example; it is necessary, that all Christians should pray twice a day, every day of the week, and four times on Sunday, if they be well. This is so necessary and essential to a Christian, that he cannot, without this, maintain himself in a Christian state. Besides this, the godly have ever added some hours of prayer; as at nine, or at three, or at midnight or as they think fit, and see cause, or rather, as God's Spirit leads them. But these prayers are not necessary, but additional. Now it so happens, that the godly petitioner, upon some emergent interruption in the day, or by oversleeping himself at night, omits his additional prayer. Upon this, his mind begins to be perplexed and troubled; and Satan, who knows the exigent, blows the fire, endeavoring to disor-

der the Christian, and put him out of his station, and to enlarge the perplexity, until it spread, and taint his other duties of piety, which none can perform so well in trouble as in calmness. Here the parson interposeth with his distinction, and shows the perplexed Christian, that—this prayer being additional, not necessary; taken in, not commanded,—the omission thereof upon just occasion ought by no means to trouble him. God knows the occasion as well as he; and he is a gracious father, who more accepts a common course of devotion, than dislikes an occasional interruption. And of this he is so to assure himself, as to admit no scruple, but to go on as cheerfully as if he had not been interrupted. By this it is evident, that the distinction is of singular use and comfort; especially to pious minds, which are ever tender and delicate. But here there are two cautions to be added. First, that this interruption proceed not out of slackness or coldness; which will appear if the pious soul foresee and prevent such interruptions, what he may, before they come; and when, for all that, they do come, he be a little affected therewith, but not afflicted or troubled; if he resent it to a dislike, but not a grief. Secondly, that this interruption proceed not out of shame. As for example; a godly man, not out of superstition, but of reverence to God's house, resolves whenever he enters into a church, to kneel down and pray; either blessing God, that he will be pleased to dwell among men; or beseeching him that whenever he repairs to his house, he may behave himself so as befits so great a presence; and this briefly. But it happens that, near the place where he is to pray, he spies some scoffing ruffian, who is likely to deride him for his pains. If he now shall, either for fear or shame, break his custom, he shall do passing ill; so much the rather ought he to proceed, as that by this he may take into his prayer humiliation also. On the other side, if I am to visit the sick in haste, and my nearest way lie through the church, I will not doubt to go without staying to pray there, (but only, as I pass, in my heart,) because this kind of prayer is additional, not necessary; and the other duty overweighs it; so that if any scruple arise, I will throw it away, and be most confident that God is not displeased.

This distinction may run through all Christian duties; and it is a great stay and settling to religious souls.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PARSON'S SURVEYS.

THE Country Parson hath not only taken a particular survey of the faults of his own parish, but a general also of the diseases of the time; that so, when his occasions carry him abroad or bring strangers to him, he may be the better armed to encounter them. The great and national sin of this land, he esteems to be idleness; great in itself and great in consequence; for when men have nothing to do, then they fall to drink, to steal, to whore, to scoff, to revile, to all sorts of gamings. "Come," say they, "we have nothing to do; let's go to the tavern, or to the stews;" or what not? Wherefore the parson strongly opposeth this sin, wheresoever he goes.

And because idleness is twofold,—the one in having no calling, the other in walking carelessly in our calling,—he first represents to everybody the necessity of a vocation. The reason of this assertion is taken from the nature of man; wherein God hath placed two great instruments, reason in the soul, and a hand in the body, as engagements of working. So that even in paradise man had a calling; and how much more out of paradise? when the evils which he is now subject unto, may be prevented or diverted by reasonable employment. Besides, every gift or ability is a talent to be accounted for, and to be improved to our Master's advantage. Yet it is also a debt to our country to have a calling; and it concerns the commonwealth, that none should be idle, but all busied. Lastly, riches are the blessing of God, and the great instrument of doing admirable good; therefore all are to procure them, honestly and seasonably, when they are not better employed. Now this reason crosseth not our Saviour's precept of selling what we have; because when we have sold all and given it to the poor, we must not be idle, but labor to get more, that we may give more; according to St. Paul's rule, Eph. 4: 28. 1 Thess. 4: 11, 12. So that our Saviour's selling is so far from crossing St. Paul's working, that it rather stablisheth it; since they that have nothing, are fittest to work.

Now because the only opposer to this doctrine is the gallant, who is witty enough to abuse both others and himself,

and who is ready to ask, if he shall mend shoes, or what he shall do; therefore the parson, unmoved, showeth, that ingenious and fit employment is never wanting to those that seek it. But, if it should be, the assertion stands thus;—All are either to have a calling, or prepare for it; he that hath or can have yet no employment, if he truly and seriously prepare for it, he is safe, and within bounds. Wherefore all are either presently to enter into a calling, if they be fit for it, and it for them; or else to examine, with care and advice, what they are fittest for, and to prepare for that with all diligence.

But it will not be amiss, in this exceeding useful point, to descend to particulars; for exactness lies in particulars.

Men are either single or married. The married and house-keeper hath his hands full, if he do what he ought to do. For there are two branches of his affairs; first, the improvement of his family, by bringing them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and secondly, the improvement of his grounds, by drowing, or draining, or stocking, or fencing, or ordering his land to the best advantage both of himself and his neighbors. The Italian says—“none fouls his hands in his own business.” And it is an honest and just care, so it exceed not bounds, for every one to employ himself to the advancement of his affairs, that he may have wherewithal to do good. But his family is his best care; to labor Christian souls, and raise them to their height, even to heaven; to dress and prune them, and take as much joy in a straight-growing child or servant, as a gardener doth in a choice tree. Could men find out this delight, they would seldom be from home; whereas now, of any place, they are least there. But if, after all this care well-despatched, the house-keeper’s family be so small, and his dexterity so great, that he have leisure to look out, the village or parish which either he lives in or is near unto it, is his employment. He considers every one there; and either helps them in particular, or hath general propositions to the whole town or hamlet, of advancing the public stock, and managing commons or woods, according as the place suggests. But if he may be of the commission of peace, there is nothing to that. No commonwealth in the world hath a better institution than that of justices of the peace. For it is both a security to the king, who hath so many dispersed officers at his beck throughout the kingdom, accountable for the public good; and also an honora-

ble employment of a gentle or nobleman in the country he lives in, enabling him with power to do good, and to restrain all those who else might both trouble him and the whole State. Wherefore it behoves all, who are come to the gravity and ripeness of judgment for so excellent a place, not to refuse, but rather to procure it. And, whereas there are usually three objections made against the place;—the one, the abuse of it, by taking petty country bribes; the other, the casting of it on mean persons, especially in some shires; and lastly, the trouble of it;—these are so far from deterring any good man from the place, that they kindle them rather to redeem the dignity either from true faults, or unjust aspersions.

Now, for single men, they are either heirs, or younger brothers.—The heirs are to prepare in all the forementioned points against the time of their practice. Therefore they are to mark their father's discretion in ordering his house and affairs; and also elsewhere, when they see any remarkable point of education or good husbandry, and to transplant it in time to his own home; with the same care as others, when they meet with good fruit, get a graft of the tree, enriching their orchard and neglecting their house. Besides, they are to read books of law and justice; especially the statutes at large. As for better books, of divinity, they are not in this consideration; because we are about a calling, and a preparation thereunto. But, chiefly and above all things, they are to frequent sessions and assizes. For it is both an honor which they owe to the reverend judges and magistrates, to attend them, at least in their shire; and it is a great advantage to know the practice of the land, for our law is practice. Sometimes he may go to court, as the eminent place both of good and ill. At other times he is to travel over the king's dominions; cutting out the kingdom into portions, which every year he surveys piecemeal. When there is a parliament, he is to endeavor by all means to be a knight or burgess there; for there is no school to a parliament. And when he is there, he must not only be a morning man, but at committees also; for there the particulars are exactly discussed, which are brought from thence to the house but in general. When none of these occasions call him abroad, every morning that he is at home he must either ride the great horse, or exercise some of his military postures. For all gentlemen, that are not weakened and disarmed with sedentary lives, are to know the use of their arms; and as the husbandman la-

bors for them, so must they fight for and defend him, when occasion calls. This is the duty of each to other, which they ought to fulfil; and the parson is a lover of, and exciter to justice in all things; even as John the Baptist squared out to every one, even to soldiers, what to do. As for younger brothers, those whom the parson finds loose, and not engaged in some profession by their parents, (whose neglect in this point is intolerable, and a shameful wrong both to the commonwealth and their own house); to them, after he hath showed the unlawfulness of spending the day in dressing, complimenting, visiting and sporting, he first commends the study of the civil law, as a brave and wise knowledge, the professors whereof were much employed by Queen Elizabeth; because it is the key of commerce, and discovers the rules of foreign nations. Secondly, he commends the mathematics, as the only wonder-working knowledge, and therefore requiring the best spirits. After the several knowledge of these, he adviseth to insist and dwell chiefly on the two noble branches thereof, of fortification and navigation; the one being useful to all countries, and the other especially to islands. But if the young gallant think these courses dull and phlegmatic, where can he busy himself better, than in those new plantations and discoveries, which are not only a noble, but also, as they may be handled, a religious employment? Or let him travel into Germany and France; and, observing the artifices and manufactures there, transplant them hither, as divers have done lately, to our country's advantage.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PARSON'S LIBRARY.

THE Country Parson's library is A HOLY LIFE; for (besides the blessing that that brings upon it,—there being a promise, that if the kingdom of God be first sought, all other things shall be added,) even itself is a sermon. For, the temptations with which a good man is beset, and the ways which he used to overcome them, being told to another, whether in private conference or in the church, are a sermon. He that hath considered how to carry himself at table about his appe-

tite, if he tell this to another, preacheth; and much more feelingly and judiciously, than he writes his rules of temperance out of books. So that the parson having studied and mastered all his lusts and affections within, and the whole army of temptations without, hath ever so many sermons ready penned, as he hath victories. And it fares in this as it doth in physic. He that hath been sick of a consumption, and knows what recovered him, is a physician, so far as he meets with the same disease and temper; and can much better and particularly do it, than he that is generally learned, and was never sick. And if the same person had been sick of all diseases, and were recovered of all, by things that he knew, there were no such physician as he, both for skill and tenderness. Just so it is in divinity, and that not without manifest reason. For though the temptations may be diverse in divers Christians, yet the victory is alike in all, being by the selfsame Spirit.

Neither is this true only in the military state of a Christian life, but even in the peaceable also; when the servant of God, freed for a while from temptation, in a quiet sweetness seeks how to please God. Thus the parson, considering that repentance is the great virtue of the gospel, and one of the first steps of pleasing God, having for his own use examined the nature of it, is able to explain it after to others. And, particularly, having doubted sometimes, whether his repentance were true, or at least in that degree it ought to be,—since he found himself sometimes to weep more for the loss of some temporal things than for offending God,—he came at length to this resolution, that repentance is an act of the mind, not of the body (even as the original signifies), and that the chief thing which God in Scriptures requires, is the heart and the spirit, and to worship him in truth and spirit. Wherefore, in case a Christian endeavor to weep and cannot, since we are not masters of our bodies, this sufficeth. And consequently he found that the essence of repentance, (that it may be alike in all God's children,—which, as concerning weeping, it cannot be, some being of a more melting temper than others,) consisteth in a true detestation of the soul, abhorring and renouncing sin, and turning unto God in truth of heart and newness of life; which acts of repentance are and must be found in all God's servants. Not that weeping is not useful, where it can be (that so the body may join in the grief, as it did in the sin), but that, so the other acts be,

that is not necessary. So that he as truly repents, who performs the other acts of repentance, when he cannot more, as he that weeps a flood of tears. This instruction and comfort the parson getting for himself, when he tells it to others, becomes a sermon. The like he doth in other Christian virtues, as of faith and love and the cases of conscience belonging thereto; wherein, as St. Paul implies that he ought, Rom. ii, he first preacheth to himself, and then to others.

 CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PARSON'S DEXTERITY IN APPLYING OF REMEDIES.

THE Country Parson knows that there is a double state of a Christian even in this life; the one military, the other peaceable. The military is, when we are assaulted with temptations, either from within or from without. The peaceable is, when the devil for a time leaves us, as he did our Saviour, and the angels minister to us their own food, even joy, and peace, and comfort in the Holy Ghost. These two states were in our Saviour, not only in the beginning of his preaching, but afterwards also, (as, Matt. 22: 35, he was tempted; and Luke 10: 21, he rejoiced in spirit); and they must be likewise in all that are his. Now the parson having a spiritual judgment, according as he discovers any of his flock to be in one and the other state, so he applies himself to them.

Those that he finds in the peaceable state, he adviseth to be very vigilant, and not to let go the reins as soon as the horse goes easy. Particularly, he counselleth them to two things. First, to take heed lest their quiet betray them, as it is apt to do, to a coldness and carelessness in their devotions; but to labor still to be as fervent in Christian duties, as they remember themselves were, when affliction did blow the coals. Secondly, not to take the full compass and liberty of their peace; not to eat of all those dishes at table, which even their present health otherwise admits; nor to store their house with all those furnitures, which even their present plenty of wealth otherwise admits; nor, when they are

among them that are merry, to extend themselves to all that mirth, which the present occasion of wit and company otherwise admits; but to put bounds and hoops to their joys; so will they last the longer, and, when they depart, return the sooner. If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; and if we would bound ourselves, we should not be bounded. But if they shall fear that, at such or such a time, their peace and mirth have carried them further than this moderation; then to take Job's admirable course, who sacrificed, lest his children should have transgressed in their mirth. So let them go, and find some poor afflicted soul, and there be bountiful and liberal; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Those that the parson finds in the military state, he fortifies, and strengthens with his utmost skill. Now, in those that are tempted, whatsoever is unruly falls upon two heads. Either they think that there is none that can or will look after things, but all goes by chance or wit; or else, though there be a great Governor of all things, yet *to them* he is lost; as if they said, God doth forsake and persecute them, and there is none to deliver them.

If the parson suspect the first, and find sparks of such thoughts now and then to break forth, then, without opposing directly (for disputation is no cure for atheism), he scatters in his discourse three sorts of arguments; the first taken from nature, the second from law, the third from grace.—For *nature*, he sees not how a house could be either built without a builder, or kept in repair without a house-keeper. He conceives not possibly how the winds should blow so much as they can, and the sea rage so much as it can, and all things do what they can; and all, not without dissolution of the whole, but also of any part, by taking away so much as the usual seasons of summer and winter, earing and harvest. Let the weather be what it will, still we have bread; though sometimes more, sometimes less; wherewith also a careful Joseph might meet. He conceives not possibly how he, that would believe a divinity if he had been at the creation of all things, should less believe it, seeing the preservation of all things. For preservation is a creation; and more, it is a continued creation, and a creation every moment.—Secondly, for *the law*, there may be so evident, though unused a proof of divinity taken from thence, that the atheist or Epicurean can have nothing to contradict. The Jews yet live, and are known. They have their law and language

bearing witness to them, and they to it. They are circumcised to this day, and expect the promises of the Scripture. Their country also is known; the places and rivers travelled unto and frequented by others, but to them an unpenetrable rock, an unaccessible desert. Wherefore, if the Jews live, all the great wonders of old live in them; and then who can deny the stretched-out arm of a mighty God? especially since it may be a just doubt, whether, considering the stubbornness of the nation, their living then in their country under so many miracles were a stranger thing, than their present exile, and disability to live in their country. And it is observable, that this very thing was intended by God; that the Jews should be his proof and witnesses, as he calls them, Isa. 43: 12. And their very dispersion in all lands was intended, not only for a punishment to them, but as an exciting of others, by their sight, to the acknowledging of God and his power, Ps. 59: 11; and therefore this kind of punishment was chosen rather than any other.—Thirdly, for *grace*. Besides the continual succession, since the gospel, of holy men who have borne witness to the truth, there being no reason why any should distrust St. Luke, or Tertullian, or Chrysostom, more than Tully, Virgil, or Livy; there are two prophecies in the gospel, which evidently argue Christ's divinity by their success. The one, concerning the woman that spent the ointment on our Saviour; for which he told, that it should never be forgotten, but with the gospel itself be preached to all ages, Matt. 26: 13. The other, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; of which our Saviour said, that that generation should not pass, till all was fulfilled, Luke 21: 32; which Josephus' story confirmeth, and the continuance of which verdict is yet evident. To these might be added the preaching of the gospel in all nations, Matt. 24: 14; which we see even miraculously effected in these new discoveries, God turning men's covetousness and ambitions to the effecting of his word. Now a prophecy is a wonder sent to posterity, lest they complain of want of wonders. It is a letter sealed, and sent; which to the bearer is but paper, but to the receiver and opener is full of power. He that saw Christ open a blind man's eyes, saw not more divinity, than he that reads the woman's ointment in the gospel, or sees Jerusalem destroyed. With some of these heads enlarged, and woven into his discourse, at several times and occasions, the parson settleth wavering minds.

But if he sees them nearer desperation than atheism, not so much doubting a God as that he is theirs, then he dives into the boundless ocean of God's love, and the unspeakable riches of his loving kindness. He hath one argument unanswerable. If God hate them, either he doth it as they are creatures, dust and ashes; or as they are sinful. As creatures, he must needs love them; for no perfect artist ever hated his own work. As sinful, he must much more love them; because, notwithstanding his infinite hate of sin, his love overcame that hate, and that with an exceeding great victory; which in the creation needed not, gave them love for love, even the Son of his love out of his bosom of love. So that man, which way soever he turns, hath two pledges of God's love, (that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established); the one in his being, the other in his sinful being; and this, as the more faulty in him, so the more glorious in God. And all may certainly conclude that God loves them, till either they despise that love, or despair of his mercy. Not any sin else, but is within his love; but the despising of love must needs be without it. The thrusting away of his arm makes us only not embraced.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PARSON'S CONDESCENDING.

THE Country Parson is a lover of old customs, if they be good and harmless; and the rather, because country people are much addicted to them; so that to favor them therein is to win their hearts, and to oppose them therein is to deject them. If there be any ill in the custom, which may be severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them the clean to feed on.

Particularly, he loves procession, and maintains it; because there are contained therein four manifest advantages. First, a blessing of God for the fruits of the field; secondly, justice in the preservation of bounds; thirdly, charity in loving, walking and neighborly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if there be any; fourthly, mercy in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution and largess, which at that time is or ought to be used. Where-

fore he exacts of all to be present at the perambulation ; and those that withdraw and sever themselves from it, he dislikes and reproves as uncharitable and unneighborly ; and, if they will not reform, presents them. Nay, he is so far from condemning such assemblies, that he rather procures them to be often ; as knowing that absence breeds strangeness, but presence, love. Now love is his business and aim. Wherefore he likes well that his parish at good times invite one another to their houses, and he urgeth them to it. And sometimes where he knows there hath been or is a little difference, he takes one of the parties, and goes with him to the other ; and all dine or sup together. There is much preaching in this friendliness.

Another old custom there is of saying, when light is brought in, "God sends us the light of heaven!" and the parson likes this very well. Neither is he afraid of praising or praying to God at all times, but is rather glad of catching opportunities to do them. Light is a great blessing, and as great as food, for which we give thanks ; and those that think this superstitious, neither know superstition nor themselves. As for those that are ashamed to use this form, as being old and obsolete, and not the fashion, he reforms and teaches them, that at baptism they professed not to be ashamed of Christ's cross or for any shame to leave that which is good. He that is ashamed in small things, will extend his pusillanimity to greater. Rather should a Christian soldier take such occasions to harden himself, and to further his exercises of mortification.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE PARSON BLESSING.

THE Country Parson wonders that blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren ; whereas he thinks it not only a grave and reverend thing, but a beneficial also. Those who use it not, do so either out of niceness, because they like the salutations, and compliments, and forms of worldly language better ; which conformity and fashionableness is so exceeding unbefitting a minister, that it deserves reproof, not refutation ; or else, because they think it empty and super-

fluous. But that which the apostles used so diligently in their writings, nay, which our Saviour himself used, Mark 10: 16, cannot be vain and superfluous. But this was not proper to Christ or the apostles only, no more than to be a spiritual father was appropriated to them. And if temporal fathers bless their children, how much more may, and ought, spiritual fathers! Besides, the priests of the Old Testament were commanded to bless the people; and the form thereof is prescribed, Num. vi. Now, as the apostle argues in another case, if the ministration of condemnation did bless, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit exceed in blessing? The fruit of this blessing good Hannah found, and received with great joy, 1 Sam. 1: 18, though it came from a man disallowed by God; for it was not the person, but priesthood, that blessed; so that even ill priests may bless. Neither have the ministers power of blessing only, but also of cursing. So, in the Old Testament, Elisha cursed the children, 2 Kings 2: 24; which though our Saviour reprov'd, as unfitting for his particular, who was to show all humility before his passion, yet he allows it in his apostles. And therefore St. Peter used that fearful imprecation to Simon Magus, Acts viii,—*Thy money perish with thee*; and the event confirmed it. So did St. Paul, 2 Tim. 4: 14, and 1 Tim. 1: 20; speaking of Alexander the copper-smith, who had withstood his preaching. *The Lord*, saith he, *reward him according to his works*. And again, of Hymeneus and Alexander he saith, he had *delivered them to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme*. The forms both of blessing and cursing are expounded in the common prayer-book; the one, in “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc. and “The peace of God,” etc.; the other in general in the Communion.

Now blessing differs from prayer, in assurance; because it is not performed by way of request, but of confidence and power, effectually applying God's favor to the blessed, by the interesting of that dignity wherewith God hath invested the priest, and engaging of God's own power and institution for a blessing. The neglect of this duty in ministers themselves, hath made the people also neglect it; so that they are so far from craving this benefit from their ghostly father, that they oftentimes go out of church before he hath blessed them. In the time of popery, the priest's *benedicite* and his holy water were over-highly valued; and now we are fallen to the

clean contrary even from superstition to coldness and atheism. But the parson first values the gift in himself, and then teacheth his parish to value it. And it is observable, that, if a minister talk with a great man in the ordinary course of complimenting language, he shall be esteemed as an ordinary complimenter. But if he often interpose a blessing, when the other gives him just opportunity by speaking any good, this unusual form begets a reverence, and makes him esteemed according to his profession. The same is to be observed in writing letters also.

To conclude; if all men are to bless upon occasion, as appears, Rom 12: 14, how much more those who are spiritual fathers.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCERNING DETRACTION.

THE Country Parson, perceiving that most, when they are at leasure, make other's faults their entertainment and discourse; and that even some good men think, so they speak truth, they may disclose another's fault, finds it somewhat difficult how to proceed in this point. For if he absolutely shut up men's mouths, and forbid all disclosing of faults, many an evil may not only be, but also spread in his parish, without any remedy, (which cannot be applied without notice), to the dishonor of God, and the infection of his flock, and the discomfort, discredit and hindrance of the pastor. On the other side, if it be unlawful to open faults, no benefit or advantage can make it lawful; for we must not do evil, that good may come of it.

Now the parson, taking this point to task, which is so exceeding useful, and hath taken so deep root that it seems the very life and substance of conversation, hath proceeded thus far in the discussing of it. Faults are either notorious, or private. Again, notorious faults are either such as are made known by common fame; and of these those that know them may talk, so they do it not with sport, but commiseration; or else such as have passed judgment, and been corrected either by whipping, imprisoning, or the like. Of these also men may talk; and more, they may discover them

to those that know them not ; because infamy is a part of the sentence against malefactors, which the law intends ; as is evident by those, which are branded for rogues that they may be known, or put into the stocks that they may be looked upon. But some may say, though the law allow this, the gospel doth not ; which hath so much advanced charity, and ranked backbiters among the generation of the wicked, Rom. 1: 30. But this is easily answered. As the executioner is not uncharitable that takes away the life of the condemned, except, besides his office, he adds a tincture of private malice, in the joy and haste of acting his part ; so neither is he that defames him, whom the law would have defamed, except he also do it out of rancor. For, in infamy, all are executioners ; and the law gives a malefactor to all to be defamed. And, as malefactors may lose and forfeit their goods or life ; so may they their good name, and the possession thereof, which, before their offence and judgment, they had in all men's breasts. For all are honest, till the contrary be proved. Besides, it concerns the commonwealth that rogues should be known ; and charity to the public hath the precedence of private charity. So that it is so far from being a fault to discover such offenders, that it is a duty rather ; which may do much good, and save much harm. Nevertheless, if the punished delinquent shall be much troubled for his sins, and turn quite another man, doubtless then also men's affections and words must turn, and forbear to speak of that, which even God himself hath forgotten.

Gildas Salsbianus.

BAXTER'S REFORMED PASTOR.

ABRIDGED AND ARRANGED BY

SAMUEL PALMER,

1766.

Ex seipsa renascitur.—*Plin. De Phoenice.*

P R E F A C E .

IN the following Abridgement of Baxter's Reformed Pastor, "whatever appeared foreign and redundant is omitted ; sentences that were too long are commonly divided ; the construction of such as were obscure is altered ; and obsolete or uncouth words are generally changed for more common ones. But the greatest liberties have been taken in the alteration of the Method, which is in a manner new ; the design of which was to lessen the number of divisions, to avoid frequent repetitions, and to bring together in one point of view, all the author's thoughts on the same subjects, which were sometimes scattered in four or five different parts of the treatise. So that sentences, paragraphs and whole heads of discourse, are transposed with great freedom, wherever it was apprehended it would be of advantage to the work ; which, it is hoped, is generally the case. To point out these several transpositions, would be tedious and unnecessary. But it was proper that the reader should be apprised of them, lest, if he should give himself the trouble of comparing this work with the original, he should imagine any important passages have been omitted ; or that any additions have been made, which, he may be assured, there have not (excepting the contents of the chapters) unless the connection seemed to require it ; and in that case the words inserted are distinguished by crotchets [thus]. The utmost care has always been taken to preserve the author's sense ; and in some instances, his expressions, though rather inaccurate, are suffered to remain as they were, through fear of altering

his sentiment, or losing his spirit, by correcting them. In short, this work is as really MR. BAXTER's as that he himself published.—*From the Preface to the original edition of Palmer's Abridgement, published in London in 1766.*

THE REFORMED PASTOR.

ACTS 20: 28.

TAKE HEED THEREFORE TO YOURSELVES, AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER WHICH THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS; TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.

Reverend and dearly beloved Brethren :

IF the people of our charge must 'teach, admonish and exhort one another,' Col. 3: 16. Heb. 3: 13), no doubt *teachers themselves* may do it, as brethren in office, as well as in faith, without pretending to any supereminence in power or degree.

We have the same sins to mortify, and the same graces to be quickened and corroborated, as they have. We have greater works than they have to do, greater difficulties to overcome, and no less necessity is laid upon us. We have therefore need to be warned and awakened, (if not instructed,) as well as they. So that I confess, I think we should meet together more frequently, if we had nothing else to do but this. And we should deal as plainly and closely with one another, as the most serious among us do with our flocks; lest, if they only have the sharp admonitions and reproofs, they only should be 'sound and lively in the faith.' This was Paul's judgment. I need no other proof of it, than this rousing, heart-melting exhortation to the Ephesian elders. A short sermon, but not soon learned. Had the bishops and teachers of the church but thoroughly learned it, (though to the neglect of many a volume which has taken up their time and helped them to greater applause in the world,) how happy had it been for the church and for themselves!

I shall now touch upon no part of it but my text. The persons here addressed under the characters of *overseers* or *bishops*, *Ἐπίσκοποι*, were officers appointed to teach and guide

the Ephesian church in the way to salvation; and are the same, that in the 17th verse are called *elders*. So that all persons who stately officiate in the same work and capacity, as the pastors of a particular church, may consider themselves as included.¹

The exhortation here addressed to such, consisteth of two parts.

The FIRST is,—that they should take heed to *themselves*; And the

SECOND,—That they should take heed to the *Flock* over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Both these articles will, in the following work, be distinctly handled.

PART FIRST.

OF THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS WITH REGARD TO THEMSELVES.

THE first part of the apostle's exhortation respects the care that ministers ought to exercise with regard to their own disposition and behavior. It is thus expressed, 'Take heed therefore to *yourselves*.' Let us then in the

First place, consider what this *personal* care is, and wherein it consisteth.

For the sake of brevity, I will join the explication and the application together. And I beseech you, brethren, let your *hearts* attend as well as your understandings.

I. Above all, see to it that a work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own souls.

Take heed to yourselves lest you be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach; and lest, while you proclaim to the world the necessity of a Saviour, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an

¹ If the reader would see this point defended, he may meet with satisfaction by turning to the original work.

interest in him and his saving benefits. Be that first, yourselves, which you persuade your hearers to be; believe that which you daily persuade them to believe; and heartily entertain that Christ and Spirit, which you offer to them.

You have a heaven to win or lose yourselves, and souls that must be happy or miserable forever; it therefore concerns you to begin at home, and take heed to yourselves. It is possible (though an unusual thing), that, preaching well may succeed to the salvation of others without the holiness of your own hearts and lives; but it is impossible it should save your own souls. Though it be promised to "them that turn many to righteousness" that they "shall shine as stars," Dan. 12: 3, it is on supposition that they be first turned to it themselves. Believe it, Sirs; "God is no respecter of persons." A holy calling will not save an unholy man. God never did save any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his master's work. Nor can it be reasonably expected that he should save any for offering salvation to others, while they refuse it themselves; or for telling others those truths, which they themselves neglect and abuse. If you stand at the door of the kingdom of grace to light others in, but will not go in yourselves, you shall knock at the gates of glory in vain. Many a preacher is now in hell, who called upon his hearers a hundred times to use their utmost care and diligence to avoid that "place of torment." Preachers of the gospel must be judged by the gospel; must be sentenced on the same terms, and dealt with as severely as other men. "Many at that day shall say, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" who shall be answered, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;" Matt. 7: 22, 23. And what case can be more wretched than that man's, who made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and help others to attain it, and yet after all is excluded from it himself. [Let me add,

The case of unconverted ministers, is very deplorable *at present.*]

It is a dreadful thing to be an unsanctified *professor*, but much more to be an unsanctified *preacher*.

Do not you, who know this to be your character, tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, you are drawing up indictments against yourselves.

When you are arguing against sin, you are aggravating your own. When you proclaim to your hearers, the riches of Christ and his grace, you publish your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your own unhappiness in being destitute of them. What can you devise to say to your hearers, but, for the most part, it will be against your own souls? If you mention hell, you mention your own inheritance. If you describe the joys of heaven, you describe your own misery in having no right to them. O wretched life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self-condemning! A graceless, inexperienced preacher is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth.

Yet he is ordinarily, the most insensible of his unhappiness. He has so many counters, that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that resemble the Christian's jewels, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty; but thinks "he is rich and wants nothing, while he is wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked," Rev. 3: 17. He is acquainted with the Holy Scripture; he is exercised in holy duties; he lives not in open, disgraceful sins; he serves at God's altar; he reproveth other men's faults, and preaches up holiness of heart and life; and therefore can hardly suspect himself to be unholy. How awful the delusion of such! But especially, how dreadful and aggravated their future misery!—To perish with the bread of life in their hands, while they offer it to others!—That those ordinances of God should be the occasion of their delusion, which are the appointed means of conviction and salvation!—That while they hold the looking-glass of the gospel to others, and show them the true face of their souls, they should turn the back part of it towards themselves, where they can see nothing?

Verily it is the common danger and calamity of the church, to have unregenerate and inexperienced pastors! Many men become preachers, before they are Christians; are sanctified by dedication to the altar as God's priests, before they are sanctified by hearty dedication to Christ as his disciples. Thus they worship an unknown God, preach an unknown Saviour, an unknown Spirit, an unknown state of holiness, and communion with God, and a future glory that is to them unknown, and to be unknown to them for ever.

And can it be expected that such persons should prove any great blessings to the church? How can it be imagined

that he is likely to be as successful as others, who dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work, who never soundly believeth what he saith, nor is ever truly serious, when he seemeth most diligent! And can you think that any unsanctified man *can* be hearty and serious in the ministerial work? It cannot be. A kind of seriousness indeed he may have; such as proceeds from a common faith or opinion that the word is true, and is actuated by a natural fervor or by selfish ends; but the seriousness and fidelity of a sound believer, who ultimately intends God's honor and men's salvation, he cannot have. O Sirs! all your preaching and persuading of others will be but dreaming, and trifling hypocrisy, till the work be thoroughly done upon yourselves. How can you constantly apply yourselves to a work, from which your carnal hearts are averse? How can you, with serious fervor, call upon poor sinners to repent and come to God, who never did either yourselves? How can you follow them with importunate solicitations to forsake sin, and betake themselves to a holy life, who never felt the evil of the one or the worth of the other? And let me tell you, these things are never well known till they are *felt*; and that he who feeleth them not himself, is not likely to speak feelingly of them to others, or to help others to feel them. He that does not so strongly believe the word of God and the life to come, as to take off his own heart from the vanities of this world, and bring him, with resolution and diligence, to seek his own salvation, cannot be expected to be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. He that dares to damn himself, will dare to let others alone in the way to damnation. He that, with Judas, will sell his master for silver, will not scruple to make merchandize of the flock. We may well expect that he will have no pity on others, who is thus wofully cruel to himself; and surely he is not to be trusted with other men's souls, who is unfaithful to his own. It is a very unlikely thing that he will fight against Satan with all his might, or do any great harm to his kingdom, who is himself a servant of Satan and a subject of that kingdom; or that he will be true to Christ, who is in covenant with his enemy. What prince will choose the friends and voluntary servants of his enemy, to lead his armies in war against him? Yet alas! many preachers of the gospel are enemies to the work of the gospel which they preach. O how many such traitors have been in the church of Christ in all ages, who have done more against

him under his colors, than they could have done in the open field! Though many of these men seem excellent preachers, and cry down sin as loudly as others, yet it is all but an affected fervency, and commonly but a mere ineffectual bawling. A traitorous commander, who shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder, may cause his guns to make as great a report as theirs that are loaded with bullets; but he doth no hurt to the enemy by it. So one of these men may speak as loud and with as much seeming fervency as others; but he will seldom do any great execution against sin and Satan. No man can fight well but where he hateth, or is very angry; much less against those whom he loveth, and loveth above all. So that you see, an unsanctified man, who loveth the enemy, is very unfit to be a leader in Christ's army; that he is very unlikely to engage others to renounce the world and the flesh, who cleaveth to them himself as his chief good.

If such a wretched man would take my counsel, he should make a stand, and call his heart and life to an account. He should fall a preaching a while to *himself*, before he preach to others any more! He should consider, whether "he that names the name of Christ" should not "depart from all iniquity?" Whether, "if he regards iniquity in his heart, God will hear his prayers?" And whether a wicked preacher "shall stand in the judgment, or a sinner in the assembly of the just?" Psalm 1: 5. When such thoughts as these have entered into his soul, and kindly wrought upon his conscience, I would advise him next, to go to the congregation, and there preach over Origen's sermon on Psalm 50: 16, 17. "But to the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee." When he has read this text, I would have him sit down, as Origen did, and expound and apply it by his tears; then make a free confession of his guilt before the assembly, and desire their prayers to God for pardoning and renewing grace; that hereafter, he may preach a Christ whom he knows, may feel what he speaks, and may commend the riches of the gospel by experience.

II. "Take heed to yourselves," that you be not destitute of the necessary *qualifications* for your work.

And Oh! what qualifications are requisite for a man that hath such a charge as ours! He must not be a babe in knowledge, that will teach men all those things which are

necessary to salvation. How many difficulties in divinity are there to be opened, yea, about the very fundamentals of religion! How many obscure texts to be expounded! How many duties to be done, wherein ourselves and others may miscarry, if in the matter, the end, the manner and circumstances of them, they be not well informed! How many sins, and subtile temptations must we direct our people to avoid! How many weighty, and yet intricate cases of conscience have we frequently to resolve! How many "strong holds" have we to beat down! What subtile, diligent and obstinate resistance must we expect from those we have to deal with! We cannot make a breach in their groundless hopes and carnal peace, but they have twenty shifts and seeming reasons to make it up again; and as many enemies, under the appearance of friends, that are ready to help them. We dispute not with them upon equal terms; but we have children to reason with, who cannot understand us. We have wilful, unreasonable, distracted men to deal with, who when they are silenced, are not at all the more convinced, but when they can give you no reason, will give you their resolution. We have multitudes of raging passions and contradicting enemies to dispute against at once; so that whenever we go about the conversion of a sinner, it is as if we were to dispute in a noisy crowd. Dear brethren! what men should we be in skill, resolution and unwearied diligence, who have so much to do, and so much to hinder us in doing it! Did Paul cry out, 2 Cor. 2: 16, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And shall *we* be careless or lazy, as if we were sufficient? "What manner of persons ought we to be," 2 Pet. 3: 11, not only "in all holy conversation and godliness," but in all knowledge, resolution, and diligence!

To preach a sermon, I think is not the hardest part of our work; and yet what skill is necessary to make plain the truth, to convince the hearers; to let irresistible light into their consciences, and keep it there, to drive the truth into their minds, and answer every objection that opposes it, and at the same time, to do all this with regard to the language and manner, so as best becomes our work, as is most suitable to the capacities of our hearers, and so as to honor that great God, whose message we deliver, by our delivery of it!

It is a lamentable case, that, in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so, as that the whole business

should miscarry in our hands ; that God should be dishonored, his work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened than converted, through our weakness or neglect. [Yet how frequently is this the case!] How often have carnal hearers gone jeering home, at the palpable and dishonorable failings of the preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy, and we bring not with us skill and zeal enough to awaken them! Brethren, do you not shrink and tremble under a sense of the greatness of your work? Will a common measure of ability and prudence serve for such a task as yours? Necessity may indeed cause the church to tolerate the weak ; but woe to us if we tolerate and indulge our own weakness.

Do not reason and conscience tell you, that if you dare venture on so high a work as this, you should spare no pains to be fit for the performance of it? It is not now and then an idle taste of studies, that will serve to make an able divine. I know that laziness has learned to argue, from the insufficiency of all our studies, that the spirit must wholly and alone qualify us for, and assist us in our work. But can we reasonably think that God, having commanded us to use the means, would warrant us to neglect them? Will he cause us to thrive in a course of idleness? Or bring us to knowledge by dreams? Or take us up to heaven and show us his counsels, while we are unconcerned about the matter? Strange! that men should dare by their sinful laziness, thus to quench the spirit!" God has required of us, that we "be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," Rom. 12: 11. Therefore, brethren, lose no time: study, pray, discourse and practise, that by these means your abilities may be increased.

Besides the composition of sermons, how many other things should a minister understand! What a great defect would it be to be ignorant of them; and how much shall we miss such knowledge in our work! In order to gain a competent measure of knowledge, a variety of books must be read, [and well digested.] Experience will teach you, that men are not to be made learned or wise, without hard study and unwearied diligence.—Shall we then be indolent? Will neither the natural desire of knowing, nor the spiritual desire of knowing God and things divine, nor the consciousness of our ignorance and weakness, nor a sense of the importance of our ministerial work, keep us close to our studies,

and make us diligent in seeking after truth? [Let these considerations have their due influence upon us.]

We should the rather take heed to our qualifications, because such works as ours put men more upon the use and trial of their graces, than those of other persons. Weak gifts and graces may carry a man through an even and laudable course of life, who is not exercised with any great trials. Small strength may serve for easier works, and lighter burdens: But if you will venture on the great undertakings of the *ministry*; if you will engage against "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses," Eph. 6: 12, in order to rescue captive sinners from the dominion of Satan, and lead on the troops of Christ in the face of all their enemies, common abilities will not be sufficient. The tempter will make his first and sharpest onset on *you*. He bears you the greatest malice, who are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. He has found, by experience, that to 'smite the shepherd,' is the most effectual means to 'scatter the flock,' Zech. 13: 7. You therefore shall have his most subtle insinuations, incessant solicitations, and violent assaults. So that you must expect to come off with greater shame and deeper wounds, than if you had lived a common life, if you think to go through such things as these with a careless soul. We have seen many persons that lived a private life, in good reputation for parts and piety, who, when they have taken upon them either the magistracy or military employment, where the work was superior to their abilities, have met with scandal and disgrace. So also have we seen some private Christians of good esteem, who, having thought too highly of their abilities and thrust themselves into the ministerial office, have proved weak and empty men, and have become some of the greatest burdens to the church. They might, perhaps, have done God more service, had they continued in the higher rank of private men, than they did among the lowest of the ministry. If then you will venture into the midst of dangers, and bear the burden of the day; 'take heed to yourselves.'

This care and diligence is now the more requisite for ministers, because the necessity of the church forces so many from our places of education, so very young, that they are obliged to teach and learn together. It were very desirable that the church should wait longer for their preparation, if it were possible; but I would by no means discourage such young persons as are drawn out by mere necessity, if they

are but competently qualified; and quickened, with earnest desires of men's salvation, to close study and great diligence in their work.—And this is necessary; for if the people take them to be ignorant, they will despise their teaching, and think themselves as wise as they. The lowest degree tolerable in a minister, is to be “*supra vulgus fidelium.*” It will produce some degree of reverence, when your people know that you are wiser than themselves.

If you are conscious that you are none of the most able ministers, and despair of being revered for your parts, you have the more need to study and labor for their increase. That which you want in natural ability, you must make up in other qualifications, and then you may be as successful as other persons.

III. “Take heed to yourselves,” that your ends in undertaking and discharging the ministerial office, are good and honorable.

The ultimate end of our pastoral oversight, is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives, viz. to please and glorify God. With this is connected the honor of Christ, the welfare of the church, and the salvation of our people; their sanctification and holy obedience; their unity, order, beauty, strength, preservation, and increase.

The whole ministerial work must be managed purely for God, and the good of souls, without any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. None but the upright make God their end, or do all, or anything heartily, for his honor. As for *other* persons, they choose the ministry rather than any other calling, either because their parents devoted them to it, or because it is a pleasant thing to know, and this is a life wherein they have the most opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kinds of science, or because it is not so fatiguing to the body, (loving to favor the flesh,) or because it is accompanied with some degree of reverence from men, and they esteem it an honorable thing to be leaders and teachers, to have others depend on them, and ‘receive the law at their mouth;’ or because it affords them a comfortable maintenance. For such ends as these do many undertake the ministry; and were it not for some or other of these, they would soon give it over. Now, can it be expected that God should greatly bless the services of such men? Since it is not for him that they preach, but for themselves, their own ease or advantage, no wonder if he leave them to them-

selves for the success. A wrong end spoils all our work with regard to ourselves, how good soever it may in itself be. They that undertake this as a common work, to make a trade of it, in order to their subsistence in the world, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though it be good employment. Self-denial is of absolute necessity in every Christian; but of double necessity in a *minister*, as he hath a double sanctification or dedication to God; and without self-denial he cannot faithfully do God any service. Hard studies, much knowledge and excellent preaching, if the end be not right, are but more glorious, hypocritical sinning.

IV. 'Take heed to yourselves,' lest you fall into those sins you preach against, and lest, by your example, you contradict your doctrine.

Will you make it your business to magnify God, and when you have done, dishonor him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet rebel against it? Will you preach his laws, and then wilfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you commit it? If it is not, why do you dissuade men from it? If God's threatenings are true, why do you not fear them? If they are false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them? 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not *thyself*? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest *thou* God?" Rom. 2: 21—23. It is a palpable error in those ministers, who make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will study hard to preach accurately, and study little or not at all to *live* accurately. They are loath to misplace a word in their sermons, but they make nothing of misplacing their affections, words or actions in the course of their lives. They are so nice in their compositions, that they seem to look upon it as a virtue in them to preach seldom, that their language may be the more polite; and all the rhetorical writers they can meet with are pressed to serve them for the adorning their style, but when it comes to matter of practice, how little do they regard what they said? What difference is there between their pulpit-speeches and their familiar discourse! They that are most impatient of barbarisms and solecisms in a sermon, can too easily tolerate them in their conversation. Surely, brethren, we have great cause to take heed what we *do*, as well as what we *say*. A practical doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach

well. If the saving of souls be your end, you will certainly attend to it out of the pulpit, as well as in it; you will *live* for it, and contribute all your endeavors to attain it. If you intend the end of the ministry only in the pulpit, it seems you take yourselves for ministers no longer than you are there; and if so, I think you are unworthy to be esteemed such at all.

You have very great need of the strictest care over your conduct, for you have the same *depraved nature* and sinful inclinations as others. There are in the best of us, the remnants of pride, unbelief, self-seeking, hypocrisy and other sins. How small a matter may cast us down, by enticing us to folly, enkindling our passions, perverting our judgments, abating our resolution and cooling our zeal! Without great care, our treacherous hearts may some time or another, deceive us, and those sins that seem to lie dead, may revive.

Remember too, that as you have the same evil dispositions as other persons, you are exposed to *temptations* peculiar to yourselves; particularly, (as has been already observed) from the great enemy of souls; who obtains a very great conquest if he can make a minister unfaithful, and tempt him into sin. Do not gratify your grand adversary; nor give him an occasion to insult and triumph.

Again, *many eyes are upon you*, and therefore many will observe your falls. The eclipses of the sun by day time, are seldom without many witnesses. If other men may sin without great observation, *you* cannot. While "you are as lights set upon a hill, you cannot be hid," Matt. 5: 14. The light of your doctrine will expose your evil doings. Live therefore as those who remember that the world looks on you with the quick-sighted eye of malice, ready to find the smallest fault, to aggravate and divulge it, yea, to make faults where there are none.

Further, take heed to your conduct, because your sins are attended with more *heinous aggravations* than those of other men. It was a saying of king Alphonsus, "that a great man cannot commit a small sin." We may with more propriety say, that a *learned* man, and a *teacher* of others, cannot; or at least, that *that* sin is great when committed by him, which would be esteemed smaller in another person. Your sins are committed against greater knowledge than the sins of most others can be. They discover greater hypocrisy,

and carry in them greater treachery. You are laid under more solemn obligations to abstain from them than other men, and you enjoy superior advantages for so doing.

Again, take heed of falling into sin, because *the honor of your Lord and Master* is concerned. As you may do him more service, so you may do him more disservice than others. The nearer men stand to God, the greater dishonor does he receive from their miscarriages. A heavy judgment was threatened and executed on Eli and his house, because they "kicked at his sacrifice and offering;" and we are told, "the sin of the young men was great before the Lord," because on account of their profane behavior, "men abhorred the offering of the Lord," 1 Sam. 2: 29 and 17. The aggravation of their sin was, that it "caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," 2 Sam. 12: 11—14; which circumstance provoked God to deal more sharply with David with respect to his crime, than otherwise he would have done. Never give sinners occasion to say, "there goes a covetous, or a drunken priest;" or to reflect when they see you, that notwithstanding all your talk, you are as bad as they. "Offences will come; but woe to the man by whom they come," Matt. 18: 7. You "bear the ark of the Lord," you are intrusted with this honor, and dare you let it fall? Take heed in the name of God, of every word you speak and of every step you take. God will indeed wipe off all the dishonor that may be cast upon *him*, but *you* will not so easily remove the shame and sorrow from yourselves.

Once more; take heed to your conduct, because the *success of all your labors* does very much depend upon it. If you unsay by your lives, what you say with your lips, you will prove the greatest hinderers of your own work. It greatly prevents our success, that other men are all the week contradicting to the people in private, what we have been speaking to them from the word of God, in public; but it will prevent it much more, if we contradict ourselves, if our actions give our words the lie. This is the way to make men think that the word of God is but an idle tale. Surely he that means as he speaks, will *do* as he speaks. One improper word, one unbecoming action, may blast the fruit of many a sermon.

Say, brethren, in the fear of God, do you regard the success of your labors, and wish to see it upon the souls of your hearers, or do you not? If you do not, why do you study

and preach, and call yourselves the ministers of Christ? If you do, surely you cannot easily be induced to spoil your own work. You do not much regard the success of it, if you are willing to sell it at so cheap a rate, as for the indulgence of any sin. Long enough may you lift up your voices against sin, before men will believe there is any such harm in it, or such danger attending it as you talk of, if they see you commit it yourselves. While men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they see your meaning, as well as hear it; and they are much more ready to believe what they see, than what they hear. All that a preacher does, is a kind of preaching. When you live a covetous or careless life, when you drink or game or lose your time, and the like; by your practice you preach these sins to your people. They will give you leave to speak against it in the pulpit as much as you will, if you will but let them alone afterwards, and talk and live as they do; for they take the pulpit to be but as a stage, a place where preachers must show themselves and play their parts, where you have liberty for an hour to say what you please. They will not much regard it, if you do not show by your conduct amongst them, that you meant as you said.

Consider further, (since the success of your labors depends on the grace and blessing of God) whether you will not, by your sins, provoke him to forsake you and blast your endeavors; at least with regard to yourselves, though he may in some measure bless them to his people. Once more,

V. "Take heed to yourselves," that your graces be maintained in life and action.

For this end, preach to yourselves the sermons you study, before you preach them to others. If you were to do this for your own sakes, it would be no lost labor. But I principally recommend it on the public account, and for the sake of the church. When your minds are in a holy frame, your people are likely to partake of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet and heavenly to them. They are likely to feel it when you have been much with God. That which is on your hearts most, will be most in their ears. I confess, I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my flock the distempers of my soul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching is confused also. And I have often observed it in the best of my hearers, that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold accordingly. The next

prayers I have heard from them, have been too much like my sermons. You cannot decline and neglect your duty, but others will be losers by it as well as yourselves. If we let our love decrease, and if we abate our holy care and watchfulness, it will soon appear in our doctrine. If the matter show it not, the manner will, and our hearers are likely to fare the worse for it. Whereas, if we could abound in faith and love and zeal, how would they overflow to the refreshing of our congregations! and how would this appear by increasing the same graces in our people! Watch therefore, brethren, over your own hearts. Keep out lusts, and worldly inclinations, and keep up the life of faith and love. Be much at home, and be much with God. If it be not your daily serious business to study your own hearts, to subdue corruptions, and to "walk with God," all will go amiss with you, and you will starve your audience. Or if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect any great blessing to attend it. Above all be much in secret prayer and meditation. Thence you must fetch the heavenly fire, that must kindle your sacrifices.

But besides this general course of watchfulness for ourselves and others, methinks a minister should take some special pains with his own heart, just before he goes to the congregation. If it be cold *then*, how is he likely to warm the hearts of his hearers? Go *then* to God especially for life. Read some rousing, awakening book, or meditate on the vast importance of the subject on which you are to speak and on the great necessity of your people's souls, that thus you may go, in "the zeal of the Lord, into his house," Psalm 69: 9.

PART SECOND.

OF THE DUTY OF STATED MINISTERS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR PEOPLE.

HAVING showed you, as it was first necessary, what we must be, and what we must do for our own souls, I proceed to the

Second branch of the exhortation, which is thus expressed: "Take heed unto all the *flock* over which the Holy

Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Here it is necessarily supposed that every flock should have their own pastor, and every pastor his own flock. It is the will of God, that Christians should "know their teachers that labor among them, and are over them in the Lord," 1 Thess. 5: 12. Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every church," Acts 14: 23; see Tit. 1: 5. Though a minister be an officer in the universal church, yet he is in an especial manner the *overseer* of that particular church which is committed to his care. When we are ordained ministers, without a special charge, we are licensed and commanded to do our best for all, where we are called to exercise; but when we have undertaken a particular charge, we have restrained the exercise of our gifts and guidance especially to that, so that we should allow others no more of our time and help than our own flock can spare. From this relation of pastor and flock, arise those duties which we mutually owe each other.

It is further implied, that our flocks should be no larger, than we are capable of overseeing, or taking the care of. The nature of the pastoral work is such as requires it to be done by the pastor himself.

By the *flock* or *church* is meant that particular society of Christians of which a bishop or elder has the charge, associated for personal communion in God's public worship, and for other mutual assistance in the way to salvation.

What is meant when we are exhorted *ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*, seems to be, not only to *feed* the church, as it is translated; not merely to *rule* it, as some understand it, but to perform every branch of the pastoral oversight. In a word, it is *pastorem agere*, to do the work of a pastor to the flock.

In treating of this part of the exhortation, we shall, first, consider and recommend the several branches of the ministerial office; ch. i, a minister's stated public work, preaching, prayer, and administering the sacraments; ch. ii, personal inspection and private instruction; ch. iii, the several cases and characters to be regarded, both in preaching and private discourse; ch. iv, catechising; ch. v, arguments for personal instruction, particularly by catechising; ch. vi, church discipline. Secondly, ch. vii, the motives to pastoral fidelity, suggested in the text; thirdly, ch. viii, the objections

against this course of ministerial duty ; fourthly, ch. ix, miscellaneous directions respecting the whole ministerial work ; fifthly, ch. x, the conclusion, being a particular application of the whole.

CHAPTER I.

OF A MINISTER'S STATED PUBLIC WORK ; PREACHING, PRAYER, AND ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS.

ONE of the most important and most excellent parts of our work is I. The public preaching of the word. [Here we shall suggest a few thoughts on the design of preaching, the manner of it, the pronounciation, and the composition of sermons].

I. Of the design of preaching.

The grand design of preaching is, to show men their truest happiness, and to direct them how to attain it. It is the great work of Christian ministers, to acquaint men with God, and that glory which all his chosen people shall enjoy in his presence ; to show them the certainty and excellence of the promised felicity in the life to come, compared with the vanities of the present world, that so we may turn the stream of their thoughts and affections, bring them to a due contempt of this world, and put them upon seeking that durable treasure. This is the work about which we are to treat with men, day after day ; for could we once bring them to propose a right end, and set their hearts unfeignedly on God and heaven, the greatest part of our business would be done. Having shown them the right end, our next work is to acquaint them with the right means of attaining it. We must first teach them the evil and danger of sin ; then we must open to them the great mysteries of redemption, the person, natures, incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and dominion of the blessed Son of God. As also, the conditions imposed on us, the duties he has commanded us, the everlasting torments he has threatened to the finally impenitent, the rich treasury of his blessings and grace, the tenor of his promises and all the privileges of the saints. We must recommend to them a life of holiness and commun-

ion with God. We must excite them to, and direct them in the performance of all the spiritual duties which the gospel requires. At the same time, we must discover to them the deceitfulness of their own hearts; the many difficulties and dangers they will meet with; especially we must show them the depth of Satan's temptations, and assist them against all these. We must reveal and recommend to them the great and gracious designs of God, in his works of creation, providence, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification. In a word, we must teach them as much as we can, of the whole works and word of God. And what two volumes are here for a minister to preach upon! how great, how excellent, how wonderful! All Christians are the disciples or scholars of Christ; the church is his school; we are his ushers; the Bible is his grammar; this it is we must be daily teaching them. The papists would teach them without a book, lest they should learn heresies from the word of truth; but our business is not to teach them without book, but to help them to understand this book of God.

2. Of the manner of preaching.

Preaching is a work which requires greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us commonly bring to it. It is no trifling matter to stand up in the face of a congregation, and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy thing to speak so plainly, that the most ignorant may understand us; so seriously, that the deadest heart may feel; and so convincingly, that contradicting cavillers may be silenced. Certainly, if our hearts were set upon the work of the Lord as they ought to be, it would be done more vigorously than by the most of us it is. Alas! how few ministers preach with all their might, or speak about everlasting joys and torments in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in earnest! It would make a man's heart ache to see a number of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a minister, without having a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. The blow often falls so light, that hard-hearted persons cannot feel. Few ministers will so much as exert their voice, and stir themselves up to an earnest delivery. Or if they speak loud and earnestly, oftentimes they do not answer it with earnestness of matter, and then the voice does but little good. The people will esteem it but mere bawling if the matter does not correspond. On the other hand, it

would grieve one to hear what excellent subjects some ministers treat upon, who yet let them die in their hands for want of a close and lively application; what fit matter they have for convincing sinners, and yet how little they make of it. O Sirs! how plain, how close, how serious should we be in delivering a message of such importance as ours, when the everlasting life or death of men are concerned in it! Methinks we are nowhere so much wanting, as in seriousness; yet nothing is more unsuitable to our business, than to be slight and dull. What! speak coldly for God, and for the salvation of men? Can we believe that our people must be converted or condemned, and yet can we speak to them in a drowsy tone? In the name of God, brethren, awaken your hearts before you come into the pulpit; that when you are there, you may be fit to awaken the hearts of sinners. Remember, that they must be awakened, or damned; but surely a sleepy preacher is not likely to awaken them. Though you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, if you do it coldly, you will unsay by your manner all that you have said. It is a kind of contempt of great things especially so great as these, to speak of them without great affection and fervency. "Whatsoever our hand findeth to do," (certainly then in such a work as preaching for men's salvation,) we should "do it with all our might," Eccl. 9: 10. Though I do not recommend a constant loudness in your delivery, for that will make your fervency contemptible, yet see to it that you have a constant seriousness; and when the matter requires it, as it should do in the application at least, then "lift up your voice and spare not" your spirits. Speak to your hearers as to men that must be awakened either here, or in hell. Look upon your congregation with seriousness and compassion, and think in what a state of joy or torment they must be forever, and that surely will make you earnest, and melt your hearts for them. Whatever you do, let the people *see* that you are in good earnest. You cannot soften men's hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gaudy oration. They will not cast away their dearest pleasures, at the drowsy request of one who seems not to mean as he speaks, or to care much whether his request be granted or not.

Let us then rouse up ourselves to the work of the Lord. Let us speak to our people as for their lives, and "save them as by violence, pulling them out of the fire," Jude v. 23. Sa-

tan will not be charmed out of his possessions; we must lay siege to the souls of sinners which are his chief garrison; must play the battery of God's ordnance against it, and play it close, till a breach is made; not suffering them to make it up again. As we have reasonable creatures to deal with, we must see to it that our sermons be all-convincing; and that we make the light of Scripture and reason shine so bright in the faces of the ungodly, that unless they wilfully shut their eyes, it may even force them to see. A sermon full of mere words, while it wants the light of evidence, and the zeal of life, is but an image, or a well-dressed carcass. In preaching, there is intended a communion of souls between us and our people, or a communication of somewhat from ours to theirs. We must endeavor to communicate the fullest light of evidence from our understandings to theirs, and to warm their hearts by enkindling in them holy affections from our own. The great things which we are to commend to our hearers have reason enough on their side, and lie plain before them in the word of God. We should, therefore, be so furnished with a proper store of evidence, as to come as with a torrent upon their understandings, and bear down all before us. With our dilemmas and exostulations, we should endeavor to bring them to a *non-plus*, that they may be forced to yield to the power of truth, to see that it is great and will prevail.

3. Of the pronounciation.

A great matter with most of our hearers, lies in the pronounciation and tone of the voice. The best matter will not move them, unless it be movingly delivered. When a man has a reading or declaiming tone, and speaks like a school-boy saying a lesson or pronouncing an oration, few are much affected with anything that he says. The want of a familiar tone and expression, is as great a defect in the delivery of most of us, as anything whatever; in this respect, therefore, we should be careful to amend. Let us guard against all affectation, and speak as familiarly to our people as if we were speaking to any of them personally.

4. Of the composition of sermons.

In the study of our sermons we are apt to be negligent; gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions to set them home to men's hearts. We must *study* how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick; not leaving all this to our *extemporary promptitude*, unless it be in cases of necessity.

Next to preaching, let me mention another very important part of our public work ; that is,

II. To guide our people, and be their mouth to God in the prayers and praises of the church, as also to bless them in the name of the Lord.

This sacerdotal part of our office is not the least, nor ought it to be thrust into a corner, as it too frequently is. A very considerable part of God's public service, was wont in all ages of the church, till of late, to consist in praises and eucharistical acts of communion. The Lord's day was kept as a day of thanksgiving, in the hymns and common rejoicings of the faithful ; in special commemoration of the work of redemption, and the happy condition of the gospel church. Though I am as apprehensive of the necessity of preaching as most persons, yet I think that it ought not to prevent our solemn prayers to, and praises of God, from employing more of the Lord's day than they generally do. Our worship should be as evangelical as our doctrine. [Now as it is our business to lead the devotions of our people on such solemn occasions, we ought to take great care, that we do it with that propriety and fervor which will promote their real edification.]

Another part of our pastoral work, which I may take notice of in this chapter, is,

III. The administration of the sacred mysteries, or the seals of God's covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Many ministers totally neglect these ordinances, others administer them in a very careless manner, and a third sort lay a very undue stress on trifling circumstances relating to them, and make them a matter of much contention, even in that ordinance, in which union and communion are so much professed. [I shall only observe that we ought carefully to avoid all these faults.]

CHAPTER II.

OF PERSONAL INSPECTION AND PRIVATE INSTRUCTION.

WE are commanded in the text to "take heed to *all* the flock ;" that is, doubtless, to every individual member of it. To which end it is necessarily supposed, that we should *know*

every person that belongs to our charge; for how can we take heed to them if we do not know them? We must labor to be acquainted, as fully as we can, not only with the persons, but with the state of all our people, their inclinations and conversations; what are the sins they are most in danger of, what duties they neglect, both with respect to the matter and the manner, and to what temptations they are peculiarly liable. If we know not the temperament or disease, we are likely to prove unsuccessful physicians.

Being thus acquainted with all the flock, we must take diligent heed to them, or do the work of a pastor towards every individual. And one would imagine, that all reasonable men would be so well satisfied in regard to this, that nothing need be said to recommend it. Does not a careful shepherd look after every individual sheep, and a good physician attend every particular patient? Why then should not the shepherds and the physicians of the church take heed to every individual member of their charge? Christ himself, the great and 'good shepherd,' who has the whole flock to look after, takes care of every individual; like him whom he describes in his parable, who 'left the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, to seek after one that was lost.' Paul 'taught the people publicly, and from house to house.' He 'warned every man, and taught every man, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' Col. 1: 28. 'Every man is to seek the law at the priest's lips, Mal. 2: 7. We are to 'watch for souls as those that must give an account,' Heb. 13: 17, how we have done it.

To these and a variety of other Scriptures which might be quoted to our present purpose, I might add many passages from the ancient counsels, from whence it appears that such a personal inspection was the practice of the most ancient times. But I shall only mention one from Ignatius; "Let assemblies be often gathered; seek after (or inquire of) all by name; despise not servant-men or maids."¹

Let me now mention a few particulars to which this part of our work should be applied.

1. We should use all the means we can to instruct the ignorant in the matters of their salvation.

We should use our most plain familiar words in discours-

¹ πικνότερον συναγωγαί γινέσθωσαν· ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντα ζητεῖ. Δούλους καὶ δούλας μὴ ὑπερηφάνει.—*Ignat. ad Polyc.*

ing with them, and should give or lend them such books as are fit for them. We should persuade them to learn catechisms; and direct such as cannot read, to get help of their neighbors, whom we should exhort to give them their assistance; especially such as have the best opportunities for it.

2. We should be ready to give advice to such as come to us with cases of conscience; especially that great case which the Jews put to Peter, and the jailer to Paul and Silas, 'What must we do to be saved?'

A minister is not only to be employed in public preaching to his people, but should be a known counsellor for their souls, as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician for their bodies. Not that a minister, any more than a physician or lawyer, should be troubled with every trifling matter about which others can advise them as well. But every man that is in doubts and difficulties about matters of importance, should bring his case to his minister for resolution. Thus Nicodemus came to Christ, as it was usual for the people to go to the priest, 'whose lips were to preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth, they were to ask the law, because he was the messenger of the Lord of hosts,' Mal. 2: 7. Since the people are grown too much unacquainted with the office of the ministry, and their own duty herein, it belongs to us to acquaint them with it, and to press them publicly, to come to us for advice in cases of great concernment to their souls. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring them to this! But how few are there who heartily press their people to it! A sad case, that men's souls should be injured and hazarded by the total neglect of so great a duty, and that ministers should scarce ever tell them of it, and awaken them to it! Were they but duly sensible of the need and importance of it, you would have them more frequently knocking at your doors, to open their cases, to make their complaints, and to ask your advice. I beseech you, then, put them more upon this, and perform your duty carefully when they seek your help.

To this end it is very necessary, that we should be acquainted with practical cases, and especially with the nature of true grace, so that we may assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question, which concerns their everlasting life or death. One word of seasonable, prudent advice, given by a minister to persons in necessity, has sometimes done that good which many sermons have failed of doing.

3. We should have an especial eye upon families, to see that they be well-ordered, and that the duties of each relation be well performed.

The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of church and state, depend much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we undo all. What are we likely to do towards the reforming of a congregation, if all the work be cast upon us alone, and masters of families neglect that necessary duty of theirs, by which they are obliged to help us? If any good be begun by the ministry in any soul, a careless, prayerless, worldly family is likely to stifle, or very much hinder it. Whereas, if you could but get the rulers of families to do their part, to take up the work where you left it; what abundance of good might be done by it! Do all that you can, therefore, to promote this business, if ever you desire the true reformation and welfare of your parishes.

To this end, get information how every family is conducted, and how God is worshipped in it, that you may know how to proceed. Go now and then among them, when they are most at leisure, and ask the master of the family whether he prays with them and reads the Scripture. Labor to convince such as neglect this, of their sin. If you have an opportunity, pray with them before you go, to give them an example what you would have them do, and how they should do it. Then get them to promise that they will be more conscientious therein for the future. If you find any unable to pray in tolerable expressions, through ignorance or disuse, persuade them to study their wants, and get their hearts affected with them. Advise them frequently to visit those neighbors who use to pray, that they may learn; and in the meantime, recommend it to them to use a form of prayer, rather than omit the duty. It is necessary to most illiterate people, who have not been brought up where prayer has been used, to begin with a form; because otherwise they will be able to do nothing. From a sense of their inability, they will wholly neglect the duty, though they desire to perform it. Many persons can utter some honest requests in secret, who will not be able to speak tolerable sense, before others; and I will not be one of them that had rather the duty were wholly neglected, or profaned and made contemptible, than encourage them to use a form, either recited by memory, or read. Tell them, however, that it is their sin and shame to

be so unacquainted with their own necessities, as not to know how to speak to God in prayer, when every beggar can find words to ask an alms; and that this form is only to be used till they can do without it; which they ought to endeavor after, that their expressions may be varied according to their necessities and observations.

See that besides the Bible, they have some profitable moving books in every family. If they have none, persuade them to buy some of a low price. If they are not able, either give them, or procure for them such as are likely to be of the greatest use to them. Engage them to read in the evening, when they have leisure, but especially on the Lord's day; and by all means persuade them to teach their children to read English. Particularly, direct them how to spend the Lord's day; how to despatch their worldly business, so as to prevent encumbrances and distractions; and when they have attended public worship, how to spend their time in their families. The life of religion, among poor people especially, depends much upon this, because they have very little time besides this to spare. If they lose this, they lose all, and will remain ignorant and brutish. Persuade the master of the family, every Lord's day evening, to cause all his family to repeat some catechism to him, and give him an account of what they have learned that day in public. If you find any who cannot spend their time profitably at home, advise them to take their families to some godly neighbor that can.

If any in the family are known to be unruly, give the ruler a special charge concerning them, and make him understand what a sin it is to connive at, and tolerate them. If you can thus get masters of families to perform their duty, they will save you much pains with the rest, and greatly promote the success of your labors. You cannot expect a general reformation, till you procure family reformation. Some little obscure religion there may be in here and there one, but while it sticks with single persons, and is not promoted by these societies, it does not prosper nor promise much for future increase.

4. Another part of our ministerial oversight lies in visiting the sick, and helping them to prepare for a fruitful life, or a happy death.

Though this be the business of all our lives and theirs, yet a time of sickness requires extraordinary care both in them and us. When time is almost gone, and they must be now

or never reconciled to God and possessed of his grace, oh! how does it concern them to redeem their few remaining hours, and 'lay hold on eternal life!' And when we see that we shall have but a few more days or hours with them, in which to speak to them in reference to their eternal state, what man that is not an infidel, or to the last degree stupid, would not be with them, and do all that he can in that short space for their salvation? Will it not awaken us to compassion, to look upon a languishing man, and think that within a few days his soul will be in heaven or in hell? So great is the change made by death, that it should awaken us to the greatest sensibility to see a man so near it; and it should excite in us the deepest pangs of compassion, to do the office of inferior angels for the soul, before it departs from the flesh, that it may be ready for the convoy of superior angels, to transmit it to the prepared glory. When a man is almost at his journey's end, and the next step puts him into heaven or hell, it is time for us to help him if we can, while there is hope.

But further, as the present necessity of sick persons should induce us to take that opportunity for their good, so should the advantage which sickness and the foresight of death affordeth for it. There are few of the stoutest hearts, but will hear us on their death-beds, though they scorned us before. They will then be as tame as lambs, who were before as untractable as madmen. I find not one in ten of the most obstinate, scornful wretches in the parish, but when they come to die, will humble themselves, confess their faults, seem penitent, and promise, if they should recover, to reform their lives. With what resolution will the worst of them seem to cast away their sins, exclaim against their follies, and the vanities of the world, when they see that death is in earnest with them! I confess it is very common for persons at such a season to be frightened into ineffectual purposes, but not so common to be converted to fixed resolutions. Yet there are some exceptions. That there are so *few*, should make both them and us the more diligent in the time of health; and that there are *any* should bestir us at last, in the use of the last remedies.

It will not be useless to *ourselves* to read such lectures of mortality. Surely it will much try the faith and seriousness of ministers or others, to be about dying men; they will have much opportunity to discern, whether they themselves are in

good earnest about the affairs of the world to come. "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting;" for it tends to 'make the heart better' when we see 'the end of all the living,' Eccl. 7: 2, and what it is that the world will do for those who sell their salvation for it. It will excite us the better to consider the use of faith and holiness, which cannot prevent *us* from dying, any more than others, but which may enable us to die better than they.

To render your visits to the sick the more useful, take the following directions.

1. Stay not till their strength and understanding be gone, and the time so short that you scarcely know what to do, but go to them as soon as you hear they are sick, whether they send for you or not.

2. When the time is so short, that there is no opportunity to attempt the change of their hearts in that distinct and gradual way which is usual with others, we must be sure to dwell upon those truths which are of the greatest importance, and which are the most likely to effect the great work of their conversion. Show them the certainty and glory of the life to come, the way in which it was purchased, the great sin and folly of neglecting it in time of health; yet the possibility that remains of obtaining it, if they do but close with it heartily, as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the way thereto; abhorring themselves for their former evil, and unfeignedly resigning up themselves to be justified, sanctified, ruled and saved by him. Show them the sufficiency and necessity of the redemption by Jesus Christ, and the fulness of the Spirit, which they may, and must be partakers of; the nature and necessity of faith, repentance, and resolutions for new obedience, according as there shall be opportunity. Labor, upon conviction and deliberation, to engage them by solemn promise to Christ, that if their lives are spared, they will yield him such obedience.¹

3. If they recover, go to them purposely to remind them of their promises, that they may reduce them to practice. If, at any time afterward, you see them remiss, go to them again, to put them in mind of what they formerly said; this

¹ In MR. BAXTER'S practical works there is "A form of exhortation to the godly and the ungodly in their sickness," which the reader may find it worth his while to consult, for further direction on this head.

is often of great use to such as recover; it has been the means of converting many a soul. It is necessary, therefore, that you visit them whose sickness is not mortal, as well as them that are dying; you will hereby have some advantage to bring them to repentance and newness of life, as you will afterwards have this to plead against their sins. When the emperor Sigismund asked the bishop of Coln, "What was the way to be saved?" he answered him, "that he must be what he promised to be, when he was last troubled with the stone or the gout." In such a manner, may we remind our people, after a fit of sickness, of the resolutions they made in it.

5. It is the duty of ministers to reprove and admonish such as have been guilty of notorious and scandalous sins.

Before we bring such matters to the congregation, [the propriety and manner of which will be afterwards considered,] it is ordinarily fit for the minister to try what he himself can do more privately, to bow the sinner to repentance. A great deal of skill is here required, and a difference must be made according to the various tempers of the offenders. But with the most, it will be necessary to fall on with the greatest plainness and power; to shake their careless hearts, and show them the evil of sin, its sad effects, the unkindness, unreasonableness, unprofitableness, and other aggravations that attend it; what it is they have done against God and themselves.

6. We ought to give due encouragement to those humble, upright, obedient Christians, who profit by our teaching, and are ornaments to their profession.

We should, in the eyes of all the flock, put some difference between them and others, by our more especial familiarity, and other testimonies of our approbation of, and rejoicing over them, that so we may both encourage them, and excite others to imitate them. God's graces are amiable and honorable in all, even in the poorest of the flock, as well as in their pastors. The smallest degrees must be cherished and encouraged; but the highest, more openly honored and proposed to imitation. They who slight the most gracious because they are of the laity, while they claim to themselves the honor of the clergy, as they show themselves proud and carnal, take the ready way to debase themselves, and to bring their office into contempt. If there be no honor due

to the real sanctity of a Christian, much less to the relative sanctity of a pastor, nor can he reasonably expect it should be given him.

CHAPTER III.

OF SEVERAL PARTICULAR CASES AND CHARACTERS, TO BE REGARDED BOTH IN PREACHING AND PRIVATE DISCOURSE.

[HAVING treated of preaching in general, and recommended private instruction, with regard to some objects peculiar to it, we shall now take notice of such cases as are to be attended to in both.]

1. One great part of our ministerial work (i. e. both in public and in private,) is to bring unsound professors to sincerity.

Though we be not absolutely certain that this or that man in particular is unsound and un sanctified, yet, as long as we have a certainty that many such attend upon our ministrations; and since we have a great probability that this is the character of some that we can name, we have ground enough to go upon, in treating with them for their conversion.

Alas! the misery of the unconverted is so great, that it calls loudest for our compassion. They are "in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity," Acts. 8: 23. They have "no part or fellowship" in the pardon of sin, or the hope of glory. We have therefore a work of great necessity to do for them; even to "open their eyes, to turn them from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ," Acts 26: 18; to soften and "open their hearts," to the entertainment of the truth, 'if peradventure God will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of it, that they may escape out of the snare of Satan, who are led captive by him at his will,' 2 Tim. 2: 25, 26. It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation, that methinks we should not be able to let them alone, either in public or in private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess I am forced frequently to neglect that which would tend to the further increase of the godly, and

what may be called "stronger meat," Heb. 5: 12, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who can talk of controversies, or nice unnecessary points, or even truths of a lower degree of necessity, however excellent, to gratify certain hearers of higher fancies, (who look for rarities, and expect to have their ears pleased,) while he sees a number of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before him, who must be *changed* or *damned*? Methinks I even see them entering upon their final woe! Methinks I hear them crying out for the speediest help! If they have not hearts to seek or ask for help themselves, their misery speaks the louder. As Paul's "spirit was stirred within him," when he saw the Athenians so addicted to idolatry, Acts 17: 16, methinks it should cast us into one of his paroxysms, to see such numbers of men in the greatest danger of being everlastingly undone. If by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues, than Croesus's danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go down to hell for want of speaking to him, has infinitely less esteem for souls than the Redeemer of them had; and less for his neighbor, than rational charity will allow him to have for his greatest enemy. Oh! therefore brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the *most miserable*. Whatever you pass over, forget not poor souls, who are under the condemnation and curse of the law, and who may every hour expect the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. Oh! call after the impenitent with the greatest importunity, and diligently pursue this great work of converting souls, whatever else you leave undone!

II. The next part of our ministerial work, is for the *building up* those who are already converted.

And here our work is various, according to the various conditions of such.

I. Many of our flock are young and weak; though of long standing, yet of small proficiency or strength.

Indeed this is the most common condition of the godly. Most of them stop at very low degrees of grace, and it is no easy thing to get them higher. To bring them to higher and stricter *opinions*, is easy enough; but to increase their knowledge and gifts, is not easy, and to increase their *graces* is the hardest of all:

A state of weakness in grace is of very bad consequence. It abates consolation and delight in God, and makes persons

less serviceable to God and man. They dishonor the gospel; they do but little good to any about them, or themselves. And as they live to but little profit, they are unwilling, and too unfit to die. How diligent then should ministers be, to cherish and increase the graces of God's people! The strength of Christians is the honor of the church. When men are inflamed with the love of God, live by a lively, operative faith, set light by the profits and honors of the world, "love one another with a pure heart fervently," can bear and heartily forgive a wrong, "suffer joyfully" for the cause of Christ, walk inoffensively in the world, study to do good, willing "to be the servants of all for their good, becoming all things to all men that they may win them," yet "abstaining from the appearance of evil," and seasoning all their actions with a sweet mixture of prudence, humility, zeal and heavenly spirituality; O what an honor are they to their profession! what ornaments to the church! how excellently serviceable to God and man! The world would sooner believe that the gospel is indeed a work of truth and power, if they could see more of these effects of it upon the hearts and lives of men. They are better able to read the nature of a man's religion in his *life* than in the *bible*. Those that 'obey not the word may be won by the conversation,' 1 Pet. 3: 1, of such as these. It is therefore a necessary part of our work, to labor after the polishing and "perfecting of the saints," that they may 'be strong in the Lord, and fitted for their Master's use.'

2. Another sort of converts, who need our assistance, are such as labor under some particular distemper, or such as are often overcome by some particular lusts, which keeps their graces under, and makes them temptations or troubles to others, and burdens to themselves.

Alas! there are too many such persons as these. Some are especially addicted to pride, some to worldliness, some to this or that sensual desire, and many to sudden anger or violent passions. Now it is our duty to give our assistance to all these. We should labor, by dissuasions and clear discoveries of the odiousness of their sin, and by suitable directions about the way of remedy, to help them to a fuller conquest of their corruptions. We are the leaders of Christ's army against the "powers of darkness," and we must resist all the "works of darkness," wherever we find them, though it be in "the children of light." We must be no more ten-

der of the sins of the godly than of the ungodly, nor ought we any more to befriend or favor them. In proportion as we love their persons above others, should we express it by opposing their sins. We must expect to meet with some tender persons among them, (especially when iniquity has got to any head, and many have indulged it,) who will be as peevish, and as impatient of reproof, as some worse men; nay, they will interest piety itself with their faults, and say that a minister that preaches against them, preaches against the godly. But the servants of Christ must do their duty, notwithstanding men's peevishness, and must not so far "hate their brother," Lev. 19: 17, as to forbear the plain rebuking of him, and "suffer sin to lie upon his soul."

3. Another sort of persons who require our regard, are *declining Christians*, who are either fallen into some scandalous sin, or who have abated their zeal and diligence, and discover that they have "lost their former love."

As the case of backsliders is very sad, our diligence must be great for their recovery. It is sad to *themselves*, to have lost so much of their life and peace and usefulness, and to have become so serviceable to Satan and his cause. It is sad to *us*, to see that all our labor is come to this; that when we have taken so much pains with men, and have entertained such hopes concerning them, all should be so far frustrated. It is saddest of all, to think that God should be so abused by those whom he hath so loved, and for whom he has done so much; that the enemy should have obtained such an advantage over their graces, and that Christ should be so "wounded in the house of his friends;" that the name of God should be evil spoken of through them, and that those who fear him should be reproached for their sakes. Besides, the condition of such persons is deplorable, as a partial backsliding has a tendency towards a total apostacy, and would end in it, if special grace were not to prevent it. The worse the condition of such Christians is, the more lies upon us for their effectual recovery. We should "restore those that are overtaken with a fault, in the spirit of meekness," Gal. 6: 1, and yet see to it, that the sore be thoroughly searched and healed, what pain soever it cost. We should especially look to the honor of the gospel, and see that such persons rise by such free and full confessions, and by such expressions of true repentance, that some reparation may be made to the church and their holy profession, for the wound of dishonor

they have given both, by their sin. Much skill is required to the restoring of such souls.

4. Much of our assistance is necessary for such of our people as have fallen under some great temptation.

Every minister, therefore, should have much insight into "Satan's wiles." We, of all persons, should "not be ignorant of his devices." We should be acquainted with the great variety of them, with the cunning craft of his instruments, "who lie in wait to deceive," and with all the methods used by the grand deceiver. Some of our people lie under temptations to error; especially the young, the unsettled, the self-conceited, and such as are most conversant with seducers. Young, raw, ungrounded Christians, are commonly of their mind who have most interest in their esteem, and most opportunity of familiar conversation to draw them into their way. And as they are tinder, erroneous persons want not the sparks of zeal to set them on fire. A zeal for error and opinions of our own is natural; it is easily kindled and kept alive; though it is far otherwise with a spiritual zeal for God. How much prudence and industry then is necessary for a pastor, to preserve the flock from being corrupted with noxious conceits; and especially such as lie under peculiar temptations to it! Others are under temptations to worldly-mindedness, others to intemperance, others to lust; some to one sin, and some to another. A faithful pastor, therefore, should have his eye upon all his flock, should labor to be acquainted with their natural dispositions, with their business in the world, with the company they live in, or are most conversant with; that so he may know where their temptations lie, and endeavor speedily, prudently and diligently to help them, both by his public preaching and private discourse.

5. Another branch of our ministerial work, is to comfort the disconsolate, and to settle the peace of our people's souls on sure and lasting grounds.

To which end, the quality of their complaints, and the course of their lives had need to be known; for all persons must not have the same consolations, who have the same complaints.¹

¹ The author tells us, that the reason of his brevity on this head, was, that he had particularly treated of it in some of his other works, and that this subject has been considered at large by several other authors, particularly by Mr. Bolton, in his "Instructions for right comforting."

6. Another part of our work with regard to real Christians, respects those who are strong and lively.

They have need of our assistance, partly to prevent their temptations and declensions, or to preserve the grace they have, partly to help them to a further progress and increase, and partly to direct them in the improvement of their graces for the service of Christ and the assistance of their brethren; as also to encourage them (especially the aged, the tempted and the afflicted) to persevere, that they "may receive their crown."

III. Those whose characters are doubtful, are also to be regarded both in our public and private discourses.

There are some of our flock, who by a professed willingness to learn and obey, make it probable that they may have true repentance and faith, who yet, by their ignorance or lukewarmness or by some uneven walking, will occasion us fears as great as, or greater than our hopes with regard to their present safety. We may see occasion to doubt the worst, though we have not ground to charge them with being unconverted and impenitent persons. I think half that come to me are of this sort, among whom I almost dare pronounce ten to one to be unregenerate.

Now it may put some younger ministers to a difficulty to know what they should do with this sort of people, where they have no sufficient ground to pronounce them godly or ungodly, whatever their fears or hopes may be. I would advise you to be very cautious how you pass too hasty or absolute censures on any that you have to do with; because it is not an easy matter to discern that a man is certainly graceless, who professes to be a Christian. Besides, we may discharge our duty with regard to such persons, without an absolute conclusion concerning their real characters. With regard to such, let the following hints suffice.

Keep them close to the use of public and private means. Be often with the lukewarm and careless, to admonish and awaken them; for this purpose take the opportunities of sickness, which will bow their hearts and open their ears. See that they spend the Lord's day, and order their families, aright. Draw them off from the temptations to, and occasions of sin. Charge them to come to you for help when their minds are distressed, to open to you their temptations and dangers, before they are swallowed up by them. In your preaching, and your discourse with them, strike at the

great radical sins; self-seeking, carnality, sensuality, pride, worldly-mindedness, infidelity, etc. Press them to reading the Scriptures and other good books; and direct them to such as are most likely to awaken them. Engage their godly neighbors to have an eye over them. Keep up discipline in the church, to awe them. But especially maintain the life of grace in your own souls, that it may so appear to them in all your sermons, that every one who comes cold to the assembly, may have his mind properly affected before he departs.

[Thus have we given some directions for discharging our ministerial duty with regard to the unconverted, to real converts of various classes, and to those whose characters are doubtful. But there is another sort of men, whom we may probably meet with, in regard to whom it may be proper in this chapter to give a few hints of advice;] That is,

IV. Opiniated persons, who being tainted with pride and self-conceit, are more ready to teach, than to be taught; who rather than receive instruction from you, will quarrel with you as ignorant or erroneous.

The preservation of the unity and peace of your congregations, doth very much depend on your right dealing with such persons as these. [—In order to cure them of their conceits, and to prevent others from being infected with them, take the following directions.]

1. If any such person should fall in your way in any of your private conferences with your people, and by his impertinence should strive to divert you from better discourse, tell him that the meeting was appointed for another use, and that you think it improper to pervert it from that. However, let him know, that you do not say this to avoid any trial of the truth, but that you will, at any other time, give him satisfaction or receive instruction from him.

2. When you meet him with such an intent, ask him such questions as appear to be of great importance, but take care to throw some difficulty in his way, and be sure to keep the predicate out of your questions; put him most upon defining or distinguishing.¹ If he discover his ignorance in the case proposed, endeavor to humble him under a sense of his pride and presumption, in going about with a teaching,

¹ The author produces a number of such questions (Chap. viii. § 1.) which it was judged unnecessary here to retain.

contentious behavior, while he is so ignorant in things of very great moment. At the same time, see to it that you are able to give him information with regard to those points, wherein you find him ignorant.

3. Take care to discern the *spirit* of the man. If he be a settled, perverse schismatic, quite transported with pride, humble him as much as you can before other persons. But if you find him godly, and there is hope of his restoration, only do this in a private manner. Do not let fall any bitter words that would tend to his disparagement. We must always be as tender of the reputation of good men, as our fidelity to them and the truth will permit. We must "restore such with the spirit of meekness," Gal. 6: 1. There is little hope of doing them any good, if you once exasperate them and disaffect them towards you.

4. If you come to debate any controversy with such persons, tell them, that seeing they think themselves able to teach you, it is your desire to learn. When they have spoken their minds to you in their dictatorial manner, let them know, that they have said nothing *new* to you; that you had considered of it all before, and that if you had seen divine evidence for it, you had received it long ago; that you are truly willing to receive all truth, but that you have far better evidence for the doctrines you have embraced, than they have for the contrary. If they desire to hear what your evidence is, tell them, that if they will hear as learners, with impartiality and humility, freely entertaining the truth, you will communicate your evidence to them in the best manner you can. When you have brought any such person to this, first show him your reasons against the grossest imperfections of his own discourse, and then give him a few of the clearest texts of Scripture in support of your sentiments. When you have done, give him some book that best defends the truth in question; desire him to peruse it carefully, and to bring you a sober, solid answer to it, if, after the perusal, he judge it to be unsound. And if you can, fasten some one of the most striking evidences on him, before you leave him. If he refuse to read the book, endeavor to convince him of his unfaithfulness to the truth and his own soul.

But above all, before you part, sum up the truths wherein you are both agreed. Ask such a person, whether he supposes that you may obtain salvation if you live according to your faith? And, if he will allow that you may, whether

they that are so far agreed should not live in love and peace, as children of the same God, and heirs of the same kingdom? whether, notwithstanding your smaller difference, you are not bound to hold communion in public worship and church relation, and to walk together in the fear of God? And whether it be not schism to separate for the sake of so small a disagreement?

5. In order to preserve the church from such an infection it is desirable, that the minister be so far superior to the people, as to be able to teach them, and keep them in awe, and manifest their weaknesses to themselves and others. The truth is, (a truth which cannot be hid,) it is much owing to the weakness of ministers, that our poor people run into so many factions: When a proud seducer has a nimble tongue, and a minister is so dull or ignorant as to be confounded by him in company, it brings him into contempt, and overthrows the weak, who judge his to be the best cause, that talks in the most confident, plausible and triumphant manner.

6. Endeavor frequently and thoroughly to possess your people's minds with the nature, necessity and daily use of the great unquestionable principles of religion, and of the great sin and danger of a perverse zeal about the lower points; especially before the greater are well understood. Convince them of the obligations we are all under, to maintain the unity and peace of the church.

If any small (but hurtful) controversy should arise, in order to divert them from it, do you raise a greater yourself; which you have better advantage to manage, and which is not likely to make a division. Let contentious persons know that there are greater difficulties than theirs, first to be resolved. Go and converse with the persons whom you perceive to be affected with any noxious conceits, as soon as possible. When a fire is kindling, resist it in the beginning, and make not light of the smallest spark.

7. Preach to such auditors as these, some higher points which shall be above their understandings. Feed them not always "with milk," but sometimes with "strong meat;" for it exceedingly puffs them up with pride, when they hear nothing from ministers, but what they already know, and can say themselves; this it is that makes them think themselves as wise as you, and as fit to be teachers, and it is this that hath set so many of them on preaching; for they believe that you know no more than you preach. However, do not

neglect the great fundamentals of religion, nor wrong other persons, for their sakes.

8. Be sure to preach as little as possible against such persons as these. Never in a direct manner oppose their sect by name, or any reproachful titles; for such persons are ordinarily exceeding tender, proud, passionate and rash; so that they will but hate you, and fly from you as an enemy, and say that you rail at them. Without mentioning *them*, lay the grounds clearly and soundly, which must subvert their *errors*. If you are obliged at any time to deal with them directly, handle the controversy thoroughly, peaceably and convincingly. Be not long upon it; do not say all that can be said; but choose that which they can have the least pretence to quarrel with, and omit what would require more trouble to defend.

9. Keep up private meetings, and draw these persons in among you; manage them prudently, and by this means you may keep them from such meetings among themselves, as will promote divisions. Professors very commonly will have private meetings, which, if well conducted, are of great use to their edification, but if not, will be of bad consequence.

In the management of them for the present purpose, observe the following rules. Be sure that you give a constant attendance. Let not the exercises of the meeting be such as encourage private men's ostentation of their gifts, but such as tend to the edification of the people. Do not let private men preach or expound Scripture; nor let every one speak to questions of his own proposing; but do you repeat the sermons you have preached, call upon God in prayer, and sing his praise. Yet let there be some opportunity for the people to speak. When you have done repeating, give them liberty to propose any difficulties they want to have resolved respecting the subject in hand, or any other. If you perceive any of them bent upon the exercise of their abilities for ostentation, be not too severe upon them, but mildly let them know, that it is for their good and the edification of the church, that you oppose it. However,

10. Make use of your people's gifts to the uttermost, as your helpers, in their proper places, in an ordinary way, and under your guidance. This may prevent them from using them in a disorderly way, in opposition to you. It has been a great cause of schism, that ministers have contemptuously refused to make use of private men's gifts for their assistance

and thrust them too far from holy things. The good work is likely to go on but poorly, if none but ministers are employed in it. By a prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able Christians, (none of which God gave to be buried, but for common use,) we may receive much help from them, and prevent their abuse, as lawful marriage prevents fornication.

You may use the gifts of your people for several purposes; e. g. urge them to be diligent in teaching, catechising, and praying with their own families. Recommend it to them to step out now and then, to their ignorant neighbors, to catechise and instruct them, in meekness and patience. Desire them to go often to impenitent and scandalous sinners, and endeavor, with all possible skill and earnestness, yet also with love and patience, to reform, convert and save their souls. Acquaint them with their duty of watching over each other "in brotherly love;" of "admonishing and exhorting one another daily;" if any of them walk disorderly, to reprove them, and if they prevail not, "to tell the officers of the church," that they may be further dealt with, as Christ has appointed. At your private meetings, employ them in prayer. In some cases, send them to visit particular persons in your stead, when you are prevented from going. Let some of them be chosen to represent, and be agents for the church, in affairs of importance relating to it. Let such as are fit, be made subservient officers, I mean *deacons*, that they may afford you help in a regular way; and then they will, by their relation, discern themselves obliged to maintain the unity of the church, and the authority of the ministry. But be sure that they be men competently qualified for the office.

I am persuaded, if ministers had thus used the abilities of their ablest members, they might have prevented much of the division, distraction and apostasy, that have befallen us; for they would then have found work enough upon their hands, for higher parts than theirs, without invading the ministry, and would have seen cause to bewail the inequality of their abilities to the work which belonged to them. Experience would have convinced and humbled them more than our words will do.

11. Still keep up Christian love and familiarity even with those that have begun to warp and make defection; lose not

your interest in them while you have any thoughts of attempting their recovery.

If they withdraw into separate meetings, follow them, and enter into a mild debate as to the lawfulness of it. Tell them that you have a mind to hear what they have to say, and to be among them for their good, if they will give you leave, for fear they should run to further evil. You will thereby prevent much reviling, and the venting of further errors, and by a moderate, gentle opposition of them, may in time convince them of their folly; and by this means, if any seducers come from abroad to confirm them, you will be ready to oppose them, and so you will at least do much to prevent the increase of their party.

Ministers themselves have occasioned many of the divisions in England, by contemning those that have withdrawn into separate meetings, by talking against them, and by reproving them in the pulpit; while they have been entire strangers to them, or have shunned their company, and in the meantime have given seducers an opportunity to be familiar with them, and to do what they pleased with them without contradiction. Oh that ministers had been less guilty of the errors and schisms that they talk against! But it is easier to chide sectaries in the pulpit, and subscribe a testimony against them, than to play the skilful physician for their cure, or to do the tenth part of our duty to prevent or heal their disorders. I am not finding fault with prudent reprehensions of, or testimonies against them in public; but I think too many of us have cause to fear, lest we do but publicly proclaim our own shame by our negligence or weakness, and lest, in condemning and testifying against them, we testify against and condemn ourselves.

12. In order to preserve your church from divisions, and to keep your people from running after irregular, libertine preachers, be sure that you never let these authors of schism outdo you in anything that is good.

As truth should be more effectual for sanctification than error, if you give them this advantage, you give them the day, and all your disputations will do but little good. Weak people judge all by the outward appearance, and by the effects, not being able to judge of the doctrine itself; they think he has the best cause, whom they take to be the best man. I extend this rule both to doctrine and to life: e. g. if a libertine preach *free grace*, do you preach it up more ef-

fectually than he; be much more upon it, and make it more glorious on right grounds, than he can do on his wrong. If on the like pretence he magnify the grace of *love*, do not contradict him in the affirmative, only in the negative and destructive part; but go beyond him, and preach up the love of God with its motives and effects, more fully and effectually than he can do on the corrupt grounds on which he proceeds; or else you will make all the silly people believe, that the difference between you and him is, that he is for free grace and for the love of God, and that you are against both. So if an enthusiast talks of the Holy Ghost, as the light and witness and law within us, do you fall upon that subject too, and do that well which he does ill; preach up the office of the Holy Spirit, his indwelling and operations, the light and testimony and law within us, better than he does. You must *dwell* upon these things in your preaching, as well as he; for the people will take no notice of a short concession. I might mention many more instances to this purpose, but these will be sufficient to show what I mean; the sum of which is, that preaching truth is the most successful way of confuting error. Further,

We should be careful that seducers do not excel us in the practice of religious duties, any more than in defending any sacred truths.

Do any of them express a hatred of sin, and a desire of church-reformation? We should much more. Do they, when they meet together, spend their time in religious discourse, instead of vain jangling? Let us do so much more. Are they unwearied in propagating their opinions? Let us be much more diligent in propagating the truth. Will they condescend to the meanest, and 'creep into houses to lead captive the silliest' of the flock? Let us stoop as low, and be as diligent, to do them good. Are they loving to their party and contemners of the world? Let us be lovers of *all*, especially of all the saints. Let us "do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith." Let us love an enemy as well as they can do a friend. Let us be more just than they, more merciful than they, more humble, meek, and patient than they; "for this is the will of God, that by well-doing, we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," 1 Pet. 2: 15. There is no virtue wherein your example will do more to abate men's prejudices, than humility, meekness and self-denial. Forgive injuries, and "be not overcome of evil,

but overcome evil with good." Imitate our blessed Lord, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again." Take not up carnal weapons against your enemies, (further than self-preservation or the public good requireth it,) but overcome them with kindness, patience and gentleness. If you believe that Christ was more imitable than Caesar or Alexander, and that it is more glorious to be a Christian than a conqueror, or to be a man than a beast, contend with charity and not with violence. Do not set force against force; but meekness, love and patience. If we thus excel these men in a holy, harmless, righteous, merciful, fruitful and heavenly life, as well as in soundness of doctrine, 'by our fruits we shall be known;' and the weaker sort of people will see the truth, in this reflection of it, who cannot see it in itself. Then our 'light will so shine before men, that they may be led to glorify our father who is in heaven;' and even 'they that obey not the word, may, without the word, be won by the conversation,' 1 Pet. 3: 1, 2, of their teachers.

Oh how happy had England been; how happy had all the churches been, if the ministers of the gospel had taken these courses! This would have done more against error and schism, than all our exclaiming against them hath done, or than all the force of the magistrate can do.

CHAPTER IV.

OF CATECHISING:¹ WITH PARTICULAR DIRECTIONS IN REFERENCE TO IT.

[HAVING treated of private and personal instruction, we proceed to recommend one very excellent and useful method of conducting it, viz. by Catechising.] For the better management of this work, the following directions may be of

¹ By Catechising, the Author plainly meant, not only hearing persons repeat, and expounding to them, *a form of words* containing the grand and common principles of religion; but proposing to them familiar questions of *our own*, in order the better to judge of their knowledge and dispositions, and to be the more capable of suiting our instructions and admonitions to them. And this method he recommends to be used not only with respect to children, but those who are come to years of maturity.

service; they are of two kinds, viz. for bringing your people to comply with your design, and for executing it in the most acceptable and useful manner.

I. In order to bring those persons to comply with this method of instruction, [whom you think proper, thus to instruct.]

It will be a matter of vast importance to behave yourselves, through the main course of your ministry, in such a manner as may convince them of your ability, and your unfeigned love to them. When people are convinced that a minister is qualified for his work, and intends no private ends of his own but merely their good, they will more readily stoop to his advice, and be persuaded by him.

Supposing this general preparation, the next thing to be done is, to convince your people of the benefit and necessity of this method of instruction, for the good of their souls. In order to this, it will be proper to preach some plain and serious sermons to show the benefit and necessity of an acquaintance with divine truths in general, particularly the great *principles* of religion; and that persons advanced in life have equal need to be instructed in them with others, and in some respects greater. Make them understand that this is not an arbitrary business of your devising or imposing, but that "necessity is laid upon you" to look to every member of your flock, according to your ability, and that if you neglect to do it, they may "perish in their iniquities, and their blood be required at your hands." When this is done, furnish every family with a catechism [where you apprehend they need it] or see that they furnish themselves. Take a catalogue of the names of all those whom you intend thus to instruct, that you may know whom to expect, and who fail to give their attendance. Deal very gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can. Do not insist upon every person's committing the catechism to memory; but, where they labor under peculiar difficulties, only exhort them to read it often, and get the substance of it into their minds and hearts. If any persons will not submit to be thus instructed by you, go to them and expostulate the matter with them; know what their reasons are, and convince them of the sinfulness and danger of contemning the help that is offered them. Souls [are so precious, that we should not lose one for want of labor, but should follow them

while there is any hope, and not give them up as desperate, till there be no remedy.¹

II. Having brought your people to comply with this kind of instruction, the next thing to be considered is, how you should deal the most effectually with them in the work.

And I must say that I think it is a much easier matter to compose and preach a good sermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man for his instruction in the principles of religion. This work will try the abilities and tempers of ministers; it will show the difference between one man and another, more than pulpit-preaching can do. Good bishop Usher observes, "As the laying of the foundation skilfully, is a matter of the greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very master-piece of the wisest builder. Thus the apostle Paul conceived of it when he said, 'According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid the foundation;' 1 Cor. 3: 10. The neglect of this, is the frustrating the whole work of the ministry." The directions which I think should be observed in managing this work, are the following.

1. When your people, one family or more, come to you, (which perhaps it will be the best for them to do,²) begin your work with a short preface to remove all discouragements, and to prepare them for your instructions; e. g. "It may perhaps appear to some of you, my friends, an uncom-

¹—"Ignorant souls (says Mr. Gurnal) feel no such smart as to put them upon inquiring for a physician. If the minister stay till they send for him to instruct them, he may sooner hear the bell go for them than any messenger come for him. You must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are more afraid of their remedy than their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance than to have it cured; it should make us pity them the more because they can pity themselves so little. . . . It is an unhappiness to some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we cannot attend on them, as their needs require . . . but let us look to it, that though we cannot do what we should, we be not wanting in what we may."—Gurnal's Christian Armor, p. 235, quoted by the author at the end of his preface. The whole passage is worth reading.

² Mr. Baxter, in his preface, tells us what was his method: "At the delivery of the catechisms (says he) I take a catalogue of all the persons of understanding in the parish; the clerk goes a week before hand to every family to tell them when to come, and at what hour; e. g. one family at eight o'clock, the next at nine, the next at ten, etc."

mon and troublesome business, which I now put you upon; but I hope you will not think it needless. Had I thought so, I should have saved you and myself this labor. But God has told me in his word, how great a thing it is to have the charge of souls, and that 'the blood of them that perish will be required at the hands' of such ministers as neglect them; so that my conscience will not suffer me to be so guilty of such a neglect, as I have been. The Lord only knows how long you and I may be together; it therefore concerns me to do what I can for your salvation and my own, before I leave you and the world. I hope you will be glad of help in so needful a work, and not think much of it that I put you to this trouble, when even the trifles of the world cannot be gotten without much greater."

2. In general, take each person alone, and discourse with him out of the hearing of the rest; for some do not like to be questioned before others, and cannot answer you with freedom. However, let none be present but those of the same family, or those with whom they are familiar. I find by experience that, in general, people will bear plain and close dealing about their sin, their misery and their duty, when you have them alone, better than when others are present.

3. As for those that commit a catechism to memory, it may be proper at the beginning of these exercises, to take an account of what they have learned, and to hear them repeat the answers to each question.

4. When you form questions of your own to propose to them, be careful of the following things. Let them be such as they may perceive to be of great importance, and of the nearest concernment to themselves;—e. g. "What do you think becomes of men when they die? Do you believe that you have sinned? What doth sin deserve? What remedy hath God provided for saving sinful and miserable souls? Hath any one suffered for sin in our stead? Who are they that God will pardon? What change must be made on all that will be saved? And how is it made? Where is our chief happiness, and what must our hearts be most set upon?"—Take heed of asking them any nice, doubtful, or difficult questions. Be very cautious how you put them upon definitions, or descriptions; so contrive to bring the predicate into your questions, that they may perceive what you mean; e. g. "What is God? Is he flesh and blood as we

are, or is he a spirit?"—Look not after words but things; and often leave them to a bare *yes*, or *no*; for there are many elderly and godly people who cannot speak their minds in any tolerable expressions. If you find them at a loss, and unable to answer you, do not drive them on too hard or too long, lest they should imagine that you only intend to puzzle and disgrace them. When you perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, take off their burden by answering the question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, that they may understand it before you leave them.

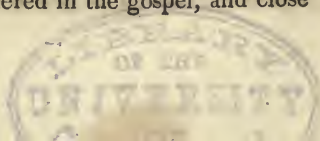
5. When you have done what you think necessary in trying their knowledge, proceed to instruct them further. This must be done according to their several characters. If the person be a professor, fall upon something which you apprehend he most needs; either explain some doctrine, or lay the foundation of some duty which you have reason to think he neglects, etc. If the person be grossly ignorant, give him a plain, familiar summary of the Christian religion; for though he may have it in the catechism, a more familiar way of discoursing upon it, may help him better to understand it. If you perceive he does not understand you, go over it again; then ask him whether he does or not, and endeavor to leave it fixed in his memory.

6. If you suspect any to be ungodly, whether they be grossly ignorant or not, make a prudent inquiry into their states. The least offensive way of doing it will be, to take your occasion from some article in the catechism, which they have repeated; e. g. "though I have no desire needlessly to pry into the secrets of any, yet, because it is the office of a minister to give advice to his people in the matters of salvation, and because it is so dangerous a thing to be mistaken, where life or death eternal is depending, I would intreat you to deal faithfully, and tell me whether you ever found this great change upon your hearts, whether you live in this or that sin or whether you perform this or that duty;" etc.—If any such person tells you he hopes he is converted, show him, in the plainest manner, what true conversion is; then renew and enforce the inquiry. Ask him such questions as these; "Can you truly say, that all the known sins of your past life are the grief of your heart? That you have felt yourself undone by them? That you have gladly entertained the news of a Saviour, and have cast your soul upon Christ alone for salvation? Can you say from your heart, that you hate the

sins which you formerly loved, and that you now love that holy life for which once you had no relish? Do you live in the practice of any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty? Is the main course and bent of your whole life to please God, and enjoy him forever?"—Mention particularly some of those duties which you most suspect him to omit, and ask him whether he performs them; especially prayer, in the family, and in secret; as also, how he spends the Lord's day?

7. If you discern an apparent probability that the person is in an unconverted state, your next business is to labor, with all your skill and power, to bring his heart to a sense of his condition. Address him in some such a manner as this.—“Truly, friend, the Lord knows I have no mind to make your case worse than it is, nor to occasion you any unnecessary fear or trouble; but I suppose you would take me for an enemy, and not a faithful friend, if I should flatter you and not tell you the truth. I much fear that you are yet a stranger to the new and divine life. If you were a Christian indeed, you would not have lived in such a sin, etc. Alas! What have you been doing? How have you spent your time, that you are so ignorant, and so unprepared for death if you should now be called to it? What if you had died before now, in an unconverted state? What had become of you and where had you now been?” Here be very earnest; if you get not the heart, you get nothing. That which does not affect, is soon forgotten.

Let this be followed with a practical exhortation concerning the nature and necessity of closing with Christ, and the use of every proper means, for the time to come, to avoid former sins. Speak to them to this effect. “I am heartily sorry to find you in so sad a case, but should be more so to leave you in it. Let me therefore entreat you for the Lord's sake, and for your own sake, to regard what I shall say to you. It is a great mercy that you were not cut off in your natural state; that you have yet life and time; especially, that there is a sufficient remedy provided for you in the blood of Christ. There is yet a possibility of your being converted and saved. Let me then entreat you, not to rest in your present condition, since, if you do, you must perish forever. Think seriously of the vanity of the world, the awful nature of eternity, and the importance of religion. Without any delay, accept of the salvation offered in the gospel, and close



with the Lord Jesus Christ, who offers it to you. Resolve immediately against your former sins, and be diligent in the use of all God's appointed means, till the great change of regeneration be wrought. Because you cannot effect this change yourself, betake yourself daily to God in prayer, and beg of him to effect it, as well as pardon your sins. Avoid carefully all temptations to, and occasions of sin. Forsake your evil companions, and join the company of them that fear God. Especially spend the Lord's day in holy exercises, both in public and in private; lose not any time, but especially, lose not the most precious time which God has given you to be instructed by him, and prepared for your latter end." Be sure, if you can, to get a promise from such persons that they will attend to your advice. Ask it solemnly; reminding them of the presence of God who hears their promises and will expect the performance.

8. Through the whole of these exercises, see that your manner, as well as matter, be suited to the end. Make a difference according to the difference of the persons you have to deal with. With the dull and obstinate, you must be earnest and severe; with the tender and timorous, you must mildly insist upon direction and confirmation. With the young, you must represent the shame and evil of sensual pleasures, and the necessity of mortification; with the aged, you must disgrace the present world; you must represent the nearness of their change, and the aggravations of their sins, if they live and die impenitent. With your inferiors you may be very free; with you superiors and elders you must speak with more reverence. To the rich, the nature and necessity of self-denial must be opened; to the poor, we must show the great "riches of glory" proposed to them in the gospel. The evil and danger of those sins must be insisted on, to which each one's age, or sex, or temperature of body or employment in the world, does most incline them. Be as condescending, familiar and plain as possible with those of the weakest capacities. Give them the Scripture proofs of all that you say, to convince them that it is not you only, but God by you, who speaks to them. Be serious in all, but especially in your applications. I scarcely fear anything more than lest some careless ministers will hurry over this work superficially, and destroy this, as they do all other duties, by turning it into a mere formality; proposing a few cold questions, and giving a few cold words of advice, without any

life and feeling in themselves, or any likelihood of producing any feeling in the hearers. But surely he that values souls and knows what opportunity is before him, will do it accordingly.

To this end, it will be of considerable importance that both before, and in the work, we take great pains with our own hearts; especially to strengthen our belief of the truth of the gospel, and the invisible glory and misery which are to come. This work will greatly try the strength of our faith. A superficial Christian will feel his zeal quite fail him (especially when the duty is grown common,) for want of a belief in the things he is treating of, to keep it alive. In the pulpit, from the press and in public acts, where there is room for ostentation, the hypocritical minister will give you his best; but an affected fervency and hypocritical stage-action will not hold out long in such duties as these; they are other kind of men that must effectually perform them. We should endeavor to prepare ourselves for this business particularly by private prayer. And, if the time will permit, it will be best to begin and end these exercises I am recommending with a short prayer with our people.

Lastly; if God has given you ability, extend your charity to the poorer sort before they part from you, for their relief, and for the time that is thus taken from their labors; especially for the encouragement of those that make the best proficiency.

CHAPTER V.

ARGUMENTS FOR PERSONAL INSTRUCTION, PARTICULARLY BY CATECHISING IN THE MANNER RECOMMENDED.

IT must, indeed, be acknowledged that the method of instruction which has been proposed, is attended with many difficulties and discouragements. Many arise both from our people, and from ourselves. There is *in us* much dullness and laziness; so that it will not be easy to bring us to be faithful in so hard a work. We have also a base man-pleasing disposition, which will suffer us to let men go quietly to hell, lest we should lose their respect. We are more ready to venture on the displeasure of God, and their everlasting

misery, than draw upon us their ill-will; and are so carnal that we dare not be faithful for fear of losing our income, or bringing ourselves into difficulties. Many of us have a foolish bashfulness, which makes us backward to begin this great work. We are so modest, forsooth, that we blush to speak for Christ, or contradict the devil, or attempt to save a soul; while we are less ashamed of more shameful works than these. We are commonly too unfit for this work by reason of our unskilfulness; we know not (as we ought) how to deal with an ignorant worldling for his salvation, how to get within him and win upon him, nor how to suit our addresses to men's several conditions and tempers. But the greatest impediment of all is, that we ourselves are too weak in faith, and feel too little of the power of religion upon our souls. Our belief of divine truths and invisible things is so feeble, that it will hardly excite in us so kindly, resolute and constant a zeal as is necessary for this work.

Besides these difficulties from ourselves, we have too many to encounter from our *people*. Many of them will scorn to come to us to be taught, imagining they are too good to be catechised, or too old to learn. Many are so dull that they will keep away, as ashamed of their ignorance; or, if they come, you will find it a hard matter to get them to understand you; and yet more difficult to work upon their hearts, so as to produce a saving change; which is our principal end, and without which our labor is almost lost. Oh what a rock a carnal heart is! How strongly will it resist the most powerful persuasions, and with what unconcern will sinners hear of everlasting life and death! And even when you have made some desirable impressions upon them, if you have not a special care over them, their hearts will soon return to their former hardness, and their old companions and temptations will work off all again.—[These things must be acknowledged to be great discouragements,] but in a necessary work, they should excite us to the greater diligence. [That *this is a necessary work*, will appear, if we consider] the benefits to be expected from, and the obligations ministers are laid under to perform it.

I. Let us consider the *benefits* which may reasonably be expected from the method of private instruction which has been proposed. And,

1. It is attended with the most excellent advantage for in-

forming the judgment, and changing the will of the ignorant and ungodly.

It will tend greatly to inform the understanding, to have the sum of Christianity in the memory. Though bare words will be of but little advantage, yet when the words are plain English, he who has them by rote, is much more likely to know the truths contained in them, than another. Such forms of sound words, (though some deride all catechisms as unprofitable,) may be of admirable use; especially as we shall have an opportunity, by personal converse with those who have committed them to memory, to try how far they understand them, to explain to them what they do not understand, and to insist on those particulars which we apprehend each person has most need to hear.

[In some respects this kind of instruction has the preference to *preaching*.¹] What other argument need we for this than our own experience? I seldom deal with men on this great business in private serious conference, but they go away with some seeming convictions, and promises of new obedience, and sometimes with a deep remorse, and affecting sense of their condition. Yea, I have found, (and I doubt not but you have experienced the same,) that an ignorant sot, who for a long time had been an unprofitable hearer, has got more knowledge and remorse of conscience, in half an hour's close conversation, than he did by ten years' public preaching. I know *that* is the most excellent means, because we therein speak to many at once; but this private

¹ "Private, frequent, spiritual conference, (saith Dr. Hammond,) between fellow Christians, but especially between the presbyter and those of his charge, particularly in the discussion of every man's special sins, infirmities and inclinations, may prove very useful and advantageous, (in order to spiritual directions, reproof and comfort,) to the making the man of God perfect. And to tell the truth, if the pride and self-conceit of some, the carelessness of others, the bashfulness of a third sort, the nauseating and instant satiety of any good in a fourth, if the follies of men and artifices of Satan, had not put this practice quite out of fashion among us, there is no doubt but more good might be done by ministers in this way, than is now done by any other means, even than by that of public preaching, which is now almost solely depended upon; it being, as Quintilian saith, (comparing public and private instruction of youth,) a more likely way to fill narrow mouthed bottles, (and such are the most of us,) to take them single in the hand, and pour water into them, than to set them altogether, and throw ever so much water upon them."—*Dr. Hammond on the Power of the Keys, Ch. IV. § 104.*

way of preaching is usually far more effectual, for many reasons. For example, we have the best opportunity to imprint religious truths upon the heart, when we can speak to each one's particular necessity, and can say to the sinner, "thou art the man;" when we can mention his particular case, and address him in regard to it with familiar importunity. If anything in the world is likely to do our people good, it is this. They will understand a familiar speech, who hear a sermon as if it were nonsense. Besides, they have far greater advantage for the application of it to themselves. By this means, you will hear their objections, and know where Satan has the most advantage over them, or what it is that resists the truth; and so may be the more able, effectually to convince them. We can here answer their objections, drive them to a stand, urge them to discover their resolutions for the future, and to promise to use the means for reformation. Again; in private, we may speak in a much *plainer* manner than we can in public. The plainest preacher can hardly speak plain enough in the pulpit, to make many understand. I have often been surprised to find how grossly ignorant many are, who have been my hearers several years; who are as unable to answer some of the plainest questions as if they had never heard the gospel in their lives. Now in public we cannot use such homely expressions, nor so many repetitions as their dulness requires; but in private we may. In public our speeches are long; we quite over-run their understandings and their memories, so that they are confounded and unable to follow us; one thing drives out another, so that they know not what we have been saying; but in private we may take our work *gradatim*, and take our hearers with us as we go. By their answers to our questions we may see how far they go with us, and what we have next to do. In public, by our length, and speaking *alone*, we lose their attention; but when they are interlocutors we can easily cause them to attend. I conclude, therefore, that public preaching alone, will not be sufficient, nor effectual for the conversion of so many, as this method. Long may you study and preach to little purpose, if you neglect this duty.

2. This work of private instruction, if well managed, will be the means of the most *orderly* building up those that are converted, and establishing them in the faith.

It hazards the whole work, or at least very much hinders it, when we do it not in a proper order. How can you build,

if you do not lay a good foundation? It is owing to the neglect of this, that there are so many deluded novices in religion; and that so many are laboring in vain; 'still learning, without coming to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. 3: 7; like those that would read before they have learned the letters. This makes so many fall away, or to be 'shaken by every wind of doctrine.' These fundamentals are what must lead men to further truths; these they must build upon; these must actuate all their graces, and animate all their duties; these must fortify them against particular temptations. He that knows these well, knows as much as is necessary to make him happy. He that knows these best, is the most understanding Christian. He that knows not these, knows nothing. The most godly people, therefore in your congregation, will find it worth their while to be thus instructed. If you would edify and well-establish them, be diligent in this work.

3. This method of private instruction will tend to make our preaching better understood and regarded.

When you have acquainted persons with the principles, they will more easily perceive what you are aiming at; it will prepare their minds and open the way to their hearts; whereas without this you may lose the most of your labor; and the more pains you take in accurate preparations, the less good you will do.

4. By this means you will become familiar with your people; which is no inconsiderable advantage.

The want of this is a great impediment to the success of our labors. By distance and strangeness, abundance of mistakes between ministers and people are occasioned. Besides, familiarity tends to beget those affections which may open their ears to further teaching. When we are familiar with them, they will be encouraged to use freedom in opening their doubts to us, for our resolution of them; but when a minister knows not his people, or is as strange to them as if he did not know them, it must be a great hindrance to his doing them any good. By this familiarity we shall be better acquainted with each person's temper and spiritual state, and so shall know better how to watch over them, how to preach to, and discourse with them; how to lament for, or rejoice over them; and how to pray to God on their behalf. We shall hereby be the better enabled to help them against temptations, and prevent their falling into any hurtful errors; of

which they are in great danger while their pastors are strangers to them, and seducers are very familiar with them. Once more ; this familiarity with our people will better satisfy us in the administration of the Lord's supper ; as we shall hereby better know who are fit, and who are unfit for it. Whereas many will question a minister, who examines his people in order to this ordinance, by what authority he does it, and will not submit to such an examination, the same work will be done in such a course as this, in an unexceptionable manner.

5. This method of private instruction will better inform the people concerning the nature of the ministerial office, or awaken them to a better attention to it.

It is common for men to think that our work is nothing more than to preach well, to baptize, administer the Lord's supper, and visit the sick ; they are therefore willing to submit to no more ; and through a common neglect, ministers are become such strangers to their own calling, that they think of doing nothing more. They have hundreds of people to whom they never spoke a word personally for their salvation. Nay, the omission of personal instruction is grown so frequent, even among pious and able men, that the disgrace of it is abated, and a man may be guilty of it without any dishonor or observation. Show the world then, by your practice, what the nature of our office is ; and I hope that you will see the time, when neglect of personal oversight will be taken for as scandalous an omission, as preaching but one part of the day would now be esteemed. In overthrowing the errors of Popery, many have run into the contrary extreme ; lest they should seem to favor auricular confession, they have neglected all personal instruction. I am past doubt that the popish auricular confession is a sinful novelty ; but I must say, (though some will think it strange,) that our neglect of personal instruction is much worse. Let us, by our practice, show careless ministers, as well as our people, the importance and necessity of this duty. Further ; as this course will acquaint the people with our duty towards them, it will also inform them of *theirs* towards *us* ; and then they will be more likely to discharge it better. This I mention, not for our own sakes only, but because their salvation is much concerned in it. If they do not know what our office is, viz. that it is one great branch of it to admonish and instruct them in regard to their particular cases, it is no wonder if

they neglect to apply to us for our help, to their own prejudice. The matter is now come to this pass, that if we exhort them to come for instruction, or begin to discourse with them about their souls, they question our authority, and look upon us as proud, pragmatistical persons, who would bear rule over their consciences. They do in general discover no more wisdom nor gratitude, than if they were to quarrel with a person for quenching the fire when their houses were burning; or if, when one offered to save them from drowning, they should ask him by what authority he did it. And what is it that has brought our people to this ignorance of their duty, but our neglect of ours? Where it is the custom, (as among the *papists*,) they are willing to confess all their sins to the priest; but among *us* they disdain to be questioned or instructed, because it is not the custom. Let us then by our diligence in this work, endeavor to make it become a common thing; and thus we shall facilitate the ministerial service to the next generation. If we can but establish this custom, our successors in the ministry will reap the fruit of our labors, as their work will be easier to them; and thus we may be the means of saving many souls in ages to come, as well as in the present.¹

6. Another considerable benefit attending private instruction, (especially by catechisms,) is, that it will keep our people from much of that vanity, which now possesses their minds and takes up their time.

When workmen are employed in their shops, almost all their talk is vanity; and children are apt to learn foolish songs and idle stories, and thus furnish their minds with filth and rubbish, which occasions them to lose much time, and to be guilty of many idle thoughts and words. Now when they have a catechism to learn, and know that they must give an account of it, much of their time and thoughts will be better employed. It will particularly find them, and heads of families, profitable employment for the Lord's day.

7. As the method of instruction I am recommending is, by supposition, very extensive, we have reason to expect the most *extensive* benefits from it.

¹ "Perhaps you who find a people rude and ignorant, (like stones in the quarry, or trees unhewn,) may not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire. Yet as David did for Solomon, you may, by your pains in teaching and instructing, prepare materials for another who shall rear the temple."—*Gurnal, ubi supra.*

It has a more excellent design, (and therefore we may hope it will have more important effects,) than our accidental conferences with here and there a particular person. In such occasional discourses, I observe ministers satisfy themselves to have spoken some few good words, but seldom set themselves, in so plain and close a manner, to convince men of their sin and misery, and their need of mercy, as in this purposely appointed work, we shall have an opportunity of doing.

In short, so weighty and excellent is this duty, that the chief part of church reformation is behind without it, and consists in it. We are apt to look upon a reformation as what is to be wrought immediately by God, without considering, that it is to be effected by our means; but this we have no warrant to do. In order to such a reformation, we must use our unwearied endeavors, and particularly must be diligent in catechising and personal instruction; for this is likely to do more towards effecting such a reformation as we have long prayed and hoped for, than every other means without it. Brethren, all that our forefathers have been doing for the good of the church, and for a true reformation, for so many years, was but to prepare the way for you to come in and do the work which they desired. They have opened you the door, and at a great expense of labors and sufferings, have removed many of your impediments; and will you now stand still or loiter? God forbid! Have they spent so much time in fencing the vineyard, in weeding and pruning it, to make it ready for your hands, and will you now fail, who are sent to gather in the vintage? In the name of God, take heed that you do not frustrate their labors, their prayers and their hopes! To what has been said, let me add,

8. The diligent prosecution of this work will do some good to ministers themselves.

It will be the best cure for their idleness and loss of time, in unnecessary discourses, journies or other recreations, and at the same time, will cut off that scandal which attends them. Besides, it will tend to subdue our own corruptions, to increase our own graces, and consequently to procure much peace to our own consciences, and much comfort when our time and actions come to be reviewed. This constant employment of our minds and tongues against sin, and in the cause of Christ and holiness, will do much more towards habituating us to overcome our carnal inclinations, than all the austerities of monks and hermits, who addict themselves

to unprofitable solitude, and 'hide their master's talents.' Not to mention what an excellent means this will be, to take us (as well as our people) from vain controversies, and discourses upon lesser matters of religion, and thus to cure those unhappy contentions which too often prevail among ourselves.

Having thus considered the advantages that attend personal instruction, particularly catechising, I shall now

II. Point out the obligations ministers are under to the practice of it.

1. The necessity of this duty may be argued from the regard you owe to the glory of God, in the fuller success of the gospel.

God is most honored and pleased when most souls are saved; for he hath sworn that 'he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but had rather that he return and live,' Ezek. 18: 23, 32. 33: 11. How gladly then should you take this course which will most effectually promote this end! O brethren! if we could generally set this work on foot in all the parishes of England, and prosecute it skilfully and zealously, what a glory would it put upon the face of the nation, and what honor would redound to God thereby! If our common ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every family employed in learning catechisms, and speaking of the word and works of God, what pleasure would God take in our cities and countries! He would dwell in our habitations and make them his delight. If we increase the number or strength of the saints, we thereby increase the honor of the king of saints; Christ will be honored in the fruits of his bloodshed. And the Spirit of grace will also be glorified in the fruit of his operations. And do not these ends require us to use the means with diligence?

2. I may urge this duty, from the general obligation we are *all* under to do good, and from the regards we owe to the welfare of our people.

Every Christian is obliged to do all the good he can, for the salvation of others; but every *minister* is doubly obliged, because he is 'separated to the gospel' of Christ, and is to 'give himself up wholly' to that work. Rom. 1: 1. 1 Tim. 4: 15. It is needless to make any further question about our obligation, when we know in general that we are obliged to do all that is necessary for the conversion and salvation of

our people, and that this work (as has been already shown) is needful to these ends. Of these surely we cannot doubt; let us not, then, any longer neglect so reasonable and necessary a duty. If the saving of souls, of your *neighbor's* souls, of *many* souls from everlasting misery, be worth your labor, up, and be doing! If you would be the fathers of many new born unto God, if you would 'see the travail of your souls' with comfort, and be able to say at last, "Here am I and the children that thou hast given me," be diligent in this blessed work. If it would rejoice you to present your converts 'blameless and spotless to Christ,' and to see them among the saints in glory, praising the Lamb before his throne, be glad of this singular opportunity that is offered you. 'What is your hope and joy and crown of rejoicing?' Are not your saved people 'in the presence of Christ Jesus at his coming? Yea, doubtless they are your glory and your joy;' 1 Thess. 2: 19, 20.) If you are the ministers of Christ indeed, you will long for 'the perfecting of his body, and the gathering in of his elect.' Your hearts will be set upon it, and you will travail as in birth for them till Christ be formed in them, Gal. 4: 19, and will take all opportunities [that are likely to promote this great end] as the sunshine days in a rainy harvest, in which it is unreasonable and inexcusable to be idle. Nay, if you have but a spark of Christian compassion in you, it will appear worth your utmost labor to 'save souls from death and to cover a multitude of sins.' O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that there is an opportunity in your hands to save a soul! to 'rejoice the angels in heaven!' to rejoice Christ himself! and to increase the family of God! There is not a sinner whose case you should not so far compassionate, as to be willing to relieve him at a much dearer rate than [by the labor I have been recommending.] Can you see sinners as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully pass by? Can you hear them cry to you as the man of Macedonia to Paul in his vision, "Come and help us," and yet refuse your help? Are you intrusted with a hospital, where one languishes, and another groans, crying out "Oh help me! pity me for the Lord's sake!" and where a third is raging mad, and would destroy himself and you, and yet will you still sit idle? If it is said of him that relieveth not men's bodies, how much more may it be said of them that relieve not men's souls, 'If you see your brother have need and shut up the bowels of your compassion from him,

how dwelleth the love of God in you? 1 John, 3: 17. You are not such hard-hearted men, such monsters, but you will pity the naked, the imprisoned, or those that are tormented with grievous pain or sickness; and will you not pity a hard-hearted sinner, who must be excluded the presence of the Lord, (if a thorough, speedy repentance prevent it not,) and lie under his remediless wrath? What shall I call the heart of that man who will not pity such a one? The heart of an infidel! a heart of stone! a very rock or adamant! Surely if he believed the misery of the impenitent, it would be impossible for him not to pity them. Can you tell men in the pulpit, that they shall certainly be damned except they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have so proclaimed their danger? And if you do pity them, will you not do thus much for their salvation? What if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets—"O Sir! have pity on me, and afford me your advice! I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I fear, lest I shall be miserable in the next!" What if they came to your study door and cried "Oh pity us! Oh help us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell,"—and would not leave you till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God, could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why such persons, alas! who do not thus cry for help, are the most miserable. The hardened sinner, who cares least for your advice, needs it most. He that has not so much life as to feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense as to pity himself, this is the man that is most to be pitied. O how can you walk and talk and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, and think of their future misery, you should break forth into tears (as the prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal,) and then fall on with the most importunate exhortations! When you come to visit them in their last sickness, will it not wound your hearts to see them ready to depart into misery, without your having ever dealt seriously with them for their recovery? O then, for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of such poor souls, have pity on them! Bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

3. Our obligations to this kind of instruction may be made to appear both from scripture examples and precepts.

We have Christ's own example, who used this interlocutory preaching both to his disciples and to the Jews; and we have the examples of the apostles, who did the like. Indeed this was their ordinary way of preaching; and when they made a speech of any length, the people and they discoursed it out in the conclusion.

Thus Peter preached to the Jews, Acts ii; and to Cornelius and his friends, Acts x. Thus Philip preached to the Eunuch, Acts ix; and thus Paul preached to the jailor, Acts xvi. Thus as he tells us, Gal. 2: 2, he 'preached privately to those of reputation, lest he should have run and labored in vain.' That earnest charge of his to Timothy, no doubt, includes it; 'I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, etc. preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine;' 2 Tim. 4: 1, 2. [Some other passages to the present purpose were quoted in a former chapter. It would be needless tediousness to recite any more to those who know them so well.] But I must further tell you,

4. This ministerial fidelity is necessary to your own welfare, as well as your people's.

You can no more be saved without that fidelity which belongs to you as ministers, than your people can without that which belongs to them as Christians. If you care not for *others*, at least care for *yourselves*. Oh! what a dreadful thing is it to answer for the neglect of such a charge as ours! What sin more heinous than the betraying of souls! That threatening (to which we have so often referred) is enough surely to make us tremble; 'If thou warn not the wicked,' etc. their 'blood will I require at thy hands.' I am afraid, nay, I am past doubt, that the day is near, when unfaithful ministers will wish they had never known their charge; but that they had been employed in the meanest occupations, instead of being pastors of Christ's flock; when besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for. Oh brethren! our death, as well as our people's, is near at hand; and certainly death is as terrible to an unfaithful pastor as to any. When we see that we must die, and there is no remedy; that no wit, nor learning, nor popular applause, can avert the stroke or delay the time; but that, whether willing or unwilling, our souls must be gone into that world we never saw, where our persons, and worldly circumstances will not be respected,—Oh!

then for a clear conscience, that can say, "I have not lived to myself, but to Christ; I spared not my pains; I 'hid not my talent;' I concealed not men's misery, nor the way of their recovery; 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!'" 2 Tim. 4: 7. Let us be diligent in doing good to others and to ourselves; that we may end our days with this glorious triumph. Let us take time, while we may have it; and work while it is day, 'for the night cometh wherein no man can work.' If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a glorious reward, 'gird up the loins of your minds, and quit yourselves like men.' If you would be 'blessed with those that die in the Lord,' labor now, that you may 'rest from your labors' then, and do such 'works' as you would wish to 'follow you.'

CHAPTER VI.

OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.¹

THE next part of our oversight is the use of *church discipline*. This consists (after private reproofs, which were considered above, Ch. II.) of the following particulars; publicly reproofing offenders, exhorting them to repentance, praying for them, restoring the penitent, and excluding the impenitent.

I. The first part of church discipline to be considered, is public reproof.

In order to conduct this in the most useful manner, these things must be observed.

¹ N. B. The author, in treating this subject, goes on the supposition that discipline is to be extended to all that are in what he calls a church-state; i. e. not only those who are admitted to the Lord's table, but those who have acknowledged their relation to the pastor as his charge, by giving him their names, after having regularly "passed from an infant to an adult state, by confirmation;" the nature and the grounds of which rite he has considered at large, in a treatise called "Confirmation and Restoration." However, in this abridgement, what was peculiar to the author's idea of a church is generally omitted, and this chapter is, for the most part, accommodated to any mode of government which Christian churches have commonly adopted.

1. The accusations of none (not even the best in the church), should be taken without proof.

A minister should never make himself a party, before he has sufficient evidence of the case. It is better to let many vicious persons go unpunished and without censure, when we want full evidence against them, than to censure one unjustly; which we may easily do if we go upon bold presumptions alone: and that will bring upon a pastor the scandal of partiality and unrighteous dealing, which will make his reproofs and censures become contemptible.

2. Let there be therefore a private meeting of chosen persons, (the officers, and some delegates of the church on their behalf,) to have the hearing of all such cases, before they are made public. They may meet together once a month, at some certain place, that [among other ends] they may be ready to receive what charge shall be brought against any member of the church; that it may be considered whether it be just, and that the offender may be dealt with there first. If the fault be not of a public heinous nature, and the party shall there profess repentance, that may suffice. But if it be otherwise, and the person remain impenitent, he must 'be reprov'd before all.'

3. Great caution and much prudence must be exercised in such proceedings as these, lest we do more harm than good. But let it be such Christian prudence as orders duties aright, and directs them to their proper ends, and not such carnal prudence as shall enervate or exclude them. It may therefore be proper for young ministers to consult with others, for the more cautious proceeding in such work.

In the performance of it, we should always deal humbly, even when we deal most sharply; that we may make it appear it is not from any lordly disposition, nor an act of revenge, but a necessary duty, which we cannot in conscience avoid. It will therefore be proper publicly to disclaim all animosities, and show the people the commands of God obliging us to what we do.

II. With the duty of public reproof, must be joined an exhortation of the person to repentance, and to a public profession of it for the satisfaction of the church.

As the church is bound to avoid communion with scandalous, impenitent sinners, so when they have had evidence of their sin, they must also see some evidence of their repentance; for we cannot know them to be penitent without evi-

dence. And what evidence is the church capable of, but their profession of repentance first, and their actual reformation afterwards. Both which must be expected and demanded of them. Both in our public reproofs and exhortations we should be very cautious of giving offence; in order to avoid which we should proceed in some such manner as this:

“Friends and brethren, *sin* is so evil and dangerous a thing, that God has commanded us to ‘exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of it,’ Heb. 3: 13, and that we do not ‘hate our brother in our heart, but in any wise rebuke our neighbor and not suffer sin upon him,’ Lev. 19: 17. Our Lord exhorts us, ‘if our brother offend us, to tell him of his fault, and if he will not hear us, to take two or three persons with us to reprove him; and if he will not hear them, to tell the church, to esteem him as a heathen or publican,’ Matt. 18: 15—17. ‘Those that sin,’ we are commanded to ‘rebuke before all, that others also may fear,’ 1 Tim. 5: 20; and ‘if they repent not, to avoid them, and not so much as eat with them,’ 2 Thess. 3: 6, 12, 14. 1 Cor. 5: 11, 13. Accordingly, having heard of the scandalous practice of N—— of this church, and having received sufficient proof that he hath committed the odious sin of ***, we have seriously dealt with him in private to bring him to repentance; but to the grief of our hearts, perceive that he still remains impenitent, (or lives in the same sin). We therefore judge it our necessary duty to use this further remedy which Christ hath commanded us to try. And I do earnestly beseech him for the sake of his own soul, and require it of him, as a messenger of Jesus Christ, (as he will answer the contrary at the bar of God,) to remain no longer stout and impenitent, but unfeignedly to confess and lament his sin before God and this congregation. This desire I here publish, not out of any ill will to his person (as the Lord knows), but in obedience to Christ, and in love to his soul, wishing that, if possible, he may be saved from his sin, from the power of Satan and the everlasting wrath of God; and that he may be speedily reconciled to him, and his church.” To this purpose should our public admonition proceed; and in some cases, where the sinner esteems his sin to be small, it will be necessary to set it in its proper light, and especially to quote some texts of Scripture which aggravate and threaten it.

III. To our reproofs and exhortations may properly be added the prayers of the church.

We should pray both for those that have been reprov'd, and those (some of them at least) that have been rejected, that they may repent and be restored. We are commanded 'to pray always, and in all things; for all men, and in all places;' so great a business as this, therefore, should not be done without it. We should earnestly join together in prayer to God, that he would open the sinner's eyes, that he would soften his heart, and save him from impenitency and eternal death. That we have not his request or consent, is no reason against it; for that is his very disease, and the malignity of it. If the person even refuses to be present to receive our admonition, it will be proper to desire the prayers of the congregation for him. And let us be very earnest in praying for him, that the congregation may be provok'd to join with us. Who knows but God may hear such prayers, and that they may be more effectual than our exhortations? However, the people will thereby perceive that we do not make light of sin, and that we do not preach to them in mere custom or form. When the sinner is thus admonish'd and prayed for, if it please the Lord to open his eyes and give him repentance, our next duty is,

IV. To proceed for his full recovery; where these things must be observed.

We must not discourage him by too much severity; nor yet by too much haste and lenity, palliate the offence and sink the ideas of discipline. We must urge him to be serious in his humiliation, till he be truly sensible of his sin; for it is not a vain formality that we are to expect, but the recovering and saving of the soul. We should bring him to beg the communion and prayers of the church, and to promise that he will most carefully avoid the sin into which he has fallen, for the time to come. After this we must assure him of the riches of God's love, and the sufficiency of Christ's blood, to pardon his sin; and that, if his repentance be sincere, we are authorized as the messengers of the Lord, to assure him that he is pardoned. We should then charge him to persevere, and perform his promises; to avoid temptations, and continue begging mercy and strengthening grace. Hereupon we should charge the church, that they imitate Christ in forgiving, and that they retain the person in (or receive him again into) communion; that they never reproach him

with his sin, but forgive and forget as Christ does. We have no warrant to rip up matters that are worn out of memory, or to make that public again, which has ceased to be so. After this we should give God thanks for his recovery so far, and pray for his confirmation and future preservation.—The next part of discipline is

V. Rejecting from the church's communion those who, after sufficient trial, remain impenitent.

Exclusion from church communion is of divers kinds and degrees, of which, I shall not so far digress, as here to treat. That which is most commonly to be practised among us, is only to forbid an offender communion with us, or to inflict a temporal exclusion, called suspension, till it shall please the Lord to give him repentance, [or till he shall discover very evident marks of impenitence.] We have, indeed, no express directions in Scripture how long we should stay to try whether the sinner be so impenitent as to be necessarily and entirely excluded; we must therefore follow the general directions, with such diversity as the case and character of the person, and former proceeding shall require; this being left to the discretion of the church, who must always continue to pray for, and exercise patience towards the offender, till he manifest himself obstinate in his sin. Where a person has openly sinned but once or twice, a profession of repentance may suffice; but if he be accustomed to sin, and has often broken his promises of amendment, then we must require an actual reformation. He that will refuse either to reform, or to make a profession of repentance, must be considered as living in the sin; for a heinous sin, but once committed, is morally continued in till it be repented of; and a mere forbearing of the act is not sufficient. [If the church, after having waited a proper time, cannot discern in the person any signs of genuine repentance,] they must then proceed to excommunication. The minister must pronounce him unworthy of communion, and authoritatively charge the people in the name of the Lord, to avoid communion with such a person; and must deny him those ordinances and privileges which do not belong to him, whereof he is the administrator. And as far as this act of the pastor is not contrary to the word of God, the people are in duty bound to fall in with it. However, it will be proper to pray for the repentance and restoration even of the excommunicate; and, if God should give them repentance, they are gladly to be received into the

communion of the church again. So much for the nature of church discipline; and sure I am, if well understood, much of the pastoral work and authority consists in it.

There are many, I know, who would set open the doors of the church, would pluck up the hedge, and lay the vineyard common to the wilderness. Nay, (which is very amazing,) some who are esteemed godly divines, reproach as a sect, those faithful pastors who will not give the sacrament to all the parish, and who maintain discipline in their churches, under the name of Sacramentarians and Disciplinarians; as the impure used to reproach the diligent by the name of Puritans. [But surely their censures are very ill grounded.] Was not Christ himself the leader of these Disciplinarians? He instituted discipline, and commanded the particular acts of it. "If thy brother," says he, "shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault; if he will not hear thee, then take with thee two or three more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established: but if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." He adds, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. 18: 15—18. Christ made his ministers the rulers of his church, and put the keys of the kingdom into their hands; and he requires the people to 'submit to them, and obey them in the Lord,' Heb. 13: 17.

Agreeable to these Scriptures was the practice of the ancient church, for many years after Christ; in which discipline was exercised much more vigorously than among any of us, even in the heat of heathen persecutions, as well as under Christian magistrates, (till selfishness and formality caused them to be remiss in this and other duties together,) as may be seen in the ancient canons and Cyprian's epistles. Discipline was not then taken to be a useless thing;¹ nor would it appear such now, if it were shown in its strength and beauty, by a vigorous practice; for you will never make

¹ *Disciplina est custos spei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonae indolis, magistra virtutis; facit in Christo manere semper, ac jugiter Deo vivere, ad promissa coelestia et divina praemia pervenire: Hanc et sectari salubre est, et adversari ac negligere lethale.* Cypr. de Discip. p. 265. See Calvin's Instit. lib. IV. cap. 12. § 1, 2.

men know what it is by mere talking of it; it being, like the government of Commonwealths, little known till learned by experience. I know that when the church began to be tainted with vain inventions, the word discipline changed its signification for various of their own rules of life, and austere impositions; but it is for the ancient and truly Christian discipline alone that I am contending. There is no room to doubt whether this be our duty, nor whether we are unfaithful as to the performance of it. It is certainly no less our duty because our brethren of late have made so little conscience of it. And what are the hindrances that now keep the ministers of England from the discharge of it? I hear what some say, and see more.

1. Some object "that we shall be guilty of defaming men, by thus publishing their crimes." I answer in the words of Bernard, "Cum carpuntur vitia, et inde scandalum oritur, ipse sibi scandali causa est, qui fecit quod argui debet; non ille qui arguit. Non ergo timeas contra charitatem esse, si unius scandalum multorum recompensaveris pace. Melius est enim ut pereat unus quam unitas."¹ Many of us, who would be ashamed to omit preaching or praying half so much, have not considered what we do in wilfully neglecting this duty. We draw down the guilt of men's crimes upon our own heads, when we do not use God's means for the cure of them.²

2. Others will say "that there is little likelihood that public, personal reprehension should do any good to offenders, because they will be but enraged by the shame." I answer in the words of Philo a Jew: "We must endeavor as far as we are able to save those from their sins who will certainly perish by them; imitating good physicians, who, when they cannot save a sick man, do yet willingly try all means for cure, lest they seem to want success, through their own negligence."³ I further answer, it ill becomes the ignorant creature to implead the ordinances of God as useless. God can render his own ordinances successful, or else he would never have appointed them. Besides, church discipline seems to

¹ Bernard sup. Cantic.

² Qui non corrigit ressecanda committit.—*Greg.*
Si quid me scis fecisse incite aut improbe, si id non accusas, tu ipse objurgandus es.—*Plaut.*

³ Philo de sacrif. Abel et Cain.

be well calculated for usefulness. It tends to the shaming of sin, and the humbling of the sinner; to manifest the holiness of Christ, of his doctrine, and his church, before all the world. What method should be taken with offenders, if not this? Must they be given up as hopeless? That were cruel; and other means are supposed to have been used without success. The church of Christ has found this method to be successful, even in times of persecution, when (if ever) carnal reason would have told them to forebear it, for fear of driving away their converts. But besides all that has been said, let it be remembered, that the principal use of this public discipline, is not for the offender himself, but for the church. It tends greatly to deter others from the like crimes, and so to keep our churches and worship pure.¹

3. Some will say, "That this will but restrain men as hypocrites and not convert them." I answer, Who knows how God may bless his ordinances? It is true repentance to which offenders are exhorted, and which they profess; whether they truly profess it or not, who can tell but God? However, if it only restrains persons, that is a benefit not to be contemned. It is of some importance that sin be disgraced; and so far the church acquit themselves. But the grand objection against discipline, as far as I can learn, is,

4. The difficulty of the work, and the trouble or suffering you are likely to bring upon yourselves by it. "We cannot (say you) publicly reprehend one sinner, but he will highly resent it, and bear us malice for it. We can prevail with very few to make a public profession of repentance; and if we excommunicate them, that will enrage them the more. If we were to deal with all the obstinate sinners in the parish in the manner you advise, it would be dangerous living among them; or we should be so hated, that our labors would become quite unprofitable to them. Duty therefore ceases to be duty, because the hurt that would follow would be greater than the good." But are not these reasons as valid against professing and defending Christianity in some times and places, as now against discipline? Christ has told us 'that he came not to send peace;' and that 'the world will hate us.' Many of his servants have met with more difficulty in doing their duty than we can expect; which yet did not pre-

¹ Vitia transmittit ad posteros, qui praesentibus culpis ignoscit.—Bonis nocet qui malis parcit.—*Seneca*.

vent their faithful discharge of it. If we did our duty faithfully as ministers, we should now find much the same lot among professed Christians, as our predecessors did among infidels. But if you cannot suffer for Christ, why did you 'put your hands to his plough?' You ought 'first to have sat down and counted the cost.' This makes the ministerial work so unfaithfully done, because it is so carnally undertaken. Many enter upon it as a life of ease and honor from men, and therefore they resolve to attain their ends, whether right or wrong. As for your making yourselves incapable of doing men any good, if you thus publicly admonish them; I answer, that reason is as valid against plain preaching, or private reproof, or any other duty for which wicked men will hate us. As has been already observed, God will bless his own ordinances to do good, or else he would not have appointed them. By this means you may possibly do good to the offender, and even to the excommunicate; I am sure it is God's means, and the last means we can use; it were therefore perverse to neglect it. However, other persons, both within and without the church, may receive good by it, though the offender himself receive none; and God will certainly have the honor when his church is thus manifestly distinguished from the world. But let me tell you, there is not such 'a lion in the way' as you may imagine; nor is discipline so useless a thing. I bless God, upon the small (and too late) trial I have made of it myself. I can say by experience it is not vain, nor are the hazards of it such as may excuse our neglect.—To this last objection many have added,

5. "That it is a vain thing to attempt the use of discipline in the church, unless it were established by secular power, and all the people were forced, under a penalty, to submit to it; that without the help of the civil magistrate it is not likely that we should do any good, since every man has liberty to despise our censures, and to absent himself when he should appear before the church." Here let me ask, How did the church of Christ subsist before the days of Constantine the Great, without the help of the civil magistrate? And how was discipline exercised for three hundred years together, when the prince did not so much as give protection or toleration to Christians, but even persecuted them to death? Yet then was the church in its best state, and its discipline the most pure and powerful. Are the keys of Christ's church

so unfit and useless, that they will not open and shut without the magistrate's help? If they have contracted any rust we may thank ourselves, who have let them lie so long without use. But let me add, that too much interposition of the civil magistrate with our discipline, would do more hurt than good; it would but corrupt it by the mixture, and make it become a mere human thing. Your government is all to work upon the conscience, and the sword cannot reach that. It is not a desirable thing to have repentance so obscured by mere forced confessions, that you cannot know when persons mean as they speak. I confess, if (since I have exercised discipline) the sword had interposed and forced men to those public confessions of sin and professions of repentance, to which I have persuaded them by the light of God's word, it would have left me, (and I believe the church too,) very much dissatisfied with them; imagining they only complied with it because they were forced. I am the less sorry that the magistrate doth so little interpose, on account of that blind, confused zeal which so much prevails amongst us. Persons of every party are so confident that they are in the right, and lay such stress upon many opinions of their own, as if life or death depended upon them; making a great outcry against whatever are called errors by their own party, without knowing what they are, or how to confute them, or which are tolerable in the church, and which intolerable. If the sword were in such envious, angry hands, there would be little quiet to the church. This may possibly make the magistrate think fit to let us fight it out with our naked fists, and not to put swords into our hands till we are more sober, and know better how to use them. As long as he does not prevent us from exercising that kind of discipline which has now been recommended, I fear not but, by the blessing of God, a prudent, resolute, unanimous ministry will, in general, be able to bring persons to submit to it, so as to answer very important purposes.

I shall conclude this subject with earnestly requesting my brethren in the ministry speedily and faithfully to put in execution, at least, all the unquestionable part of the discipline for which I have been contending.

1. Consider how sinful the neglect of it is, and how dangerous with respect to yourselves. It is indeed a sad case that good men, under so much liberty, should settle themselves so long in the constant neglect of so great a duty. In

our preaching to our people, we make it a bad sign to live in the wilful, continued omission of any known duty; and shall we do so year after year, and even all our days? We plainly manifest sloth and laziness herein, if not unfaithfulness in the work of Christ. I speak from experience; laziness pleaded hard against this duty, and long kept me from it. It is indeed a troublesome and painful work, and calls for some self-denial, as it will expose us to the displeasure of the wicked. But dare we prefer our carnal ease or the love of wicked men before our duty to Christ our master? Can such slothful servants look for a good reward?

2. The neglect of discipline has a strong tendency to the deluding of souls; by making men think that they are Christians when they are not, because they are not, by God's ordinance, separated from such as are; and by making scandalous sinners think their sin tolerable, because it is so tolerated by the pastors of the church. We hereby corrupt Christianity itself in the eyes of the world, and do our part to make them believe, that to be a Christian is only to be of such or such an opinion, and the Christian religion requires holiness no more than the false religions of the world. If the holy and unholy are all permitted to be sheep of the same fold, without the use of Christ's means to distinguish them, we do our part to defame Christ by it, and to make it appear as if this were according to his institutions.

3. By the neglect of discipline you encourage separation. If you will not by this means distinguish between 'the precious and the vile,' the people will do it by withdrawing from you; which many honest Christians will think they are necessitated to do. Nor can you wonder, if you keep a number of scandalous sinners in your churches without ever reproofing them, that some timorous souls should run out of them, as out of an edifice which they apprehend ready to fall.

I have known many who have separated merely on this account.

4. By this neglect we do much to bring the wrath of God upon ourselves and our congregations, and so to blast the fruit of our labors. If 'the angel of the church of Thyatira,' Rev. 2: 20—23, was reproofed for suffering seducers in it, and those who joined with them were so severely threatened, surely we deserve reproof on the same ground, for suffering open, scandalous, impenitent sinners among us, and have

reason to fear the execution of this threatening upon our churches.

But against all that I have said in behalf of discipline you will plead, "Our people are not ready for it; they will not yet bear it." But is not the meaning of this, that *you* will not bear the trouble and hatred which it will occasion? I beseech you, in order that you may make a comfortable account to the 'chief shepherd,' and that you may not be found 'unfaithful in the house of God,' that you do not shrink from duty because of the trouble to the flesh, that may attend it. Remember for your encouragement, that the most costly duties are usually the most comfortable, and you may be sure that Christ will bear the cost.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE MOTIVES TO PASTORAL FIDELITY IN GENERAL, SUGGESTED IN THE TEXT.

THE first thing proposed has now been fully handled, which was to point out and recommend the several parts of the ministerial office; we therefore proceed to the second, which is "to consider the motives suggested in the text, to a diligent performance of them." The Lord grant that they may work upon us all according to their truth and importance.

I. The nature of our office obliges us to 'take heed to all the flock;' we are styled *overseers*.

And for what else are we overseers?¹ To be a bishop or pastor is not to be set up as an idol for the people to bow to; or to be (what the apostle calls the Cretans,) "evil beasts, slow bellies," Tit. 1: 12, to live to our fleshy delight and ease; but it is to be the guide of sinners to salvation. It is a sad thing that men should undertake a calling of which they know not the nature; which, with too many, is evidently the case. Do those persons know and consider what they have undertaken, who live in ease and pleasure; who have time to take their superfluous recreations, and spend it in loitering

¹ Episcopus est nomen quod plus oneris quod honoris significat.—*Polyd. Virg.* p. 240.

or in vain discourses, when so much work lies upon their hands? Brethren, do you consider where you stand, and what you have taken upon you? You have, under Christ, undertaken a band of his soldiers "against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places;" you must lead them on in the sharpest conflicts; you must acquaint them with the enemy's stratagems and assaults; you must watch yourselves, and keep them watching. If you miscarry, they and you may perish. You have a subtle enemy, and therefore you must be wise; you have a vigilant enemy, therefore you must be vigilant; you have a malicious, violent and unwearied enemy, and therefore you must be resolute, courageous and unwearied. You are in a crowd of enemies, encompassed with them on every side; so that if you do not take particular heed to every one of them, you will quickly fall. And oh! what a world of *work* have you to do! Had you but *one* ignorant person to teach, though willing to learn, what a tedious task would it be! How much more difficult then would it be if that person were as unwilling as ignorant! But to have such multitudes of these as most of us have, will find us work indeed! How much wickedness have we sometimes to contend against in one soul! And what a number of such wicked persons have we to deal with! What deep rooting have their sins taken, and under what disadvantages must truth come to them! What strangers are they to the heavenly message we bring them! They frequently know not what you say, though you speak to them in the plainest language. And when you think you have done them some good, you leave your seed among the "fowls of the air." Wicked men are at hand to contradict all that you have said, who will cavil at and slander you that they may disgrace your message, and that they may deride and scorn them away from Christ; thus they quickly extinguish the good beginnings which you hoped you had seen. They use indeed weaker reasons than yours; but such as come with more advantage, being taken from things which they see and feel, and which are befriended by the flesh: besides, they are more familiarly and importunately urged. You speak but once to a sinner for ten or twenty times that the messengers of Satan do. Moreover, how easily do the 'cares and businesses of the world choke and devour the seed' which you had sown, and how easily will a frozen, carnal heart (had it no external enemies) extinguish those sparks, which you

have been long in kindling! Yea, for want of fuel and further help, they will go out of themselves. Among what abundance of distempers, lusts and passions do you cast your words, where they are likely to meet with but a poor entertainment! And when you think your work doth happily succeed, seeing men under trouble, confessing their sins, promising reformation and living as new creatures and zealous converts, they will often prove unsound; to have been but superficially changed; to have taken up new opinions and new company, without a new heart. O how many persons (after some considerable change in them has taken place,) are deceived by the profits, the honors or the pleasures of the world, and 'again entangled in their former lusts!' Nay, how soon do even the graces of the saints themselves languish, if you neglect them; and how easily are they drawn into shameful ways, to the dishonor of the gospel, as well as their own loss and sorrow! O brethren, what a field of labor is before us! There is not a person you can see, but may find you work! You see what the work of a minister is, and what a life he hath to lead. Exert yourselves then with all your might. In order to quicken you the more, let me beg you to attend to the following considerations.

1. Consider the office of an overseer was your own voluntary undertaking. No man is forced to be an overseer of the church; does not common honesty then require you to be true to your trust?

2. Consider also the *honor* that is connected with your office as an encouragement to labor. A great honor indeed it is, to be the 'ambassadors of God,' and the instruments of men's conversion and salvation; to 'save souls from death and cover a multitude of sins.' For ministers to strive for precedence, and fill the world with wide contentions about the dignity and superiority of their office, shows that they forget the nature and work of that office they strive about. The honor is but the appendix to the work. If ministers would faithfully and humbly lay out themselves for Christ and his church, without thinking of titles and reputation, they should then have honor, whether they would or not; whereas by gaping after it they lose it.

3. Consider that you have many *privileges* belonging to your office, which should engage you to diligence in it. It is no small thing that you are maintained by other men's labors. This is for your work, that you may not be taken off from

it, but that (as Paul requires) you may 'give yourselves wholly to these things,' 1 Tim. 4 : 15, and not be forced to neglect men's souls, while you are providing for your own bodies. Either do the work, or take not the maintenance. Besides, it ought to be considered as a great privilege to be bred up to learning, while many others are brought up at the plough and cart; to be furnished with so much delightful knowledge, when the world lies in ignorance: and to converse with learned men about sublime and glorious things, while many others are conversant with none but the most vulgar and illiterate. But especially, what an excellent privilege is it, to live in studying and preaching Christ! to be continually searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them! to be daily employed in contemplating the blessed nature, works and ways of God! Others are glad of the leisure of the Lord's day, and now and then an hour besides when they can lay hold of it, but we may keep a continual sabbath. We may almost do nothing else but study and talk of God and glory, engage in acts of prayer and praise, and drink in sacred and saving truths. Our employment is all sublime and spiritual. Whether we are alone, or in company, our business is for another world. O that our hearts were but more disposed for this work! what a blessed, joyful life should we then live! How sweet would the study be to us! how pleasant the pulpit! and what delight would our conferences yield! What excellent helps do our libraries afford; where we have such a variety of wise, silent companions, whenever we please! Surely all these, and more such privileges attending the ministry, bespeak our unwearied diligence in the work. Once more,

4. [Consider the interest which all the faithful servants of Christ have in their Master's regards.] You are related to Christ as well as to the flock, and he is related to you. If therefore you are faithful in your work, you are not only advanced, but secured by the relation. You are 'the stewards of his mysteries, and the rulers of his household;' and he that intrusted you with his work, will maintain you in it. But then 'it is required of a steward that a man be found faithful.' Be true to him, and never doubt of his being true to you. Do you feed his flock? He will sooner feed you as he did Elijah, than forsake you. In the midst of enemies, he will 'give you a tongue and wisdom which none shall resist.' If you willingly put your hand to his plough, he will wither

the hand that is stretched out against you. His faithful ministers have always had large experience of his care. He who knows that he serves a God who will never suffer any man to be a loser by him, needs not fear what hazards he runs in his cause; and he who knows that he is seeking a prize which, if obtained, will infinitely exceed his cost, may boldly engage his whole estate on it, and 'sell all he has to purchase so rich a pearl.' The

II. Motive to fidelity, which our text suggests, is taken from the person by whom ministers are invested with their office, viz: the Holy Ghost; "the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

This divine agent is said to make bishops or pastors, not merely because he has determined in his word that there shall be such an office, what the work and power shall be, and what sort of men shall receive it; but also because he qualifies men for the office, because he directs those that ordain them, to discern their qualifications, and because he directs them and the people themselves, in fixing them over a particular charge. These were done, in the first ages of Christianity, in an extraordinary manner by inspiration. But, when men are rightly called, they are made overseers of the church by the Holy Ghost, i. e. by the ordinary influences of the same Spirit, now as well as then. What an obligation then is laid upon us by our call! If our commission be from heaven, it is not to be disobeyed. When Paul was called by the voice of Christ to preach the gospel, he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." When the apostles were called by our Lord, from their secular employments, they immediately "left their friends and houses and trade and all, and followed him." Though our call be not so immediate or extraordinary, it is from the same Spirit, and therefore ought to be as readily obeyed. It is not a safe course to imitate Jonah, in turning our backs upon the commands of God. If we neglect our work, he has a spur to quicken us. If we run from it, he has messengers enough to overtake us, to bring us back and make us do it; and certainly it is better to do it at first than at last. The

III. Motive in the text to diligence in our work, is taken from the dignity of the object, viz. the church of God.

It is that church for which the world is upheld, which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is united to Christ, and which is his mystical body. That church with which angels

are present, and on which they attend as 'ministering spirits' whose very 'little ones have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven.' O what a charge is it that we have undertaken! And shall we be unfaithful to it? Have we the stewardship of God's own family, and shall we neglect it? Have we the conduct of those saints who are to live for ever with God in glory, and shall we omit our duty to them? God forbid! Are the souls of men thought meet by God to see his face, and live forever in his presence? and are they not worthy of your utmost cost and labor? Do not think so meanly of the church of God, as if it deserved not your highest regards. Were you the keepers of swine or sheep, you would scarcely let them go, and say they were not worth looking after; especially if they were your own: dare you then neglect the souls of men, even the church of God? Remember Christ 'walks among them; the praises of the most high God are in the midst of them. They are a chosen generation; a sanctified, peculiar people; a royal priesthood, a holy nation; to show forth the praises of him that called them.' What an honor is it to be one of them, though but a 'door-keeper in the house of the Lord!' Surely then to be the Priest of these priests, and the Ruler of these kings, is such an honor, is such a noble employment, as multiplies your obligations to diligence and fidelity.

IV. The last motive mentioned in the text to "take heed to the flock, and feed the church of God," is, the Price that was paid for it.

It is spoken of as 'purchased by *his* blood:' i. e. by the blood of Christ, who (by the way) is here expressly called God. God the Son did purchase the church with his own blood. What an argument is here to quicken the negligent, and to condemn those that will not be quickened! What! shall we despise the blood of Christ? Shall we think it was shed for such as are not worthy of our care? The guilt of negligent pastors is certainly great, since, as much as in them lies, they make the blood of Christ to be shed in vain. They would lose him those souls, whom he has so dearly bought. Whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless, let us imagine we heard the blessed Saviour arguing with us to this effect; "Did I die for those souls, and wilt not thou look after them? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth thy care? Did I come down from heaven to earth 'to seek and to save them that were lost,' and wilt not thou

go to the next door or street or village to seek them? How small is thy labor or condescension in comparison with mine? I debased myself to this; but it is thy honor to be so employed. Have I done and suffered so much for the salvation of men, and was I willing to make thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse the little that lies upon thy hands?"

Every time we look upon our congregations, let us believingly remember that they are the purchase of Christ's blood, and let us regard them accordingly. Let us often think in what confusion a negligent minister will be at the last day, to have the blood of the Son of God pleaded against him; and to hear Christ say, "Thou didst make light of the purchase of my blood, and canst thou now hope to be saved by it thyself?" O brethren! since Christ will bring his blood to plead [at God's righteous bar], let it now effectually plead with us to do our duty, lest it should then plead against us to our damnation!

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE OBJECTIONS TO THE COURSE OF MINISTERIAL DUTY RECOMMENDED; PARTICULARLY PERSONAL INSTRUCTION.

It is a hard case that so good a master as ours, in so good a work, should have servants so bad as to plead against their duty when they should practice it, especially that *good* men should be so backward to it as to need many words to excite them to the diligent performance of it. Yet alas! this is too common a case. I have no great fear of any opposition from conscience, or unbiassed reason; but only from unwillingness, and from reason biassed by the flesh. [This will suggest many objections; the principal of which shall now be considered and answered; which was the *third* thing proposed.]

I. Perhaps some will object to what is said about personal instruction, "That their congregations are so large that it is impossible for them to *know* all their hearers, much more to take heed to every individual."

But let me ask such persons,—Was it necessary for you to take upon you such a charge? If not, you excuse one sin by

another. How durst you undertake what you knew yourselves unable to perform? If it was in a manner necessary, might you not have procured some assistance? Have you not, or could not you get a maintenance sufficient for yourselves and another to help you? What though it will not serve to support you in fulness, is it not more reasonable that you should pinch your flesh and families, than undertake a work you cannot do, and neglect the souls of so many of your flock? With me it is an unquestionable thing, (though it will seem hard to some,) that it is your duty, if you can, to live upon part of your salary, and allow the rest to a competent assistant. Do not many families in your parish live on less than you would then have? Have not many able ministers been glad of less, with liberty to preach the gospel? Can your parishioners endure damnation better than you can poverty? What! do you call yourselves ministers of the gospel, and yet esteem the souls of men so little, as that you had rather they should eternally perish, than that you and your families should live in a low condition? Ought you not rather to beg your bread, than hazard the salvation of one soul? If you have but 'food and raiment, you ought therewith to be content.' What! would you have more than is sufficient to enable you for the work of God? 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesses,' Luke 12:15. If your clothing be warm, and your food wholesome, you may be as well supported by it, to do God's work, as if you enjoyed the greatest affluence. He that has these, has but a poor excuse for hazarding men's souls, that he may enjoy more of this world's good. Remember how strongly our blessed master recommends self-denial to all his servants. They that will not exercise it, are so far from being his ministers, that they are not his true disciples. If your circumstances are such that proper assistance cannot be procured, then you should undertake your charge with limitation. But do not omit the work of personal oversight entirely, nor refuse dealing particularly with any, because you cannot do it with all; take this course with as many as you are able, and put your godly neighbors, especially parents and masters of families upon doing more. Again,

II. Some may object, that "The course recommended will require too much time, and will not allow so much as is necessary for ministers (young men especially) to follow their studies, and improve their own abilities."

I answer, the persons whom I am persuading to this work, are supposed to understand the substance of the christian religion, and to be able to teach others; and the addition of less necessary things, is not to be preferred to the communication of what are fundamentally necessary. I highly value common knowledge, and would not encourage any to set light by it, but I value the saving of souls more. That which is immediately necessary, ought to be done, whatever else is left undone. It is a very desirable thing for a physician to be well studied in his art; but if he would be inquiring even into the most useful subjects when he should be looking to his patients; and should tell them that he has not time to give them advice, because he must follow his own studies, I should esteem that man a preposterous student, who thus preferred the means to the very end itself; indeed I should think such a physician to be but a civil kind of a murderer, [nor can such a minister be looked upon in a better light]. Men's souls may be saved without your knowing whether God did predetermine the creature in all its acts; whether the understanding necessarily determines the will, etc. etc. Get well to Heaven, and help your people thither, and you shall know all these things in a moment, and a thousand more, of which now, by all your studies, you cannot gain a certain knowledge. This is the most certain and expeditious way to the attainment of it.—But consider further.

If, by the diligent practice of the ministerial duties, you are prevented from acquiring an extensive knowledge, you will hereby improve more in that which is most excellent. If you know not so many things as others, you will know the most important matters better than they. And a little of this kind of knowledge, is worth all the other knowledge in the world. When I am looking heaven-ward, gazing towards the inaccessible light, and aspiring after the knowledge of God, and find my soul so dark and distant, and consider how little I know of God, and how much he is out of my reach, I find this the most killing and grievous ignorance. Methinks I could willingly exchange all the other knowledge I have, for one glimpse more of God and the life to come. Now, by frequent serious conversation about everlasting things, by diligently instructing and catechising your people, you will gain more of this kind of knowledge, than can be gained by any other means; and thus you will really grow wiser than those that spend their time in any other way what-

ever. As Theology is a practical science, the knowledge of it thrives best in a practical course. Laying out here, is a means of gathering in; a hearty endeavor to communicate and do good is one of the greatest helps to our own proficiency. So that by this means you are likely to become more able pastors of the church, than private studies alone can make you. Particularly it will be an excellent means to help you in preaching, for when you are well acquainted with your people's cases, you will know what to preach upon; an hour's conversation will furnish you with as much matter as an hour's study. As he will be the best physician and lawyer, so he also will be the best divine, who adds practice and experience proportionable to his studies; whereas that man will prove a useless drone, who refuses God's service all his life, under a pretence of preparing for it; and lets men's souls pass on to perdition, while he pretends to be studying how to recover them, or getting more ability to help and save them.

However, let me add, that though I esteem religious knowledge the chief, I would have you to acquire other knowledge too. The other sciences may be very useful, and indeed subservient to this; and you may have competent time for both. Lose none upon vain recreations and amusements; trifle not away a minute; consume none in needless sleep; do what you do with all your might, and then see what time you may command. If you set apart two days in a week for the work of personal instruction, you may find time enough for your common studies out of all the rest. Duties are to be taken together; none are to be neglected that can be performed, but the greatest should always be preferred. But if there were such a case of necessity, that we could not read or study for ourselves and instruct the ignorant too, I would throw by all the libraries in the world rather than be guilty of the perdition of one soul: at least I know that this would be my duty.

III. It will be objected by many, "that this course will destroy our health; by continually spending our spirits, without allowing time for necessary recreations."

I answer, we may do our duty, and have time for necessary recreations too. An hour or half an hour's walk before meat is as much recreation as is necessary for the weaker sort of students. I have reason to know something of this by long experience. Though I have a body which has lan-

guished under great weaknesses many years, and which requires me to take as much exercise as almost any person in the world, yet I have found the above proportion sufficient. It is undoubtedly our duty to use as much exercise as is necessary for the preservation of our health; so far as our work requires it; otherwise, for one day's work we should lose the opportunity of many; and this may be done very consistently with all the duties I have been recommending.

As for those men that limit not their recreations to stated hours; who must have them, not to fit them for their work, but to please their voluptuous humor, such sensualists have need to study the nature of Christianity better; to learn the danger of "living after the flesh," and to get more mortification and self-denial, before they preach to others. If you must have your pleasures, you should not have put yourselves into a calling which requires you to make God and his service your pleasure, and which restrains you so much from carnal gratifications. Do you not know that the Christian warfare consisteth in the combat between the flesh and the spirit? That the very difference between a Christian and a wicked man is, that the one "lives after the spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body," and the other "lives after the flesh?" And that to overcome the flesh is the principal part of that victory, on which the crown of life depends? If notwithstanding this, you must have your pleasures, then for shame give over preaching of the gospel and the profession of Christianity, and profess yourselves to be what you are; for as you 'sow to the flesh, so of the flesh, shall you receive the wages of corruption.' Does such a one as Paul say, 'I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away?' 1 Cor. 9: 27. And have not such sinners as *we* need to do so too? Shall *we* pamper our bodies, when Paul kept his under? Did he bring it into subjection, lest after all his preaching he should be cast away? And have not *we* much *more* cause to fear it? Some pleasure is undoubtedly lawful, namely, such as tends to fit us for our work. But for a man to be so far in love with his pleasures as, for the sake of them, to waste his precious time, and neglect the work of God for men's salvation, (especially to plead for this as necessary, and to justify himself in it,) is a degree of wickedness inconsistent with the fidelity of a common Christian, much more with that of a Christian minister. Such wretches

as are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," are more fit to be cast out of Christian communion, than to be the chief in the church; "from such" we are commanded "to turn away," 2 Tim. 3: 5.

Recreations for a student, must be especially for the exercise of his body, since he has continually before him a variety of delights to the mind; and they must be used (as whetting is by the mower), only as far as is necessary to his work.

Let it be further considered; the business I am recommending is not of such a nature as is likely much to impair our health. It is true, it must be serious; but it will not so much spend our spirits, as excite and revive them. Men can talk all the day long about other matters, without any prejudice to their health; why then may not we talk with men about their salvation without any great detriment to ours? I only mean on the supposition that we have a tolerable measure of health and strength. [But supposing the worst consequence, let me ask,] What have we our time and strength for but to lay them out for God? What is a candle made for but to be burned? Burned and wasted we must be; and is it not more reasonable that it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the flesh? How little difference is there between the pleasure of a long life and a short one, when both are at an end? What comfort will it be to you at death, that you lengthened your life by shortening your work? Our life is to be estimated according to the end and business of it, not according to the mere duration. He that works much, lives much. What Seneca said of a drone, [may be applied to an indolent minister] "*ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; et diu fuit, non diu vixit.*" Will it not comfort us more at death to review a short time faithfully spent, than a long life unfaithfully?

As for visits and civilities, if they can answer greater ends than our ministerial employments, you may break the sabbath, or forbear preaching for them, and thus excuse yourselves from private instruction. But if not, how dare you make them a pretence to neglect so great a duty? Must God wait on your friends? What though they are Gentlemen or Lords, must they be served before Him? Or is their displeasure or censure more to be feared than His? It will be but a poor excuse at the last day for neglecting men's sal-

vation, "that such a gentleman, or such a friend would have taken it ill, had you not waited on them." If you yet seek to please men, you are no longer the servants of Christ, Gal. 1: 10. He that dares to waste his time in compliments, does little consider what he has to do with it. Oh that I could but improve my time according to my conviction of the importance of it! He that hath looked death in the face as often as I have done, will know how to value it. I profess I am astonished at those ministers that can find time to hunt or shoot or bowl or use other recreations two or three hours, yea days together! that can sit an hour at once in vain discourse, and spend whole days in complimentary visits, or journeys to the same purpose! Good Lord! what do such men think on? when so many souls about them cry for their help, and when the smallest parish has work enough to employ all their diligence, night and day! If you have no sense of the worth of souls, of the value of that blood which was shed for them, of the glory set before them, and of the misery to which they are exposed, then you are no Christians, and therefore very unfit to be ministers; if you *have*, how dare you, like idle gossips, chat and trifle away your time, when so many and such great works call for it? O precious time! how swiftly does it pass away! how soon will it be gone! What are the forty years of my life that are past? Were every day as long as a month, methinks it were too short for the work of a day. Have we not lost time enough in the days of our vanity, that we have any now to lose? Never do I come to a dying man, who is not utterly stupid, but he better sees the worth of time than others generally do. O then, if they could call time back again, how loud would they call! What would they give for it! Can *we* then afford to trifle it away? Is it possible that a man of any true compassion and honesty, or any concern about his ministerial duty, or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness and vanity? May a physician in the time of the plague take any more relaxation than is necessary for his life and health, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life or death? If his pleasure is not worth men's lives, certainly yours is not worth men's souls.

Do not reply, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it? And that God does not require ministers to make drudges of themselves." Surely those men are not likely to honor God,

and promote his service, who have such base thoughts of it nor can they delight in holiness who account it a slavish work. Our Lord says, 'he that denieth not himself, and taketh not up his cross to follow him, cannot be his disciple,' Matt. 10: 38. But these men count it a slavery to labor hard in his vineyard at a time when they have all accommodations and encouragements. If they had seen the diligence of Christ in doing good, when he neglected his meat to talk with one woman; John 4: 31—34, and when he was so zealous in preaching as to 'have no time to eat bread,' Mark 3: 20, 21, they would have been of the same mind with his carnal friends who went to lay hold of him, and said 'he is beside himself.' If they had seen him all day in preaching and healing, and 'all night in prayer to God,' they would have told him that he made a slave of himself, and that God did not require so much ado. I cannot but advise such men to search their own hearts, and inquire whether they unfeignedly believe that word they preach. If you do, Sirs, how can you think any labor too much for such weighty ends? If you do not, say so, and get you out of the vineyard; go with the prodigal to keep swine, and do not undertake the feeding of Christ's flock.

Do you not know that it is your own benefit you grudge at? The more you do, the more you receive; the more you lay out, the more you have coming in. The exercise of grace increases it. And it is a slavery to be more with God, and to receive more from him, than other men? It is the chief solace of a gracious soul to be doing good, and receiving good by doing it. Besides, hereby we are preparing for fuller receivings hereafter. We put out our talents to usury, and by improving them, shall make five become ten. They who esteem the service of God as slavery, justify the profane who look upon all diligent godliness in that light; and hereby aggravate their sin, and while they thus debase the work of the Lord, they do but debase themselves, and prepare for a greater abasement at last.

IV. Perhaps some may suggest, "that if we make such severe laws for ministers, the church will soon be left without them, as few parents will choose such a burden for their children, and many persons will be discouraged from undertaking it."

I answer, the carnal and self-seeking may be discouraged, but not those that thirst after the "winning of souls," who

are devoted to the service of God and have "taken up the cross to follow the Lamb." Christ would not forbear telling the world of the absolute necessity of self-denial for fear of discouraging men from his service, but on the contrary, declares that he will have none but such as will submit to it, and that those who will not come on these terms may go their way, and see whether he wants their service more than they want his protection and favor. These laws which you call severe, are not ours, but what Christ has made and imposed. If I should conceal or misinterpret them, that would not relax them, nor excuse you. He who made them, knew why he did it, and will expect the performance of them. And he will take care for a supply of pastors. He has the "fulness of the spirit," and therefore can give men hearts to do the duty he has imposed. He that has undertaken the work of our redemption, will not lose all his labor, for want of instruments to carry on his work. He will provide his people with 'pastors after his own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge,' Jer. 3: 15, who will "seek not theirs, but them, and willingly spend and be spent for their sake." What! do you think that Christ can have no servants, if such as you (with Demas) forsake him and turn to the present world?" If you dislike his service, you may seek a better where you can find it, and boast of your gain in the conclusion; but do not threaten him with the loss. Look to yourselves as well as you can, and tell me at the hour of death, or at the judgment-day, who had the better bargain; whether Christ had more need of you, or you of him. It shall not serve your turn to run out of the vineyard, on pretence that you cannot do the work; he can follow you and overtake you, as he did Jonah, with such a storm as shall lay you "in the belly of hell." Totally to cast off duty, because you cannot endure to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuse at last.

V. But the strongest objection of all seems to be, "that few people will submit to be so freely dealt with by their ministers, but will make a scorn at our motion."

It cannot be denied, that too many people are obstinate in their wickedness; that "simple ones love simplicity, that scorers delight in scorning, and that fools hate knowledge," Prov. 1: 22. But I wish it were not too much owing to ministers, that a great part of our people are so obstinate and contemptuous. If we did but shine and burn before them as

we ought ; were our sermons and our lives more convincing ; did we set ourselves to do all the good we could do ; were we more humble and meek, more loving and charitable ; and did we let them see that we do but little esteem any worldly things in comparison with their salvation, much more might be done than is done ; the mouths of many would be stopped, and the wicked would be more tractable and calm than they are. However, the worse they are, the more they are to be pitied, and the more diligent should we be for their recovery. Their wilfulness will not excuse us from our duty. If we do not offer them our help, how do we know who will refuse it ? Offering it is our part ; accepting is theirs. If we offer it not, we leave them excusable, because then they do not refuse it ; but we leave ourselves without excuse. If they refuse our help when it is offered, we have done our part and delivered our own souls. But if some refuse it, others will accept it ; and the success, with regard to them, may be such as to reward all our labor, though it were much more. All are not wrought upon by public preaching ; but we must not therefore give it over as unprofitable. In a word, there is nothing from God or from right reason to make us backward to any part of our work ; though from the world, the flesh and the devil, we shall have much, and perhaps more than we yet expect. But if, against all temptations and difficulties, we have recourse to God, and look on his great obligations on one side, and the hopeful effects and rewards on the other, we shall find but little cause to draw back or faint.¹

¹ The author, in his preface to the 2d edition of the Reformed Pastor, has a remarkable passage concerning his own experience on this head, which it may not be amiss here to transcribe ; especially as it shows what an illustrious example he was of that diligence which he recommends to others. " I find (says he) that we never took the rightest course to demolish the kingdom of darkness till now. I wonder at myself that I was kept from so clear and excellent a duty so long. But the case was with me, as I suppose it is with others ; I was convinced of my duty, but my apprehensions of it were too small, and of the difficulties of it, too great. I thought that the people would have scorned it, and that only a few (who had least need) would have submitted to it. The work seemed strange to me ; I was for staying till the people were better prepared for it, and thought my strength would never go through with it ; thus was I detained in delays, which I beseech the Lord of mercy to forgive. Whereas upon trial, I find the difficulties to be nothing to what I imagined, and I experience the benefits and comforts of the work to

VI. But to all that I have said to recommend personal instruction, many will answer, "You build too much on Paul's teaching from house to house, and other passages of the same kind; those times, when the churches were first planting, required more diligence than ours; show us some passage of Scripture which requires from *us* all that you have prescribed, and especially which obliges us to set apart two days in the week for it."¹ I reply,

1. I do not make it a minister's duty absolutely to go up and down from house to house to each person in the parish, or of his charge; nay, I would not so much as advise you to this without necessity; but first call the people to come to you at your house, or at the vestry, or wherever you please, so that you will but give them that personal instruction, on a proper inquiry into their states, which their circumstances require. And then go to those that will not come to you if they will consent to it, and if you are able. For my own part, I cannot go from house to house without the apparent hazard of my life. And I think it more for the people's benefit to accustom them to attend their pastor, (and it is much more for his,) than for him to hunt up and down after them, scarcely knowing where or when. But men's obstinacy may make that necessary which is inconvenient.

2. It is not on these texts in question, or any other, that I wholly ground this duty; though supposing there were no more than the general command [on which we have been insisting] of "taking heed to *all* the flock," surely this were sufficient to convince you that you should take as particular care of every individual as you can. Must I turn to my Bible to show a preacher where it is written that a man's soul is of more worth than a world? Or that both we, and all we have, are God's? Or that it is inhuman cruelty to let souls

be such, that I would not wish to have neglected it, for all the riches in the world. We spend Monday and Tuesday (from the morning almost to night) in the work; taking about fifteen or sixteen families in a week, that we may go through the parish (in which there are above eight hundred) in a year. And I cannot say that one family hath yet refused to come to me, or that many persons have shifted it off. And with regard to most of them that come, I find more outward signs of success [from this private discourse with them], than from all my preaching to them.

¹ This is taken from the author's Appendix to the 2d Edition, in which he answers many other objections, which are either too weak to bear repeating, or too peculiar to need it.

go to hell for fear we and our families should live somewhat the harder? In a word, the question is, Whether you are not bound to do the best you can to save the souls of your people? Do this, and I desire no more. But do you think in your conscience that you do the best you can, if you neglect to exhort, instruct, and catechise them?

3. To say the present times require less diligence than the days of the apostles, savors of a man locked up in a study and unacquainted with the world. Good Lord! Are there such multitudes round about us who are ignorant of the first principles of religion? Are there so many thousand drowned in presumption, security and sensuality? So many drunkards, worldlings, haters and scoffers of a holy life? So many dull, ignorant, scandalous professors? So many trouble-makers, seducers and dividers of the church? And yet is the happiness of our times so great, that we may excuse ourselves from personal instruction because it is unnecessary? Look more without, and I warrant you that you will not see cause to spare your pains for want of work. What conscientious minister finds not work enough to do from one end of the year to the other, though he has not a hundred souls to take care of? It is true that there are more professors of Christianity in our day than in the apostle's; but are the ungodly the less miserable for that profession, or the more so?

4. As to the objection that relates to the proportion of time to be allotted for this work, etc. I answer, What if God only bids us to "pray without ceasing," will you approve of those who neglect it because they are not commanded to pray morning and night, or in the family? Set times are as needful for the constant performance of this duty, as for your private or family duties, your lectures or your studies. When you have shown me a written precept for these, or for preaching twice on the Lord's day, then I will show you more than one for the things in question. However, I presume not to impose an unnecessary task on any, but leave it to your prudence to discern and determine the seasons and other circumstances of your duty.

CHAPTER IX.

MISCELLANEOUS DIRECTIONS RESPECTING THE WHOLE MINISTERIAL WORK.¹

[THE next thing proposed, to which we now proceed, was, *fourthly*, to give some miscellaneous directions for the more comfortable, acceptable and useful discharge of the pastoral office in all its branches.]

I. Through the whole course of your ministry, insist most upon the greatest, most certain and most necessary things.

If we can teach Christ to our people, we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The plainest and most commonly acknowledged truths, are what men live most upon; these are the great instruments in destroying sin, and in raising the heart to God. We should always have our people's necessities in our eye. To remember that "one thing is needful," will take us off from needless ornaments and unprofitable controversies. Many other things are desirable to be known, but these *must* be known, or else our people are undone forever. Necessity should be the great disposer of a minister's studies and labors. If we were sufficient for everything, we might fall upon everything, and take in order the whole Encyclopaedia. But life is short, and we are dull. Eternal things are necessary, and the souls which depend on our teaching are precious. I confess that necessity has been the conductor of my studies and my life. It chooses what books I shall read, and when, and how long. It chooses my text and makes my sermon, both for matter and manner, as far as I can keep out my own corruptions. Though I know that the constant expectation of death has been a great cause of this with regard to myself, yet I can see no reason why the most healthful man should not make sure of the necessaries first; considering the shortness and uncertainty of all men's lives. Who can, either in study, preaching or life, be employed about foreign matters, when he knows that this or that *must* be done? As the sol-

¹ N. B. "The sins of ministers," which the author had pointed out in a distinct series of particulars, are introduced in this, as many of the thoughts in both necessarily coincided. These directions stood in different parts of the original work, but it seemed most natural to place them together here.

dier says, "Non diu disputandum, sed celeriter et fortiter dimicandum ubi urget necessitas," so much more may we, as our business is more important. Doubtless this is the best way to redeem time, to spend it only on necessary things; and I think it is the way to be most profitable to others, though not always to be most pleasing and applauded; because through men's frailty, that is too true which Seneca complains of, "Nova potius miramur quam magna."

A preacher must be often upon 'the same things, because the matters of necessity are few. This we should not avoid, in order to satisfy such as look for novelties, though we should clothe the same necessaries with a grateful variety, in the manner of our delivering them. Necessaries are common and obvious; for superfluities we may waste our time and labor, and often to no purpose. The great volumes and tedious controversies that so much trouble us and waste our time, usually made up more of opinion than necessary truths.¹ You would choose those authors to read for yourselves, which tell you what you know not, and treat of the most necessary things in the clearest manner, though it be in the most barbarous language; rather than those which most learnedly, and in the most elegant, grateful language, tell you that which is false and vain, and "magno conatu nihil dicere."² And surely you should act on the same principle in teaching other men, as in studying for yourself. They are commonly empty, ignorant men, destitute of the matter and substance of true learning, who are over-curious about words and ornaments, who affect to be esteemed what they are not, having no other way to procure that esteem; whereas the oldest, most experienced and most learned men abound in substantial verities, usually delivered in the plainest dress. Which brings me to add,

II. All our teaching should be as plain and evident as we can make it.

This best suits a teacher's ends. He that would be un-

¹ Necessitas brevibus clauditur terminis; opinio nullis.—*Marsil. Ficinus.*

² Sunt qui scire volunt eo fine tantum ut sciant, et turpis curiositas est; et sunt qui scire volunt ut scientiam suam vendant, et turpis quaestus est; sunt qui scire volunt ut sciantur ipsi, et turpis vanitas est; sed sunt qui scire volunt ut aedificentur, et prudentia est; et sunt quoque qui scire volunt ut aedificent, et charitas est.—*Bernard, Serm. in Cant. 26.*

derstood, must make it his business to be understood; by speaking to the capacities of his hearers. Truth loves the light, and is most beautiful when most naked. He is an enemy that hides the truth; and he is a hypocrite, who does this under a pretence of revealing it. Highly ornamented sermons, (like painted glass in windows, which keeps out the light,) are too often the marks of hypocrisy. If you would not teach men, what do you in the pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood? For a man purposely to cloud his matter in strange words, and hide his mind from the people whom he pretends to instruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound learning, but wise men, his folly, pride and hypocrisy. Some persons purposely conceal their sentiments, through a pretence to necessity, because of men's prejudices, and the unpreparedness of common understandings to receive the truth. But truth overcomes prejudice by mere light of evidence. There is no better way to make a good cause prevail, than to make it as plain and as thoroughly understood as we can; this will properly dispose an unprepared mind. He that is not able to deliver his matter plainly to others, (I mean as plainly as the nature of it will bear, and supposing them to have capacities for understanding it,) shows that he has not well digested it himself.

III. We should always suit our instructions, and our behavior to the capacities and circumstances of those with whom we have to do.

Our work must be carried on prudently, orderly and by degrees. Milk must go before strong meat. The foundation must be laid before we can build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. A person must be brought into a state of grace, before we can expect from him the works of grace. The stewards of God's household must 'give to each their portion in due season,' Luke 12: 42. We must not go beyond the capacities of our people, nor teach them the perfection, who have not learned the principles. There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness, both in our preaching and discipline; each must be predominant according to the quality of the person or the matter we have in hand. If there be no severity, our reproofs will be despised; if it be all severity, we shall be esteemed usurpers of dominion.

IV. Every part of our work must be managed with great humility.

Pride is one of the most heinous, and yet one of our most palpable sins. It discovers itself in many by their dress; it chooses their cloth and their fashion, and dresses their hair and their habit according to the taste. And I wish this were all, or the worst; but alas, how frequently does it go with us to our studies! How often does it choose our subject, and how much oftener our words and ornaments! Sometimes it puts in toys and trifles under a pretence of laudable embellishments, and often pollutes instead of polishing. It makes us speak to our people what they do not understand, [merely to display our learning]. It takes off the edge of a discourse under a pretence of filing off the roughness and superfluity. If we have a plain and cutting passage, it throws it away as too rustical or ungrateful. Now, though our matter be of God, if our dressing and manner and end be from Satan, (as is the case when pride has the ordering of it,) we have no great reason to expect success. Yet thus does pride make many a man's sermon. And when they have composed the discourse, it goes with them into the pulpit, it forms their tone, it animates their delivery, it takes them off from what would be displeasing, and directs them in the pursuit of vain applause. In short, instead of seeking God's glory and denying themselves, it makes them, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves and deny God. When they should ask, "what shall I say, and how shall I say it to please God best, and do most good?"—pride makes them ask, "what shall I say, and how shall I deliver it, to be thought a learned, able preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me?" When the sermon is done, pride goes home with them, and makes them, more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did any good to the souls of men. Were it not for shame, they could willingly ask people how they liked them, to extort their commendations. If they perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice as having attained their end; if not, they are displeased as having lost the prize.

But this is not all; some ministers are so set upon a popular air, and having the highest place in the esteem of men, that they envy the abilities and names of their brethren who are preferred to them; as if all were taken from their praise, that is given to another's, and as if God had bestowed his

gifts upon them as the mere ornaments of their persons, that they might walk as men of reputation in the world, and as if all the gifts of other ministers were to be trodden down and vilified, if they should stand in the way of their honor. Strange! that one workman should malign another, because he helps him to do his master's work! Yet how common is this heinous crime among men of ability and eminence in the church! They will secretly blot the reputation of such as oppose their own, and will at least raise suspicions, where they cannot fasten accusations. Nay, some go so far as to be unwilling that any ministers abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves. It is a surprising thing that any man who has the least fear of God, should so envy his gifts in others, as that he had rather his carnal hearers should remain unconverted, than that they should be converted by another person who may be preferred to himself. Yet this sin does so prevail, that it is difficult to get two ministers to live together in love and quietness, unanimously to carry on the work of God. Unless one of them be greatly inferior to the other, and content to be so esteemed, and to be governed by him, they are contending for precedency, envying each other's interest, and behaving with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of their profession and the injury of the congregation. Nay, so great is the pride of some ministers, that when they might have an equal assistant, to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves though more than they can bear, than that any should share with them in their honor, or lest they should diminish their own interest in the people. It is owing to pride, that many ministers make so little proficiency; they are too proud to learn. It is through pride also that men so magnify their own opinions, and are as censorious of any that differ from them in lesser things as if their sentiments were the rules of the church's faith. While we cry down papal infallibility, too many of us would be Popes ourselves, and would have everything determined by our judgments, as if we were infallible. And so high are our spirits, that when any reprove or contradict us, (though they have sufficient reason to do it,) we are commonly impatient both of the matter and the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and promote our reputation, though in other respects he be less worthy our esteem; but he is ungrateful to us, who differs from us,

and contradicts us, and who plainly tells us of our faults, especially in relation to our public performances. Many, through their pride, imagine that all those despise them who do not admire all they say, and submit to their judgments in the most palpable mistakes; thus have they dishonored themselves by idolising their honor, and publicly proclaimed their own shame. From pride proceed all the envy, contention and unpeaceableness of ministers, which are the hindrances to all reformation; all would lead, but few will follow or concur. Yea, hence proceed schisms and apostasies, as did former persecutions, arrogant usurpations and impositions. In short, it is pride at the root that nourishes all our other sins, and this virtually contains them all.

Give me leave, brethren, to expostulate with you and my own heart with regard to this sin, that we may see the evil of it and be reformed. Pride is the sin of devils, the first born of hell, it is that wherein the devil's image does principally consist. It is an intolerable evil in a man that is so much engaged against him as we are. Pride ill becomes those that are to lead men in such a humble way to heaven. We had need to take care, lest when we have brought others thither, the gate should prove too strait for ourselves. God, who thrust out a proud angel, will not there entertain a proud preacher as such. The very design of the gospel tends to self-abasement. The work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. Humility is not the mere ornament of a Christian, but it is an essential part of the new creature. All that will be Christ's disciples must 'come to him and learn;' their lesson is, to be "meek and lowly in heart," Matt. 11: 28, 29. How many admirable precepts and examples has our Lord and master given us to this end! Can we once conceive of him as washing and wiping his servants' feet, and yet be haughty and domineering? Shall he converse with the meanest, and shall we avoid them as contemptible, and think none but the rich and honorable fit for our society? Many of us are oftener found in the houses of gentlemen, than in the poor cottages of such as most need our help; as if we had taken the charge only of the souls of the rich. Methinks we should remember our title as *ministers*, which, though the popish priests disdain, we do not. We should not speak proudly or disrespectfully to any, but should carry ourselves meekly and courteously to all, remembering that we are obliged to be "the servants of all." We should not be

strange to the poorest and meanest of the flock, but should 'condescend to men of low estate' as our equals in Christ. Familiarity improved to holy ends is necessary, and may do abundance of good; and surely a kind, winning carriage is a very cheap way of doing it. We should so teach others, as to be ready to learn of any; thus we may both teach and learn at once;¹ not proudly venting our own conceits, and disdaining all that any way contradict them, as if we (having attained the height of knowledge) were destined to the chair, and all other men were to sit at our feet.

Alas, brethren! what is it that we have to be so proud of? Of our bodies? They are made of the same materials, as the meanest of our fellow creatures. Is it of our graces? The more we are proud of them, the less have we to be proud of, since much of the nature of grace is in humility. Is it of our learning and abilities; Surely, if we have any knowledge at all, we must know much reason to be humble. If we know more than others, we must know more reason to be humble than they do. But how little is it that the most learned know, in comparison with what they are ignorant of! And to know how ignorant we are, and how far things are beyond our reach, one would imagine, could be no great cause of pride. It is our very business to preach humility; it is therefore very unfit that we should be proud. Must we study and preach humility, and must we not possess and practise it? A proud preacher of humility, is at least a self-condemning man. And I beseech you to consider, whether it will save us to speak well of the grace we do not possess; whether sincerity can consist with allowed pride, and whether we can be saved without humility, any more than without temperance or chastity.

Consider further, brethren, I beseech you, what baits there are in the ministerial office, to entice to vanity, and what temptations to pride lie in our way, that you may be more upon your guard against it. What a snare may it prove, to have the fame of godly men and of learned, zealous preach-

¹ We may say of ministers in general what Augustine said of the aged of them: "Etsi magis decet docere quam discere, magis tamen decet discere quam ignorare."

"Ab omnibus libenter disce quod tu nescis; quia humilitas commune tibi facere potest, quod natura cuique proprium fecit; sapientior omnibus eris, si ab omnibus discere volueris: qui ab omnibus accipiunt, omnibus ditiores sunt;"—HUGO.

ers! How pleasing is it to have the people crowd to hear us, and to be able to command their judgments and affections! Especially to be renowned through the land for the highest spiritual excellences! To have the people plead for us as their felicity, and call us the pillars of the church of God, and their fathers, "the chariots and horsemen of Israel!" Alas! brethren, a little grace will serve to make you join with the forwardest of those men that have these inducements and encouragements. Nay, pride may do it without any special grace.¹ O! therefore, be jealous of yourselves, and in all your studies be sure to study humility. 'He that exalteth himself shall be brought low; whereas he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,' Luke 14: 11. I commonly observe, that almost all men, both good and bad, loathe the proud and love the humble; so far does pride defeat its own ends. We have cause to be the more jealous of ourselves, because pride is a vice which is most deeply rooted in us, and with as much difficulty as any, extirpated from the soul. Again,

V. In every part of our work, we should be serious, affectionate, zealous and reverent.

The importance of our matter condemns coldness and sleepy dulness. Our spirits should be well awakened, that we may be fit to awaken others. If our words be not sharp and piercing, they will hardly be felt by stony hearts. To speak slightly and coldly about heavenly things, is as bad as to say nothing of them. All our work must be managed reverently, as becomes them that believe the presence of God; not treating holy things as if they were common. The more of God appears in our duties, the more authority will they have with men. Reverence is that affection of the soul which proceeds from deep apprehensions of God, and denotes that the mind is much conversant with him. To manifest irreverence about the things of God; is so far to manifest hypocrisy, and that the heart agrees not with the tongue. I know not how it is with other persons; but the most reverent preacher,

¹ [A Jesuit, who had been employed twenty years in the missions of Canada, owned privately to his friend, that, while he did not believe in the being of a God, he had faced death twenty times for the sake of the religion which he preached to the savages with great success. His friend, hereupon, represented to him the inconsistency of his zeal: "Ah!" replied the missionary; "you have no idea of the pleasure which is felt in commanding the attention of twenty thousand people, and in persuading them to what we believe not ourselves." D'Alembert's Account of the Jesuits.]

who speaks as if he saw the face of God, does more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the most accurate preparations, though he bawl it out with ever so much seeming earnestness. If reverence be not equal to fervency, it has but little effect. Of all preaching in the world I hate that most which tends to make the hearers laugh, or to affect their minds with such levity as stage-plays do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the name of God.¹ We should suppose (as it were) when we draw near him in holy things, that we saw the throne of God and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we may be awed with his majesty, lest we profane his service and take his name in vain.

VI. All our work should be done spiritually; as by men possessed of the Holy Ghost, and actuated by him.

We should be men that "savor the things of the spirit." There is in some men's preaching a spiritual strain which spiritual hearers can discern and relish; whereas in others, this sacred tincture is so wanting, that even when they speak of spiritual things, the manner is such as if they were common matters. Our evidence and ornaments ought to be spiritual; rather borrowed from the Scriptures (with a cautious, subservient use of human writings,) than from the authority of Aristotle, or any other man. "The wisdom of the world" must not be magnified against "the wisdom of God." Philosophy must be taught to stoop and serve, while faith bears the principal sway. The great scholars in Aristotle's school, must take heed of glorying too much in their master, and despising those who are beneath them, lest they themselves prove lower in the school of Christ, and "least in the kingdom of God," while they would appear great in the eyes of men. As wise a man as any of them would "glory in nothing but in the cross of Christ, and determined to know nothing but him crucified."² The most learned men should think of this. Let all writers have their due esteem, but compare none of them with the word of God. We will not refuse their service, but we must abhor them as competitors. God is the best teacher of his own nature and will. It is the

¹ *Docente in ecclesiâ te, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscite-tur; lacrymæ auditorum laudes tuæ sunt.*—JEROME.

² *Deus primo collegit indoctos; post modum philosophos, et non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed per piscatores, subegit oratores.*—GREG. M. Moral. L. 33.

sign of a distempered heart, when a person loses the relish for scripture excellency. There is in a spiritual heart a connaturality to the word of God, because this was the means of his regeneration. The word is that seal which made all the holy impressions that are in the hearts of true believers, and stamped the image of God upon them; they must therefore love that word as long as they live.

VII. The whole of our ministry must be carried on in a tender love to our people.

We must let them see that nothing pleases us but what profits them; that what does them good, does us good, and that nothing troubles us more than their hurt. "Bishops (as Jerome says) are not lords, but fathers;" and therefore must be affected towards their people as their children; yea the tenderest love of the mother should not surpass theirs. We must even "travail in birth for them till Christ be formed in them." We should convince them that we care for no outward thing, not money nor liberty nor credit nor life itself, in comparison with their salvation. When your people see that you unfeignedly love them, they will hear anything and bear anything.¹ We ourselves should put up with a blow given us in love, sooner than with a hard word given us in anger and malice. Most men judge of advice, as they judge of the affection of him who gives it. O therefore see to it that you feel a tender love to your people in your breast, and let them feel it in your speeches, and see it in your conduct. Let them see that you "spend and are spent for their sakes," that all you do, is not for any ends of your own, but for them. To this end, works of charity will be necessary, as far as your circumstances allow. [But more of this under the next particular.]

Be sure that your love be not carnal, flowing from pride, and that you do not appear as one that is a suitor for himself, rather than for Christ; who loves because he is beloved, or pretends it, that he may be. Take heed that you do not connive at men's sins under a pretence of love; for that were to contradict the very nature and ends of it.² Friendship must be cemented by piety. A wicked man can be no true friend. If you befriend the sins of the wicked, you show that you are such yourselves. By favoring their sin,

¹ Dilige et dic quodcumque voles.—*Aug.*

² Amici vitia si feras, facis tua.—*Seneca.*

you discover your enmity to God; and then how can you "love your brother?" If you be their best friend, help them against their worst enemies. Pretend not to love them if you favor their sins, and do not seek their salvation. Do not think all sharpness inconsistent with love; parents will correct their children, and God himself will "chasten every son that he loveth."¹ Next to this let me add

VIII. Take care that your worldly and fleshly interests do not too much prevail against the interest of Christ and the good of souls.

Never be guilty of temporizing for the sake of gain. It is one of the greatest reproaches upon the ministry, that so many of us do so much suit themselves to the party that is most likely to suit their ends, and promote their worldly advantage. This often occasions our enemies to say, that reputation and preferment are our religion and our reward. Never let a regard to your worldly interest prevent your discharge of any part of your duty, even though the most disagreeable to your people, and though it should hinder them from paying their dues. I find alas! that money is too strong an argument for some ministers to answer, who can proclaim 'the love of it to be the root of all evil,' and can make long orations on the danger of covetousness. If it was so heinous a sin in Simon Magus to offer to *buy* the gifts of God with money, what must it be to *sell* his gifts, his cause, and the souls of men for money! and what reason have such to fear, lest 'their money perish with them!' Further,

Be sure that your concern about your temporal interest, does not prevent your works of charity. Bare *words* will hardly convince men that you have any love to them. Works of charity do most powerfully remove men's prejudices, and open their ears to the words of piety. If they see that you are addicted to *do good*, they will more easily believe that you are good, and that it is good to which you would persuade them. Go to the poor to see what they want, and at once show your compassion to soul and body. Buy them catechisms and other small books that are likely to do them good. Stretch your purse to the utmost of your power, and do all the good you can. I would put no one upon extremes; it is doubtless every man's duty to "provide for those of his

¹ Melius est cum severitate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere.
—*Aug.*

own house." But ministers should educate their children as other persons in low circumstances do, that they may be able to get their own livings in some honest trade or employment, without other great provisions. You are bound to educate them so as they may be capable of doing the most service for God; but not to leave them rich. You should not forbear necessary works of charity, merely to make a larger provision for them. A truly charitable, self-denying heart, that hath devoted itself and all it hath to God, would be the best judge of due proportions; would see which way of expense is likely to do God the greatest service, and would cheerfully take that. Though I would not have men lie under strong temptations to incontinency, yet I confess it seems hard that they can do no more to mortify the flesh, that they may live in a single, freer condition, and have none of these temptations from wives and children, to hinder them from promoting the ends of their ministry by works of charity. It is a pity that in a better cause, we no more imitate the papists in wisdom and self-denial, where it might be done.¹ But if ministers must marry, they should marry such as can maintain themselves and their children, and so devote as much as they can of the church's means, to the church's service. But in this case, flesh and blood make even good men so partial, that they sometimes look upon duties, (and duties of very great importance,) to be extremes. The flesh will tell us that we must have a competency; and many pious men's competency is but little below the rich man's rates. If they be not clothed with the best, and "fare not sumptuously every day," they have not a competency. Brethren, think not of being rich. Seek not great things for yourselves or your posterity. A man that preaches an immortal crown of glory, must not seek much after transitory vanity. He that teaches others the contempt of riches, must himself contemn them, and show it by his life. He that recommends self-denial and mortification, must practise these himself in the eyes of the world, if he would have his doctrine prosper. All Christians, with all they have, are consecrated to their "master's use:" but ministers, as they are doubly devoted to

¹ The author has considered this point more particularly in another place, though his advice was, in this instance, contradicted by his example. There are, however, in the chapter referred to, many hints, in relation to matrimony, less liable to dispute than the passage in question.

God, are doubly obliged to honor him with their substance. That man who has anything in the world so dear to him that he cannot spare it for Christ, if he calls for it, is no true Christian. What if you impoverish yourselves to do others good, will it be loss or gain? If you believe that God is your safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in his service is the greatest usury, show your people that you do believe it. Do not take it as an undoing to "make to you friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," though you leave yourselves but little on earth.

O what abundance of good might ministers do, if they would but live in a contempt of the world, the riches, and glories of it, and expend all they have for their master's use! This would unlock more hearts for the reception of their doctrine than all their oratory will do. Without this, singularity in religion will seem but hypocrisy, and perhaps is nothing more. Though we need not do as the papists, who betake themselves to monasteries, and cast away all their property, yet we must have nothing but what we have *for God*. The world perhaps will expect more from us than we have; but if we cannot answer the expectations of the unreasonable, let us do what we can to answer the expectations of God, and to satisfy conscience and good men. Those that have a large income must increase their charity in proportion. If you are not able to do many acts of charity, show that you are willing, if you had ability, by doing that sort of good you can.

IX. Let me recommend to you the cultivation and exercise of patience, as a necessary concomitant of your work.

We must bear with many abuses and injuries from those for whom we are doing good. When we have studied for them and prayed for them, when we have exhorted and beseeched them with all condescension, when we have given them all we are able, have spent ourselves for them, and tendered them as if they had been our children, we must expect that many will requite us with scorn, hatred and contempt; that they will cast our kindness in our faces with disdain, and take us for their "enemies because we tell them the truth;" and that 'the more we love them, the less shall we be beloved.' All this must be patiently endured, and still we must unweariedly hold out in doing them good; "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if perad-

venture God will give them repentance." Though they scornfully reject our teaching, and bid us look to ourselves, still we must persevere. We have to deal with distracted men, who will fly in the face of their physician; but we must not therefore neglect the cure. He is very unfit to be a physician, who will be driven away from a frantic patient by foul words. It is not to be expected that fools should make us as grateful returns for our care over them, as wise men. But alas! how sadly do most ministers come off in this part of their trial? When sinners reproach and slander them for their love, what heart-risings will there be! How will the remnants of the old Adam (pride and passion) struggle against the meekness and patience of the "new man!"

X. In all our work we should be as peaceable as we can; we should studiously promote union and communion among ourselves, and the unity and peace of the churches committed to our care.

We must be sensible how necessary this is to the prosperity of the whole church, the strengthening of the common cause, the good of the particular members of our flock, and the further enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. Ministers therefore should feel very sensibly when the church is wounded, and should be so far from being leaders in divisions, that they should consider it as an important part of their work to prevent and heal them. They should not only hearken to motions for unity, but should study day and night to find out means to close breaches, and should also propose and prosecute them. Instead of quarrelling with our brethren, we should combine against the common enemy.

Most ministers will speak for unity and peace; but how seldom do we see them addicted to promote it! Too commonly they are jealous of it, and are even the instruments of division. The papists have so long abused the name of Catholic Church, that in opposition to them, many either put it out of their creed, or only retain the name, while they understand not, or consider not the nature of the thing, and behave not as members of that body. Of the multitude that say they are of the catholic church, it is rare to meet with men of a catholic spirit. They do not duly regard the *whole* church, but look upon their own party as if that were the whole. Most of them will pray hard for the prosperity of their sect, and rejoice and give thanks when it goes well with

them, thinking that the happiness of the rest consists only in turning to them; but if any other party suffer, they little regard it, as if it were no loss at all to the church; nay because they are not of their mind, they wish for, and are glad to hear of their fall, imagining that it is the way to the churches' rising. If they differ not among themselves, they are but little troubled at differing from others, though it be from almost all the Christian world. The peace of their party they take for the peace of the church; no wonder therefore if they are concerned to carry it no further. Few grow zealous of peace, till they grow old, or have much experience of men's spirits and principles, and see better the true state of the church and the several differences in it; and then they begin to write their *Irenicons*, to leave behind them when they are dead, as witnesses against a wilful, self-conceited, unpeaceable world. Many of these are extant at this day.¹ It often brings a man under suspicion either of favoring some heresy, and of needing an indulgence to his own errors, or of having abated his zeal for the truth, if he does but attempt a pacificatory work; as if there were no zeal necessary for the great fundamental truths, and for the unity and peace of the church, but only for parties and for some particular doctrines.

We have as sad divisions among us in England, as most nations have known; but is the difference between the several denominations of Protestants so great that we might not come to agreement? Were we but heartily willing, I know we might. I have conversed with some moderate men of all parties, and I perceive by their concessions that a union were an easy work. If we could not in every point agree, we might easily lessen our differences, and hold communion upon our agreement in the main; determining on the safest way for managing our few and small differences, without the danger or trouble of the church. To the shame of all our faces be it spoken, that this is not done. Let each party flatter themselves as they please, this will be recorded to the shame of the ministers of England as long as the gospel abides in the world.

We confess the worth of peace; we read and preach on

¹ See especially Hall's excellent treatise called "The Peacemaker," and his "Pax Terris," which deserve to be transcribed upon all our hearts.

those texts, that command us to 'follow peace with all men,' etc., and yet we sit still and neglect it as if it was not worth-looking after; and too many will censure and reproach any that endeavor it, as if holiness and peace were so fallen out that there were no reconciling them; when yet we have found by long experience that concord is a sure friend to piety, and that piety always tends to concord. We have seen to our sorrow, that where the servants of God should have lived together as of one heart and voice, promoting each other's faith and holiness, and rejoicing together in the hope of future glory, they have, on the contrary, lived in mutual jealousies, drowned holy love in bitter contentions, and studied to disgrace and undermine one another, and to increase their own parties by right or by wrong.

This sin of discord among ministers is accompanied with many heinous aggravations. We have seen how errors and heresies breed by it, as discord is bred and fed by them. Nor have we ourselves only scorched in this flame, but we have also drawn our people into it, so that they are fallen into several parties, and have turned much of their ancient piety into vain opinions, disputes and animosities. And (which is worst of all) the common ignorant people take notice of it, and not only deride *us*, but become hardened against religion. If we go about to persuade them to be religious, they see so many parties, that they know not which to join with, and think that it is as well to belong to none at all as to join any, since they know not which is the right. Many poor carnal wretches think themselves in the better case, while they hold to their old formalities, and we hold to nothing. Did we but agree among ourselves in the main, and do as much of God's work as we could in concurrent unanimity, our words would have some authority with them, and we should be in a greater capacity to do them good. But if our tongues and hearts be divided, no wonder if our work prove more like a Babel than the temple of God. It is not strange that the people should despise us, if we despise one another. Some ministers by their bitter, opprobrious speeches of others, have more effectually done the devil's service, under the name of orthodoxy and zeal for the truth, than the malignant scorers of godliness could possibly have done. The matter is come to that pass, that there are few men of note, of any party, but who are so publicly reproached by the other parties, that the ignorant and wicked rabble, who should be converted by

them, have learned to be orthodox and to vilify and scorn them. Mistake me not; I do not slight orthodoxy or jeer at the name, but only expose the pretences of devilish zeal in pious or seemingly pious men. I know that many of these reverend calumniators think that they laudably discover that soundness in the faith, and that zeal for the truth, which others want; but I will resolve the case in the words of the Holy Ghost, 'Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if you have bitter envying or strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth; this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace,' James 3: 13—18. I beseech you read these words again and again, and study them well.

The most common cause of our divisions and unpeaceableness, is men's high esteem of their own opinions. This works various ways; e. g. by setting them upon seeking after novelties. Some are as busy in their inquiries after new doctrines, as if the Scriptures were not perfect, and are for making new articles of faith, and finding out new ways to heaven. The body of Popery came in at this door. Pride occasions divisions likewise, by putting a higher rate upon some truths than the church of Christ had ever done; by making that to be of absolute certainty and of necessity to salvation, which had not before been received, or but as a doubtful point and of a lower nature, which some were for and some were against, without any great mutual censure: but especially, when the pride of men's hearts makes them so over-value their own conceptions, and to be so confident that they are in the right as to expect all others to be of their mind, and so censorious as to condemn all that differ from their party. Every sect is usually confident in their own way, and hereupon arise such breaches in affection and communion as there are. And it usually happens that this confidence does but betray men's ignorance, and show that many make that up in passion, which they want in reason, zealously condemning what they little understand. It is far easier to say that another

man is erroneous, and rail at him as a deceiver, than to give a just account of our own belief. And I have observed it is the trick of some that can scarce give a reason for any controverted part of their creed, (nor it may be of the fundamentals,) to reproach those that differ from them as unsound, in order to get the name of orthodox divines. Many ministers take up their opinions only in compliance with their several parties; looking more *who* believes them, than *what* they believe, or on what grounds; and too many take up even the truth itself in a faction. And therefore they must speak against those that they hear speak against their party. How many hot disputes have I heard, which the disputants have been forced to manifest they understood not! Nay, they will often drive all to damnatory conclusions, when they understand not one another's meaning, and are unable, if you call upon them for it, to give a definition of the [terms they use.] Thus do we proceed, in a contentious zeal, to censure our brethren and divide the church.

I entreat of you, brethren, [carefully to avoid this evil disposition, and to] be very tender of the unity and peace, not only of your own parties, but of the whole catholic church. To this end, keep close to the ancient simplicity of the Christian faith, the foundation and centre of catholic unity. Do not easily introduce any novelties into the church either in faith or practice. Some have already introduced such phrases, at least, even about the great points of faith, that there may be reason to reduce them to the primitive patterns.

A great stir is made in the world about the test of a true Christian church, with which we may hold communion. And indeed the true cause of our continued unhappy divisions, is the want of discerning the centre of our unity, and the terms on which we may unite; which is a great pity since this was once so easy a matter, till the ancient test was thought insufficient. The faith of the Papists is too large for all men to agree upon, or indeed for themselves, if it were not enforced with arguments drawn from the fire and the halter. And many Protestants do too much imitate them in the tedious length of their subscribed confessions, and new impositions. We may talk of peace as long as we live, but we shall never obtain it till we return to the apostolical simplicity. We must abhor the arrogance of them that frame new engines to rack and tear the church of God, under pretence of obviating errors and maintaining the truth. We must let

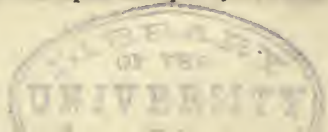
no man's writings, or the judgment of any party, be made the test of truth. If we thrust into all the canons of former councils about matters of order, discipline and ceremonies, or gather up all the opinions of the fathers for the three or four first ages, none of these will ever serve to found a catholic union upon. The sufficiency of Scripture must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on any. If Papists or others call upon us for the standard of our religion, we must show them the *Bible* rather than any confessions of churches, or writings of men; more lines would meet in this centre than are likely to meet in any other. I know it is said "that a man may subscribe the Scripture and the ancient creeds, and yet maintain heresies." To which I answer, so he may another test, which you yourselves shall contrive; and while you make a snare to catch heretics, instead of a test for the church's communion, you will miss your end; the heretic, by the slipperiness of his conscience, will get through, and the tender Christian may possibly be ensnared. Two things are necessary to obviate heresies, viz. the law, and the good execution of it. God hath made the former, which, both for sense and phrase, is sufficient; let us but do our part in the due execution of it, and we shall do all that belongs to us.

This I would recommend to all my brethren, as necessary to the church's peace; that you learn to distinguish between certainties and uncertainties, between necessities and unnecessaries, between catholic truths and private opinions, and lay the stress upon the former instead of the latter. Unite in necessary truths, and tolerate tolerable failings. Bear with one another in things that may be borne with, and do not make larger creeds or more necessities than God has done. In order to this, learn to see the true state of controversies, and reduce them to the point where the difference lies, instead of making them greater than they are. Lay not too great stress upon controverted opinions, which have good men, and especially which have whole churches on both sides; much less on such controversies as are ultimately resolved into philosophical uncertainties; as some unprofitable disputes about free-will; the manner of the Spirit's operation on the mind; the divine decrees, etc. etc. But especially lay not any stress upon controversies which are of no importance, which, if they were anatomized, would appear to be merely verbal; of which sort (I speak confidently upon cer-

tain knowledge,) are many that now make a great noise in the world and rend the church, though the eager contenders do not discern, and will not believe it. He that shall live in that happy day when God will heal his broken churches, will see all that I am pleading for reduced to practice. Moderation will take place of dividing zeal, the Scripture-sufficiency will be maintained, and all human confessions and comments will be valued only as subservient helps. Till that time come, we cannot expect healing truths will be entertained, since there are not healing spirits in the leaders of the church; but when the work is to be done, the workmen will be fitted for it, and blessed will be the agents in so glorious a cause!

But because the love of unity and truth, of peace and purity, should go together, we must avoid both the extremes, both in doctrine and discipline. One extreme in doctrine is making new additions; [this we have already considered]. The other is, hindering the progress of knowledge; this we commonly run into by avoiding the former. It must be considered, therefore, how far we may improve, and not be culpable innovators. And (1) Our knowledge must increase extensively; we must endeavor to know more truths, though we must not feign more. Much of Scripture will remain unknown to us, when we have done our best. Though we shall find out no more articles of faith which must be explicitly believed by all that will be saved, yet we may find out the sense of more particular texts, and some doctrinal truths, not contrary to the former, but such as befriend them and are connected with them. And we may find out more the order of truths, and how they stand in respect to one another; and so we may see more of the true method of theology than we did, which will give us a great light into the thing itself. (2) Our knowledge must also grow subjectively and intensively. And this is the principal growth to be sought after. We should endeavor to know the same great and necessary truths with a sounder and clearer understanding than we did, by getting more and stronger evidences of them, and a clearer and deeper apprehension of the same evidence; for one that is strong in knowledge sees the same truth as in the daylight, which the weak see but as in the twilight. To all this must be added, the fuller improvement of the truth received, to its proper ends.

With respect to church-communion also, we should carefully avoid extremes, and endeavor to preserve purity as well



as peace. As on the one hand [we should discourage] the unnecessary separation of proud men, either because the churches do not fall in with their opinion, or because they are not so reformed in discipline as they would have them, or so strict as they should be; so on the other hand we should guard against the neglect or relaxation of discipline to the corrupting of the church, the encouragement of wickedness, and the confounding of the kingdom of Christ with that of Satan.

XI. In order to promote unity and concord in the churches, and to further each other in the work of the Lord, let me beseech you to maintain meetings for communion among yourselves.

Do not grow strange to one another, but incorporate and hold all Christian correspondence. Distance breeds strangeness, and sometimes, dividing flames and jealousies, which communion will prevent or cure. It is the chief plot of our enemies to divide us in order to weaken us; let us not conspire with them. Cherish not heart-burnings, nor continue uncharitable distances. If dividing has weakened you, uniting must recover your authority and strength. Get together then, and consult for peace. If you have any dislike to any of your brethren, or to their conduct, manifest it by a free debate with them. If you will but keep together, you may come to a better understanding of each other, or at least correct yourselves. The Scripture commands all Christians to be "of one mind, and to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and obliges ministers to "be one even as Christ and the Father are one," John 17:21. You cannot be ignorant that the unity of ministers is their honor, as well as their duty, and that much of their strength with the people lies in it; nor, that constant communion and correspondence is necessary in order to it. Ministerial communion is as much a duty as Christian communion; the church has always thought so and practised accordingly.

Indeed ministers have need of one another, and must improve the gifts of God in one another. If you are humble men, you will think that you have need of the advice and assistance of your brethren. The self-sufficient are the most deficient; the proud are commonly empty men. There are many young, raw ministers, who especially need the help that such communion may afford them, and the advice of more grave, experienced men, for carrying on the work of their

ministry. And many others are so humble and sensible of their deficiencies, that they would be loath to be deprived of it. That may sometimes be spoken by a man of inferior parts, which came not into the minds of wiser men; few ministers are so weak that they may not sometimes improve those that are wiser than themselves. And those that are endowed with greater parts, will have an opportunity to do greater good with them [at such associations] than they could otherwise do. If you are above advice or any help to yourselves, [that will not excuse your absence, for] your brethren have the more need of you, by how much the less you have of them.

But remember these assemblies are not merely for your own benefit and mutual edification (though that is an important end), but the church and the common good require them. You owe duty to your neighbor churches, as well as ministers; and by carrying on lectures, disputations or conferences, you will have an opportunity of consulting for the common good and of promoting your common work. Do not show yourselves contemners or neglecters of such a necessary business.

Let none draw back, that accord in the substantial of faith and godliness. Yea, though some should think themselves necessitated to separate in public worship from the rest, methinks if they be Christians indeed, they should be willing to hold as much communion with them as they can, and to consult how to manage their differences to the least disadvantage to the Christian cause, and the common truths which they all profess to own and prefer. Though they cannot change their minds about those opinions which hinder their union, it might reasonably be expected of every party among us which profess themselves Christians, that they should value the whole before a part, and therefore not so perversely seek to promote their own parties as to hinder the common good of the church. And methinks a little humility should make men ashamed of that common conceit of unquiet spirits, that the welfare of the churches depends upon [the propagation of] their opinions. If they are indeed a living part of the body, the hurt of the whole will be so much their own, that they cannot desire it for the sake of any party or opinion whatever. If that evil spirit "whose name is Legion" has such power over the hearts of any that they will quarrel at the pacificatory endeavors of others who hunger

after the healing of the church, and rather hinder them than help them on, I must say, that how diligently soever they may preach, and how pious soever they may seem to be, if this way tends to their everlasting peace, and if they be not preparing sorrow for themselves, then I am a stranger to the way of peace.

It is past doubt that differing brethren may well join in recommending to the ignorant people the truths that they are agreed in. Bishop Usher made a motion for this in Ireland even to the Papists themselves. "But (says he) through the jealousies which distractions in matters of religion have bred among us, the motion had small effect, and so between us both, the poor people are still kept in miserable ignorance, knowing the grounds neither of the one religion nor the other."¹ [This is very much the case] among us in England. It is rare to find any, though differing only in the point of infant-baptism, that will calmly, and without fraudulent designs of secretly promoting their own opinions by it, entertain and prosecute such a motion for the common good; as if they had rather Christianity should be thrust out of the world, or kept under, than [that their own notions should not be propagated.] Well, let any person or party pretend what they will of zeal and holiness, I will ever take the "Dividatur" for an ill sign. The true mother abhors the division of the child, 1 Kings 3:26; and the true Christian prefers the common interest of Christianity to that of a faction or opinion, and would not have the whole building endangered rather than one peg should be driven in otherwise than as he would have it. Do not then neglect these brotherly meetings for the ends that have been mentioned, nor yet attend them unprofitably, but improve them to your mutual edification, and for effectually carrying on the [good of the churches].

Do not ask why you cannot do your duty to God and your people at home, without travelling many miles to a meeting of ministers; nor plead that you have business of your own to do, when you should be doing the work of God; nor under a pretence of loving to live privately, prefer your own ease to God's service. Some of those, indeed, that excuse themselves are careless and scandalous men; we should have no desire of their company, nor admit it, but upon their repentance and reformation. Some are empty men, and are afraid

¹ Sermon before king James at Wanstead, On the Unity of the Church.

their weakness should be known ; but they cannot conceal it by their solitude, whereas they might do much to heal it by communion with their brethren. As for those that are averse to associating with us because we are not of their party, [let it be considered that] by such communication they might give or receive better information ; or at least carry on so much of God's work in unity as we are agreed in. Let us resolve, by the grace of God, to adhere to more catholic principles and practices, and to have communion with all godly Christians that will have communion with us. But some object to attending these associations,

1. Because they say, "a few men commonly do all, and the rest do but follow them." I answer, there is no one in our associations that pretends to any authority over his brethren ; either civil coercive power, or ecclesiastical directive power. You cannot say then that any one does either force the rest, or awe them by any pretended commission from Christ. If any have so much power as you speak of, it seems to be but the power of *truth* in them, and such as light hath against darkness. And perhaps those that you call the leaders of the rest, find themselves to need the help of those whom you say they lead, more than you do theirs. But if you do indeed think that these leading ministers mislead the rest, there is the more need of the presence of such as you who discern it, and who may do much to undeceive them.

2. I hear many say, "under pretence of associating, you will but fall into a multitude of fractions ; not two counties can agree upon the same terms ; and why should we join with any of them till there be a greater likelihood of union among themselves ?"—An unreasonable and self-condemning objection. Are they more divided who associate, than you who are single, and go every man his own way ? But wherein does this diversity consist which you complain of ? I see none so great [as should prevent communion.] The truth is, this objection is commonly made by men that place the unity of the church in what God never placed it in. We must not be one because we subscribe not the same form of words, and agree not in every circumstance or expression ; nor shall we ever be one while unity is placed in such indifferent things. There are no greater dividers of the church in the world than those that over-do it in pretending to unity, and lay the unity of the church upon that which will not bear it. There is no possibility of bringing all to be of every

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formalist's opinion, and to use every gesture or form of words that he shall impose. Unnecessary impositions will occasion contention; whereas, where all are left to their liberty I never hear of contention or offence. In the present case we do not intend, by our associating, to tie one another to new forms and ceremonies, nor to make new terms of union for the churches; all parties may join with us without deserting their principles. But you will ask,

3. "Then what need have we to subscribe to articles of agreement?" I answer, the articles we subscribe are Scripture articles; we require no more than that all should agree to perform those duties which the word of God commands, or to unite in those circumstances of duty which, (though the Scripture has not particularly determined them,) may be discerned from its general rules, and with respect to which an agreement may further us in our work. The reason why we subscribe to these articles is, that we may hereby awaken ourselves to those duties which we have too generally neglected, and bind ourselves faster to the observance of them. He that is resolved to do his duty, is willing to be as much obliged to it as may be; when it must be done, the strongest bonds are the surest. If it be no more than your duty already, what reason have you to refuse subscribing it, unless you are unwilling to perform it? If you object,

4. "That some associations subscribe to such things as you cannot in conscience agree to," I desire you would see that you can plead Scripture as well as conscience against it. If it be but about indifferent circumstances, (though I would have nothing indifferent imposed,) I must tell you that the union and communion of the churches is not indifferent, and that therefore you must not obstruct it on account of such things as you acknowledge to be indifferent. But if the things be evil which are required of you, propose the reasons of your dissent, and beg leave to except those articles with which you are dissatisfied, without unnecessarily withdrawing from your brethren's communion; of which, no doubt, if they be peaceable men, they will readily admit. But if they would force you to subscribe against your judgement, or else hold no communion with you, then *they* exclude you, and you do not exclude yourselves. But I hope no associations among us will be guilty of such a practice. [In order to render these meetings useful, observe the following directions].

Friends! especially quarrel not upon points of precedency

or reputation or any interest of your own. No man will have settled peace in his mind or be peaceable in his place, that proudly envies the precedency of others and secretly grudges at them that seem to cloud his parts and name. One or other will ever be an eye-sore to such men. There is too much of the devil's image in this sin, for an humble servant of Christ to entertain. Be not too sensible of injuries, nor make too great a matter of every offensive word or deed. At least do not let it interrupt your concord in God's work; that were to wrong Christ and his church, because another has wronged you. If you be of this impatient humor you will never be quiet; for we are all faulty, and cannot live together without wronging one another. And these proud, over-tender men, are often hurt by their own conceits; like a man that has a sore, who thinks that it smarts the more when he imagines some body hits it. They will often think that a man jeers them or means them ill, when it never came into his thoughts. Till this *self* be taken down, we shall every man have a private interest of his own, which will lead us all into separate ways, and spoil the peace and welfare of the church. While every man is for himself and his own reputation, and "all mind their own things," no wonder if they "mind not the things of Christ."

XII. [Do not confine your ministerial labors to your own flock, but be ready to do good wherever you have an opportunity for it].

If we are heartily devoted to the work of the Lord, let us compassionate the congregations about us that are unprovided for, and endeavor to help them to able ministers. In the meantime, we should step out now and then to their assistance, when the business of our own particular charge will give us leave. A lecture in the more ignorant places, purposely for the work of conversion, carried on by the most lively, affectionate preachers, might be very useful where constant means are wanting.

XIII. In your whole ministerial work, keep up constant desires and expectations of success.

If your hearts be not set on the end of your labors, and if you do not long to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much success. It is a sign of a false, self-seeking heart, when a person is contented to be still doing, without seeing any fruit of his labor. And I have observed that God seldom

blesses any man's work, so much as his whose heart is set upon the success of it. Let it be the property of a Judas to have more regard to the bag than to the business; leave it to such worldlings as he to be satisfied, if they have their salary and the esteem of the people; but let all that preach for Christ and the salvation of men, be dissatisfied till they have the thing they preach for. He never had the right ends of a preacher in view, who is indifferent whether he obtains them or not; who is not grieved when he misses them, and rejoiced when he can see the desired issue. When a man only studies what to say, and how to spend the hour with commendation, without looking any more after it, but to know what the people think of his abilities, and thus hold on from year to year, I must needs think that he preaches for himself; that he drives on a private trade of his own; and that when he preaches Christ, he preaches not *for* Christ, how excellently soever he may seem to do it. I know that a faithful minister may have comfort when he wants success; 'though Israel be not gathered, our reward is with the Lord.' Our acceptance is not according to our fruit, but according to our labor. But then he who longs not for the success of his labors, can have none of this comfort, because he is not a faithful laborer. This is only for them whose hearts are set upon the end, and grieved if they miss it. This is not the full comfort that we must desire, but only what may quiet us, if (notwithstanding our utmost care) we fail of the rest. What if God will accept the physician though the patient die? He must still work in compassion, and do his utmost to save his life. We labor not for our own reward, but for other men's salvation. I confess for my part, that I wonder at some ancient, reverend men, who have lived thirty or forty or fifty years with an unprofitable people, where they have been scarcely able to discern any fruit of their labors, that they can with so much patience continue there. I should not be easily satisfied to spend my days in such a manner, but should suspect that it was the will of God I should go some where else, that another person might come there, better suited to them and more useful among them. Once more,

XIV. Our whole work must be carried on under a deep sense of our own insufficiency, and in a pious, believing dependance upon Christ.

We must go to him for light and life and strength, who

sends us on our work. When we feel our faith weak and our hearts grown dull, and unsuitable to so great a work as that we have to do, we must have recourse to the Lord, and pray that we may not go to persuade others to believe, with an unbelieving heart of our own; or to plead with sinners about everlasting life and death, while we have but a faint belief and feeling of these things ourselves; but that, as he has sent us forth to his work, he would furnish us with a spirit suitable to it. [Further, we must not only pray for ourselves, but we must often pray in behalf of all our hearers]. Prayer must carry on our work, as well as preaching. He preaches not heartily to his people, who will not often pray for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we are unlikely to prevail with them to believe and repent. Paul gives us his example in this respect, who tells us that he prayed for his hearers 'night and day exceedingly,' 1 Thess. 3: 10. Since our own hearts and those of our people, are so far out of order as they be, if we prevail not with God to help and mend them, we are likely to make but unsuccessful work.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORK; BEING A PARTICULAR APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE.

REVEREND and dear brethren; [having taken a survey of our duty and of our sins], let us now humble our souls before the Lord for our past negligence, and implore his assistance for the time to come. Indeed we cannot expect the latter without the former. If God will help us in our future duty, he will certainly first humble us for our past sin. He that has not so much sense of his faults as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have sufficient to make him reform them. Shall *we* deny or excuse or extenuate our sins, while we call our people to such free confessions? It is too common with us to expect that from them, which we do little or nothing of ourselves. Too many labor for other men's souls, while they seem to forget that they have any of their own to regard. They act as if their part lay only in calling for repentance,

and the hearers' in repenting; theirs in crying down sin, and the people's in forsaking it; theirs in preaching duty, and the hearers' in performing it. If we did but study half so much to affect and mend our own hearts, as we do to affect and mend those of our people, it would not be with many of us as it is. It is much too little that we do for their humiliation, but I fear it is much less that we do for our own. It is a sad thing that so many of us have preached our hearers asleep, but it is worse still, if we have studied and preached ourselves asleep, and have talked so long against hardness of heart, till our hearts are grown hard under the noise of our own reproofs! Is it not better to give God glory by a full and humble confession, than in tenderness of our own glory to seek for 'fig-leaves to cover our nakedness', and to put God upon building that glory, which we have denied him, on the ruins of our own which we have preferred to his?

It is certainly our duty to call to remembrance our manifold sins, especially those that are most obvious and 'set them in order' before God and our own faces, that he may 'cast them behind his back;' to deal plainly and faithfully with ourselves, in a free confession, that he who is 'faithful and just may forgive us our sins;' and to judge ourselves that we may not be judged of the Lord; for they only (whether pastors or people) who 'confess and forsake their sins, shall find mercy; he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief,' Prov. 28: 13, 14. [We should not refrain from confessing our sins even in public;] truly humble ministers, I doubt not, will rather be provoked more solemnly in the face of their several congregations to lament their guilt and promise reformation. Sins openly committed are more dishonorable to us when we hide them, than when we confess them. It is the sin and not the confession of it, that is our dishonor. We have committed them before the sun, so that they cannot be hid; attempts to cloak them increase the guilt and shame. It will not be amiss to look behind us and imitate the servants of God in ancient times, in their confessions. We find in Scripture that the guides of the church did confess their own sins as well as those of the people. See the example of Ezra; he confessed the sins of the priests, 'casting himself down before the house of God,' Ezra 9: 6, 7, 10. So did the Levites, Neh. 9: 32—34. So did Daniel, Dan. 9: 20. And God expressly required 'the priests and ministers of the Lord to weep,' Joel 2: 15—17, as well as others.

I think, if we consider well the duties that have been explained and recommended, and at the same time, the manner in which we have performed them, we cannot doubt whether we have *cause* for humiliation. He that reads this one exhortation of Paul from whence the text is taken, and compares his life with it, is stupid and hardened indeed if he be not laid in the dust before God, bewailing his great omissions, and forced to fly to the blood of Christ and his pardoning grace. O! What cause have we all to bleed before the Lord, that we have been ministers so many years, and yet have done so little (especially by private conference) for the saving of men's souls! Had we done our duty, who knows how many souls might have been brought to Christ, and how much happier we might have been in our parishes? And why did we not do it? Many impediments were doubtless in our way; but if the greatest had not been in ourselves, in our darkness and dulness, our indisposition to duty, and our divisions among ourselves, much more might have been done for God than has yet been done. We have sinned, and have no just excuse for our sin. The sin is great because our duties were great; we should therefore be afraid of excusing ourselves too much. "The Lord of mercy forgive us and all his ministers, and lay not any of our ministerial negligence to our charge! Oh that he would cover all our unfaithfulness, and by 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' wash away our guilt of the blood of souls! That 'when the chief shepherd shall appear, we may stand before him in peace,' and may not be condemned for the 'scattering of his flock.'"

And now, brethren, what have we to do for the time to come, but to deny our lazy, contradicting flesh, and rouse up ourselves to the great business in which we are employed? 'The harvest is great, the laborers are too few.' The loiterers and contentious hinderers are many; the souls of men are precious; the misery of sinners is great; the everlasting torment to which they are near is greater; the joy to which we ought to help them is inconceivable; the beauty and glory of the church is desirable; our difficulties and dangers are many and great; the comfort that attends a faithful stewardship is greater; but that which attends a full success is inexpressible; and the honor conferred upon us who are called to be 'co-workers with God,' and to subserve the blood-shed of Christ for the salvation of men, is illustrious beyond com-

parison.—‘The fields now seem white for harvest;’ for the preparations that have been made for us are great; the season for working is now more warm and calm than most ages have been; we have carelessly loitered in our work too long; the present time is posting away; while we are trifling, men are dying, and passing in haste to the eternal world! And is there nothing in all this to awaken us to our duty, and to engage us to speedy and unwearied diligence? Is it possible for a man to be too careful and laborious, under all these motives and engagements?

Were but our souls clearly and deeply impressed [with these considerations,] and with the very important truths we preach, especially those that relate to a future world, O what a change would it make in our sermons and in our private discourse! If we did but know what it is for the soul to pass out of the flesh, to go before a righteous God, and enter upon a state of unchangeable joy or torment, and with what amazing thoughts dying men apprehend these things, how differently would such matters be discoursed of! Oh the gravity, the seriousness, the incessant diligence these things require! I know not what others think of them; but for my own part, I am ashamed of my stupidity and wonder at myself, that I deal no more with my own and other men’s souls, as becomes one that looks for ‘the great day of the Lord;’ that I can leave room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly take me up! I seldom come out of the pulpit, but my conscience smites me that I have been no more serious and fervent. It accuses me not so much for want of elegance or human ornaments nor for letting fall an unhandsome word; but it asks me “how couldst thou speak of everlasting life and death with such a heart? How couldst thou preach of heaven and hell in so careless and sleepy a manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest, or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is so evil a thing, and that its consequences are so dreadful, without being more affected with it? Shouldst thou not weep over sinners, even till thy tears interrupt thy words? Shouldst thou not ‘cry aloud, and show them their transgressions, and shouldst thou not intreat them to repent and believe, with the utmost importunity?’” Such is the peal that conscience rings in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul will not be awakened. What a dreadful thing is a senseless, hardened heart! “Lord, save

us from the plague of infidelity, and hardness of heart! or how shall we be fit instruments of saving others from it? and do that on *our souls*, which thou wouldst have us do on the souls of others?" I am even confounded to think what difference there is between my apprehensions of the life to come in a time of sickness, and at other seasons. O brethren, if you had conversed with death as often as I have done, and as often received the sentence in yourselves, you would have an unquiet conscience, if not a reformed life, with regard to ministerial diligence. You would have something within you that would often ask you such questions as these: "Is this all thy compassion for lost sinners? Wilt thou do no more to seek and save them? Is there not such and such a one, are there not many round about thee, who are yet the visible sons of death? What hast thou said to them, or done for their recovery? Shall thousands die and go to hell, before thou wilt speak one serious word to prevent it? Will they not there curse thee forever, that thou didst no more in time to save them?" Such cries of conscience are daily in my ears, though the Lord knows I have too little obeyed them. I confess that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asks me, "What hadst thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone into eternity; what didst thou do to prepare him for it?" When you are lying a corpse in the grave, how can you help reflecting with yourselves to this purpose; "Here lies the body, but where is the soul? What did I do for it before it departed? It was part of my charge; what account can I give of it?" O sirs! is it a small matter to answer such questions as these? It may seem so now; but the hour is coming when it will appear otherwise. 'If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts,' and will condemn us more. We may plead the cause with conscience, and either bribe it, or endure its sentence; but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily borne. 'Wherefore, we receiving (and preaching) a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire,' Heb. 12: 28, 29. Let me beseech you, brethren, on the behalf of Christ, for the sake of the church, and the immortal souls of men; for your own soul's sake, that you, presently and effectually set about the work which I have been principally recommending. Hearn-

en to God and the calls of duty, if you would have peace of conscience. I know that carnal wit never wants words, nor a show of reason, to gainsay that truth and duty which it abhors; it is easier to cavil against duty than to perform it. But consider how the matter will appear on a death-bed, and what account you will give to God at the great day. Conscience will not own those reasons in a dying hour, which now it seems to admit. There is not that comfort to be had for a departing soul in the view of neglected duty, as of a life wholly devoted to the service of God; and I am confident my arguments will appear strongest at last, whatever they may do now.

O think how dreadful and aggravated our final condemnation will be, if we live and die wilful neglecters of the great work we have undertaken! Our parents that destined us to the ministry, our tutors that educated us for it, our learning and ministerial gifts, our voluntarily undertaking the care of souls, all the care of God for his church, all that Christ has done and suffered for it, all the precepts, promises, and threatenings of the Holy Scriptures, all the examples of prophets, apostles and preachers there recorded, and all the books in our studies that tell us of our duty, or any way assist us in it, will rise in judgment against us! All the sermons that we have preached, to convince men of the danger of sin, of the torments of hell and the joys of heaven, to quicken them in their duty or to reprove their neglect, all the maintenance we take for our service, all the honor we receive from the people and the ministerial privileges we enjoy, all the witness we have borne against the neglects of ministers, all the judgments and mercies of God with which we have been acquainted, all the fervent prayers of God's people that have been offered on our account, and finally, all our vows, promises and resolutions for diligence in our work, will at the last great day aggravate our condemnation, if we are found unfaithful in our master's service.

Thus have I shown you [the nature and importance of your work, the obligations under which you are laid to perform it, and] what will be the consequence, if you do not set yourselves faithfully to it. Truly, brethren, if I did not apprehend the matter to be of exceeding great moment to yourselves, to your people and to the honor of God, I would not have troubled you with so many words about it, nor have presumed to speak so sharply as I have done. But in an affair

of life and death, men are apt to forget their reverence, courtesy and compliments, commonly called good manners. For my part, I apprehend this to be one of the greatest and best works that I ever put my hand to, in my whole life. I verily believe you will agree with me herein; and if you do, you will not think me too prolix or too plain and severe. As for *mysclf*, spare not; tread me as dirt in the streets; let me be as vile in your eyes as you please, so that you will but hearken to God and reason, and do your duty, for the salvation of men. What am I but a servant of Christ? and what is my life worth, but to do him service? Whose favor can recompense for the ruins of the church? And who can be silent while souls are undone? Not I, for my part, while God is my master, his word my rule, his work my business, and the success of it, for the saving of souls, my end. I know myself unworthy to be your monitor; but a monitor you must have, and it is better to hear of our sin and our duty from anybody than not at all. Receive the admonition, and you will see no cause, in the monitor's unworthiness, to repent of it; but remember, if you reject it, the unworthiest messenger may bear that witness against you that will shame and condemn you. [I shall only add, as the sum of all that has been said,]

Let us set before us the exhortation, and the example given us in our text and context, and learn our duty from thence. This one passage of Scripture better deserves a whole year's study, than most things about which students are apt to spend their time. O brethren write it on your study doors, or set it as your copy in capital letters continually before your eyes. Could we but learn two or three lines of it, what preachers should we be! Here we are taught—Our general business; *servng the Lord*.—Our special work; *taking heed to ourselves and all the flock*. The substance of our doctrine; *repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. The places and manner of our teaching; *publicly, and from house to house*.—The object and internal manner; *warning every one, night and day, with all humility of mind and with tears*. —[The faithfulness and integrity that are requisite; *I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God*.]—The innocence and self-denial to be used; *I have coveted no man's silver or gold*.—The patience and resolution to be exercised; *none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I*

might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.—And once more, *The motives to engage us to all this ; The Holy Ghost has made us overseers ; the church we feed is the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Write this upon your hearts, and it will do yourselves and the church more good than twenty years' study of those lower things which often employ your thoughts ; which, though they get you greater applause in the world, yet, if separated from these, will make you ' but sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals.'

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LECTURES

ON

PULPIT ELOQUENCE.

BY

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LECTURES ON PULPIT ELOQUENCE.

LECTURE I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY, AND OBJECTIONS AGAINST IT ANSWERED.—HELPS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE ART.

It is not enough for the Christian minister, that he be instructed in the science of theology, unless he has the skill to apply his knowledge, to answer the different purposes of the pastoral charge. And the first thing, that on this article seems to merit our attention, is the consideration of the minister, in the character of a public speaker; and that, both in his addresses to God on the part of the people in worship, and his addresses to the people on the part of God in preaching. Of the importance of this last part of the character, as a public teacher, no one can reasonably doubt, who considers that it was one great part, if not the principal part of the charge which the apostles received from our Lord, Matt. 28: 19, 20, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And again, Mark 16: 15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And without derogating from those solemn institutions of our religion, which in after times came to be denominated sacraments, preaching may in one view, at least, be said to be of more consequence than they, inasmuch as a suitable discharge of the business of a teacher undoubtedly requires abilities superior to those requisite for the proper

performance of the other, a part in comparison merely ministerial or official. It is besides the great means of conversion as well as of edification. "Faith cometh by hearing," says the apostle. The ministry of our Lord, to his kinsmen the Jews, consisted chiefly in teaching; for the evangelist John, 4:2, expressly tells us that Jesus baptized none; this, as comparatively an underwork, was intrusted entirely to his disciples. And the apostle Paul acquaints the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 1:17, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; that the latter and not the former was the principal end of his mission. When it pleased God by the conversion of Cornelius the Roman centurion, to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, no less a person than Peter, the first of the apostolical college, was selected for announcing to him and his family the gospel of Christ; but after they were converted by his preaching, the apostle did not consider it as any impropriety to commit the care of baptizing them to meaner hands. "He (that is, Peter,) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord," Acts 10:48. What hath been said, however, is by no means intended to arraign the propriety of limiting to a lower number, in churches which are already constituted, the power of dispensing the sacraments, than is done in regard to the power of preaching. The near connection which the former has with discipline and order in a Christian society already established, affords a very good reason for this difference. But if teaching is a matter of so much consequence, and if the proper discharge of this duty is a matter of principal difficulty, it ought doubtless to employ a considerable part of the student's time and attention, that he may be properly prepared for it. Indeed it may be said, that the study of the science of theology is itself a preparation, and in part it no doubt is so, as it furnishes him with the materials; but the materials alone will not serve his purpose, unless he has acquired the art of using them. And it is this art in preaching which I denominate *Christian or pulpit eloquence*. To know is one thing, and to be capable of communicating knowledge is another.

I am sensible, however, that there are many pious Christians, who are startled at the name of eloquence when applied to the Christian teacher; they are disposed to consider it as setting an office, which in its nature is spiritual, and in its origin divine, too much on a footing with those which are merely human and secular. And this turn of thinking I

have always found to proceed from one or other of these two causes; either from a mistake of what is meant by eloquence, or from a misapprehension of some passages of holy writ in relation to the sacred function. First, it arises from a mistaken notion of the import of the word. It often happens both among philosophers and divines, that violent and endless disputes are carried on by adverse parties, which, were they to begin by settling a definition of the term whereon the question turns, would vanish in an instant. Were these people then, who appear to differ from us, on the propriety of employing eloquence, to give an explication of the ideas they comprehend under the term *eloquence* or oratory, we should doubtless get from them some such account as this, a knack or artifice, by which the periods of a discourse are curiously and harmoniously strung together, decorated with many flowery images, the whole entirely calculated to set off the speaker's art by pleasing the ear and amusing the fancy of the hearers, but by no means calculated either to inform their understandings or to engage their hearts. Perhaps those people will be surprised, when I tell them, that commonly no discourses whatever, not even the homeliest, have less of true eloquence, than such frothy harangues, as perfectly suit their definition. If this, then, is all they mean to inveigh against under the name *eloquence*, I will join issue with them with all my heart. Nothing can be less worthy the study or attention of a wise man, and much more may this be said of a Christian pastor, than such a futile acquisition as that above described. But if, on the contrary, nothing else is meant by eloquence, in the use of all the wisest and the best who have written on the subject, but that art or talent, whereby the speech is adapted to produce in the hearer the great end which the speaker has, or at least ought to have principally in view, it is impossible to doubt the utility of the study; unless people will be absurd enough to question, whether there be any difference between speaking to the purpose and speaking from the purpose, expressing one's self intelligibly or unintelligibly, reasoning in a manner that is conclusive and satisfactory, or in such a way as can convince nobody, fixing the attention and moving the affections of an audience, or leaving them in a state perfectly listless and unconcerned.

But, as I signified already, there are prejudices against this study in the Christian orator, arising from another source,

the promises of the immediate influence of the divine Spirit, the commands of our Lord to his disciples, to avoid all concern and solicitude on this article, and the example of some of the apostles who disclaimed expressly the advantages resulting from the study of rhetoric, or indeed of any human art, or institute whatever. In answer to such objections, I must beg leave to ask, Are we not in the promises of our Saviour, to distinguish those which were made to his disciples, merely as Christians, or his followers in the way to the kingdom, from those made indeed to the same persons, but considered in the character of apostles, the promulgators of his doctrine among Jews and Pagans, and the first founders of his church? Are we entitled to apply to ourselves those promises made to the apostles, or even the first Christians, manifestly for the conviction and conversion of an infidel world? "These signs," says Christ, "shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Do we now expect such signs to follow upon our faith? And is not the promise of immediate inspiration on any emergency, (which is doubtless a miraculous gift as well as those above enumerated,) to be considered as of the same nature, and given for the same end? And ought not all these precepts, to which promises of this supernatural kind are annexed as the reason, to be understood with the same restriction? When our Lord foretold his disciples, that they should be brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake, he adds, "Settle it in your hearts not to meditate before what you shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." It is manifest the obligation of the precept can only be explained by a proper apprehension of the extent of the promise. But the truth is, that few or none, in these our days, would consider premeditation in such circumstances as either unlawful or improper. Who, even among those who inveigh most bitterly against the study of eloquence for the pulpit, does ever so much as pretend that we ought not to meditate, or so much as think, on any subject before we preach upon it? And yet the letter of the precept, nay, and the spirit too, strikes more directly against particular premeditation, than against the general study of the art of speaking.

It is more a particular application of the art, than the art itself, that is here pointed at. And as to what the great apostle of the Gentiles hath said on this article, it will serve, I am persuaded, to every attentive reader, as a confirmation of what has been advanced above, in regard to the true meaning of such promises and precepts, and the limitations with which they ought to be understood. Well might he renounce every art which man's wisdom teacheth, whose speech was accompanied with the demonstration of the spirit and of power; that is, with those miraculous gifts, which were so admirably calculated to silence contradiction, and to convince the most incredulous. But the truth is, there is not one argument can be taken from those precepts and examples, that will not equally conclude against all human learning whatsoever, as against the study of rhetoric. Because the apostles could preach to men of every nation without studying their language in consequence of the gift of tongues with which they were supernaturally endowed, shall we think to convert strangers, with whose speech we are totally unacquainted, and not previously apply to grammars, and lexicons, and other helps, for attaining the language? Or because Paul, as he himself expressly tells us, received the knowledge of the gospel by immediate inspiration, shall we neglect the study of the Scriptures and other outward means of instruction? There have been, I own, some enthusiasts who have carried the matter as far as this. And though hardly any person of the least reflection, would argue in such a manner now, it must be owned that the very same premises, by which any human art or institute in itself useful, is excluded, will equally answer the purposes of such fanatics in excluding all. And to the utility, and even importance of the rhetorical art, Scripture itself bears testimony. Is it not mentioned by the sacred historian in recommendation of Apollos, that he was "an eloquent man," as well as mighty in the Scriptures? And is not his success manifestly ascribed, under God, to these advantages? There is no mention of any supernatural gifts, which he could receive only by the imposition of the hands of an apostle; and it appears from the history, that before he had any interview with the apostles, immediately after his conversion, he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. The very words used by the inspired penmen are such as are familiar with rhetoricians in relation to the foren-

sic eloquence, *Εὐτόνως γὰρ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις διακατηλέγγετο, Acriter, vehementer, magna contentione.* Now though it is not permitted to us to reach the celestial heights of a Peter, or a Paul, I see nothing to hinder our aspiring to the humbler attainments of an Apollos. But enough, and perhaps too much, for obviating objections, which I cannot allow myself to think, will have great weight with gentlemen, who have been so long employed in the study of the learned languages, and of the liberal arts and sciences. However, when one hath occasion to hear such arguments, (if indeed they deserve to be called so,) advanced by others, it may be of some utility to be provided with an answer.

The next point, and which is of the greatest consequence, is, in what this art or talent may be attained, at least as much of it as is suited to the business of preaching, and is on moral and religious subjects best adapted to the ends of instruction and persuasion? The talents required in the preacher are, in great measure, such as are necessary to him in common with every other public speaker, whatever be the scene of his appearances, whether it be his lot to deliver his orations in the senate, at the bar, or from the pulpit. Now what the preacher must have in common with those of so many other and very different professions, it cannot be expected that here we should treat particularly, especially when it is considered how many other things have a preferable title to our notice. What indeed is peculiar in the eloquence of the pulpit will deserve a more particular consideration. But though we do not from this place propose to give an institute of rhetoric, it will not be improper to give some directions in relation to the theory of it, and particularly to the reading both of ancient and modern authors, whence the general knowledge of the subject, which is too much neglected by theological students, may be had. When we consider the nature of this elegant and useful art with any degree of attention, we shall soon be convinced, that it is a certain improvement on the arts of grammar and logic, on which it founds, and without which it could have no existence. On the other hand, without this, these arts would lose much of their utility and end, for it is by the art of rhetoric, that we are enabled to make our knowledge in language, and skill in reasoning, turn to the best account for the instruction and persuasion of others. "The wise in heart," saith Solomon,

“shall be called prudent, but the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.”¹

Now the best preparation for an orator, on whatever kind of theatre he shall be called to act, is to understand thoroughly the discursive art, and to be well acquainted with the words, structure and idiom of the language which he is to employ. By skill in the former, I do not mean being well versed in the artificial dialectic of the schools, though this, I acknowledge, doth not want its use, but being conversant in the natural and genuine principles and grounds of reasoning, whether derived from sense or memory, from comparison of related ideas, from testimony, experience or analogy. School-logic, as was well observed by Mr. Locke, is much better calculated for the detection of sophistry than the discovery of truth. Its forms of argumentation in mood and figure carry too much artifice, not to say mechanism, in the very front of them, to suit the free and disengaged manner of the orator, in whom everything ought to appear perfectly natural and easy, and nothing that looks like contrivance or insidious design. But though the logician's manner is not to be copied by the public speaker, his art will be of use, sometimes in furnishing topics of argument, often in suggesting hints to assist in refutation. But true logic, it must be acknowledged, is best studied not in a scholastic system, but in the writings of the most judicious and best reasoners on the various subjects supplied by history, science and philosophy. And with regard to language, as it is the English alone with which the preachers in this country, a very few excepted, are concerned as public speakers, they ought not only to study its structure and analogy in our best grammarians, but endeavor to familiarize themselves to its idiom, and to acquire a sufficient stock of words and a certain facility in using them, by an acquaintance with our best English authors. We have the greater need of this, as in this part of the island we labor under some special disadvantages, which, that our compositions may be more extensively useful, it is our duty to endeavor to surmount.

As to the rhetorical art itself, in this particular the moderns appear to me to have made hardly any advance or improvement upon the ancients. I can say, at least, of most of the

¹ See the Philosophy of rhetoric, vol. I. book I. ch. iv. of the relation which Eloquence bears to Logic and to Grammar.

performances in the way of institute, which I have had an opportunity of reading on this subject, either in French or English, everything valuable is servilely copied from Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, in whose writings, especially Quintilian's Institutions, and Cicero's books *de inventione*, those called *ad Herennium*, and his dialogues *de oratore*, every public speaker ought to be conversant. To these it will not be amiss to add Longinus on the sublime, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and some others. And as, in every art, the examples of eminent performers will be found to the full as instructive to the student, as the precepts laid down by the teacher, antiquity does here at least furnish us with the best models in the orations of Cicero in Latin, and in those of Aeschines and Demosthenes in Greek. Of modern authors considered in both views, as teachers of the art, and as performers, I would recommend what Rollin and Fenelon have written on the subject, the sermons, and also the lectures on eloquence lately published by the ingenious and truly eloquent Dr. Blair; to which give me leave to add the sermons of my amiable and much lamented friend Mr. Farquhar, which, though no other than fragments, having been left unfinished by the author, who appears to have had no view to publication, and though consequently less correct in point of language, are, on account of the justness of the sentiments, and the affecting warmth with which they are written, highly admired by persons of taste and discernment.¹

LECTURE II.

OF THE SENTIMENT IN PULPIT DISCOURSES.

I am now to consider the train of sentiment, the elocution, and the pronounciation, that are best adapted to the pulpit. Of these things I only mean at first to take a more general

¹ Here the author introduced for his second lecture the tenth chapter of the first book of his Philosophy of Rhetoric, entitled "The different kinds of public speaking in use among the moderns, compared, with a view to their different advantages in respect of eloquence." In that chapter there are several things highly worthy of the attention of the preacher.

and cursory survey, and make such remarks on each, as will hold almost universally of all the instructions given from the pulpit, whatever the particular subject be. As to those which may suit the different sorts of sermons and other discourses to be employed by the preacher, I shall have occasion afterwards to take notice of them, when I come to inquire into the rules of composition, worthy the attention of the Christian orator, and to mark out the different kinds, whereof this branch of eloquence is susceptible.

I begin at this time with what regards the sentiments. Let it be observed, that I here use the term sentiments in the greatest latitude for the sense or thoughts. I mean thereby what may be considered as the soul of the discourse, or all the instruction of whatever kind, that is intended to be conveyed by means of the expression into the minds of the hearers. Perhaps the import of the word will be more exactly ascertained by saying, it is that in any original performance, which it behooves a translator to retain in his version into another language, whilst the expression is totally changed. Thus (to preserve the metaphor of soul and body already adopted) we may say, that a discourse in being translated undergoes a sort of transmigration. The same soul passes into a different body. For if the ideas, the sense, the information, conveyed to the hearers or readers, be not the same in the version, as in the original performance, the translation is not faithful. Now all that regards the soul or sense may be distributed into these four different forms of communication, namely, *narration*, *explanation*, *reasoning*, and *moral reflection*. This last is sometimes, by way of eminence, called *sentiment*.

To the first of these, narration, there will be pretty frequent occasion of recourse, both for the illustration of any point of doctrine or portion of Scripture wherewith the subject happens to be connected, and also for affecting the hearers in a way suitable to the particular aim of the discourse. And indeed it often happens, that nothing is better adapted to this end, than an apposite passage of history properly related. But what are the rules, it will be asked, by the due observance of which propriety in this matter may be attained? One of those most commonly recommended is, to be brief. But this rule needs explanation, as there is nothing we ought more carefully to avoid than a cold uninteresting conciseness, which is sometimes the consequence of an ex-

cessive desire of brevity. Brevity in relating, as in everything else, is only so far commendable, as it is rendered compatible with answering all the ends of the relation. Where these are not answered, through an affectation of being very nervous and laconic, comprehending much in little, the narration ought not to be styled brief, but defective. In strictness, the relation ought to contain enough, and neither more nor less. But what is enough? That can be determined only by a proper attention to the end for which the narration was introduced. A narrative may contain enough to render the story and its connection intelligible to the hearer, yet not enough to fix his attention and engage his heart, and may therefore be justly chargeable with a faulty conciseness. But if this extreme ought to be carefully guarded against, it well deserves your notice, that the contrary, and no less dangerous extreme of prolixity, by entering into a detail too minute and circumstantial, ought with equal care to be avoided. If, in consequence of the first error the hearer's mind remains unsatisfied, in consequence of the second it is cloyed. Both faults can be avoided only by such a judicious selection of circumstances, as at once excludes nothing essential to the purposes of perspicuity and connection, or conducive to the principal scope of the narration, and includes nothing, that in the respects aforesaid can be deemed superfluous. Such is every circumstance that can be denominated remote, trivial, or necessarily implied in the other circumstances mentioned. But to assist the preacher in conducting such narratives, when pertinent, nothing will serve so well for a model, as the historical part of sacred writ. Nowhere else will he find such simplicity, as brings what is said to the level of the meanest capacity, united with such dignity, as is sufficient to engage the attention of the highest. Passages of Scripture history, when they happen to coincide with the speaker's view, are much preferable to those which may be taken from any other source; and that on a double account. First, it may be supposed, that not only all the serious part, but even the much greater part of the audience, being better acquainted with these, will both more readily perceive and more strongly feel the application which the preacher makes of them; and secondly, the authority of holy writ gives an additional weight to that which is the intent of the narrative. I do not say, however, that a preacher, in quoting instances, examples and authorities, ought to confine

himself entirely to the sacred history. Our blessed Lord, though addressing himself only to Jews, did not hesitate to lay the foundation of some of his parables in those customs which had arisen solely from their intercourse with the Romans. Of this the parable you have, Luke 19: 12, etc., of the nobleman who travelled into a distant land, in order that he might obtain the royal power, and return king over his countrymen, is an evident instance. Such was become the general practice in all the provinces and states dependent upon Rome. The royalty was often not to be attained without applications to the Roman senate and these were often thwarted, as in the parable, by counter applications, either from the people, or from some rival for power. Nay, there is very probably in that parable an allusion to some things which had actually happened in regard to the succession of Archelaus, son of Herod, king of Judea, with which many of his hearers could not fail to be acquainted, the thing having happened but recently and in their own time. Nor was the apostle Paul at all scrupulous in illustrating the sublimest truths of the gospel, by the exercises and diversions which obtained at that time among the idolatrous Greeks. But even in those cases wherein Scripture doth not furnish the facts, it supplies us with an excellent pattern of a natural, simple and interesting manner in which the relation ought to be conducted. I shall only add on this article, that the different circumstances ought to be so fitly and so naturally connected, that those which precede may easily introduce those which follow, and those which follow may appear necessarily to arise out of those which precede. This, by adding to the credibility and verisimilitude, greatly increases the effect of the whole. I shall not at this time say anything of those qualities which more regard the expression than the thought, as there will be scope for this afterwards.

The second thing comprised under the term thought, or sentiment, was explication, in which I include also description and definition. And on this, the rules laid down upon the former article will equally hold good. The same care and attention will be requisite, both in culling and disposing the particulars, that the whole may be neither tedious nor unsatisfactory. In regard to disposition and arrangement, there is rather more art necessary in this case than in the former. In the former, to wit, narrative, all the material circumstances are successive, and the order of introducing them must

in a great measure be determined by the order of time. But in explication, they are simultaneous, and therefore require the exercise of judgment and reflection, in assigning to each its proper place and order in the discourse. Need it be added, that in all descriptive enumerations particular care ought to be taken, that nothing foreign be comprehended, and that nothing which properly belongs to the subject be omitted. The logical rules in regard to definition are sufficiently known, and therefore shall not here be repeated. On the whole, in regard to both the preceding articles, a certain justness of apprehension is of all things the most important in a speaker. If he has not a clear conception of the matter himself, it can never be expected he should convey it to others.

The third thing mentioned as belonging to the thought, was reasoning. When it is considered, what a mixed society a Christian assembly for the most part is, and how little the far greater number, even of what are called the politest congregations, is accustomed to the exercise of the discursive faculty, it will be evident that anything in the way of argument would need to be extremely simple, consisting of but a very few steps, and extremely clear, having nothing in that is of an abstract nature, and so not easily comprehended by them, and nothing that alludes to facts which do not fall within ordinary observation. If the argument is not deduced from experience, or the common principles of the understanding, but from the import of the words of Scripture, one would need to be particularly distinct in setting the sacred text before them, avoiding as much as possible, everything that savors of subtlety, conceit or learned criticism. Something indeed of criticism, when the point to be proved, is a point merely of revelation, cannot always be avoided. In general, however, we are warranted to say, it ought to be avoided as much as possible. The passages of holy writ, therefore, which you make choice of, in support of your doctrine, ought to be always the plainest and the most direct. Though you should perhaps find other passages, in which to a man of letters, there might appear equal or even stronger evidence, yet if such passages would require a commentary or elaborate disquisition to elucidate them, they are not so convincing to the people, and should, therefore, be let alone.

It may not be improper here, however, before we dismiss this article, to examine a little what the occasions are which require reasoning from the pulpit, and what are the different

topics of argument adapted to the different natures of the subject. These last are very properly divided into practical and speculative. In the former, the preacher argues to enforce the practice of a duty recommended by him; in the latter, to gain the belief of his hearers to a tenet he thinks fit to defend. In the former case, it is his aim to evince the beauty, the propriety, the equity, the pleasantness, or the utility of such a conduct both for time and for eternity. His topics therefore are all drawn from common life and experience, from the common sense of mankind and the most explicit declarations of holy writ, topics in a great measure the same with those on which men of all conditions are wont to argue with one another, in regard to what is right and prudent in the management of their ordinary secular affairs. Such were the topics, to which our Lord himself had recourse in his parables, always illustrating the reasons and motives which ought to influence in the things of eternity, by the reasons and motives which do commonly influence us in the things of time. Such topics are consequently, if properly conducted, level to the capacities of all. Whereas in the latter case, when the subject is of doctrinal points, or points of speculation, the resources of the preacher are extremely different. His reasoning must then be drawn from the essential natures and differences of things, and the comparison of abstract qualities, or perhaps from abstruse and critical disquisitions of the import of some dark and controverted passages of Scripture, which it must be owned, are beyond the sphere of the illiterate. I would not by this be understood to mean, that controversy should never be admitted into the pulpit. We are exhorted by the apostle Jude "earnestly to contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints." And Paul in his epistles hath given us an excellent example of this laudable zeal in support of the fundamental doctrines of our religion, against those who denied or doubted them. This he shows, as on several other occasions, so in particular in the defence of the doctrine of the resurrection, and in opposition to that false dogma of the Judaizing teachers of his time, that the observance of circumcision and of the other ceremonies of the law is necessary to salvation. And indeed from the reason of the thing it is manifest, that in a religious institution founded on certain important truths or principles, through the belief of which only it can operate on the hearts and influence the lives of men, it must be of the

utmost consequence to refute the contrary errors, when they appear to be creeping in or gaining ground among the people. But before the preacher attempt a refutation of this kind, there are two things he ought impartially and carefully to inquire into. First, he ought to inquire, whether the tenet he means to support be one of the great truths of religion or not. It may be a prevalent opinion, it may have a reference to the common salvation, nay more, it may be a true opinion, and yet no article of the faith which was once delivered to the saints. These articles are neither numerous nor abstruse. We cannot say so much in regard to the comments and glosses of men. Yet it is an undoubted fact, that where the former have excited one controversy in the church the latter have produced fifty. It must therefore be of importance to him, to be well-assured that he is vindicating the great oracles of unerring wisdom, and not the precarious interpretations and glosses of fallible men; that he acts the part of the genuine disciple of Christ, and not the blind follower of a merely human guide. In the former case only he defends the cause of Christianity; in the latter he but supports the interest of a sect or faction. In that, he contends for the faith; in this, "he dotes about questions and strifes of words, vain janglings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and involving himself in oppositions of science falsely so called." And that under this last class, the far greater part of our theological disputes are comprehended, even such as have been too often and too hotly agitated in the pulpit, is not to be denied. Such in particular are a great many of the doctrinal controversies, which different parties of protestants have with one another. They may with great propriety be styled *λογομαχίαι*, (strifes of words, 1 Tim. 6: 4.) an emphatic term of the apostle Paul; for they are not only wars with words, but wars merely about words and phrases, where there is no discernible, or at least, no material difference in the sense; and which agreeably to the character he gives of them, "gender strifes, and minister idle disputes rather than godly edifying." The second thing which the preacher ought to inquire into, before he engage in preaching controversy, is whether the false doctrine he means to refute has any number of partizans amongst his hearers; or whether there be any immediate danger of their being seduced to that opinion. If otherwise, the introduction of such questions might possibly raise doubts where formerly there were none,

and at any rate, unless managed with uncommon prudence and temper, have rather a tendency that is unfavorable to the Christian spirit, and in narrow minds is apt to beget a sort of bitterness and uncharitableness, which these dignify in themselves with the name of zeal, though in their adversaries they can clearly see its malignity. At the same time, that I give these caveats against the abuse, I by no means deny the occasional expediency and use of controversy.

As to the fourth and last species of thought mentioned, moral reflection, or what is sometimes peculiarly denominated sentiment; there is much less hazard that in this we should succeed. Here the preacher, if he is at all judicious in his choice, runs less risk of either growing tiresome to the more improved part of his audience, or unintelligible to those whose understandings have not been cultivated. In the former, the rational powers are addressed; in this, the heart and the conscience. Indeed, I am far from thinking, that these two kinds of addresses may not often be happily blended together; particularly, when the subject relates to moral conduct, an address of the latter kind, if interwoven with a plain narrative, will frequently prove the most effectual means of removing unfavorable prepossessions, engaging affection as well as satisfying reason, and bringing her to be of the same party. It was a method often and successfully employed by our blessed Lord, when attacked by a Jewish bigotry, on the extent that ought to be given to the love of our neighbor. The maxims of the Pharisees, like those of all bigots, of every age, nation and profession, were very illiberal; and measuring the universal Father, by their own contracted span, they could not bear to think that those of a different nation, and still more those who differed in religious matters, could be comprehended under it. When attacked by these narrow-hearted zealots, in what manner, I pray you, doth he silence contradiction, and gain every susceptible heart over to his side? Not by subtle ratiocination on the beauty of virtue, or on the eternal and unalterable fitness of things; but by a simple story, by the parable of the compassionate Samaritan, in the conclusion of which he shows, that, even their own consciences being judges, to act agreeably to the more extensive explanation of the duty, was the more amiable part, and consequently more worthy of their esteem and imitation. Again, when he would show, that even the profligate are not to be abandoned to despair, with what an amazing superiori-

ty doth he subdue the most unrelenting pharisaic pride by the parable of the prodigal? Who ever could so quickly dissipate the thickest clouds raised by inveterate prejudices and party-spirit, and render the only unequivocal standard of moral truth, the characters of the divine law engraven on the human heart, to all who are not wilfully blind distinctly legible? Could any the most acute and elaborate dissertation on moral rectitude, or the essential qualities and relations of things, have produced half the effect, even in point of conviction, as well as of feeling? How different his method from that of the ancient sophists? But not more different than their aims. Their aim was to make men talk fluently and plausibly on every subject; his, to make them think justly and act uprightly.

So much shall suffice for what regards the sentiments or thoughts in general, that are adapted to the eloquence of the pulpit, whether narration, explanation, reasoning, or moral reflection. On this head, we were under a necessity of being briefer and more general, as it is here that a man's natural talents, genius, taste and judgment, have the greatest sway; and where nature has denied these talents, it is in vain to imagine that the defect can ever be supplied by art. Whereas the principal scope for the exertions of art and education is in what regards language, composition and arrangement. It is principally in what regards the thought, that we may say universally, whatever be the species of eloquence a man aims to attain, everything that serves to improve his knowledge, discernment and good sense, serves also to improve him as an orator. "*Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons.*"

LECTURE III.

OF THE EXPRESSION.

IN my last lecture, I treated in general of the thought or sentiment of the discourse, and laid before you some reflections on the different sorts into which it is distinguishable, narration, explanation, argumentation and moral reflection, and the methods whereby each ought to be conducted by the Christian orator. I proceed now to consider what may prop-

erly be called the expression of the sentiments by language. By this word I here mean, all that regards the enunciation of the thoughts by language. It is by this, that eloquence holds of grammar, as it is by the other, that she holds of logic.

A few words therefore on what I may call the grammatical expression, before I enter on the consideration of the rhetorical. The work of the grammarian serves as a foundation to that of the rhetorician. The highest aim of the former is the lowest aim of the latter. The one seeks only purity, the other superadds elegance and energy. Grammatical purity in any language, (suppose English, that in which every preacher in this country is chiefly interested,) requires a careful observance of these three things; first, that the words employed be English words; secondly, that they be construed in the English idiom; thirdly, that they be made to present to the reader or hearer the precise meaning, which good use hath affixed to them. A trespass against the first, when the word is not English, is called a barbarism; a trespass against the second, when the fault lies in the construction, is termed a solecism; a trespass against the third, when the word, though English, is not used in its true meaning, is denominated an impropriety. As the foundation is necessary to the superstructure, so an attention to grammatical purity is previously necessary to one who would attain the elegant, affecting, and energetic expression of the orator. Permit me, therefore, to take this opportunity of recommending to you, to bestow some time and attention on the perusal of our best English grammars, and to familiarize yourselves to the idiom of our best and purest writers. It is, I think, a matter of some consequence, and therefore ought not to be altogether neglected by the student.

I know it will be said, that when all a man's labor is employed in instructing the people of a country parish, to which there is little or no resort of strangers, propriety of expression is not a matter of mighty moment, provided he speak in such a manner as to be intelligible to his parishioners. I admit the truth of what is advanced in this objection, but by no means the consequence which the objectors seem disposed to draw from it. I must therefore entreat that a few things may be considered on the other hand. And first, you cannot know for certain, where it may please Providence that your lot should be. If you acquire the knowledge of the language in the proper acceptation of the word, you acquire a dialect

which will make you understood wherever the language is spoken ; for as the English translation of the Bible, and as all our best writings, are in what I may call the general and pure idiom of the tongue, that idiom is perfectly well understood even by those, who do not speak with propriety themselves. Whereas if you neglect grammatical accuracy, it is a hundred to one, that many of your words and phrases will be misunderstood in the very neighboring district or county. And even though they should be intelligible enough, they have a coarseness and vulgarity in them, that cannot fail to make them appear to men of knowledge and taste ridiculous ; and this doth inexpressible injury to the thought conveyed under them, how just and important soever it be. You will say, that this is all the effect of mere prejudice in the hearers, consequently unreasonable and not to be regarded. Be it, that this is prejudice in the hearers, and therefore unreasonable. It doth not follow, that the speaker ought to pay no regard to it. It is the business of the orator to accommodate himself to men, such as he sees they are, and not such as he imagines they should be. A certain pliancy of disposition in regard to innocent prejudices and defects, is what in our intercourse with the world, good sense necessarily requires of us, candor requires of us, our religion itself requires of us. It is this very disposition, which our great apostle recommends by his own example, where he tells us that he “ became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.” But upon impartial examination, the thing perhaps will be found not so unreasonable, as at first sight it may appear. A man of merit and breeding you may disguise by putting him in the apparel of a clown, but you cannot justly find fault, that in that garb he meets not with the same reception in good company, that he would meet with if more suitably habited. The outward appearance is the first thing that strikes us in a person, the expression is the first thing that strikes us in a discourse. Take care at least, that in neither, there be anything to make an unfavorable impression, which may preclude all further inquiry and regard. It was extremely well said by a very popular preacher in our own days, who when consulted by a friend that had a mind to publish, whether he thought it befitting a writer on religion to attend to such little matters as grammatical correctness, answered, “ By all means. It is much better to write so as to make a critic turn Christian, than so as to make a Chris-

tian turn critic." The answer was judicious and well expressed. That the thought may enter deeply into the mind of the reader or hearer, there is need of all the assistance possible from the expression. Little progress can it be expected then, that the former shall make, if there be anything in the latter, which serves to divert the attention from it. And this effect at least of diverting the attention, even mere grammatic blunders with those who are capable of discerning them, are but too apt to produce. The more immediate object with us is rhetorical, not grammatical expression; and only that kind of the former which is specially adapted to the Christian oratory. For though there be not perhaps any qualities requisite here, which may not with good effect be employed by those whose province it is to harangue from the bar or in the senate, and though there be very few of the qualities of elocution, which may not on some occasions, with great propriety, be employed from the pulpit; yet some of them, without all question, are more essential to one species of oratory than to another, and it is such as are most adapted to the discourses with which we are here concerned, that I propose now particularly to consider. Before all things then, in my judgment, the preacher ought to make it his study, that the style of his discourses be both perspicuous and affecting. I shall make a few observations to illustrate each of these particulars.

First I say, his style ought to be perspicuous. Though it is indeed a most certain fact, that perspicuity is of the utmost consequence to every orator, (for what valuable end can any oration answer, which is not understood?) this quality doubtless ought to be more a study to the Christian orator than to any other whatever. The reason is obvious. The more we are in danger of violating any rule (especially if it be a rule of the last importance), the more circumspection we ought to employ to avoid that danger. Now that the preacher must be in much greater danger in this respect than any other public speaker, is manifest from the mixed character at best, often from the very low character in respect of acquired knowledge, of the audience to whom his speech is addressed. Perspicuity is in a great measure a relative quality. A speech may be perspicuous to one, which to another is unintelligible. It is possible indeed to be obscure in pleading before the most learned and discerning judges, because the pleader's style may be remarkably perplexed and

intricate ; but without any perplexity or intricacy of style, it is even more than possible, that a man of reading and education shall speak obscurely when he addresses himself in a set discourse to simple and illiterate people. There is a cause of darkness in this case, totally independent of the grammatical structure of the sentences, and the general character of the style. It is, besides, of all causes of obscurity, that which is most apt to escape the notice of a speaker. Nothing is more natural than for a man to imagine, that what is intelligible to him is so to every body, or at least that he speaks with sufficient clearness, when he uses the same language and in equal plainness, with that in which he hath studied the subject, and been accustomed to read. But however safe this rule of judging may be in the barrister and the senator, who generally address their discourses to men of similar education with themselves, and of equal or nearly equal abilities and learning, it is by no means a proper rule for the preacher, one destined to be in spiritual matters a guide to the blind, a light to them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes. Therefore, besides the ordinary rules of perspicuity in respect of diction, which in common with every other public speaker he ought to attend to, he must advert to this in particular, that the terms and phrases he employs in his discourse be not beyond the reach of the inferior ranks of people. Otherwise his preaching is, to the bulk of his audience, but beating the air ; whatever the discourse may be in itself, the speaker is to them no better than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. It is reported of Archbishop Tillotson, that he was wont, before preaching his sermons, to read them privately to an illiterate old woman of plain sense, who lived in the house with him, and wherever he found he had employed any word or expression, that she did not understand, he instantly erased it, and substituted a plainer in its place, till he brought the style down to her level. The story is much to the prelate's honor ; for however incompetent such judges might be of the composition, the doctrine or the argument, they are certainly the most competent judges of what terms and phrases fall within the apprehension of the vulgar, the class to which they belong. But though such an expedient would not answer in every situation, we ought at least to supply the want of it by making it more an object of attention than is commonly done, to discover what in point of language falls within and what without the sphere of the common people.

Before I dismiss this article of perspicuity, I shall mention briefly a few of those faults by which it is most commonly transgressed.

The first is pedantry, or an ostentation of learning, by frequent recourse to those words and phrases which are called technical, and which are in use only among the learned. This may justly be denominated the worst kind of obscurity, because it is always an intentional obscurity. In other cases a man may speak obscurely, without knowing it; he may on some subjects speak obscurely, and though he suspects it, may not have it in his power to remedy it; but the pedant affects obscurity. He is dark of purpose, that you may think him deep. The character of a profound scholar is his primary object. Commonly indeed he overshoots the mark, and with all persons of discernment loses this character by his excessive solicitude to acquire it. The pedant in literature is perfectly analogous to the hypocrite in religion. As appearance and not reality is the great study of each, both in mere exteriors far outdo the truly learned and the pious, with whom the reputation of learning and piety is but a secondary object at the most. The shallowness, however, of such pretenders rarely escapes the discovery of the judicious. But if falsehood and vanity are justly accounted mean and despicable, wherever they are found; when they dare to show themselves in the pulpit, a place consecrated to truth and purity, they must appear to every ingenuous mind perfectly detestable. It must be owned, however, that the pedantic style is not now so prevalent in preaching, as it hath been in former times, and therefore needs not to be further enlarged on. There is indeed a sort of literary diction, which sometimes the inexperienced are ready to fall into insensibly, from their having been much more accustomed to the school and to the closet, to the works of some particular schemer in philosophy, than to the scenes of real life and conversation. This fault, though akin to the former, is not so bad, as it may be without affectation, and when there is no special design of catching applause. It is, indeed, most commonly the consequence of an immoderate attachment to some one or other of the various systems of ethics or theology that have in modern times been published, and obtained a vogue among their respective partizans. Thus the zealous disciple of Shaftsbury, Aken-side and Hutcheson, is no sooner licensed to preach the gospel, than with the best intentions in the world, he harangues

the people from the pulpit on the moral sense and universal benevolence, he sets them to inquire whether there be a perfect conformity in their affections to the supreme symmetry established in the universe, he is full of the sublime and beautiful in things, the moral objects of right and wrong, and the proportionable affection of a rational creature towards them. He speaks much of the inward music of the mind, the harmony and the dissonance of the passions, and seems, by his way of talking, to imagine, that if man have this same moral sense, which he considers as the mental ear, in due perfection, he may tune his soul with as much ease as a musician tunes a musical instrument. The disciple of Doctor Clarke, on the contrary, talks to us in somewhat of a soberer strain, and less pompous phrase, but not a jot more edifying, about unalterable reason and the eternal fitness of things, about the conformity of our actions to their immutable relations and essential differences. All the various sects or parties in religion have been often accused of using a peculiar dialect of their own, when speaking on religious subjects, which though familiar to the votaries of the party, appears extremely uncouth to others. The charge, I am sensible, is not without foundation, though all parties are not in this respect equally guilty. We see, however, that the different systems of philosophy, especially that branch which comes under the denomination of pneumatology, are equally liable to this imputation with systems of theology. I would not be understood, from anything I have said, to condemn in the gross either the books or systems alluded to. They have their excellences as well as their blemishes; and as to many of the points in which they seem to differ from one another, I am satisfied that the difference is, like some of our theological disputes, more verbal than real. Let us read even on opposite sides, but still so as to preserve the freedom of our judgment in comparing, weighing and deciding, so that we can with justice apply to ourselves, in regard to all human teachers, the declaration of the poet,

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

And even in some cases, wherein we approve the thought in any of those authors, it may not be proper to adopt the language. The adage, which enjoins us to think with the learned, but speak with the vulgar, is not to be understood as enjoining us to dissemble; but not to make a useless parade of

learning, particularly to avoid everything in point of language which would put the sentiments we mean to convey beyond the reach of those with whom we converse. It was but just now admitted, that the different sects or denominations of Christians had their several and peculiar dialects. I would advise the young divine, in forming his style in sacred matters, to avoid as much as possible the peculiarities of each. The language of Holy Scripture and of common sense affords him a sufficient standard. And with regard to the distinguishing phrases, which our factions in religion have introduced, though these sometimes may appear to superficial people and half thinkers sufficiently perspicuous, the appearance is a mere illusion. The generality of men, little accustomed to reflection, are so constituted, that what their ears have been long familiarized to, however obscure in itself, or unmeaning it be, seems perfectly plain to them. They are well acquainted with the terms, expressions and customary application, and they look no farther. A great deal of the learning in divinity of such of our common people as think themselves, and are sometimes thought by others, wonderful scholars, is of this sort. It is generally the fruit of much application, strong memory and weak judgment, and consisting mostly of mere words and phrases, is of that kind of knowledge which puffeth up, gendereth self-conceit, that species of it in particular known by the name of spiritual pride, captiousness, censoriousness, jealousy, malignity, but by no means ministereth to the edifying of the hearers in love. This sort of knowledge I denominate learned ignorance, of all sorts of ignorance the most difficult to be surmounted, agreeably to the observation of Solomon, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him." Would you avoid then feeding the vanity of your hearers, supplying them with words instead of sense, amusing them with curious questions and verbal controversies, instead of furnishing them with useful and practical instruction, detach yourselves from the artificial, ostentatious phraseology of every scholastic, or system builder in theology, and keep as close as possible to the pure style of holy writ, which the apostle calls "the sincere or unadulterated milk of the word." The things, which the Holy Spirit hath taught by the prophets and apostles, give not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words which the Holy Spirit teacheth, a much more natural and

suitable language. But be particularly attentive that the Scripture expressions employed be both plain and apposite. The word of God itself may be, and often is handled unskilfully. Would the preacher carefully avoid this charge, let him first be sure that he hath himself a distinct meaning to everything he advanceth, and next examine, whether the expression he intends to use be a clear and adequate enunciation of that meaning. For if it is true, that a speaker is sometimes not understood, because he doth not express his meaning with sufficient clearness, it is also true that sometimes he is not understood, because he hath no meaning to express.

The last advice I would give on the head of perspicuity is, in composing, to aim at a certain simplicity in the structure of your sentences, avoiding long, intricate and complex periods. Remember always that the bulk of the people are unused to reading and study. They lose sight of the connection in very long sentences, and they are quite bewildered, when, for the sake of rounding a period, and suspending the sense till the concluding clause, you transgress the customary arrangement of the words. The nearer therefore your diction comes to the language of conversation, it will be the more familiar to them, and so the more easily apprehended. In this too the style of Scripture is an excellent model. So much for perspicuity.

The next quality I mentioned in the style, was, that it be affecting. Though this has more particularly a place in those discourses, which admit and even require a good deal of the pathetic, yet, in a certain degree, it ought to accompany everything that comes from the pulpit. All from that quarter is conceived to be, mediately or immediately, connected with the most important interests of mankind. This gives a propriety to the affecting manner in a certain degree, whatever be the particular subject. It is this quality in preaching, to which the French critics have given the name of *onction*, and which they explain to be, an affecting sweetness of manner which engages the heart. It is indeed that warmth, and gentle emotion in the address and language, which serves to show, that the speaker is much in earnest in what he says, and is actuated to say it from the tenderest concern for the welfare of his hearers. As this character, however, can be considered only as a degree of that which comes under the general denomination of pathetic, we shall

have occasion to consider it more fully afterwards. It is enough here to observe, that as the general strain of pulpit expression ought to be seasoned with this quality, this doth necessarily imply, that the language be ever grave and serious. The necessity of this results from the consideration of the very momentous effect which preaching was intended to produce; as the necessity of perspicuity, the first quality mentioned, results from the consideration of the character sustained by the hearers. That the effect designed by this institution, namely the reformation of mankind, requires a certain seriousness, which though occasionally requisite in other public speakers, ought uniformly to be preserved by the preacher, is a truth that will scarcely be doubted by any person who reflects. This may be said in some respect to narrow his compass in persuasion, as it will not permit the same free recourse to humor, wit and ridicule, which often prove powerful auxiliaries to other orators at the bar and in the senate, agreeably to the observation of the poet,

Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.

At the same time, I am very sensible that an air of ridicule in disproving or dissuading, by rendering opinions or practices contemptible, hath been attempted with approbation by preachers of great name. I can only say that when the contemptuous manner is employed (which ought to be very seldom) it requires to be managed with the greatest delicacy. For time and place and occupation seem all incompatible with the levity of ridicule; they render jesting impertinence, and laughter madness. Therefore anything from the pulpit, which might provoke this emotion, would now be justly deemed an unpardonable offence against both piety and decorum. In order, however, to prevent mistakes, permit me here, in passing, to make a remark that may be called a digression, as it immediately concerns my own province only. The remark is, that in these prelections, I do not consider myself as limited by the laws of preaching. There is a difference between a school, even a theological school and a church, a professor's chair and a pulpit; there is a difference between graduates in philosophy and the arts, and a common congregation. And though in some things, not in all, there be a coincidence in the subject, yet the object is different. In the former, it is purely the information of the

hearers, in the latter, it is ultimately their reformation. I shall not therefore hesitate, in this place, to borrow aid from whatever may serve innocently to illustrate, enliven or enforce any part of my subject, and keep awake the attention of my hearers, which is but too apt to flag at hearing the most rational discourse, if there be nothing in it, which can either move the passions, or please the imagination. The nature of my department excludes almost everything of the former kind, or what may be called pathetic. A little of the *onction* above explained is the utmost that here ought to be aspired to. There is the less need to dispense with what of the latter kind may be helpful for rousing attention. I hope, therefore, to be indulged the liberty, a liberty which I shall use very sparingly, of availing myself of the plea of the satirist,

Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?

So much for the perspicuous and the affecting manner, qualities in the style which ought particularly to predominate in all discourses from the pulpit. There are other graces of elocution, which may occasionally find a place there, such as the nervous, the elegant, and some others; but the former ought never to be wanting. The former therefore are characteristic qualities. The latter are so far from being such, that sometimes they are rather of an opposite tendency. The nervous style requires a conciseness, that is often unfriendly to that perfect perspicuity which ought to predominate in all that is addressed to the Christian people, and which leads a speaker rather to be diffuse in his expression, that he may the better adapt himself to ordinary capacities. Elegance too demands a certain polish, that is not always entirely compatible with that artless simplicity, with which, when the great truths of religion are adorned, they appear always to the most advantage, and in the truest majesty. They are "when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most."

We have now done with what regards in general the sentiment and the elocution. The next lecture shall be on the pronunciation.

LECTURE IV.

OF PRONUNCIATION.

I have in the two preceding discourses finished what regards in general the sentiments and the elocution proper for the pulpit. I intend in the present discourse to discuss the article of pronunciation. This admits the same division, which was observed in the former branch, into grammatical and rhetorical. The former was by the Greeks denominated *ἐκφώνησις*, the latter *ὑποκείσις*. As it is of the utmost consequence, when we are entering on the examination of any article, that we form precise ideas of the subject of inquiry, and do not confound things in themselves distinct, I shall begin this lecture with a definition of each of these, to which I must beg leave to entreat your attention, that so none may be at a loss about the meaning or application of what shall be advanced in the sequel. As to the first, then; grammatical pronunciation consisteth in articulating audibly and distinctly the letters, whether vowels or consonants, assigning to each its appropriated sound, in giving the several syllables their just quantity, and in placing the accent, or as some call it, the syllabic emphasis, in every word on the proper syllable. As to the second; rhetorical pronunciation consisteth in giving such an utterance to the several words in a sentence, as shows in the mind of the speaker a strong perception, or as it were feeling of the truth and justness of the thought conveyed by them, and in placing the rhetorical emphasis in every sentence, on the proper word, that is, on that word which, by being pronounced emphatically, gives the greatest energy and clearness to the expression. Under this head is also comprehended gesture; as both imply a kind of natural expression, superadded to that conveyed by artificial signs, or the words of the language. Under the term gesture, I would be understood to comprehend not only the action of the eyes and other features of the countenance, but also that which results from the motion of the hands and carriage of the body. This together with the proper management of the voice was all comprised under the Greek word *ὑποκείσις*, borrowed from the theatre, but which, for want of a term of equal extent in our language, we are forced to in-

clude under the name pronunciation. Now these two kinds of pronunciation, the grammatical and the rhetorical, are so perfectly distinct, that each may be found in a very eminent degree without the other. The first indeed is merely an effect of education; insomuch that one who has had the good fortune to be brought up in a place where the language is spoken in purity, and has been taught to read by a sufficient teacher, must inevitably, if he labors under no natural defect in the organs of speech, be master of grammatical pronunciation. The second is more properly, in its origin, the production of nature, but is capable of being considerably improved and polished by education. The natural qualities which combine in producing it, are an exquisite sensibility joined with a good ear and flexible voice. An Englishman, who hath been properly educated, and always in good company, as the phrase is, that is, in the company of those who, by a kind of tacit consent, are allowed to take the lead in language, may pronounce so as to defy the censure of the most critical grammarian, and yet be, in the judgment of the rhetorician, a most languid and inanimate speaker, one who knows nothing at all of the oratorical pronunciation. Speakers you will often find in the house of commons, who are perfect in the one and totally deficient in the other. On the other hand, you will find speakers of this country who, in respect of the last, have considerable talents, insomuch that they can excite and fix attention, that they can both please and move, that their voice seems capable alike of being modulated to sooth the passions or to inflame them, yet in whose pronunciation a grammarian may discover innumerable defects. There is this difference, however, between the two cases, that though the grammatical pronunciation may be perfect in its kind without the rhetorical, the last is never in perfection without the first. The art of the grammarian in this, as in the former article of expression, serves as a foundation to that of the orator. It will be proper therefore to begin with a few remarks upon the former.

That a right grammatical pronunciation will deserve some regard from us, appears from the same reasons, which evince that grammatical expression deserves some regard. Those reasons therefore shall not be now repeated. There is, however, it must be acknowledged, a considerable difference between the two cases. And the former attempt is much more hazardous than the latter. If we aim no higher, than that

the words we use, the application and the construction be proper English, (which is all that grammatical expression requires,) we shall never run the risk of the charge of affectation, than which, I know no imputation that is more prejudicial to the orator. Whereas a forced and unnatural, because unaccustomed pronunciation, and the awkward mouthing which the attempt often occasions, as it falls within the observation of the generality of hearers, so it is more disgusting to hearers of taste and discernment, than perhaps any provincial accent whatsoever. Shall we then give up all attempts this way? I do not say that neither. But let us keep a proper medium in our attempts, and never strain beyond what we can effect with ease. Let us begin by avoiding the most faulty pronunciations we can discover in ourselves, or which have been remarked to us by others; and let us endeavor to avoid them not in the pulpit only, but in common conversation. It would be a matter of considerable consequence for this as well as for more material purposes, that young men of an ingenuous temper and good sense, who happen to be companions, should mutually agree to serve as checks and monitors to one another. I know not anything which would contribute more to prevent the contracting of ungainly habits, or to correct them timely when contracted. "A friend's eye," says the proverb, "is a good mirror." And every one must be sensible, that there are several kinds of faults and improprieties, which totally elude the discovery of the person chargeable with them, but which by no means escape the notice of the attentive spectator or auditor. I said that when a faulty manner in pronouncing is discovered, it ought to be avoided not in the pulpit only, but in conversation. The nearer our manner of pronouncing in the pulpit is to that we daily use, the more easy and the more natural it will appear. Example, as in everything, so here in particular, goes a great way. Let us therefore attend to the manner of the best speakers, to whose company we have access, and we shall insensibly conform ourselves to it. It is by such insensible, more than by any intentional imitation, that every man acquires the speech and pronunciation which he uses. And by the like easy and gradual influence of example, by which a faulty pronunciation was contracted, it will best be cured. The only caution necessary on this article is, that we be very sure as to the choice we make of patterns, lest unluckily we imitate blemishes for excellences,



and be at great pains in acquiring, what we ought rather to be at pains to avoid. Grammars and dictionaries may be of some use here, but are not sufficient without other aid. Distinctions only discernible by the ear, can never be adequately conveyed merely by the eye. There is one part of pronunciation, however, and a very important part, which may be learned solely by book, that is, the placing of the accent or syllabic emphasis. So much for grammatical pronunciation.

As to the rhetorical pronunciation, there is not anything so peculiar in the Christian eloquence, as to require that we make any addition of moment to the rules on this subject laid down in the best institutes of rhetoric, which I recommend to your serious perusal. I shall only remark to you a few of the chief and most common faults in this way, observable in preachers, and suggest some hints, by a due attention to which, one may attain the right management of the voice, and be enabled to avoid those faults. The first I shall observe, though not in itself a very great, yet is a very common fault, and often proves the source of several others; it is the *straining of the voice* beyond its natural key, commonly the effect of a laudable desire to make one's self be heard in a large congregation. This, however, is one of those expedients, that rarely fail to defeat the purpose which occasioned them. What is thus spoken in a forced tone, (though the note in a musical scale emitted by the voice be higher,) is neither so distinct, nor so audible, as what is spoken in the natural tone of voice. There is a very great difference between speaking high, and speaking loud; though these two are often confounded. Women's voices are a full octave higher or shriller (for that is all the term means) than men's, and yet they are much less fitted for being heard in a large auditory. In a chime or music bells the bass notes are all struck on the biggest bells, and the treble notes on the smallest. Accordingly the former are heard at a distance, which the feeble sound of the other cannot reach. The same thing may be observed of the pipes in an organ. Besides, it is a much greater stress to the speaker, to hold out with his voice raised ever so little above its natural pitch, and it lays him under several disadvantages in respect of pronunciation, of which I shall have occasion to take notice afterwards.

A second fault which is very common with preachers is too great rapidity of utterance. This is an ordinary, though not

a necessary consequence of committing a discourse to memory and repeating it. A person, without particularly guarding against it, is apt to contract an impatience to deliver the words, as fast as they occur to his mind, that so he may give them to the audience, whilst he is sure he can do it. This also is a great hinderance to the attainment of an affecting or energetic pronunciation; besides that it greatly fatigues the attention of the hearer, whom, after all, many things must escape, which otherwise he might have retained.

A third fault I shall observe is a theatrical and too violent manner. This, though it seems to proceed from a commendable ardor, sins against propriety in many ways. It suits not the gravity of the subject; and to appear destitute of all command of one's self doth not befit one who would teach others to obtain a perfect mastery over their passions. The preacher's manner in general ought to be modest, at the same time earnest and affecting.

A fourth fault, which is indeed the opposite extreme to that now mentioned, is an insipid monotony, by which everything that is said, whether narration, explanation, argumentation or address to the passions, is uniformly and successively articulated in the same listless, lifeless manner. And this is a much greater fault than the preceding. The former offends only hearers of taste and reflection, but the latter, all who can either understand or feel. The preacher, in such a case exhibits the appearance of a school-boy who repeats a lesson he hath conned over, but who doth not form a single idea of what he is saying from beginning to end.

The fifth, and only other remarkable fault in pronunciation I shall mention, is a sing-song manner; or what we commonly call a cant, which is something like a measure of a tune, that the preacher unintermittedly runs over, till he conclude his discourse. This, as a kind of relief to the lungs, is what a strained voice (the fault in speaking first mentioned) when it becomes habitual, generally terminates in, and though it hath not the same air of indifference with the monotony, is in other respects liable to the same objections. It marks no difference in the nature of the things said, and consequently (though the tune itself were not unpleasant) it may prove a lullaby, and dispose the hearers to sleep, but is quite unfit for awakening their attention. Both the last mentioned faults are the too frequent (not the unavoidable) consequence of the common method of rehearsing a discourse by rote,

which has been verbatim committed to memory. This very naturally leads the speaker to fix the closest attention on the series of the words prepared, that he may not lose the thread. And this as naturally carries off his attention entirely from the thought.

The consideration of these things hath often led me to doubt, which of the two methods of delivery, reading or repeating, we ought to recommend to students, or at least which of the two, if universal, would probably have the best effect, and be attended with fewest disadvantages. I shall candidly lay before you, what hath occurred to my thoughts on this subject, and leave it to every one's own judgment to decide for himself. That a discourse well spoken hath a stronger effect than one well read, will hardly bear a question. From this manifest truth I very early concluded, and was long of opinion, that the way of reading sermons should be absolutely banished from the pulpit. But from farther experience, I am now disposed to suspect, that this conclusion was rather hasty. Though by proper culture the powers of oratory may be very much improved, yet by no culture whatever will these powers be created, where nature hath denied them. A certain original and natural talent or genius for art to work upon is as necessary in the orator, as in the poet. Now if all, who have the ministry in view, were possessed of this natural talent, the conclusion we mentioned would certainly be just. But so far is this from being the case, that experience plainly teacheth us, it is the portion of very few. But though there be not many, who will ever arrive at the pathos, the irresistible force of argument and the sublimity, in which the glory of eloquence consists, there are not a few who by a proper application of their time and study, will be capable of composing justly, of expressing themselves not only with perspicuity, but with energy, and of reading, I say not in a proper and inoffensive, but even in an affecting manner. So much more common are the talents necessary for the one accomplishment, than those requisite for the other. I have indeed heard this point controverted, and people maintain, that it was as easy to acquire the talent of repeating with energy and propriety, as of reading. But I could hardly ever think them serious who said so, or at least that they had duly examined the subject. There are no doubt, degrees of excellence in reading, as well as in repeating, and they are but few, that attain to the highest degree in either. But in what

may be regarded as good in its kind, though not the best, I speak within bounds when I say, that I have found six good readers, for one who repeated tolerably. As to my personal experience, I shall frankly tell you what I know to be fact. I have tried both ways; I continued long in the practice of repeating, and was even thought, (if people did not very much deceive me,) to succeed in it; but I am absolutely certain, that I can give more energy, and preserve the attention of the hearers better, to what I read, than ever it was in my power to do to what I repeated. Nor is it any wonder. There are difficulties to be surmounted in the latter case, which have no place at all in the former. The talents in other respects are the same, that fit one to excel in either way. Now as it will, I believe, be admitted by everybody who reflects, that a discourse well read is much better than one ill spoken, I should not think it prudent to establish any general rule, which would probably make bad speakers of many, who might otherwise have proved good readers. There is something in charging one's memory with a long chain of words and syllables, and this is one of the difficulties I hinted at, and then running on, as it were, mechanically in the same train, the preceding word associating and drawing in the subsequent, that seems by taking off a man's attention from the thought to the expression, to render him insusceptible of the delicate sensibility as to the thought, which is the true spring of rhetorical pronunciation. That this is not invariably the effect of getting by heart, the success of some actors on the stage is an undeniable proof. But the comparative facility, arising from the much greater brevity of their speeches, and from the relief and emotion that is given to the player by the action of the other dialogists in the scene, makes the greatest difference imaginable in the two cases. A man, through habit, becomes so perfectly master of a speech of thirty or forty lines, which will not take him three minutes to repeat, that he hath no anxiety about recollecting the words; his whole attention is to the sentiment. The case must be very different, when the memory is charged with a discourse which will take thirty minutes to deliver.

Besides, it must be observed, there is a great difference between speaking an oration and repeating it. In the former case, the orator may by premeditation have made himself master of the argument; he may have arranged his matter in his own mind, but as to the expression, trusts to that fluency

and command of language which by application and practice have become habitual to him. It is impossible, that any speech on any motion in the house of commons, except the first speech, should be gotten by heart. For every following one, if pertinent, must necessarily have a reference to what was said on the argument before. In like manner it is only the first pleading in the cause at the bar, which can have the advantage of such preparation. Whether those, who open the cause or question, always avail themselves of this power, and previously commit to memory every sentence they utter, I know not. But we do not find, that these speeches have generally a remarkable superiority in point of elocution, over those which follow, as it is certain, they can have no superiority at all in point of pronunciation. Several of Cicero's best orations were on the defensive side, and therefore could not have been composed verbatim before they were spoken. And the most celebrated oration of Demosthenes, that which at the time had the most wonderful effect upon his auditory, and raised to the highest pitch the reputation of the speaker, the oration *περὶ στεφάνου*, was an answer to Æschines's accusation; and such an answer as it was absolutely impossible should have been, either in words or method, prepared before hearing his adversary: So close is the respect it has, not only to the sentiments, but to the very expressions that had been used against him. And the two parties were at the time such rivals and enemies as to exclude the most distant suspicion of concert. It deserves our notice, that instances of all the faults in pronunciation above enumerated, except the last, are to be found both in the senate and at the bar; particularly the two extremes of violence and monotony. And these are easily accounted for. The one is a common consequence of strong passions, where there is neither the taste nor the judgment that is necessary for managing them. The other generally prevails where there is a total want both of taste and of feeling. It is remarkable, that the only other fault mentioned, the canting pronunciation, is hardly ever found but in the pulpit. Nay, what would at first appear incredible, I have known ministers whose sing-song manner in preaching was a perfect soporific to the audience, pronounce their speeches in the general assembly with great propriety and energy. The only account I can make of this difference is, that in the two former cases, in the senate and at the bar, the speeches are almost always spoken. Committing the

whole, word for word, to memory, is, I believe, very rarely attempted. Now the general assembly partakes of the nature both of a senate and court of judicature. Sermons, on the contrary, are more generally repeated. They are very few who trust to a talent of speaking extempore in the pulpit. Now when once the attention, as was hinted already, loses hold of the thought, and is wholly occupied in tracing the series of the words, the speaker insensibly, to relieve himself from the difficulty of keeping up his voice at the same stretch, falls into a kind of tune, which, without any regard to the sense of what is said, returns as regularly, as if it were played on an instrument. One thing further may be urged in favor of reading, and it is of some consequence, that it always requires some preparation. A discourse must be written before it can be read. When a man who does not read, gets over, through custom, all apprehension about the opinion of his hearers, or respect for their judgment, there is some danger, that laziness may prompt him to speak without any preparation, and consequently to become careless what he says. But to return, the sum of what has been offered, is not that reading a discourse is universally preferable to repeating it. By no means. But only that if the latter way admits of higher excellence, the former is more attainable and less hazardous.

It is to be regretted that the training of young men, who are intended for public speakers, to read and speak properly and gracefully, is so much and so universally neglected in latter times. The ancients both of Greece and of Rome, sensible of the importance of this article in educating their youth for the forum and for the senate, were remarkably attentive to it; and it must be owned their success in this way was correspondent to their care. For however much we moderns appear to have surpassed them in some, and equalled them perhaps in all other arts, our inferiority in regard to eloquence will hardly bear a dispute. It is not possible, however, that so great a defect in modern education should be supplied by a few cursory directions, which is all that your leisure and the prosecution of the other and still more important branches of my plan will here give scope for. To attain a mastery in the art of speaking, would require much study improved by exercise and corrected by conversation. But though we cannot do all that we would, let us not for this think ourselves excused from doing what we can.

The first thing then I would advise the young preacher at his setting out, in regard to the management of his voice, is cautiously to avoid beginning on too high a clef. His natural tone of speaking in conversation is that which will always succeed best with him, in which, if properly managed, he will be best heard, be able to hold out longest, and have most command of his voice in pronouncing. Let it be observed, that in conversing (according as the company is large or small) we can speak louder or softer, without altering the tone. Our aim therefore ought to be, to articulate the words distinctly, and to give such a forcible emission to the breath in pronouncing, as makes the voice reach farther without raising it to a higher key. Every man's voice has naturally a certain compass, above which it cannot rise, and below which it cannot sink. The ordinary tone, on which we converse, is nearly about the middle of that compass. When we make that, therefore, as it were, the key-note of our discourse, we have the power with ease, of both elevating and depressing the voice, in uttering particular words, just as the sense requires, that they be uttered emphatically or otherwise. When we recommend the ordinary tone of the voice in conversation, as that on which we ought in public to attempt to speak, we would not be understood to recommend an insipid monotony; we only mean to signify, that this should serve as the foundation note, on which the general tenor of the discourse should run. On the contrary, it being one of the best preservatives against that egregious fault in speaking, by giving the voice the greatest latitude both in rising and falling with facility, is one reason that I so earnestly recommend it. Every body must be sensible, that when the voice is at an unnatural stretch, it can give no emphasis to any word whatever without squeaking; so that the speaker, for the ease of his own lungs is forced to take refuge, either in a tiresome monotony or a drowsy cant. Besides, it deserves to be remarked, that most men when earnest in conversation on an affecting subject, naturally, without any study, give their voice the proper inflections which the import of what is said requires. When, therefore, we speak in public, if we ourselves enter seriously into the subject, and are as it were interested in it, we shall, without any effort, being taught by nature and assisted by habit, give such an emphasis to the words which require it; and such cadence to the sentences, as in conversing on serious and moving subjects we never

fail to employ. Whereas, if we speak on a forced key, we cannot have the same assistance either from nature or habit.

A second direction I would give, is to be very careful in proceeding in your discourse, to preserve in the general tenor of it the same key on which you began. Many, who begin right, insensibly raise their voice as they advance, till at last they come to speak in a tone that is very painful to themselves, and by necessary consequence, grating to their hearers. It will require much care, attention, and even practice, to prevent this evil.

It will not a little contribute to this end, that you diligently observe the following direction, the third I am to give on this subject, which is, that you always begin by speaking very deliberately and rather slowly. Even a drawling pronunciation, in the introduction of a discourse, is more pardonable than a rapid one. Most subjects will require that you grow somewhat quicker as you advance. But of all things be careful to avoid that uniform rapidity of utterance, which is very unattractive, as having the evident marks of repeating a lesson by rote, which is so great an enemy to all emphasis and distinction in pronouncing, and which, besides, even to the most attentive hearer, throws out the things delivered faster than his mind is able to receive them. The fourth and last direction I shall give, is what was hinted already, frequent practising in reading, speaking, and repeating before one sensible companion at the least, or more where they may be had, who should be encouraged to offer with freedom and candor such remarks and censures as have occurred. So much for the general rules of rhetorical pronunciation in preaching. A great deal more might be profitably offered; but where such a multiplicity of subjects demands our attention and a share of our time, a great deal on each must be left to your own application and diligence.

LECTURE V.

DISCOURSES DISTRIBUTED INTO VARIOUS KINDS, AS ADDRESSED TO THE UNDERSTANDING, THE IMAGINATION, THE PASSIONS AND THE WILL.

I proceed in the third place, to inquire into the various kinds of discourses, which the Christian eloquence admits, and the rules in regard to composition, that ought to be followed in each.

It was observed in a former lecture that the word eloquence, in its greatest latitude, denotes that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end. Now all the legitimate ends of speaking, whatever be the subject, you will find, if you attend to it, are reducible to these four. Every speech hath, or ought to have, for its professed aim, either to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will.

The first of these may be subdivided into two others. When a speaker addresseth himself to the understanding, he proposes the instruction of his hearers, and that either by explaining some doctrine unknown or not distinctly comprehended by them, or by proving some position disbelieved or doubted by them. In other words, he proposeth either to dispel ignorance or to vanquish error. In the one, his aim is their information; in the other, their conviction. Accordingly the predominant quality of the former, is perspicuity; of the latter, argument. By that we are made to know; by this, to believe.

The name of address to the imagination may seem at first, to some hearers, to convey a notion of too much levity, to be a suitable characteristic of anything which ought to come from the pulpit. But this is a mere prejudice, arising from an unfavorable sense that is sometimes put upon the word imagination, as opposed to truth and reality. Whereas with us, it only means that faculty of the mind, whereby it is capable of conceiving and combining things together, which in that combination have neither been perceived by the senses, nor are remembered. Now in that acceptation of the word, let it be observed, that all fables, apologues, parables, and allegories, are addressed to the imagination. Poetry,

for the most part, both sacred and profane, is an address of this sort; in like manner all prophecy. Indeed in the Jewish idiom poetry and prophecy were synonymous terms. Hence it is, that the apostle Paul speaking of the Cretans, does not scruple to call one of their poets, though a Pagan, a prophet of their own. This only by the way, in order to remove any dislike or unfavorable prepossession which may be occasioned by the name.

In regard to preaching, the only subject with which we are at present concerned, the imagination is addressed, by exhibiting to it a lively and beautiful representation of a suitable object. As in this exhibition the task of the orator like that of the painter, consisteth in imitation, the merit of the work results entirely from these two sources, dignity as well in the subject or thing imitated, as in the manner of imitation, and resemblance in the performance or picture. The principal scope for this kind of address is in narration and description, and it attains the summit of perfection in what is called the sublime, or those great and noble images, which, when in suitable coloring presented to the mind, do, as it were, distend the imagination and delight the soul, as with something superlatively excellent. But it is evident, that to this creative faculty the fancy frequently lends her aid in promoting still nobler ends. From her exuberant stores, most of those tropes and figures are derived, which have such a marvellous efficacy in rousing the passions, and by some secret, sudden and inexplicable association, awaking all the tenderest emotions of the heart. In that case, the address of the orator is intended not ultimately, to astonish by the loftiness of the images, or to charm by the beauteous resemblance which the painting bears to nature, nay, it will not permit the hearers even a moment's leisure for making the comparison, but as by some magical spell, hurries them, before they are aware, into love, pity, grief, terror, aversion or desire. It therefore assumes the denomination of pathetic, which is the characteristic of the third species of discourses, that are addressed to the passions.

The fourth and last kind, the most complex of all, which is calculated to influence the will, and persuade to action, as it is in reality an artful mixture of that which proposeth to convince the judgment, and that which interests the passions, its distinguishing excellency results from these two, the argumentative and the pathetic incorporated together. These

acting with united force, constitute that vehemence, that warm eviction, that earnest and affecting contention, which is admirably fitted for persuasion, and hath always been regarded as the supreme qualification in an orator. Of the four sorts of discourses now enumerated, it may be observed in general, that each preceding species, in the order above exhibited, is preparatory to the subsequent, that each subsequent species is founded on the preceding, and that thus they ascend in a regular progression. Knowledge, the object of the understanding, furnisheth materials for the fancy; the fancy culls, compounds, and by her mimic art disposes these materials so as to affect the passions; the passions are the natural spurs to volition or action, and so need only to be rightly directed. So much in general for the different kinds of discourses on whatever subject, from the bare consideration of the object addressed, understanding, imagination, passion, will, and those fundamental principles of eloquence in the largest acceptation which result from these. But as the kind addressed to the understanding has been subdivided into two, that which barely explains, and that which proves, I shall henceforth consider them as five in number.

I come now to apply these universal principles to the particular subject, with which we are immediately concerned. It hath been occasionally observed, oftener than once, that the reformation of mankind is the great and ultimate end of the whole ministerial function, and especially of this particular branch, preaching or discoursing from the pulpit. But it is not necessary, that the ultimate end of the whole should be the immediate scope of every part. It is enough, that the immediate scope of the part be such, that the attainment of it is manifestly a step towards the ultimate end of the whole. In other words, the former ought always to serve as a means for the effecting of the latter. Let us proceed in considering the propriety of particular and immediate ends by this rule.

First then, in order to effect the reformation of men, that is, in order to bring them to a right disposition and practice, there are some things which of necessity they must be made to know. No one will question, that the knowledge of the nature and extent of the duties which they are required to practise, and of the truths and doctrines which serve as motives to practice, is absolutely necessary. The explication

of these in the pulpit forms a species of discourses which falls under the first class above mentioned. It is addressed to the understanding, its aim is information, the only obstacle it hath to remove is ignorance. Sermons of this sort we shall henceforth distinguish by the term *explanatory*. Now if knowledge is the first step in religion, faith is certainly the second, for the knowledge of any tenet influenceth our conduct only so far as it is believed. My knowledge of the peculiar doctrines maintained by Mahometans nowise affects my practice. Why? Because I do not believe them. When therefore revelation in general, or any of its fundamental doctrines in particular, are known to be called in question, by a considerable part of the congregation, it is doubtless incumbent on the preacher earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and consequently it must be a proper subject for the pulpit to defend the cause of religion by refuting the cavils of gainsayers, and publicly evincing the truth. Such defence and confutation form a species of discourses which falls under the second class above mentioned. It is addressed to the understanding, its aim is conviction; the adversaries it encounters are skepticism and error. Discourses of this sort we shall distinguish by the name *controversial*. Both the above sorts, the explanatory and the controversial, as they coincide in the object addressed, the understanding of the hearers, go also under the common name of instructive.

Further, as one way, and indeed a very powerful way, of recommending religion is by example, it must be conducive to the general end of preaching above mentioned, to make it sometimes the business of a sermon, to exhibit properly any known good character, by giving a lively narrative of the person's life, or of any signal period of his life, or of any particular virtue, as illustrated through the different periods of his life. For performances of this kind the history of our Lord Jesus Christ affords the richest fund of matter. In like manner the lives of the saints recorded in Scripture, the prophets, apostles and martyrs, such at least with which from the accounts given in holy writ we have occasion to be acquainted, make very proper subjects. Add to these, what are called funeral sermons, or merited encomiums on the life and actions of deceased persons, eminent for virtue and piety, whose character is well known to the people addressed. It may not want its use, on the contrary, to delineate some-

times in proper colors the conduct of the vicious. To do justice to the respectable qualities and worthy actions of a good man is to present an audience with an amiable and animated pattern of Christian excellence, which by operating on their admiration and their love, raiseth in their mind a pious emulation. That we are, without attending to it, induced to imitate what we admire and love, will not admit a question. Exhibitions of this kind from the pulpit form a species of discourses which falls under the third class above mentioned. They are addressed to the imagination, and their scope is to promote virtue by insinuation; the view of excellence engages love, love awakes emulation, and that as naturally produces imitation. In order to distinguish such discourses, we shall henceforth denominate them *commendatory*.

Again, when an audience is about to be employed in any solemn office of religion, which, that it may prove edifying to those engaged in it, requires in them a devout, a recollected and a benevolent disposition of soul, it will doubtless tend to promote the general end, reformation, to make it the immediate scope of the sermon, by working on the affections of the audience, to mould them into a suitable frame. Sermons of this sort fall under the fourth class above mentioned; they are addressed to the passions, and their scope is to beget virtuous and devout habits by conformation. This species of discourse we call *pathetic*. It deserves, however, to be remarked, that the pathos excited by the preacher, ought ever to be accompanied with, and chastened by, piety, submission and charity. At the same time, that it conveys both light and heat to the soul, it is pure and inoffensive; like that wherein God appeared to Moses in the bush which burned, but was not consumed. It is this kind of *pathos* in its lowest degree, which the French devotional writers have distinguished by the name of *onction*, but for which we have not a proper term in English. Mr. Gibbon, a late celebrated historian, says in one place, after Jortin, that what the French call *onction*, the English call *cant*. This on some occasions may be true; but it is not the constant or even the general meaning of the word. What the English call *cant* in preaching, is no other than a frequent recurrence to certain common words and phrases, with which the people are delighted merely through habit, but which convey no sound instruction whatever. That termed *onction* by the French,

is such a manner in the speaker, as convinces the hearers that he is much in earnest, that he speaks from real affections to them, and thereby strongly engages their attention. That cant with ignorant hearers may produce an effect somewhat similar, is not to be denied. But the result upon the whole cannot be the same. *Onction* is an excellent vehicle for instruction; but where no instruction is conveyed, the hearer can be rendered neither wiser nor better by mere cant; he may be hereby made a greater bigot and a greater fool. The two last kinds of discourses, it must be owned, are near a-kin to each other, and very apt to be confounded. The enemies they combat are indifference and listlessness. If we thought it necessary to observe a scrupulous exactness in distinguishing, we should rather say (for the words are not synonymous) that the enemy of the former is indifference, and of the latter, listlessness. And let me add, these often prove more dangerous adversaries to religion, than others of more hostile appearance and of more formidable names.

Finally, it will not be questioned, that it will frequently be proper to make it the direct design of a discourse to persuade to a good, or to dissuade from a bad life in general, or to engage to the performance of any particular duty, or to an abstinence from any particular sin, and that either from all the arguments, or from any one class of arguments afforded by the light of nature, or by revelation, and adapted to the purpose. Discourses of this sort fall under the fifth and last class above mentioned. They are addressed to the will; their aim is persuasion. The enemies they combat, are irreligion and vice. Such sermons we discriminate by the term *persuasive*.

Let us now, for further illustration of the subject, consider whether the different sorts of discourses from the pulpit above enumerated bear any analogy to the different sorts of orations treated of by ancient rhetoricians. These both Greek and Romans, after Aristotle, have distributed into three kinds, the judiciary, the demonstrative and the deliberative. The *judiciary*, is the name by which the Stagyrite has thought fit to distinguish the pleadings of advocates or counsellors, whether in accusation of an adversary, or in defence of a client. As in all such pleadings, and indeed in all litigation whatever, there is something affirmed by one of the litigants, which is denied by the other, so the aim of each is to convince the bench, that his representation is agreeable to truth,

and to refute the arguments of his antagonist. The point in dispute is sometimes a question of fact. Did the defendent do, or not do, the action, with which he is charged by the plaintiff? Sometimes it is a question of right. The fact may be undeniable; and the only point in debate, Was it right; wrong or indifferent? lawful or criminal? Sometimes indeed both points may be contended by the parties. But it doth not belong to us, to enter into these minutiae, or consider the different sources of topics, whence the proof must be derived. Only from what hath been said, it is manifest that this species, from its very nature, is perfectly analogous to the second class of sermons, the controversial. It is directed to the understanding; its aim is conviction; the adversaries it professeth to combat, are doubtfulness and mistake. The *demonstrative*, a name given to those panegyrics or funeral orations, which were sometimes by public authority pronounced in honor of departed patriots and heroes, must from the design of insinuating the love of virtue by exhibiting such examples to their imitation, so exactly and so evidently coincide in form and composition, (however different in regard to matter or subject,) to the third class of sermons above mentioned, the commendatory, that I should think it unnecessary to attempt any further illustration of it. Only it may not be amiss to observe here by the way, that to this political expedient among the ancient Greeks and Romans, of paying such public honors to their great men departed, perhaps more than to any other, that love of their country, that contempt of life, and that thirst of military glory, for which they were so remarkable, is to be ascribed. The term *deliberative* is applied to speeches in the senate or in the assembly of the people, whose express aim is to persuade the audience to come to a certain resolution, in regard to their conduct as a commonwealth or state, such as, to declare war, or to make peace, to enter into an alliance, or the contrary. Discourses of this sort must evidently be in many respects very similar to the fifth and last class of sermons above mentioned. They are addressed to the will, their aim is persuasion. The enemies they combat are temerity, imprudence, and other such vices, considered particularly as political evils, as prejudicial to the interest or honor of the state. Nay, there will be often found a pretty considerable coincidence in the topics, from which the arguments, in both these kinds of persuasives, are commonly drawn. The use-

ful, the honorable, the equitable, are considerations entirely well adapted to each. To the first and fourth kinds of sermons mentioned, there is not found anything in the institutes of rhetoricians which can be denominated analogous. The first, the explanatory, is indeed, of all kinds the simplest, and may in respect of form be considered as bearing a resemblance to the lessons delivered in the schools of the philosophers, in regard to which, no person, as far as I know, has thought it necessary to lay down rules. The fourth kind, the pathetic, hath in point of aim more similarity to the eloquence of the theatre, tragedy in particular, than to that either of the bar or of the senate. But the difference in form arising from the nature of the work, between all dramatic compositions, and the discourses prepared for the pulpit, is so extremely great, that I have not judged it necessary hitherto so much as to name this species of oratory.

And as probably I shall not have occasion in these prelections to mention it hereafter, I shall now take the liberty to give you briefly, in passing, my sentiments concerning theatrical performances, and the use which may be made of them by the Christian orator. As to the drama in general, it is manifestly no more than a particular form, in which a tale or fable is exhibited; and if the tale itself be moral and instructive, it would require no small degree of fanaticism to make one think, that its being digested into so many dialogues, and dressed up in the dramatic form, can render it immoral and pernicious. So much for the question of right, as I may call it. If from this we proceed to a question of fact, to which the other very naturally gives occasion, and inquire, whether the greater number of modern plays, be such tales as we can really denominate moral and instructive, or on the contrary, such as have a tendency to vitiate the principles and debauch the practice of the spectators; to this point, I acknowledge, it is more difficult to give a satisfactory answer. I own, indeed, that in my judgment the far greater part of our comedies, I say not all, merit the latter character, rather than the former. For not to mention the gross indecencies with which many of them abound, (and to the reproach of our national taste, as well as morals, English comedy perhaps more than any other,) what is generally the hero of the piece, but a professed rake or libertine, who is a man of more spirit, forsooth, than to be checked in his pursuits by the restraints of religion, the dictates of conscience,

the laws of society, or, (which were accounted sacred even among pagans and barbarians,) by the rights of hospitality and of private friendship? Such a one, the poet, in order to recommend him to the special favor of the audience, adorns with all the wit and humor and other talents, of which he himself is master, and always crowns with success in the end. Hence it is, that the stage with us may, without any hyperbole, be defined, the school of gallantry and intrigue; in other words, the school of dissoluteness. Here the youth of both sexes may learn to get rid of that troublesome companion Modesty, intended by Providence as a guard to virtue, and a check against licentiousness. Here vice may soon provide herself in a proper stock of effrontery for effectuating her designs, and triumphing over innocence. But besides the evil that too commonly results from the nature and conduct of the fable, there is another, in the tendency to dissipation and idleness, the great enemies of sobriety, industry and reflection, which theatrical amusements ordinarily give to the younger part of the spectators. On the other hand, are there no advantages which may serve as a counterbalance to these evils? There are some advantages; it would not be candid to dissemble them, but they can be no counterbalance. What is just pronunciation, easy motion, and graceful action, compared with virtue? Those accomplishments are merely superficial, an external polish; this is internal and essential. But at the same time that we acknowledge that the manner and pronunciation of the orator may be improved by that of the actor, we must also admit, on the other side, that by the same means it may be injured. And I have known it, in fact, injured in consequence of too servile an imitation of the stage. I allow, that what hath been advanced regards only the modern English comedy, for, though some of our tragedies are also exceptionable in point of morals, yet they are comparatively but a few, and those by no means faulty in the same way, and much less to the same degree. And as I would with equal freedom approve, and even recommend what I think laudable and useful, as I would censure what I think blamable and hurtful, I cannot deny, but that both in regard to the sentiments, and in the wonderful talent of operating on the passions, the tragic poet will often give important lessons to the preacher. I would be far then from dissuading you from consulting occasionally whatever may contribute to your improvement. Our great apostle, as we learn

from his history and epistles, did not scruple to read the dramatic pieces of heathen poets; nay, he has even thought fit sometimes to quote their sentiments with approbation, and to give their very words the sanction of sacred writ. Where debates arise on any subject, it is almost invariably the case, that both sides run to extremes, alike deserting truth and moderation. It is the part of a wise man, like the bee, to extract from everything what is good and salutary, and to guard whatever is of a contrary quality. But I am aware, that the most of what I have said on this subject may be looked on as a digression. I acknowledge, it in a great measure is so; but as the mention of it was perfectly apposite, and as few topics have occasioned warmer disputes among Christians, I did not think it suited that decorum of character, which I would wish always to preserve, to appear artfully, when a fair opportunity offers, to avoid telling freely my opinion.

LECTURE VI.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF LECTURES.

IN my last lecture on the subject of pulpit eloquence I told you, that every discourse was addressed either to the understanding of the hearers, to their imagination, to their passions or to their will. As those addressed to the understanding may be intended either for explaining something unknown to them, or for proving something disbelieved or doubted by them, sermons in the largest acceptation of the word may be distributed into five classes, the explanatory, the argumentative or controversial, the demonstrative or commendatory, the pathetic and the persuasive. It will not be amiss here, in order to prevent mistakes, to take notice of the particular import which I mean to give to some terms, as often as I employ them on this subject. The first I shall mention is the term *demonstrative*, which in the application usual with rhetoricians, hath no relation to the sense of the word as used by mathematicians. Here it hath no concern with proof or argument of any kind, but relates solely to the strength and distinctness with which an object is exhibited, so as to render the conceptions of the imagination almost equal in vivac-

ity and vigor with the perceptions of sense. This is entirely agreeable to the use, both of the Latin word *demonstrativus*, and of the Greek ἀποδεικτικὸς among critics, orators and poets. Another difference I beg you will remark, is between *conviction* and *persuasion*, which, in common language, are frequently confounded. To speculative truth, the term, *conviction*, only with its conjugates, ought to be applied. Thus we say properly, I am convinced of the being of a God. In popular language, we should sometimes in this case say *persuaded*, but this application of the term is evidently inaccurate. Thus also, he hath proved the truth of revelation to my full conviction, or, I attempted to convince him of his error. And even in regard to moral truth, when no more is denoted but the assent of the understanding, the proper term is to convince. I am convinced it is my duty, yet I cannot prevail on myself to do it. This is well illustrated by that of the poet,

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

I am convinced, but not persuaded; my understanding is subdued, but not my will; the first term always and solely relates to opinion, the second to practice. The operation of conviction is merely on the understanding; that of persuasion is on the will and resolution. Indeed the Latin word *persuadeo* is susceptible of precisely the same ambiguity with the English. It is this double meaning which gave occasion to that play upon the word used by Augustine, when he said, "Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris." The import of which in plain English manifestly is, Though your arguments may convince my reason, they shall not determine my resolution; or, you may convince, but shall not persuade me. The first of the distinctions now mentioned will serve to discriminate the argumentative or controversial, from the demonstrative or commendatory, the other distinguishes the controversial from the persuasive.

I would further observe, that though any one discourse admits only one of the ends above enumerated as the principal, nevertheless in the progress of a discourse, many things may be advanced, which are more immediately and apparently directed to some of the other ends of speaking. But then it ought always to appear, that such ends are introduced as means, and rendered conducive to that which is the primary

intention. Accordingly the propriety of these secondary ends will always be inferred from their subserviency to the principal design. For example, a sermon of the first or second kind, the explanatory or the controversial, addressed to the understanding and calculated to illustrate or evince some point of doctrine, may borrow aid from the imagination, and admit metaphor and comparison. But not the bolder and more striking figures, as that called phantasia, prosopopeia, and the like, which are not so much intended to throw light on a subject as to excite admiration; much less will it admit an address to the passions, which never fails to disturb the operation of the intellectual faculty. Either of these, it is obvious, far from being subservient to the main design, simple explanation or proof, would distract the attention from it. Such arts, however, I cannot call them legitimate, have sometimes been successfully used; but in such cases, if impartially examined, the scope of the speaker will be found to have been more to cloud than to enlighten the understandings of his hearers, and to deceive rather than to edify. They are of those unlucky arts, which are naturally fitted more for serving a bad cause, than a good one, and by consequence, when used in a good cause, rather hurt it with the judicious, by rendering it suspected.

Now before I proceed to consider the rules which ought to be observed in these different sorts of composition resulting from their respective natures, I shall make a few remarks on a kind of discourses very common in this country, which come not under the general name of sermons, and follow rules peculiar to themselves. As the Bible is with us Protestants acknowledged to be the repository, and indeed the only original, full and untainted repository of Christian knowledge; and as the study of it is maintained to be a duty incumbent on every disciple of Christ, that kind of discourses with us commonly called *lectures*, has been devised as means of facilitating to the people the profitable reading of holy writ. We acknowledge, indeed, that in all things essential to salvation, Scripture is sufficiently perspicuous even to the vulgar; and that, in such important matters, if any man err, it will be found more the fault of the heart than of the head. But this acknowledgment is nowise inconsistent with the avowal, that there are in this repository many things highly useful and instructive, which do not immediately appear upon the surface, which require more time and application to

enable us to discover, and in which in particular it is the province of the pastor to lend his assistance to the illiterate and the weak. That people may be put in a capacity of reading with judgment and without difficulty, those parts of Scripture which are most closely connected with the Christian faith and practice, *lecturing*, or as it is called in some places *expounding*, hath been first prescribed by our church rulers. The end or design of a lecture, therefore, is to explain the train of reasoning contained, or the series of events related, in a certain portion of the sacred text, and to make suitable observations from it, in regard either to the doctrines, or to the duties of our religion. As all discourses of this kind consist of two principal parts, the explication, and the remarks or inferences, so they may be distributed into two classes, according as the one or the other constitutes the principal object of the expounder. In discourses of the first class, it is the chief design of the speaker to explain the import of a portion of Scripture, which may not be perfectly clear to Christians of all denominations. In the second, it is his great scope to deduce from a passage, whose general or literal meaning is sufficiently perspicuous, useful reflections concerning providence, the economy of grace, or the conduct of human life. Were we nicely to distinguish the two kinds, I should say that the ultimate end of the former is to teach the people to read the Scriptures with understanding, and of the latter to accustom them to read them with reflection. The former therefore may more properly (according to the current import of the words) be termed an *exposition*, and the latter a *lecture*. And in this manner we shall afterwards distinguish them. Both are properly of the explanatory kind, though from the complex nature of the subject, the form of composition will be very different from that of the first class of sermons mentioned above. Indeed several English sermons, for instance those on the compassionate Samaritan, the prodigal son, or any other of our Lord's parables, may strictly be denominated lectures in the sense to which we just now appropriated the term. And of this sort also are several of the homilies of the ancient fathers. Nay there are some discourses, that go under the general appellation of sermons, particularly of Bishop Hoadley and Doctor Clarke, that properly belong to that class we distinguished by the name exposition, being no other than a sort of familiar commentary on some of the most difficult passages in the

epistolary writings of the apostle Paul. They differ from us in Scotland, only in the manner in which the explication is introduced from the pulpit. We take the whole portion of Scripture for a text; they, commonly a single verse in the end of it, by means of which all the other verses, as connected, are more awkwardly ushered into the discourse; for as all these share equally in the explication, so in most cases the remarks bear no more relation to the text, than to any other sentence in the context. The relation is commonly to the whole taken together, and not to a part considered separately. That it may not be necessary to return afterwards to the consideration of these two classes of discourses, which I denominate expositions and lectures, I shall now make a few observations in regard to their composition, and so dismiss this article.

And first, as to the subject to be chosen, care should be taken, that as much as possible it may be *one*, that is, one distinct passage of history, (if taken from any of the historical books of Scripture,) one parable, one similitude, one chain of reasoning, or the illustration of one point of doctrine or of duty. When a minister purposes in a course of teaching to give the exposition of a whole book of Scripture, it is of much greater moment, and unspeakably more conducive to the edification of the hearers, that in the distribution of the parts, more regard be had to the natural connection, that may subsist between the sentiments, than to the artificial division of the words into chapters and verses. For it is manifest, that in making this distribution of the sacred books, which by the way is an invention merely human and not very ancient, there hath often been very little attention given to the sense. You will easily conceive, that it must be still a greater fault in expounding, to confine one's self regularly, as some do, to the same or nearly the same number of verses. Nothing can tend more effectually to injure the sense, and to darken (instead of enlightening) the subject. Nothing would less fall under the description, which the apostle gives of the manner of the workman that hath no reason to be ashamed, "his rightly dividing the word of truth." To merit this praise, one must, like a skilful anatomist, chiefly attend, in the division, to the distinctive characters and limits, which nature hath assigned to the several parts, and not, like a carver for the table, merely to the size and form.

The second remark I shall make, is that if the portion of

Scripture be, as to the sense, not so independent of the words immediately preceding, but that some attention to these will throw light upon the sacred lesson, the preacher may very properly introduce himself to his subject by pointing out in a few words the connection. There are cases in which this is necessary; there are some in which we should say it were improper, and there are no doubt some in which it is discretionary. Of the first kind are many passages in Paul's epistles; for though perhaps you can say of the passage with strict propriety, it is one, because it is only one topic that is treated in it, or at least the argument is considered in one particular point of view, yet it makes, as it were, a member of a train of reasoning which runs through several chapters; and of this series it may be requisite to take a cursory review, in order to obtain a more distinct apprehension of the import of the passage read. It is improper, when there is no connection at all with the words preceding, as in the relation given us of several of the miracles performed by our Lord, which have no other connection in the history than that the one in fact preceded the other; or it may be only, that the one is first related, and the other immediately after. The same may be said of several of the parables. Some of these indeed have a natural connection with a preceding passage, having been pronounced by our Lord in the illustration of some point which he had been just inculcating. In such cases, when the design of the parable is sufficiently clear of itself, to trace the connection is not absolutely necessary. As good use, however, may be made of it, it cannot be called improper. This therefore is an example of those cases wherein it is discretionary. There are several other instances which the intelligent hearer will easily distinguish for himself. I shall mention only one. Were it the design of a preacher to expound to a congregation the Lord's prayer, as recorded in the sixth chapter of Matthew, he may justly consider it as a matter of mere choice, whether he shall take any notice of the words preceding or of the subsequent, because though his text be connected with both, it is so independently intelligible, and so completely one in itself, that he is under no necessity to recur to these for the illustration of his subject.

My third observation shall be, that his exposition of the portion of Scripture read, may either be, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, where there

is any obscurity or difficulty in the verse, sentence or paragraph, that seems to require it; or it may be, by a kind of paraphrase of the whole passage. I have observed already that there are two kinds of discourses, the exposition and the lecture, into which this class may be distributed; the former of these methods, by verses or sentences, is best suited to the first; the latter by paraphrase, to the second. In the first, there are supposed some difficulties to be removed and some darkness to be dispelled; in order to this, more minuteness and closer attention to the several parts is necessary. In the second, as the scope of the whole passage is supposed to be abundantly perspicuous, a few pertinent introductory remarks may sometimes happily enough supersede the necessity even of a paraphrase.

The fourth observation shall be in relation to the difficulties, which, in the first species of lectures mentioned, the expounder must endeavor to remove. And they are these—an apparent inconsistency between the import of any verse or expression and the principles of right reason, or a seeming contradiction to other texts of Scripture, or to any known historical fact; in like manner if the words taken literally seem to support any erroneous opinion, or to authorize any improper practice, or if the preacher is aware that it consists with the knowledge of a considerable part of his audience, that such uses are made of the words by some sect or party still subsisting amongst us. I mention these things with the greater caution, because if the difficulties are not obvious of themselves, or are such as can be reasonably thought to have come to the knowledge of very few, if any, in the auditory, it is much better they remain unnoticed by the speaker, lest he should be imagined to have more the talent of suggesting scruples and raising difficulties than of removing them. And this will especially hold, in regard to what hath at any time been pleaded in favor of the errors of ancient or distant sects, of which the congregation knows little or nothing, and by whose arts they can be in no hazard of being seduced. If the subjects were, for example, the parable of the supper, in the 14th chapter of Luke, it would be very pertinent to show that the expression, “Compel them to come in,” which occurs in that passage, doth not authorize persecution or force in matters of religion; because it is notorious, that this absurd use hath been and still is made of the words. But if the portion of Scripture to be explained were the first chap-

ter of the gospel by John, to what Christian congregation would it answer any valuable purpose, to make them acquainted with the ravings of the Gnostics and their wild extravagances about the *Eons*?

I shall add, that particular care ought to be taken in expounding the Scriptures to the people, not to appear over-learned and over-critical in one's explications. There is no occasion to obtrude on an audience, as some do, all the jarring interpretations given by different commentators, of which it is much better that the people should remain ignorant, than that they should be apprized. For this knowledge can serve no other purpose, than to distract their thoughts and perplex their judgment. Before you begin to build, it is necessary to remove such impediments, as lie directly in your way; but you could not account him other than a very foolish builder, who should first collect a deal of rubbish, which was not in his way, and consequently could not have obstructed his work, that he might have the pleasure and merit of removing it. And do the fantastic, absurd and contradictory glosses of commentators deserve a better name than rubbish? No, surely. But if such absurd glosses are unknown to your congregation, they are rubbish which lies not in your way. No interpretation, therefore, or gloss should ever be mentioned in order to be refuted, unless it be such as the words themselves, on a superficial view, might seem to countenance, or such as is generally known to the people to be put upon them by some interpreters, or sects of Christians. Where a false gloss cannot be reasonably supposed to be either known or thought of by the audience, it is in the preacher worse, than being idly ostentatious of his learning, to introduce such erroneous gloss or comment. And as to an excess of criticism in this exercise, it ought also doubtless carefully to be avoided. We must always remember the difference between a church and a college. In most Christian congregations there are very few, if any, linguists. I do not say that in our lectures we ought never to mention the original, or recur to it. Justice to the passage we explain may sometimes require it. Nor is it necessary, that our translators should be deemed infallible even by the multitude. It is enough that we consider as the pure dictates of the Spirit those intimations with which the prophets and apostles were inspired. But then, on the other hand, it is neither modest nor prudent in the preacher, especially if a young man, to be at every turn

censuring the translators, and pretending to mend their version. It is not modest, as they, over whom the corrector assumes a superiority, are allowed on all hands to have been men of eminent talents and erudition. And it is not prudent, as this practice never fails to produce in the minds of the people a want of confidence in their Bible, which tends greatly to lessen its authority. Therefore, though I am by no means for ascribing infallibility to any human expositors, propriety requires, that we should neither too often, nor too abruptly tax with blundering, before such a promiscuous audience as our congregations commonly are, men of so respectable memory. Manly freedom of inquiry, becoming a Protestant, becoming a Briton, tempered with that decent reserve which suits the humble Christian, will guard the judicious against both extremes, an overweaning conceit of his own abilities, and an implicit faith in those of others. And indeed in regard to everything, which may be introduced either in the way of criticism or comment, it ought ever to be remembered, that it is not enough, that such an observation is just, that such an interpretation hath actually been given, or that such an opinion hath been maintained; the previous inquiry, which the preacher ought to make by himself is, whether it be of any consequence to the people to be informed of the observation, comment or opinion. This inquiry impartially made will prove a check against the immoderate indulgence of what is perhaps the natural bent of his own genius, whether it be to critical or controversial disquisition, and which it is not always easy for youth, commonly impetuous and opinionative, duly to restrain. If on other occasions, more especially on this, the apostolical admonition ought to be sacredly observed, that "nothing proceed out of the speaker's mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." But for our direction in this kind of discernment, no precepts, it must be acknowledged, will suffice. A fund of good sense is absolutely necessary, enlightened by a knowledge of mankind. In this, as in every other kind of composition, the maxim of the poet invariably holds,

Scribendi recte sapere est principium et fons.

I shall just add the fifth and last observation in relation to the remarks or inferences. These, as was hinted already, in the exposition, whose chief aim is to throw light on the sa-

cred text and remove the difficulties, are to be considered as only a subordinate part of the discourse ; in the lecture, they are to be considered as the principal. In the former therefore they do not require to be so fully treated, as in the latter. It is enough, that the remarks are just in themselves, pertinent in regard to the subject of discourse, and expressed with sufficient perspicuity and energy. But in the lecture, properly so called, where the observations are the primary object of the speaker, and that for which the passage of Scripture was chosen as a text, it is not enough that they be just, pertinent and perspicuous ; they require besides, to be more copiously treated, and such of them as are of a practical nature to be more warmly enforced. Nay, they admit all that variety in respect of illustration, proof and recommendation, which are to be found in discourses explanatory, controversial or persuasive. Only for the sake of unity, it may be proper to add, that all the remarks compared among themselves should be congenial, and tend to illustrate one another, that is, all doctrinal or all practical ; and whether the one or the other, that they be points nearly and mutually related, that thus the discourse may, if I may so express myself, be of one color and tenor throughout. Quick transitions from the warmth of the pathos to coldness of criticism, from the moral and persuasive to the abstract and argumentative, or inversely, from the critical to the pathetic and from the abstract to the persuasive, are neither natural nor easy. Now the transitions here, if there be any, must be quick, even immediate, since they result from the different natures of the remarks that immediately succeed one another. In the first kind, which we distinguished by the name exposition, there is no occasion for so much delicacy in regard to the inferences deduced ; because in it, they being only of a secondary nature in respect to the scope of the performance, particular discussions would neither be proper nor expected. All that is requisite is, that they be true, fairly deduced and properly expressed. Now thus much, whatever be the nature of the truths remarked, can make no alteration in the character of the performance. In this species, the observations are properly no more than inferences, whose evidence, illustration or enforcement, should always be found in the exposition that preceded them ; whereas in the lecture properly so called, though the connection of the remarks with the portion of Scripture previously and briefly explained, ought to be very

clear, they are introduced with express view of being supported, illustrated or enforced in the body of the discourse, to which the explication of the text serves only as an introduction. So much shall serve for what we call expositions or lectures; I shall next proceed to the different sorts of sermons above defined.

LECTURE VII.

OF EXPLANATORY SERMONS—THE CHOICE OF A SUBJECT AND OF TEXTS.

IN my last prelection on the subject of pulpit eloquence, after enumerating the different sorts of discourses, from the consideration of the faculty addressed, I entered particularly into the examination of those, which with us are commonly called lectures, and which we divided into two sorts, one, whose principal end was to remove difficulties in a passage not perfectly clear; the other whose aim was to form and enforce useful observations from a passage naturally fitted to give scope for reflection. The first, we called exposition; the second, lecture. I now return to the consideration of those discourses, which come under the general denomination of sermons, and which were distributed into five orders, the explanatory, the controversial, the commendatory, the pathetic and the persuasive. The first and the simplest is the explanatory, which may be defined a sermon addressed to the understanding of the hearers, and of which the direct view is to explain some doctrine of our religion, or the nature and extent of some duty. In this species of discourses, the preacher's antagonist (if I may so express myself) is ignorance, which it is his business to dispel.

The first thing, that falls under consideration, is the choice of a subject. And in this, care ought to be taken, that whether it be more or less extensive, it may be strictly and properly *one*, that it may neither be imperfect, and consequently afford the audience but an indistinct apprehension of the matter discussed, whether it be the explication of a tenet, or of a precept of Christianity; nor redundant, by being conjoined with other points or topics, which however useful in

themselves, are neither immediately connected with, nor necessary to the elucidation of what is properly the subject. The rule of the poet,

Sit quod vis simplex dantaxat et unum,

will be found a good rule, not only in epic and dramatic poetry, but in every kind of composition without exception. The reason is, it is founded in nature, and what is adapted to the faculties of a being such as man. When things are brought together into a discourse, between which there is no immediate connection, that which happens to be last said, goes far to obliterate out of the minds of the hearers all that went before. There being no natural and manifest relation between the things themselves, and no dependence that the one has on the other, the last mentioned thought or topic doth as it were exclude its predecessor, by entirely occupying its place. Whereas in clearing up the several parts of one entire subject, whatever it be, the explication of every other branch or member, as you advance, necessarily tends, by the laws of association in our ideas, to recall to our reflections the account given of those that preceded, with which its several parts are naturally and intimately connected. That we may form some idea of the influence of connection, simplicity and unity upon the memory, do but consider the effect in point of remembrance, for it is of this only I am now speaking, that would be produced upon an audience by one of our Lord's parables, for example, or by a distinct passage of his history, or of that of the apostles, or by any one speech of Peter or Paul recorded in the Acts, and compare with it the effect that will be produced by reading an equal portion of the book of Proverbs, or of the 119th Psalm, in neither of which was there any connection of sentiments proposed: the greater part of the first being intended merely as a collection of wise observations, but independent one of another, on the conduct of life; and the other as a collection of pious ejaculations, arranged, not by affinity in the sentiments, but by the letters in the Hebrew alphabet with which the several sentences begin. But what is necessary to constitute this unity of subject and design, we shall have occasion more particularly to consider afterwards.

A subject being chosen, the next thing to be sought is the text. This seems calculated to answer a double purpose. In the first place, it serves as a motto to the discourse, notifying

to the congregation the aim and subject of the preacher; secondly, being taken from sacred writ, it adds a certain dignity and importance to the subject, showing that it hath a foundation in Scripture, the only standard of our religion. It may not be amiss here to examine a little, some objections, that have been thrown out by a celebrated writer of the present century, in his *Age of Louis the 14th*, against this method so universally practised by preachers of introducing their subject to the hearers by a text. "Perhaps," says he, "it were to be wished that in banishing from the pulpit the bad taste which dishonored it, this custom of preaching on a text had also been banished. In fact, to speak long on a quotation of a line or two, to labor in regulating one's whole discourse by that line, such a toil appears an amusement scarcely becoming the dignity of the ministry. The text proves a sort of device, or rather riddle, which the discourse unravels. The Greeks and the Romans never knew this usage. It was in the decline of letters that it began, and time hath consecrated it." The author must here doubtless be understood to mean by Greeks and Romans, those nations whilst in a state of paganism, for that this practice was current among the Greek and the Latin fathers of the church appears manifestly from such of their works as are yet extant. And indeed to acquaint us gravely, and urge it as an argument, that the pagan priests never preached upon a text, must appear extraordinary to one who attends to this small circumstance, that they never preached at all, that there was nothing in all their various modes of superstition, which was analogous to what is called preaching among Christians. And even if there had been anything among them that bore an analogy to preaching, their example could not have had the least authority with us in this particular, as it is notorious they had no acknowledged infallible or established standard of doctrine corresponding to our Bible, whence their texts could have been drawn. But if our author alludes in this, not to the customs of the heathen priests, but to those of the demagogues and pleaders, the cases are so exceedingly dissimilar, that hardly can any comparison with propriety be made between them, or any inference drawn, from the usage of the one to what is proper in the other. If indeed we make the proper allowances for the disparity in the cases, the example of the ancient orators will be found rather to favor than to discountenance the practice; because though they had nothing

which could in strict propriety be called a text, they had in effect a subject propounded, to which they were bound in speaking to confine themselves. Thus in judiciary or forensic harangues, the summons or indictment was to all intents a text, and in the deliberative orations pronounced in the senate house or in the assembly of the people, the overture or motion which gave rise to the debate answered precisely the same purpose. At least one of the designs above-mentioned, which the text with us is calculated to answer, namely, a notification to the hearers, and a remembrancer as to the subject of discourse, was fully accomplished, and as to the other end, the difference in the nature of the thing superseded the use of it. The only species of discourses with them, in which there was nothing that bore the least analogy to this so universal usage among Christian teachers, was the demonstrative, or their eulogiums on the dead. And here doubtless the notoriety of the occasion and purpose of their meeting, which was commonly at funeral solemnities, rendered any verbal intimation of the subject less necessary, than in the two others already taken notice of. It may indeed be urged in answer to what hath been said, that the preacher himself may intimate his subject in as explicit terms as he pleases before he begin. But to this I would reply, that a bare intimation is not enough in a matter of so great consequence, that the effect of the whole discourse in a great measure depends upon the attention given to it. Nothing can serve better to fix their attention than this solemn manner of ushering in the discourse, by reading a passage of sacred writ, in which every person, at least in protestant congregations, may satisfy himself by recurring to the passage mentioned in his own Bible; at the same time nothing can serve better as a monitor of the speaker's view, if the text hath been judiciously chosen, and the sermon be apposite, since the people if they please, may have it constantly in their eye. I acknowledge at the same time that the use of a text, as either a device or an enigma, is justly reprehensible, and that the conceited choice that hath been made of passages of holy writ for this purpose, and the strange manner wherein such passages have been treated in the sermon, as when the words and phrases are more properly discoursed on than the sentiment, have given an ample scope for this censure. Only it ought to be remembered, that the censure strikes solely against the abuse of this method of notifying, and not against the use of it.

It may not be amiss here to inquire a little by the way into the origin of this practice. That there is no trace of it in the ordinary discourses of our Lord and his apostles is freely owned. They spoke by immediate inspiration. They gave, by the miracles they wrought, the most authentic evidences of the authority, with which they were endowed. It did not suit the dignity of their mission, or of the spirit by which they spoke, to have recourse to any passage as giving a further sanction to their words, or as setting bounds to what they should declare. Besides, they claimed to be the heralds of a new revelation from heaven, which though founded on the old, superadded a great deal to it. After their time, the doctrine they taught having been committed to writing in the histories of our Lord and his apostles, and in the epistles occasionally written by some of the latter, the teachers who succeeded them did not pretend to any new revelation, but to deliver faithfully that, and only that, which they had received from their inspired predecessors. It became accordingly an important part of their public ministry and service, to read certain portions from the writings now styled canonical, as being the great rule of faith and practice left them by these founders of the Christian church. The usage they are said to have borrowed from the Jews, who since their return from the Babylonish captivity duly read in their synagogues, every Sabbath, portions of the law and of the prophets. But indeed the reason of the thing so strongly indicates the propriety of the practice, that there is no need of recurring to Jewish example for its origin. When there was any difficulty in the passage of Scripture read, this gave a natural occasion to the minister, who was the teacher of the congregation in matters of religion, to endeavor to remove it; and even where there was no difficulty, the words would often furnish a handle for seasonable exhortations and admonitions. Occasions of exhorting the people in this way were sometimes taken from the weekly lessons in the law or in the prophets in the Jewish synagogues, as appears occasionally both from our Lord's history and that of the apostles. See for this Luke 4: 16, etc. Acts 13: 14, etc. Accordingly it appears that the earliest discourses from the pulpit were very much of the nature of our expositions and lectures, and that the subject was not at first arbitrarily chosen by the speaker, but such as came in course of reading the Scriptures. It will easily be conceived how in process of time the pastors

did not always think it necessary to confine themselves to the portion of reading appointed for the day, especially, as there could not fail to arise occasions of addressing the people either for warning, consolation or admonition in any particular emergency, to which other passages of sacred writ would be more directly adapted. It may also be supposed, that sometimes in their discourses they would be so much engrossed by one principal point they then wished to inculcate, as would make them narrow the size of their compositions, and limit themselves in using no more from the sacred page, than was entirely apposite to their subject. A deference however to antiquity, a veneration for the Scriptures, an avowal that the writings of the prophets and apostles were the only source of all their doctrine, and a desire of supplying the people with what might serve as a remembrancer of the subject of discourse, would conspire to preserve a custom, which, though not absolutely necessary, must be allowed at least to be both decent and convenient. So much for the origin and history of this usage in Christian congregations. A usage which in my opinion ought to be the more sacredly preserved, as it may be justly considered as an ancient and universal, though implicit testimony, that no doctrine whatever deserves to be considered as a principle of Christianity, which hath not its foundation in holy writ. After this short digression, I shall now inquire what things they are, which particularly demand our attention in the choice of a text. And on this topic I shall speak the more largely, as what is to be offered on it will not regard the explanatory discourses only, but all the different sorts of sermons above defined.

And first, doubtless the passage chosen for this purpose ought to be plain and perspicuous. Without this quality of perspicuity, neither of the ends of introducing in this manner the subject can be answered by it. If obscure, and hardly at first hearing intelligible, it cannot be called a notification of the subject; as little can it give the sanction of holy writ to a subject which it doth not notify. One may err against this rule in more ways than one. First, the passage may in itself be obscure, and such as no person on a single reading, not to say the illiterate, can be supposed to divine the sense of. Such is a passage from Isaiah 21: 11, 12 on which I once heard a sermon. "He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the

night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come." Who could pretend to say from such a text what the subject of discourse were? But there are some people of that strange turn of mind, that obscurity itself is as strong a recommendation to them, as perspicuity would be to others. Not that they are influenced in this by the sentiment of the poet,

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem;

for commonly there is to the full as little light in the performance, as is discernible to an ordinary understanding in the text, the only circumstance perhaps in which the choice can be said to be apposite. The real motive of such almost invariably is, to excite in the ignorant multitude an admiration of their profound learning and most amazing penetration, who can discover wonders, where other people can perceive nothing at all. Nor do they in this particular lose their aim. But this is one of the many little arts of attracting the veneration of the populace, which is totally unworthy, I say not of the Christian pastor, but of every ingenuous mind.

But further, a passage of Scripture considered in itself, and its connection, may be perfectly perspicuous, and yet, as a text, may be extremely dark, because nothing that can be called a subject of discourse is suggested by it. Thus these words, "A bell and pomegranate, and a bell and a pomegranate," Exod. 39: 26, are sufficiently intelligible in Scripture, as expressing certain ornaments, with which alternately the border of the pontifical ephod was to be decorated; but there is not one of a thousand who would conjecture what the design of the preacher were, who should read these words to his congregation for a text. I have heard of a declaimer, one of those (and there are several such) that will rather take the most inconvenient road in the world, than keep the beaten path, who chose the words above quoted, as the ground of a discourse on this topic, that faith and holiness in the Christian life do ever accompany each other. It would not be easy to conceive a more extravagant flight. But where, you say, is the connection in the subject? It requires but a small share of fancy, to make out a figurative connection anywhere. Faith cometh by hearing. And could one desire a better reason for making the bell, which is sonorous, an emblem of faith? Holiness is fruitful in

good works. How can it then be better represented than by a pomegranate which is a very pleasant fruit? I am not fond of conceits in any serious matter; they have something so trivial and playful in them; but if they are anywhere specially unsuitable, it is in the pulpit. I remember to have seen announced in the news-papers the text of an anniversary sermon, the nature of the occasion I do not know. The text was, Jud. 4: 20, "Thou shalt say no." Here nothing can be clearer than the expression or verse, as indeed the whole passage is to which it belongs; yet nothing can be darker, than the text, as it is impossible to say with truth that it suggests any subject of discourse whatever. I will add further, that though the text, when interpreted agreeably to the meaning of the writer, may be said to suggest the subject, (which cannot be said of any of those above quoted,) yet when it is so figuratively expressed, as that the import of it is not sufficiently obvious to the bulk of a congregation, some more explicit proposition ought to be preferred. This observation is not to be understood as extending to those figures which are so current in Scripture, and now so generally understood by Christians of all denominations, that they cannot be said to hurt the plainness of the passage in the least. Of this kind are the putting of a part of religion, as the love of God, or the fear of God, for the whole; ascribing passions and bodily members to the Deity; personifying wisdom and the like; or those ordinary metaphors whereby a religious life is represented by a race, a journey or a fight. These cannot be said to give the least obstruction in reading, to those who are but a very little acquainted with their Bible. In like manner in the choice of a text, I should think it proper to avoid passages in which there is an apparent ambiguity. For though the context should sufficiently determine the sense, yet if the words taken separately are ambiguous, they do not distinctly answer the purpose of a notification of the speaker's aim. So much shall serve for the first article, perspicuity.

The next point to be attended to is, that they be pertinent. It were better not to have a text, than one that would mislead the hearers as to the subject of discourse; and such would be the case, if the text pointed one way and the sermon another. And here I cannot help observing the fantastical choice that hath been made by some English preachers, who have purposely chosen such passages as seemingly contra-

dict what they propose as the scope of their sermon. Two very eminent men in that church, Doctor Clarke and Bishop Hoadly, in their controversial or argumentative discourses frequently adopt this method. The latter, for example, to a sermon whose chief design is to show the absurdity of the opinion that all hope of pardon is cut off in the gospel from Christians, who have been wilful sinners, hath chosen for his text Heb. 10: 26, 27, "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." And to another, which he hath titled, the mistake of relying on Faith considered, he hath prefixed in the same way, Eph. 2: 8, "By grace are ye saved through faith." I do not here enter into the consideration of the justness of his doctrine, but the preposterousness of his choice. I know his reason was, thus to take an occasion of explaining a passage, that had been much employed on the opposite side of the controversy, in such a way as to show that though it might apparently, it did not really (when properly understood) contradict his design. But this plea, unless when such explication is made the sole end of the discourse, in which case it falls under that species of lecture called exposition, whereof we have given some account already, otherwise, I say this plea doth by no means vindicate a choice subversive of all the purposes which a text is intended to answer. It is the less vindicable as it is perfectly unnecessary. The explication of a passage apparently opposing the doctrine maintained in the discourse, it would be much more pertinent to introduce and obviate in answering the objections and arguments of the antagonists. There appears in both these authors, and in others misled by their example, a want of taste in this particular, however great their talents in other respects may have been.

The third quality in a proper text is, that it be full; that is, that it be expressive not of a part, but of the whole scope of the discourse; otherwise it imperfectly answers both the ends above mentioned, and we may say, with justice, that part of the sermon is entirely without a text.

The fourth and last quality is, that it be simple, nowise redundant, or expressive of more than the single scope of the sermon. An instance of a text which in the purport of it is properly complex, is that above quoted, Eph. 2: 8, "By

grace are ye saved through faith." The first part, "by grace are ye saved," is a full and perfect text for the discussion of one point of doctrine, which is to show in what respect the source of our salvation is divine grace. The other part, "ye are saved through faith," is equally perfect for the explication of another point, which is to show, in what respect the instrument of our salvation is faith. Let it be observed here, to prevent mistakes, that a sentence may be grammatically complex, which is nevertheless simple in regard to the sentiment conveyed by it, and therefore sufficiently proper for a text. Such a one is that in Prov. 3: 17, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." And even that last quoted from the Hebrews, though consisting of two long verses, is perfectly simple in regard to the sense.

I shall make two other observations on the subject of texts, and so conclude this article. One is, that as a great part of holy writ is historical, wherein things are simply related as spoken, without any mark of approbation or blame from the sacred historian; we ought, when we can be otherwise well supplied, to avoid such places, since passages taken thence, though recorded in Scripture, have not the stamp of revelation, and therefore are not fitted for answering the second purpose of a text above mentioned. I acknowledge, however, that when the sentiment in itself is manifestly agreeable to the dictates of natural or the general tenor of revealed religion, it would be an excess of scrupulousness to reject it. Should everything (for example) said by Job's three friends be avoided, because we have the best authority to affirm, that in some things they did not speak right? Or should even all that Job himself said be set aside, because he acknowledged that he had uttered what he understood not, things too wonderful for him which he knew not? In all such dubious cases, great regard is to be had to the character of the speaker, the occasion, the import and the design of the speech. On all these accounts, it was a most absurd choice which one made of a text for a sermon on the future glory of the saints in heaven. This sublime doctrine he chose to treat from these words of the serpent to our first mother Eve, Gen. 3: 5, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." For though the words taken abstractly might be apposite enough, we know that as they stand in Scripture, they have no relation to the heavenly happiness; but what renders

them still more exceptionable, as a text, is, they are the words of the father of lies, and in the sense in which he used them, contain a lie, and were employed but too successfully for the purpose of seduction. The only other observation I mean to make is, as Scripture does not consist of a number of aphorisms, it will sometimes be difficult, if not impossible, to find texts for some very suitable subjects, conformable to all the rules above laid down. It must be owned, that in such cases, it is far better to deviate from these rules, than to avoid discussing an edifying and pertinent subject. All that can be said in that case is, that if the rules be reasonable, the deviation ought to be as little as possible. Nor let any one think this point a matter of little or no moment. As a good choice may contribute previously to rouse attention, and even to put the hearers in a proper frame for the subject to be discoursed on, as well as to keep their minds in the time of preaching from wandering from the subject; so, on the contrary, an improper choice will often serve to dissipate the thoughts, and put the mind in a frame nowise suitable. I can say for myself that I have been witness to instances of both effects. I have observed sometimes, that the bare reading of the text hath served to compose the minds of the audience into an earnest and attentive expectation of what was to be said. I have seen an ill adapted text, on the contrary, especially when there was anything fantastic in the choice, excite a very different emotion in the audience, and dispose their minds not to be edified, but amused.

LECTURE VIII.

OF THE EXPLANATORY SERMONS—THE INTRODUCTION—EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT—PARTITION OF THE SUBJECT. UNITY A PRINCIPAL REQUISITE IN THE SUBJECT—HOW THIS IS TO BE PRESERVED—OFFENCES AGAINST UNITY.

IN my last discourse on the subject of Christian eloquence, I entered on the consideration of that species of sermons, which we distinguished by the name of explanatory, whose principal intention is, agreeably to the name, to explain the import of any doctrine or the extent of any precept of our religion. And first, I took occasion to inquire into the origin



and history of that method now so universal in Christendom, of introducing our subject to the audience, by a portion of sacred writ, called a text. I inquired into the principal uses which a text is intended to answer, and from this was naturally led to deduce the rules, whereby we ought to be directed in the choice. On this topic I was the more particular, as the same observations, though introduced merely in the examination of one species of discourses, would hold equally with regard to them all. I shall now proceed to consider the other parts of the explanatory sermon.

The first thing here, that falls under review, is the exordium or introduction, the great design of which is (agreeably to the rules of rhetoricians) to awaken and fix the attention of the audience. Nothing can be more obvious, than that if the hearers will not attend, the preacher addresses them to no purpose, his speaking is no better than beating the air. The first requisite, therefore, on their part, is some expectation and consequent desire. This is absolutely necessary to render them attentive. A certain degree of curiosity is natural in an auditory, just at the moment that a speaker is ready to open his mouth. But then it will depend very much on him, either to work up this favorable inclination in people into a devout and even anxious attention, or to extinguish it altogether, and not only to extinguish it, but even to create in them the contrary dispositions of weariness and disgust. Such topics, therefore, as manifestly tend to conciliate a favorable hearing from the congregation, as rouse in them the hope of something momentous or interesting, are especially adapted to the introductory part of the discourse. No doubt some regard must be had to this end through the whole of the performance. But it is the direct business of the exordium, to inspire a disposition, which the other parts of the sermon ought to preserve from expiring. And as to the manner, in which this purpose may be best effected, it is evident, that the preacher's topics should be drawn chiefly or solely from that which is to be the subject of discourse. The church, in this respect more delicate than either the tribunal or the senate, doth not so easily admit the urging of considerations merely personal, for winning the affection of the hearers. The venerable aged senator may not ungracefully preface his harangue with topics taken from his years, experience and public services. The hearers, conscious of the truth, will think him well entitled to avail himself of such a plea; and

the mention of these particulars will serve to rouse their attention and regard. It is only in extraordinary circumstances, that this conduct would be tolerable in the preacher. I do not say it never would. We have excellent patterns in this way in the prophet Samuel, and in the apostle Paul. See 1 Sam. 12: 1, etc. Acts 20: 18, etc. The young barrister will sometimes, just in opening, plead successfully for some indulgence to his youth and inexperience. An apology of this kind, if gracefully and naturally expressed, will be ascribed, not to want of merit, but to modesty, a quality very engaging especially in youth. The same plea would be more hazardous from the pulpit, and therefore can rarely, if ever, be attempted there. Any view that seems ultimately to point to self, anything that may be considered as either directly or indirectly courting popular applause, will be stigmatized as vanity, a disposition which will meet with no quarter in a place consecrated, as it were, to the purposes of humbling the pride of man, and advancing the honor of his Maker. Passing therefore some extraordinary cases, the only topics which the preacher can safely make use of in the introduction, for gaining the devout attention of the hearers, ought to be drawn from the nature of the subject to be discussed. And these are various in different subjects. But there is no subject, with which our religion presents us, that will not afford some handle by which it may be recommended to the favorable attention of the hearers. On one subject, the leading principle for rousing our attention will be its sublimity, on another its importance, on a third perhaps its pleasantness, and on a fourth its novelty. Do not mistake me. I by no means intend to insinuate, that any tenet or precept of religion can be strictly called new. I only mean, that when the subject of discourse rarely receives a discussion from the pulpit, the examination of it may be considered as new to the congregation; they not having the same opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with it as with some other topics, which, if more momentous, are at the same time more trite. Perhaps the subject is one of those, against which we are sure, from the known character of the congregation, there are certain prejudices. A case of this kind requires a peculiar delicacy. A modest attempt to remove unfavorable prepossessions is in such a case extremely proper in the entry. Butler's sermon on the Love of God affords a very suitable example in this way. It deserves also to be remarked, that a

preacher ought in the exordium cautiously to shun being so particular as might anticipate what should be advanced afterwards; that he ought here to proceed on such principles as are generally, if not universally, admitted; such as approved maxims, incontestible observations; otherwise its obscurity will rather avert than attract the attention of the audience. And if in order to prevent this obscurity, one should fall into a train of reasoning, or be at particular pains to explain and illustrate the principles advanced, it is manifest this conduct would convert into a real discourse, what ought to be no more than a prelude; it would extend the introduction to an undue length, and so far from answering the design of preparing the hearers to receive with attention the discussion of the subject, it would tend to make them lose sight of it altogether, by engaging them deeply in different, though related questions. In regard to the language of the introduction, it ought to be, in a particular manner, perspicuous and distinct. There is rarely scope in the introductory part of any kind of sermons, and much less in that of an explanatory sermon, for rhetorical tropes and figures. But as the expression should be plain and clear, the sentiments ought to be striking and almost self-evident.

The next part that requires to be considered, after the exordium, is the exposition of the text. And here it ought to be observed, that no more of the context should come under the notice of the preacher, than what may serve to corroborate or illustrate the thoughts advanced in the introduction, or what may be of use for throwing light upon the text. It is often necessary to take for texts, passages wherein the thing spoken of, or what is closely connected with it, is expressed by a relative pronoun, in which there is a reference to what immediately preceded. The text in such cases is not intelligible but as it stands in connection with the foregoing words. Such a text, for example, would be that in Psalm 19: 11, "In keeping of them there is great reward," where it is only from the context you can learn the import of the pronoun *them*. The same may be said of the possessive *his* in the following passage, which may be used as a text, 1 John 5: 3, "His commandments are not grievous." But when the text itself is sufficiently perspicuous, and however closely connected, independently intelligible, and when the sentiments of the context do not happen to have any coincidence with those employed by the preacher for introduc-

ing his subject, it is by no means necessary to take any notice of the context at all. Nay, it often proves in fact rather a digression from the subject, than a constituent part of the discourse. Inmemorial custom, I acknowledge, hath with us given a kind of sanction to this practice, as to many other improper ones; but it belongs to judgment and taste, to distinguish those cases wherein it is useful, and those wherein it is foreign to the purpose. And that is always to be held foreign, which, however just and even profitable abstractly considered, nowise contributes to promote that which is the ultimate aim of the discourse. When the text, as in the two passages last mentioned, has a reference to the context, but at the same time there is nothing in the context, which is not as to its meaning perfectly obvious to an ordinary capacity, it will suffice barely to repeat such of the preceding verses as have the most immediate connection with the text. Sometimes indeed it will do better to give an abstract of the story or of the reasoning, of which the text is a part, and that, without particularizing any of the passages. But in the election to be made out of these different methods, it behoveth us of necessity to leave the preacher to the guidance of his own judgment. The choice depends on such a variety of minute circumstances as renders it insusceptible of rules. The text itself, if necessary, may be explained, either by a paraphrase or otherwise. If by a paraphrase, it should be simple and brief, and no more in effect than a mere explicit declaration of the subject of discourse. If a looser method of expounding the passage is preferred, this exposition ought to terminate in a sentence, distinctly proposing the doctrine or duty to be explained.

The next thing that comes to be considered is the partition, or as it is more commonly termed, the division of the subject into its constituent branches. And here doubtless the logical rules ought to be inviolably observed. The partition ought to exhaust the subject, insomuch that no part be left uncomprehended, and it ought to extend no farther, so as to comprehend anything else. And as far as is possible in a consistency with these, a natural simplicity ought to be studied in this part in particular. Nothing harasses the memory of the hearers, more than a multiplicity of, what is called, the heads or chief topics of discourse. As where there is any partition of the subject they cannot be fewer than two, they never ought to exceed four or five. These for the most part

ought in explanatory discourses, which are directed solely to the understanding, and which should preserve an appearance of accuracy and precision throughout the whole, to be very explicitly laid before the hearers. As an instance of a just partition, that given by Dr. Tillotson of the nature and extent of gospel obedience, may serve for an example. The properties of such an obedience, he divides into these three, sincerity, universality and constancy. This division is taken from the essential qualities of the subject; it may sometimes be taken from the component parts. The preacher's design, I shall suppose, is to explain the duty of prayer, and from the consideration of the constituent members of his subject, he divides his discourse into three heads, destined severally for the explanation of the three parts, *confession*, *petition* and *thanksgiving*. To these some improperly add a fourth, *adoration*; I say improperly, because this, so far from being a distinct member, is necessarily implied in each of the others; insomuch that none of them can be explained or conceived without it. Each implies the acknowledgment of the superintendency and perfections of God, and of our own dependency and obligations. Such a distribution, therefore, in which adoration were made a separate member, would be as though one should divide an animal body into these four parts, the head, the trunk, the limbs, and the blood, which last is manifestly essential to all the parts, and does not constitute a separate branch or member, as it pervades the whole and every part. This by the way may serve as a specimen of a faulty division. As to the order, in which the different branches ought to be proposed and treated, that is no doubt sometimes discretionary, but more frequently it may be determined by something in the nature of the subject. That which is simplest and plainest ought generally to be begun with, and from this we ought to advance to that which is less obvious and more complex; but of this more afterwards. So far I thought it proper to proceed in considering the general qualities, which affect the introduction, the exposition of the text and context, where an exposition of either or both is necessary, and the propounding of the subject and the method.

Before we proceed, it will be necessary to consider a little more particularly, in what manner the text and the subject ought to be adapted to each other. And here the first thing that necessarily demands our attention is, that the text ought to be chosen for the subject, and not the subject for the text.

Nor will this observation be found, upon inquiry, of so little moment as at first sight it may appear to be. It is manifest from the general taste and manner that has hitherto prevailed in preaching, that the text, rather indeed the words of a certain portion of Scripture, hath been the primary consideration, and the subject at best but a secondary one. Or if it hath happened, that the subject hath been first thought of by the speaker, he no sooner deviseth a text, than he judges it necessary to attach to his principal subject certain other subordinate ones, suggested not by the sentiment conveyed, but by the expressions used in the text. The consequence is, that there is hardly one sermon in a hundred, wherein that unity of design is observed, which constitutes one great excellence in every composition.¹

I mentioned in the beginning of my last prelection, that the first thing that falls under the preacher's consideration is the subject. Unity I then observed was a principal requisite in the subject; but deferred stating the precise notion of it, till we should come to treat of that part of the discourse, which includes the declared design of the performance and the manner in which it is proposed to prosecute it. This will be somewhat different in the different kinds of sermons; I shall consider the unity of each, at least what is peculiar in each, in the explication of the kind. And as to that kind of which we are now treating, the explanatory, let us suppose one intending to compose a sermon in this way hath chosen for his subject, the doctrine of the Divine Omniscience. After searching for some time for a proper text I suppose he determines to take Heb. 4: 13; which though complex in the

¹ In prescribing tasks for trying the abilities of the students of theology, in instructing and persuading, it is the common practice to assign them a text on which to prepare a sermon. And this method I followed for some time. The consequence I found to be, that instead of one subject in a discourse we often heard discussed in one sermon two or three distinct subjects. I have therefore resolved instead of a text to prescribe a subject, leaving to the student to find out a proper text for himself; for example, some doctrine or precept of the gospel to be defined and illustrated in an explanatory sermon, or some duty to be inculcated or evil to be warned against in a suatory discourse. As this way of prescribing a subject gives a greater probability that unity and simplicity shall be preserved in the composition, than that of assigning a text, and as the subject ought always to be first in the intention of the composer, I have thought this method upon the whole greatly preferable.

terms, is sufficiently simple in the sentiment. The words are, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is a thousand to one he would judge it no other than a piece of justice to his text, to discuss a number of adventitious points, which, if without any text he had been required to explain the doctrine of the omniscience, he would never have dreamt to have any connection with his subject. Such as these for instance, to consider what is implied in the manifestation of a creature, or in its being naked and opened; in what respect these phrases may be used relatively, so that a creature may be said to be manifested, naked and opened to the eyes of one, which is nevertheless undiscovered, clothed and shut to the eyes of another; again, who is meant by the apostle in that expression, Him with whom we have to do; and why God is so denominated. Yet will any one say, that these critical inquiries, (which in a critical exercise on the passage would be very proper,) are I say not, necessary, but any wise conducive to the illustration of this simple proposition, God knoweth all things? And if so, there can be no unity in the subject, nor simplicity in the performance, in which things so diverse are jumbled together. The only connection there is among them is not a natural, but accidental connection arising merely from the terms in which the sentiment is expressed. Sometimes it is necessary to recur to such texts, because a simpler expression of the sense, though more eligible is not to be found in the words of Scripture. But then if there be any difficulty, it is sufficient to remove it by the way, in showing the import of the text, or in a brief paraphrase on the words, or even in a plain synonymous sentence. It must ever be remembered, that it is the leading sentiment conveyed in the text, which it is the preacher's business to illustrate, and not the terms or phrases by which it is conveyed. It is this difference that makes a principal distinction between every kind of sermons whatever, and that species of lecture which we called exposition, wherein the text is itself properly the subject, and not to be considered as a bare expression of the subject. Now it is this false taste in preaching which hath given rise to the censure formerly quoted from Voltaire, in as much as the speaker is not employed in the discussion of any one subject, but is, as it were, amusing himself and his hearers with a number of little independent dissertations

on the different words, idioms and references which are found in a line or two of sacred writ. It will perhaps be urged, that there are few passages, which from the turn of the expression would lead the speaker into such devious tracts, as that above quoted; but in reality, where the same notion prevails in regard to pulpit composition, there can hardly be found a text so simple, as will not afford some occasion for the same manner of treating the subject. Let us suppose that the preacher's subject is to explain this doctrine of revelation, that the grace of God is the genuine source of man's salvation, and let us suppose he chooseth for his text Eph. 2: 8, "By grace are ye saved." One more simple or more apposite is not even to be conceived. Yet the most general and approved way, in which, in many places, this theme at present would be managed, is the following. First, would the speaker say, I shall explain what is meant by grace; secondly, I shall show what is meant by salvation, or what it is to be saved: thirdly, and lastly, the relation which one of these bears to the other, or the dependence of the latter upon the former. Methinks I hear it resound from every quarter, could there be a juster method, or one that more perfectly exhausts the text? No indeed, if we are barely to regard the words; in which case it may be said to be three texts more properly than one. My intended subject was only one, but here we have no less than three. Ay but, say you, are not these three so intimately connected, that the one cannot be perfectly understood without the other? That they are indeed connected is very certain, but so also are all the doctrines and precepts of our religion. Is it therefore impossible to explain one without explaining them all? If so, every sermon ought to be a system, both of the tenets and of the duties of Christianity. And as the Christian system is only one, in this way there should be no more but one sermon. And as strange as it may appear, I have known preachers, and very popular preachers too, whom I have heard frequently, and yet can say with truth, I never heard from them but one sermon. The form, the mould into which it was cast, was different according to the different texts, but the matter was altogether the same. You had invariably the preacher's whole system, original sin, the incarnation, the satisfaction, election, imputed righteousness, justification by faith, sanctification by the Spirit, and so forth. As to the practical part, including the duties which our religion requires, whether it

was, that it appeared more obvious or of less consequence, I cannot say, but it was very rarely and very slightly touched. The discourses of such people have often put me in mind of the clay, with which children sometimes divert themselves. The very same mass, they at one time mould into the figure of a man, at another, into that of a beast, at a third, into the shape of a bird, and at a fourth, into the appearance of a table or stool. But you are sure of one thing, that whatever be the change on its external form, its substance is unalterably the same. Yet these people argue with an apparent plausibility. Such a one explaining the character expressed in the words *pure in heart*, tells us that in order to understand it rightly we must consider it in its source, the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit. The better to understand this we ought to consider our previous natural corruption. This brings us directly to original sin, which makes it necessary to inquire into that original righteousness whereof it is the privation. And this being implied in the expression, *image of God*, leads us to the examination of the divine perfections. These again are best illustrated by the effects, the works of creation and providence, and especially the work of redemption. This method of arguing puts me in mind of a story told by D'Alembert in an essay on the liberty of music. "Dioptrics," said a certain profound philosophical professor to his pupils, "is the science which teaches us the use of spectacles and spy-glasses. Now these are of no value without eyes; the eyes are the organs of one of our senses, the existence of our senses supposes the existence of God, since it is God who gave us them; the existence of God is the foundation of the Christian religion—we purpose therefore to evince the truth of the Christian religion, as the first lesson in Dioptrics." I shall only say in general of this method, when induced into the pulpit, that however acceptable it may be with the many, with whom sound always goes much farther than sense, and favorite words and phrases to which their ears have been accustomed, than the most judicious sentiment, I know no surer method of rendering preaching utterly inefficacious and un instructive. To attempt everything is the direct way to effect nothing. If you will go over every part, you must be superficial in every part; you can examine no part to any useful purpose. What would you think of a professor of anatomy, who should run over all the organs and limbs and parts of the human body external and internal in

every lecture, and think himself sufficiently excused by saying that there is a connection in all the parts; and that the treating of one naturally led him to say something of another; and so on, till he got through the whole? Or, what would your opinion be of a lecturer in architecture, who in every discourse discussed all the five orders, and did not leave a single member or ornament in any one of them unnamed? From such teachers could a reasonable man expect to learn anything but words? The head of the learner would, in consequence of this extraordinary manner of teaching, very quickly be stuffed with technical terms and phrases to which he could affix no definite signification. He might soon be made an accomplished pedant in these arts; but, to the end of the world, would not in this way be rendered a proficient. And do we not see among the common people many such pedants in divinity, who think themselves wonderful scholars, because they have got the knack of uttering, with great volubility, all the favorite phrases and often unmeaning cant of a particular sect or faction? It is indeed solely to be imputed to that jealousy, which party spirit and our unhappy divisions in religious matters have produced, that this futile manner owes its origin. In consequence of this party spirit many hearers, whose minds are unhappily poisoned with its malignity, come to a new preacher with an anxious concern not to be instructed, but to be satisfied whether he is what they call orthodox, is a true partizan and has the shibboleth of the party in him; and the preacher, on the other hand, either because he hath imbibed the same sectarian spirit, or because he is more ambitious to please than to edify, takes this way, which is by far the shortest and the easiest, of ingratiating himself into their favor.

But to return to the particular instance which gave rise to these observations. All that in regard to the two points, *grace* and *salvation*, is previously necessary to the explication of the only point which makes the subject, is to observe, in so many words, that grace means here the unmerited favor of God, and salvation, deliverance from all that evil which is consequent on sin. And this may be sufficiently effected in the exposition of the text, or in a paraphrase upon it. Nay, whatever further is of importance as to both these points, *grace* and *salvation*, will necessarily and more naturally occur, without doing any violence to the unity and simplicity of the discourse, in the illustration of the subject, which is

purely to show in what respect divine grace is the genuine source of men's salvation. But would you have only one point? Where is then the distribution or partition of the subject, of which you spoke before? I would indeed have but one subject, though, where the nature of the thing will admit it, distributed for order's and for memory's sake into its different members, and then the several points in the division must appear as the constituent parts of one subject and one whole, and not as so many distinct though related subject or wholes. Thus the forementioned subject may be illustrated under these two articles, which will make the heads of discourse; the plan itself of our redemption by the mediation of the Son is the result of grace or unmerited favor; the completion of it in us by the operation of the Spirit is also the result of grace. Both these manifestly centre in the same point; salvation springs from grace. But if you must draw in everything that is related, you can never have done till you have made your sermon a complete system of Christian divinity.

The method in making sermons, which for a long time hath carried the vogue in this country over every other, and which is considered as very simple compared with the more labored and intricate methods formerly in use, is a division of every text, into what the schoolmen call the subject, the predicate and the copula. Thus, suppose the topic to be discussed were the nature of the divine faithfulness, and the text 1 Cor. 10: 13, "God is faithful;" this most simple and apposite passage would be divided into three heads. The first would be the divine nature; the second, the attribute of faithfulness; and the third, the connection between the two. This is not discoursing on the subject, but cutting the text into fritters, where if the subject come in for a share, it is much; often it is eluded altogether. But the impropriety, and if it were not for the commonness, I should say the puerility of this manner will appear better by applying it to other matters, in which the pulpit is not concerned. I shall suppose one hath it prescribed to him as the subject of an oration, an inquiry into the antiquity of rhyme. Accordingly he goes to work, and having well weighed every word and syllable of the question, he thus lays down his plan of operations. First, says he, I shall consider what is implied in the word antiquity, and all the different acceptations of which the term is susceptible; secondly, I shall consider the nature,

import and properties of what is called rhyme; and thirdly, the relation in which the one stands to the other, or how far and in what respect the one may be justly predicated of the other. Could any one imagine that such a disquisitor understood the subject? Good people are sometimes offended at the application of the word eloquence to preaching. They think it savors of something merely human and too artificial. But the art of preaching, as in fact it hath been long taught and practised by the men, whom those people generally most admire, is the genuine offspring of the dialectic of the schools, and fifty times more artificial, or if you will mechanical, than that which true rhetoric would inculcate. On the contrary, it is the business of the latter to bring men back from all scholastic pedantry and jargon, to nature, simplicity and truth. And let me add, that discourses on this plan will be found much more conformable, in manner and composition, to the simple but excellent models to be found in sacred writ.

LECTURE IX.

OF EXPLANATORY SERMONS—HOW THE BRANCHES SHOULD BE ARRANGED AND TREATED—OF THE STYLE—TECHNICAL LANGUAGE TO BE AVOIDED AND THAT OF SCRIPTURE PREFERRED—ABUSE OF SCRIPTURE STYLE—OF THE CONCLUSION.

IN my last discourse on Christian eloquence, I considered part of the explanatory sermon, which was begun with as the simplest; to wit, the exordium or introduction, the proposing of the design, with the explication of the text and context where such explication is necessary, and the division of the subject. I should now proceed to consider in what method the branches of the division should be ranged, how they should be treated, and the properest way of forming the conclusion. As to the first, *the order* in which the principal heads of a discourse ought to be arranged, this is sometimes of considerable consequence, sometimes it is a matter merely discretionary. It is of consequence, when the knowledge of one part is, in its nature, pre-requisite to the right understanding of another part; it is also of consequence, when in

the order of time or of nature, the one part is conceived as preceding the other. The arrangement may be said to be discretionary, when neither of the above mentioned cases takes place. Suppose, for instance, the preacher's subject were the nature of evangelical repentance, and he were disposed to comprehend the whole under the three following heads, a proper sense and conviction of sin, pious and suitable resolutions from an apprehension of divine mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, and a real conversion or change to the obedience of God. The order, in which these topics have just now been mentioned, is the only order in which the subject could properly be discussed. The right understanding of every previous member is preparatory to the right understanding of that which follows. This arrangement will perhaps be considered also as fixed by the order of nature and of time. I shall for another instance recur to that mentioned in a former lecture. Suppose then the preacher's subject is to illustrate this important evangelical truth, that grace or the unmerited favor of God is the genuine source of man's salvation; suppose further, that one chooses for the illustration of it the two topics also above mentioned; the plan of our redemption by Jesus Christ is purely the result of grace or unmerited favor, the completion of this plan in us by the operation of the Spirit is also the result of grace. It is evident, that the order in which these two topics are now laid down, is the only natural order in which they could be treated. The plan is ever conceived as previous to the execution. But in another example of distribution taken from Tillotson, of the characters of gospel obedience, into sincerity, universality and constancy, it is not perhaps material in what order you explain these particulars. As there are few cases, however, in which even this circumstance, when attentively considered, will appear perfectly indifferent, I should like best the order wherein I have just now named them, though I could not deny, that in any order they might be treated with sufficient perspicuity. Indeed in the other instance also above mentioned of prayer, as divided into its constituent parts, petition, confession and thanksgiving, the order is perhaps as much discretionary, as in any example that could be produced. Again, as in the explication of the principal heads or topics, there may be scope for a subdivision, the same remarks will hold with regard to the arrangement of the constituent members of that subdivision.

But as it is impossible, that one who himself understands the subject that he treats, should not perceive the dependence of the parts and consequently the natural order, where the subject gives scope for it, I should think it losing time to enter more minutely into the discussion of this point. I shall only further remark on the article of arrangement, that as a multiplicity of divisions and subdivisions is not only cumbersome to the memory, but savors too much of artifice and a kind of minute and finical precision, a speaker ought carefully to avoid it. Do not imagine, that by this I mean to recommend a rambling and desultory manner of treating a subject. Nothing can be farther from my intention. I know well the power of method for assisting both the understanding and the memory, and with how much justice Horace hath styled it *lucidus ordo*, as being that which, of all qualities, tends most to throw light upon a subject. But though a just and natural order ought ever to be preserved in the disposition of the sentiments in a sermon, the formality of always proposing or laying down that order, especially in the subordinate parts or inferior branches of a discourse, is rarely the most eligible method for recommending what you say to the attention of the hearers.

Need I add, that in general in this kind of discourses the style should be remarkably simple and perspicuous. The immediate end is distinct apprehension. It therefore admits but few ornaments. Sometimes indeed it will receive very properly a sort of painting or imagery, which seems more immediately intended to delight the fancy, but which seasonably enough relieves the minds of the hearers from too intense an application of thought, to what in itself may be called a sort of abstract truth, an application, of which the generality of hearers are very little capable; at the same time that it fixes their attention and even conveys to them more distinct conceptions, by a happy illustration of things less known by things familiar to them. Thus the great truths in relation to the kingdom of heaven were ever illustrated to the people by Him, whom we ought to regard as our pattern in teaching as well as in life and practice, by the common incidents and affairs of this world, with which they had occasion to be well acquainted. I would not, however, by this be understood to recommend so close an imitation of our Lord's manner, as to endeavor to convey everything in parables and allegories. I am afraid, this might give scope for too close a

comparison, which would redound greatly to the disadvantage of any modern speaker; besides, I must acknowledge that though in what concerns the matter, the great truths of religion remain invariably the same, yet in what regards the general manner of communicating them, the mode or custom of the country where we live, ought not altogether to be overlooked. In a remarkable deviation from it, there is always the disagreeable appearance of affectation. The warmer and livelier manner of the orientals never fails to please us exceedingly in their writings; at the same time that it appears to sit very awkwardly on a modern European. It suggests the idea rather of mimicry or a servile copying, than of a liberal imitation. Certain things in the manner of conveying instruction, as well as the words and phrases of the language that we employ, are in every age and nation dependent upon use, from which we cannot deviate far without becoming ridiculous. But there is sufficient scope for imitating the manner of our Lord, by a proper choice of similes and examples borrowed from things human, for assisting the apprehension of the people in things divine.

In regard to the manner of treating the different branches of the subject, I shall only further add, that if there occur, on any of them, any difficulty arising either from the nature of the point to be discussed, or from misconceptions of the subject commonly entertained, or from any customary but wrong way of explaining it, such difficulties will generally be best obviated in the entry; I say, generally, because sometimes a simple and distinct explanation will make the difficulty entirely vanish, and at most it will require only one's remarking, as it were by the way, the misrepresentation that has been given, or the misconception that has been entertained of such a part of the subject. Let it serve also as a general rule in this kind of discourses, to avoid too great subtlety and depth in your explanations. The many controversies that have arisen in the Christian church, and the parties and factions into which Christendom is unhappily divided, have amongst all of them, in less or more, given rise to a scholastic manner of treating almost every question in divinity, a manner extremely unsuitable to the simplicity of the sacred idiom, and the purpose of edifying a Christian congregation. The same thing has also given rise to a sort of technical language in those matters, which is somewhat different, indeed, in every different sect, and too much savor-

ing in all of the cobweb distinctions of schoolmen and metaphysicians, but very little of the wisdom which is from above. It is this which made preaching in many places degenerate into what the apostle terms, "doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth." I have often recommended, and can scarce sufficiently inculcate on all students in theology, to be more conversant with their Bible, than with the writings of any of the most celebrated divines, to whatever sect or party they belong, and to familiarize themselves to the style and sentiments of the former much more than to those of the latter. I am far from thinking, that we ought to reject the use of the latter altogether; but am clearly of opinion that the more assiduous and unintermitted study of the former should give an ascendent in our minds to the sentiments, to the turn of thinking, and even to the forms of expression when we learn them, and should serve as a proper check, to prevent our imbibing and adopting too implicitly, either in tenets or in style, the peculiarities of a sect.

Before I leave this article, I would also warn you against another fault, which is sometimes to be met with, and that is, using the Scripture style itself in an unmeaning manner. There are, especially in the prophets, it must be acknowledged, several passages, about the sense of which the most learned and judicious interpreters are divided; there are many more expressions, which are not intelligible at least to the common people; and even of many, that are quite perspicuous when considered as standing in connection with the context, such applications are often made as convey either no meaning at all, or a very different meaning from that which is suggested by the same words as they are situated in Scripture. This is turning the language of the Spirit itself, if not to a bad use, at least into mere cant and jargon, a practice exceedingly common in the theological writings of the last century intended for the use of the people, but not so often to be met with in the present age; except amongst a few, on whom the dregs of the fanaticism, conceited ignorance and factious spirit of the former seem entirely to have settled. The true origin of this abuse is an excessive tendency to the use of Scripture phraseology, merely in the way of allusion. Let it be observed, that I do by no means condemn in the gross an allusive application of Scripture phrases,

when clear, when apposite and when emphatical, as they often are, although we be sensible that the meaning, in which we employ them, does not coincide with that which they have in the sacred volume. Where they are not quoted in the way of proof, but manifestly adopted in the way of illustration, they produce merely the effect of similitude, containing an implicit comparison between the event to which they originally referred, and that to which they are applied by the preacher. Besides, this method of applying by way of allusion passages of the Old Testament, we find also frequently adopted by the writers of the New. Such an use, therefore, we must declare in general, is not only allowable, but often energetic. It requires, however, to be managed with the utmost discretion. *Corruptio optimi pessima* is even grown into a proverb.

There are two dangers, in particular, which here ought to be carefully guarded against. One is, that whilst we mean only to make an allusive application, we may not express ourselves in such a manner, as might seem to fix a sense on holy writ different from that of the inspired penmen. The other is, that we do not run into the obscure and enigmatic style, as is sometimes done through an excessive inclination to hunt after Scripture phrases, tropes and figures, or after figurative applications of what perhaps was sufficiently plain in the literal and original use. Nothing can be more opposite to the nature and intention of the explanatory discourse, than such a method. For however emphatical a clear and apposite allusion may be, nothing can have a worse effect, when the resemblance is but faint and scarcely discernible; for then the way of applying the sacred words inevitably appears to the more judicious hearers affected and far-fetched; and though the imaginations of the more ignorant may be pleased, and their ears as it were tickled by the use of phrases, for which through habit they have acquired a veneration, their understandings are not at all enlightened. On the contrary, the subject, (though they may not be sensible of it; for those of this class are very prone to mistake words for things, and mere sound for sense,) is more veiled and darkened to them, than it was before. A preacher who is ever on the scent, (and such preachers I have sometimes heard,) for allusive Scripture phrases, can express nothing in a simple, natural and perspicuous manner. He will exhibit to you the mental blindness of the unregenerate, by telling

you, that they "see men as trees walking;" spiritual and temporal mercies he rarely fails to denominate, "the blessings of the upper and the nether springs;" in order to denote the assurance, which the church or Christian community have of a triumph over all their enemies, he will tell us, "the shout of a king is among them, and he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn;" and to express I know not what, (but I have myself heard the phrase adopted by preachers of this stamp,) he tells us very pompously, "the king's goings are always to be seen in the sanctuary." Nay, what is worse, (but I remark it here only by the way) sometimes dark and indefinite expressions, like these, are converted into petitions and adopted in public prayer. Such will say, "may the shout of a king be amongst us; may his goings be seen in the sanctuary;" and many other such indefinite and dark expressions one has sometimes occasion to hear, where they are exceedingly unsuitable, in the public devotions; for though the speaker may himself affix some meaning to them, it is impossible they should be understood or applied aright by the much greater part of the audience. With respect to them, therefore, he acts much the same part, as if he prayed in an unknown tongue. So much for the manner and the style in which the doctrines and the duties of our religion ought to be explained to the people. I shall only add upon the whole of this branch of the subject, as a general position that will never fail to hold, that the surest expedient that any person can devise, for preventing his explanation of his subject from being unintelligible to the hearers, is to be careful, in the first place, that he distinctly understand it himself. It was well said by a master in this valuable art, "*Si rem potenter conceperis, nec animus, nec facundia in concione defutura sunt;*" or in the words of Jerome, "*Quia firmiter concepimus bene loquimur.*" We may safely pronounce, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, where we find in any writing the thoughts to be darkly and confusedly expressed, the true reason has been the dark and confused conceptions of the author. One ought, therefore, before all things, to endeavor to be master of the subject which he explains, to range his thoughts properly and naturally, to have a distinct meaning to every expression that he uses, and to employ only such as he has reason to believe will be generally intelligible.

It remains only now, that in this species of discourse we

consider the *conclusion*. And here, if not always, it will very generally be proper, to begin with a brief recapitulation of the articles discussed. This is of importance both for the better understanding of the subject, and for fixing it more firmly in the memory, and is almost indispensable when the subject happens to be complex. But this is the smallest and the easiest part of what in such discourses should constitute the conclusion. As in religion, the ultimate end both of knowledge and faith is practice, or in other words, the real improvement of the heart and life, so every doctrine whatever is of use, either as a direction in the performance of duty, or as a motive to it. And the knowledge and belief of hearers are no farther salutary to them, than this great end is reached. On the contrary, where it is not reached, where the heart is not bettered and the life reformed, they prove only the means of aggravating their guilt and heightening their condemnation. The doctrine of the unity and spirituality of the Godhead serve to point out the proper object of religious worship, and the nature of that worship which must be acceptable to God. The other doctrines concerning the divine attributes, serve both for our direction in regard to the adoration and homage which we owe to him, and also as motives to the duties of reverence, trust, love and obedience. The Scripture doctrine in regard to the positive institutions of religion, serves chiefly to direct us as to the manner and disposition in which these institutions ought to be celebrated. The other doctrines of Christianity are manifestly intended to be used, and are employed by the sacred writers as motives to a pious and Christian life. How strongly does the doctrine of the mediation enforce the calls given in Scripture to sinners to repentance? How powerfully does the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit, rightly understood, tend both to excite us to assiduity and fervor in our devotions, and to animate our endeavors after moral perfection in the persuasion of this almighty aid? Need I suggest the practical use to which the doctrines of the resurrection, of the future judgment, of the final retribution, of heaven, hell and eternity so manifestly point? Nor can anything appear more proper and natural, than such a manner of ending a discourse which, as to the substance of it, was addressed purely to the understanding of the hearers; inasmuch as it is incontrovertible, that the revelation of these important truths delivered in the gospel was never intended to terminate in

being understood and assented to, but in having a happy influence on the disposition of mind and whole behavior. It was not given to gratify our curiosity, but to regulate our lives. Hence it is, that we find it so frequently in Scripture joined with epithets and attributes expressive of this quality, a *most holy faith*, a *doctrine according to godliness*, and *sound doctrine*, *ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία*, *wholesome instruction*, not (as the expression has been sometimes perverted by the bigoted retainers to a party) a precise conformity in phraseology and opinion to all the little captious particularities of the sect. It is impossible to conceive anything more remote from the original signification of the word, *sound*. It is a term, which marks not the logical justness of a theory, but its beneficial tendency; it is not the truth of any notion which can denominate it sound, but the salutary influence it hath on human life, that which makes it serve as food and medicine to the soul. Whatever in divinity is void of such influence, like the far greater number of the metaphysical questions agitated among controvertists, whether true or false, is hollow and unsound, a barren insignificant speculation; whatever hath an opposite influence, (and such doctrines also have been broached,) and tends to subvert the foundation of mutual love and obligations to the practice of virtue, is more properly termed poisonous. Nay the pure unadulterated tenets of the gospel have so direct and manifest a tendency to enforce sanctity of life and manners, that when any of them are treated of by the inspired writers of the New Testament, the subject is almost invariably concluded by such a practical application. Thus the apostle Peter, 2 Peter iii, after treating of the general conflagration, very naturally concludes, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness;" and after taking notice of the new heavens and new earth, that shall succeed the present, he adds, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless." In like manner, the apostle Paul, after treating at some length of the resurrection, concludes the whole with this earnest exhortation, 1 Cor. 15 : 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." It is almost only this part, which in explanatory discourses admits

of warmth, and what may be called an address to the affections. A deep sense in the preacher of the importance of this improvement of every instruction which he gives, an affectionate desire of promoting the good of the people, and a zeal for the interests of religion, and virtue are the only sure methods I know of, for qualifying him to address them suitably and efficaciously.

LECTURE X.

OF CONTROVERSIAL DISCOURSES—CANDOR AND SIMPLICITY EVER TO BE STUDIED IN THE DEFENCE OF TRUTH.

I HAVE NOW finished the consideration of the explanatory sermon, which is of all the kinds mentioned the simplest, and approaches nearest to what in the primitive church was called *homily*. The end of it, as was observed, is to dispel ignorance and to communicate knowledge, and for this purpose it addresses the understanding of the hearers. The next in order is the *controversial*, addressed also to the understanding, its end being to conquer doubt and error, and to produce belief. In other words, by the first it is proposed to inform the hearers; by the second, to convince them. It is the second kind, which I now intend to consider. There are many observations, such as those regarding the unity of the subject, the choice of a text, the topics proper for the exordium, the explication of text and context, where necessary, which hold equally in all the kinds, and therefore need not be repeated in the examination of each different kind.

In regard to the unity of the subject, I shall only observe, that here it admits rather a clearer definition or description, than perhaps in any of the others. A controversial sermon is then strictly one, when there is only one thesis, as I may call it, that is, one proposition, whether affirmative or negative, the truth of which it is the scope of the whole discourse to evince. Suppose a preacher should, (in order to guard his people against some apparent danger of seduction; for, without some special reason of this sort controversy is not eligible in the pulpit,) judge it necessary to maintain the lawfulness of infant-baptism; that which would constitute his performance *one*, is, that the aim of the whole and of every part, should unite in supporting this position, that it is agreeable

to the gospel dispensation that infants should be baptized. The thing might be illustrated by a thousand other examples; but it is really so plain in itself, that I could not consider it as any other than losing time to produce more instances.

In regard to the text, the same qualities are required here as in the former species, namely appositeness, simplicity and perspicuity. In regard to the first of these, the appositeness, let it be remarked here by the way, that it is not possible to find, on every subject, a text that has this quality in an equal degree. On some articles the declarations of Scripture are more explicit and direct; on others, not less certain even from Scripture, the evidences at least in regard to the mode of expression are more implicit and indirect. I may observe also that we are not to understand this quality of *apposite* so strictly, as to suppose that by the text we should discover whether the intended sermon is to be explanatory or controversial. This is hardly ever to be expected. The text John 4: 24, "God is a spirit," is simple, perspicuous and apposite, either for an explanatory discourse, on the nature of the Divine spirituality, or for a controversial discourse, whose aim is to evince the spirituality of God. Nay, in a course of preaching on points, which may be controverted, this method, especially by a pastor in his own parish, is sometimes not improperly adopted. His division of the subject accordingly, when he first enters on it, may be this; first, to explain the doctrine of his text whatever it be; secondly to evince the truth of that doctrine. As, however, the tenor of these two different parts, from the nature of the composition fitted to each, is very different, it is commonly better to disjoin them, so far as to make separate discourses of them, though from the same passage of sacred writ; the explanation being the subject of the first, and the proof being the subject of that which immediately succeeds. But when the explanatory part may with sufficient distinctness be despatched in a few sentences, I should admit that both parts may conveniently enough, and without violating the unity of design, be comprised in the same discourse. Something extremely similar we find to have taken place sometimes in the judiciary pleadings of the ancients, which I observed to have an analogy, in point of form, to controversial sermons. When the law was either obscure or complex, a separate explanation of the statute was made to precede the arguments either for, or against the accused. And we can easily perceive the expediency of this

method for throwing light upon the proof, and assisting the hearers in discerning the justness of the reasoning. A similar manner we find recommended by the example of some of the best preachers, both in French and in English.

In the controversial sermon, after the exordium and brief explanation of the text and context where necessary, the point of doctrine to be either supported or refuted, ought to be as distinctly, perspicuously and briefly as possible proposed, and then the method ought to be laid down in which you intend to manage the argument. This method on different questions will be very different. When a controverted point is simple in its nature, and when there is only one opposing sentiment, which the preacher has to refute, the most common, and indeed the most natural method he can take will be, first, to refute the arguments of the adversary; and secondly, to support his own doctrine by proper proofs. On the first, his acquaintance with the adversary's plea must serve for a directory as to the method wherein he should proceed. Only let it be observed in general, that where one means honestly to defend truth and to detect error, he will ever find his account in employing the most plain and unequivocal expressions, and in exposing the ambiguities and indefinite terms, in which it often happens that the sophistry of the adverse party lies concealed. Some of our theological disputes and even some of those which have created the greatest ferments and most lasting animosities among Christians, are merely verbal. These, as much as possible, ought to be avoided. Others, in which there is a real difference in opinion, as well as in expression, in the different sides, have nevertheless given rise to a deal of logomachy in the manner wherein they have been managed. In most questions, what is of real weight in the way of argument on the opposite sides might be reduced to a very small compass. It will well become the assertor of truth, whose cause has the greater advantage, the stronger the light be into which he brings it, to endeavor, by clearing off the rubbish of mere cavils, ambiguous and indefinite words and phrases, to convey plain and determinate ideas to the hearers, and thus as much as possible to simplify the question. Then let him discuss severally, what is thought to be of most moment on the adverse side, avoiding to tire his hearers with too curious a minuteness of investigation, or to perplex himself with a needless multiplicity of topics. Another error in disputation, which is by far

too common, is when one will admit nothing in the plea or arguments of an adversary to be of the smallest weight. That they have no weight may be the case sometimes, but it is not always so. And this extreme will ever, with the more judicious, savor either of blind zeal in the preacher, or of a total want of candor, which will rather create a prejudice against the speaker in the minds of those who are intelligent and sensible, that he does not justice to the other side, than incline them to give a favorable reception to his arguments. It gives, besides, an appearance to the debate which savors much more of proceeding from a mind ambitious of the glory of victory, than concerned for the interests of truth. I have heard a disputant of this stamp, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament *baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge, and, in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and, for many centuries, the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed as well as arguments, sometimes better, yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of a falsehood, even in support of the truth.

After discussing the adversary's plea, it will be proper in the second place to enter on the proofs. If the point under examination, is knowable by the light of nature, as if it regard the being and perfections of God, or the great obligations of morality, one topic of argument may not improperly be taken from the discoveries of natural reason, and on some points, like that of a future state of retribution, even the universal consent of mankind, and the earliest traditions, that have as yet been traced in any country, may not implausibly be pleaded. Sometimes ecclesiastical history will furnish a head of argument. This happens especially when the question relates to any usages or ceremonies that have obtained, or to the manner of celebrating any of the positive institutions. But the principal foundation of argument for the preacher will always be the sacred Scripture. This is true whatever be the controverted doctrine, since in order to entitle it to a discussion from the pulpit, it ought to be a doctrine in which the faith or morals of a Christian are concerned. If the tenet maintained be purely a point of revelation, the Scripture is in a manner the preacher's only ground, on

which his reasonings can be built. From this also different topics of argument may be raised, either from different passages, or from the different lights in which it is in holy writ exhibited, as suits the nature of the subject.

In arguing from the divine oracles, great care ought to be taken that we quote and interpret them candidly; in other words, that we give always what, according to the best of our judgment, is the real sense of the sacred author. Preachers, I know, will sometimes make a very plausible appearance of supporting their side of the question by a passage of Scripture, which in the detached way wherein they quote it, appears very favorable, but which, taken in connection with its context, means something totally distinct. For my own part, were the doctrine meant to be defended ever so truly a Scriptural doctrine, I could not approve an attempt to support it by such a misapplication of holy writ, and consequently by misleading the hearers in regard to the sense of particular portions of Scripture. This is like bringing people to submission to magistracy, by perverting the sense of the law; and though a person may be fighting in a good cause, one, who takes this method, fights with illicit weapons. If it be safer to be under God's direction, than under any man's, it must be safer to exhibit to the people the sense of the sacred oracles purely and candidly, leaving it to them to form the conclusions and make the application. This I take to be preaching not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves the people's servants for Jesus's sake. The contrary method is indeed preaching ourselves, it is abounding in our own sense, and even wresting the word of Christ to render it subservient to our opinions. I would not by any means, however, be understood to pass so severe a censure on the misapplication of a passage of Scripture arising from a mistake of the sense, a thing to which the wisest and the best are liable, but only on an intended misrepresentation of the true meaning, in order to make it serve as evidence of a point we are maintaining. That I may be better understood in the aim of this remark, I shall produce an example in the way of illustration. In support of this doctrine, that whatever is done by unbelievers, even those actions which are commonly accounted most laudable and virtuous, are of the nature of sin; it has been sometimes very gravely and very confidently urged, that the apostle says expressly Rom. 14: 23, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Yet this expression, (however

apposite it may appear, when cut off from the passage with which it stands connected), has not the remotest relation to that famous question. When recourse is had to the apostle himself, and the occasion of the affirmation, we find it is brought in the conclusion of his reasoning, in regard to a point much disputed in that early age of the church, the observance of a distinction in meats and days. And though the apostle explicitly declares his own conviction, that no kind of meat is in a religious view unclean of itself, yet he is equally clear, that to him who esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean, because he believes it to be so. Hence he justly concludes, that he who doubteth is liable to condemnation, if he eat; because he acts against the dictates of his conscience, even though a misinformed conscience, he himself not believing that he does right, "for," he adds, "whatever is not of faith is sin;" whatever action is not accompanied with a belief of its lawfulness, is so far criminal, as it shows in him who commits it a presumptuous disposition to violate the rights of conscience. But this has not the least reference to the belief of the principles, tenets or doctrines of Christianity, but merely of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of certain actions. It deserves also to be remarked, that, in the matter discussed by the apostle, it is of no consequence, for rendering the action virtuous or vicious, whether the things believed be true or false; but barely that they be believed, and that our practice be conformable to our belief. To act against conviction or belief, he tells us, is a sin, to forbear acting in such a case is a duty, even though the thing believed be a falsehood. Nay it is, in fact, against what he himself acknowledgeth to be an erroneous faith, that he declares the man justly condemnable who acts. Now when such a perversion of the sacred text as I have been illustrating, is made knowingly by the speaker against his better judgment, it is without doubt what the apostle calls "handling the word of God deceitfully," even though the sentiment, in support of which it is produced, be a true sentiment and conformable to the doctrine of holy writ. There is a candor and simplicity, which ought ever to attend the ministry of religion, not only in regard to the ends pursued, but in regard to the means employed for the attainment of the ends. Castalio in the defence of his Latin translation of the Bible against Beza, who had attacked him with a virulence which savors too much of what, not greatly to the honor of polemic divinity,

has been called the *odium theologicum*, amongst other things mentions an accusation, for translating the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis in this manner, "Jussit Deus ut existeret lux ut exitit lux." And the reason of Beza's animadversion is, that in his opinion, Castalio had by so doing suppressed an important argument for the trinity. "Moses," says Beza, "purposely used the verb *amar*, *said*, that he might indicate another person in the Godhead distinct from the person of the Father, and from the person of the Holy Ghost, namely, the Son of God, by whom the whole series of creation was enunciated. The evangelist John, taking occasion hence, calls him *λόγος* the word, and proves him to be God, and to have been in the beginning with God. But this man (meaning Castalio), excluding the verb *said*, in which the greatest moment and principal weight is placed, expresses only in his version the signification of the verb *ihī, fiat.*" Thus far Beza; in which remark, if he was sincere, as we are bound in charity to believe, it is impossible, whatever his erudition and other talents might be, to think otherwise than meanly of his skill in criticism. I own at the same time that I like the common translation, *Dixit Deus, Fiat lux, et facta est lux*, much better than Castalio's, and that, not indeed for Beza's reason, which is no reason at all, but merely because it is more conformable to the simplicity and dignity of the original. Castalio's answer to the above charge, though it would perhaps be thought too ludicrous for the seriousness of the subject, justly exposes the absurdity of his antagonist. "*Haec sunt illius verba, quibus nihilo aptius argumentatur, quam si quis ita dicat; Moses in illis verbis, Dixit serpens feminae, cur vobis dixit Deus, etc. data opera usus est verbo amar, dixit, ut alteram in diabolo personam distinctam a persona patris, et a persona spiritus impuri, nempe filium diaboli insigniret; nam certe simillima est locutio.*" He subjoins this sentiment, in which every lover of truth will cordially agree with him. "*Ego veritatem velim veris argumentis defendi, non ita ridiculis, quibus deridenda propinetur adversariis.*" How much more modest, in this respect, was Calvin, whose zeal for the doctrine will not be questioned, than either Beza or Luther? This last had exclaimed with great vehemence against both Jews and anti-trinitarians, for not admitting that in these words, in the first verse of Genesis, *God created, bara Elohim*, there is contained a proof of the trinity, because the noun signifying *God*

in the Hebrew has a plural form, though joined to a verb in the singular. Calvin on the contrary refutes this argument or quibble rather, at some length, and adds judiciously, speaking of this expression, "Monendi sunt lectores ut sibi a violentis ejusmodi glossis caveant." I remember once to have heard a sort of lecture, on the miraculous cure of Bartimeus's blindness from perhaps the most popular preacher, I cannot add the most judicious, that has appeared in this island in the present century. From these words of the blind man, addressed to Jesus, who had asked him what he would have done for him, "Lord, that I may receive my sight," the preacher inferred not only the divinity of Jesus Christ, but Bartimeus's faith in this article. "He could not," said he, "have given him the appellation *Lord*, *Κύριε*, had he not believed him to be God." And yet Mary gave the same appellation, *Κύριε*, to Jesus, when she took him for no higher person than a gardener. The same appellation was given by the jailer to Paul and Silas, the prisoners under his care, *Κύριοι*. In the first of these places our translators have rightly rendered it *Sir*; in the second, *Sirs*. Indeed it is notorious, that both in the Greek version of the Old Testament and in the New, the word like *Dominus* in Latin, or *Signore* in Italian, is applied indiscriminately, as a term of respect to God or to man. I own I could not help concluding in my own mind from the remark, Either you must be exceedingly ignorant in regard to the book you pretend to explain, or you treat sacred writ with a freedom and artifice, that suits better the subtlety of the Jesuit, than the sincerity of the Christian divine. If a man wanted to render truth suspicious to people of discernment, I know no better way he could take, than to recur to such cavils in order to support it.

But to return to the method of treating the proofs, from which I am afraid I shall be thought to have digressed too long. I observed on entering on this article, that when the controversy is reducible to one simple point, and when there is only one opposing sentiment to be refuted, the preacher might make the refutation of objections the first head of discourse, and the defence of the doctrine proposed the second. And if nothing can be said, in refutation, but what will naturally find a place in treating his argument, there is no necessity that the discourse should be divided into separate heads. One conclusive argument in many cases, is as good

as a great number ; for every part does not admit variety. Nor ought a division into different heads to be considered as a thing indispensable. Sometimes indeed when there is but one argument, it will very properly admit a division, as the conclusion rests on two propositions called premises ; when neither of these can be said to be self-evident, it may be made the subject of the first head, to support one of the premises, and of the second, to support the other. I shall borrow an instance from a late attempt of my own in this way, as no other at present occurs to my memory. The design was to evince the divinity of our religion from the success of its first publishers. The argument stood thus. "First, the natural means originally employed in propagating the gospel were utterly inadequate, and must have proved ineffectual, if unaccompanied with the divine interposition. Secondly, the means employed were, however, eminently effectual beyond all example before or since. Consequently they were accompanied with a divine interposition, and our religion is of God." But every argument does not admit this division ; for often one of the premises is either self-evident, or which amounts to the same, received by those against whom we argue. On the contrary, when the subject is complex and the opinions of the adversaries various, it will be better not to make a separate head of refutation, for where there are many jarring sentiments to be set aside there is a danger of distracting the mind by multiplicity. Let the truth be defended by arguments distinctly explained and enforced, and in doing this, especially when the topics are drawn from holy writ, occasion may be taken of refuting the contradictory glosses or expositions of the opponents as you proceed. In this the preacher ought to consult carefully, what will give most simplicity and perspicuity to his reasoning. Further, a question is sometimes capable of being divided into two or more, distinct though intimately related questions. In that case the heads of discourse may be the examination of each. When the arguments are numerous, it is better to class them under a few general heads or topics for the sake of memory, as those from reason, those from Scripture, and the like.

As to the arrangement of the arguments, there may sometimes be in them a natural order, as when a right apprehension of one is previously necessary to the full conception of another. When they are not of this kind, the speaker ought to consider the disposition of his hearers. If their prejudices

rather oppose his doctrine, he would need to begin with what he thinks will have the greatest weight with them, lest otherwise, by introducing the debate with what they shall think frivolous, he should disgust them in the entry, and avert their attention from what he has further to offer. In general, rhetoricians have recommended to begin and end with the strongest arguments, and throw the weakest into the middle. It is as important, that you should leave a good impression on their minds in ending the debate, as that you should bespeak their favorable attention by what is of consequence in the beginning. They would have the orator act, in this respect, like the experienced commander, who puts his weakest troops into the middle; for though he has not the same dependence on them, as on those in the front and the rear, he knows they are of some use by their number, and add to the formidable appearance of his army.

The *conclusion*, here, may very properly be introduced by an abstract or recapitulation of the argument, followed with a suitable improvement of the doctrine proved. There does not seem to be any material difference, in what constitutes a fit conclusion to an explanatory discourse, from what would suit a controversial one. Doctrine is the general subject of both discourses. In the one it is explained, in the other it is proved. The direct aim of the first is knowledge, but then the conviction or belief is taken for granted. The direct aim of the second is conviction. In both, the proper application is the influence which the knowledge and belief of such a truth ought to have on our dispositions, and on our practice. Perhaps in the conclusion of controversial discussions, it might not be amiss to offer some observations with a view to moderate the unchristian animosities, which differences on these articles sometimes occasion among those, who all profess themselves to be the disciples of the same Master, and to show in general that error is more properly a ground of pity than of indignation.

LECTURE XI.

OF COMMENDATORY DISCOURSES, OR THOSE ADDRESSED
TO THE IMAGINATION.

WE have now discussed the discourses addressed to the understanding, those two especially, the explanatory, whose end is information by dispelling ignorance, and the controversial, whose end is conviction by vanquishing doubt or error. I come now to that species which is addressed to the imagination. For as one way and indeed a very powerful way, of recommending religion is by example, it must be conducive to the general end of preaching above mentioned, to make it sometimes the scope of a sermon, to exhibit properly any known good character of a person now deceased by giving a lively narrative of his life, or of any signal period of his life, or an account of any particular virtue, as illustrated through the different periods of his life. For performances of this kind, the history of our Lord affords the richest fund of matter. In like manner, the lives of the saints recorded in Scripture, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles and the martyrs, such at least with which, from the accounts given in holy writ, we have it in our power to be acquainted, make very proper subjects. Add to these, deceased persons eminent for virtue and piety, whose characters are well known to the people addressed. Panegyrics of this kind on departed friends were more in use formerly, and commonly distinguished by the name of funeral orations. As praise of this kind was however sometimes prostituted, and as the usage itself in certain circumstances exposed the preacher to the temptation of making a sacrifice of truth from motives of interest, it is perhaps, upon the whole, no disadvantage to the ministerial character, that the practice is in this country almost entirely laid aside, and that we are now very much confined in this respect to the examples which the sacred canon presents us with. Now to do justice to the respectable qualities and worthy actions of the good, is to present the audience with a beautiful and animated pattern of Christian excellence, which, by operating on their admiration and love, raiseth in their minds a pious emulation. That we are, without attending to it, induced to imitate what we admire and

love, will not admit a question. It might not want its use, though Scripture hath not afforded here so large foundation or so ample materials, to delineate sometimes, in proper colors, the conduct of the vicious with its natural consequences, in order to excite a proper degree of horror and detestation against vice. But this, it must be owned, would require to be handled still more tenderly. It is our duty to love and esteem the virtuous, but not to hate and abhor the vicious. Our hatred and abhorrence ought to be pointed only against vice, but not against the persons addicted to it, whom, in pity, we ought rather to study to reclaim. And though the individuals themselves should be dead, and consequently in this respect beyond our power, whatever bears the odious appearance of calumny and personal invective is quite unbecoming the pulpit. Exhibitions in either way from the pulpit form that species of discourses, which falls under the third class above enumerated. They are addressed to the fancy, and their scope is to promote piety and virtue by insinuation, that is, by the gentle but efficacious influence of example. Discourses of this kind were distinguished among the ancients by the name *demonstrative*; but as that word in our language is rather equivocal, I have chosen to denominate them, *commendatory*, from the purpose to which they are most commonly applied.

In regard to the choice of a text, as there is here sometimes greater difficulty of uniting all the qualities which were formerly mentioned, as characteristical of a proper text, greater indulgence must be given. At any rate, let it be perspicuous and expressive of the happiness or amiableness of a well spent life, or of those virtues which the discourse itself will give principal scope for extolling. An appositeness to the individual person who is the subject of the sermon, when it is a funeral oration, cannot be had, and therefore, an appositeness to the character is all that can be sought. When the person, who is the subject, is one of the Scripture saints, it is better to choose for a text some passage, wherein he in particular is spoken of. As to the introduction or exordium, there does not seem to be anything very special requisite in this kind. The common qualities that ought to affect introductions in general have equally place here. They should be calculated to render the hearers attentive, docile and benevolent.

With regard to the explanation of the text and context,

unless they could in some way contribute to the illustration of the character, which is the subject of the eulogy, it were better not to attempt it. If the text be sufficiently perspicuous and apposite, there can be no necessity; and there is no sort of discourse to which anything, that has the remotest appearance of verbal criticism is worse adapted than to this. The design of the sermon should be proposed with simplicity and distinctness. One may add the mention of the method, in which it may be thought proper to prosecute the subject, unless it shall appear to be so simple and natural as to render even the bare intimation of it superfluous.

As to the method in which the different parts should be digested and arranged, that may be different as suits the particular taste and talents of the speaker, or as suits best the materials he hath to work upon. All the methods that occur to me for treating subjects of this kind, may be reduced to the three following. First, the order of time may be followed. This method I shall call the *historical*. If this be the disposition adopted, there can be no question as to what should precede and what should succeed in the discourse. If there be much ground to go upon, it may not be amiss, for the ease of the memory, to divide the life you are to recommend as a pattern, into certain distinct periods, proposing to consider each severally in its order. If the materials you are supplied with for this purpose are not very plentiful, or if, whatever has been remarkable in the person's life which can be of any service to you, is comprised within a narrow compass of time, it will be better to follow the natural order without using the formality of proposing it to the hearers, or dividing the discourse into separate heads, for this ought never to be considered as absolutely necessary. The second method of arrangement is, by considering separately the most eminent virtues displayed in the life you propose to recommend to the admiration of your hearers. This I shall call the *logical* method. Suppose the subject, for example, were the life of Jesus Christ, and one were inclined to divide the virtues thereby illustrated into three classes, those which have self for the immediate object, those which have other men, and those which have God. The greatest objection I know of, that lies against this method is, that it generally occasions frequent recurring to the same actions and events, in which different virtues may have been illustrated. This, unless managed very dexterously, will have the appearance of tire-

some repetitions. But to return to the example given of the life of Christ. Each of the heads above named may be illustrated through all the different periods of his life, or they may be subdivided into inferior branches. For example, the first of these, the duties a man owes to himself, may be understood to imply the virtues of humility, temperance and fortitude; humility or a superiority to pride and vanity, temperance or a superiority to appetite, and fortitude or a superiority to fear. But such subdivisions are not often convenient, inasmuch as they commonly tend more to burden than to assist the memory. If the preacher were to make one of the general heads only, the whole subject of one discourse, such a division of that head would be very proper. But if the whole example of Christ is the subject of a single discourse, the case is very different. Subdivisions for the greater part ought to be avoided. The sort of discourse, to which they seem most adapted, is the explanatory, whose principal excellence appears to be in perspicuity and precision. Let it be observed, however, that the method implied in a subdivision may often be conveniently followed, when it is not in so many words proposed. A third method, that may be employed in panegyrical discourses, as when two or three memorable events or actions are the sole fund, from which all the materials employed by the encomiast must be derived, is to illustrate the virtues displayed in the person's conduct, on these several occasions, as the separate heads of discourse. And this method may, for distinction's sake be denominated the *dramatical*. As to the manner of prosecuting the design through all its different branches, I do not intend to enter into particulars. It is not my purpose to give a full institute of eloquence, but only to apply to the pulpit, as far as they are applicable, the general rules laid down by the ancients, referring you to their writings for the illustration, and particularly to remark to you the differences which the very different nature of the subject, of the occasion, of the end, of the character to be supported by the speaker, and of the character of the audience, should give rise to. Now it must be acknowledged, that no sort of discourse from the pulpit hath so close a resemblance in respect both of the subject and of the end, and sometimes also of the occasion, to the judicial and deliberative orations, as this sort of encomiums hath to the demonstrative orations of the ancients. To their institutes, therefore, I must refer you for more particu-

lar information. It is not my intention by these lectures to supersede the study of ancient critics and orators, but only to assist you in applying their rules and examples to cases so different from those with which alone they were concerned. I shall, therefore, in these discourses, insist chiefly on what is different and peculiar in the eloquence of the pulpit.

And here, one of the first differences that offers itself to our observation, is, that the ancients had a much wider range in what might properly be made the subject of their praises. Pedigree, intellectual abilities, even qualities merely corporeal, such as beauty, health, strength, agility, nay those commonly called the goods of fortune, as riches, friends, rank, all came in for a share in the encomium. I do not deny that any of these may passingly be mentioned in a sermon, but it would ill become the dignity of the sacred function, to enlarge on these qualities in such a manner, as to seem to place a merit in things, which are totally independent of our will, and of which therefore the commendation in another can be of no service to a hearer in the way of example; but may, on the contrary, very readily do hurt in teaching him to place an undue value on things not in his power, and about which, as a Christian, he ought not to have the least anxiety. Nothing, therefore, must appear to be the subject of panegyric to the preacher, but moral excellence. Nothing ought to be enlarged on as a topic of discourse, but what can properly be held up to the audience as a subject, which it is incumbent on them to imitate; in other words, as the object of a noble emulation. I acknowledge, that those other qualities, accidental in respect of us, as I may call them, which have no necessary connection with virtue or religion and are only physically good, may find a place in a discourse of this kind, when they are introduced not for their own sakes, but, as it were, in passing and in order to set off real virtues. Thus the high birth of the person you extol, may be mentioned in order to add the greater lustre to his humility; his riches may be taken notice of by the way, in order to show how well he understood the proper use of wealth, and in order to set off to the greater advantage how moderate he was in regard to gratifications merely personal, and how liberal and charitable in supplying the wants and contributing to the accommodation and comfort of others. It will be easily understood, that in the same way almost every such advantage of person or fortune may be introduced. This would not be to

exhibit wealth or nobleness of birth, as an object calculated to excite the ambition of the hearers, a thing exceedingly absurd in any, but more especially in the preacher of the humble religion of Jesus; but it would be to give an instructive lesson to the rich and noble, in regard to the use they ought to make of these advantages. It must be owned on the other hand, that qualities physically bad may be rendered instrumental for the same purpose of giving higher relief to the virtues of the character. Thus the poverty of the person may serve greatly to enhance and recommend his patience, his contentment, his resignation, his prudence, his economy, nay even his charity and beneficence. In like manner, low birth and want of education may be made subservient to display to more advantage the industry and application of mind, which could surmount these signal disadvantages so perfectly, that the defect could never have been discovered from his behavior and conversation. And of this kind we should say, as of the former, it is not recommending poverty and inferiority in point of birth to our estimation, but it is exhibiting a pattern to the poor and ignoble, whereby they may be instructed how to convert such apparent evils into real occasions of improving their virtues, and of rendering these more than a sufficient compensation for every want. The ancient rhetoricians, though not so delicate on this point as Christian teachers ought to be, were yet sensible that this was the best use that could be made of fortuitous advantages or disadvantages. Thus Quintilian, "*Et corporis quidem, fortuitorumque, cum levior, tum non uno modo tractanda laus est. Interim confert admirationi multum etiam infirmitas, ut cum Homerus Tydea parvum sed bellatorem dicit fuisse. Fortuna vero cum dignitatem affert (namque est haec materia ostendendae virtutis uberior) tum quo minores opes fuerunt, eo majorem benefactis gloriam parit.*" The following sentiment is indeed excellent, and well deserves our attention. "*Sed omnia quae extra nos bona sunt, quaeque hominibus forte obtigerunt, non ideo laudantur, quod habuerit qui eas, sed quod his honeste sit usus. Nam divitiae et potentia et gratia, cum plurimum virium dent in utramque partem certissimum faciunt morum experimentum: aut enim meliores propter haec, aut pejores sumus.*"

In regard to this species of discourse, as the immediate object is to please by presenting to the imagination a beautiful and finished picture in suitable coloring, it admits, from

the nature of it, more of ornament than any other kind delivered from the pulpit. There are few of the tropes and figures of eloquence, that may not properly find admission here. This is a kind of moral painting; and greater allowance is made for introducing things which serve merely the purpose of decoration, when the immediate object is to delight. Here too there is generally more indulgence in point of style, than can be admitted in any other species of sermon. In respect of flowers and harmony, this kind borders even on the poetical. Yet still it must be remembered, that this indulgence hath its bound. Whatever soars above the reach of the congregation, whatever appears either unintelligible or affected, is still faulty and offensive. I observe further, that in regard to the very ornaments, of which the different sorts of discourses are susceptible, such as metaphors, comparisons, examples, these in the thoughts as well as in the language should be different in the different kinds. In the explanatory, all the borrowed illustrations and similitudes ought to be from things familiar and simple, as well as exhibited in a distinct and easy manner. In the controversial kind, the simplicity and perspicuity of the decorations, though still of consequence, are not so much regarded as a certain forcible manner of impressing the imagination, so as to carry conviction along with them. The similes here ought to be all a kind of analogical argument. Again, in the commendatory discourses, whose end is neither to inform nor to convince but to please, the principal quality in the fund of the imagery to be employed is its beauty. No metaphor, however like or apposite, ought ever to be admitted here, that is not taken from an agreeable object. Under the general term agreeable, I must be understood to comprehend, not only the beautiful, strictly so called, but also the grand, the sublime, the wonderful and the new, if with these qualities there be not connected anything that is disagreeable, mean, ugly or deformed.

As to the manner of concluding discourses of this kind, any one or two or even all of the three following may be adopted, according as the preacher shall judge most suitable to the time, the subject and the occasion. First, you may make out, from the actions and behavior you have been delineating, a clear and distinct character of the person. Or, secondly, you may introduce a contrast between the conduct of the person commended in some of the most memorable in-

stances, and that which there is reason to believe would be followed, or which commonly is followed by the generality, even of professing Christians, in the like circumstances. Or, thirdly, you may conclude with a more direct application to the passions of the hearers, in order to excite in them a generous ardor to be, themselves, what they cannot contemplate or behold without admiring. The first of these methods is far the most difficult. To draw a character, which shall be at once both just and striking, which shall set the different features in the most conspicuous point of view, that shall mark not only the exact turn of each, but the manner wherein they limit and set off one another, requires indeed the delicate hand of a master in the rhetorical art. It is attempted by every dabbler in historiography, but it is not one of a hundred that succeeds. Let it be observed, that a character thus introduced in the conclusion of a sermon of this kind, ought in every part of it to be manifestly supported by the particular actions and conduct delineated in the discourse, and should serve to recall to the memory and impress on it more strongly those particulars. As to the manner, a good deal of care and attention is necessary. The prevailing taste at present seems to be, to give the whole in a string of antitheses, the great dexterity of which consists in this, to make the contrasted members come as near as possible contradicting one another, and yet escape being really contradictory. Very often they do not escape this. But though I do by no means blame the use of antithesis in drawing characters, a matter of particular nicety, in as much as in this way, when well executed, the precise boundaries of the different traits are more precisely ascertained, yet a continued train of this figure through successive sentences, however well it may pass in history, has by far too artificial and elaborate an appearance to suit the seriousness and the simplicity of the pulpit diction. As much conciseness, as can be rendered consistent with perspicuity, is very suitable here.

The second kind of conclusion mentioned, by a contrast between the conduct delineated and that of others, is often a very pertinent application of the subject, inasmuch as it makes the virtues of another serve as a mirror to the hearers wherein they may discover their own vices and defects. It deserves only to be observed further on this article, that it is not necessary, that this part should be confined to the con-

clusion. When anything noble, generous, humane or pious is illustrated in the discourse, as displayed on any signal occasion, it may very properly be contrasted with the conduct either of any real character on record, or of what we know from experience to be the conduct of the majority of Christians. And this may be done in any part of the discourse. It is only when the narrative is both very affecting, and excites such an anxiety in the hearer for obtaining the sequel of the story and knowing the issue, that it is better not to interrupt the thread of the narration, but to reserve any intended contrast to the conclusion. When a contrast can be found in true history, it generally answers better than when it is merely hypothetical, founded in common experience.

The third method of concluding, by an address to the passions of the hearers, is the most common. This may be either general and have a relation to the whole, or it may consist of two or more particular addresses, referring respectively to the different virtues celebrated, or to some of the most memorable actions related in the discourse. Thus much may be said in general of all these different kinds, that no observation made or motive urged here can be called apposite, unless it have a manifest reference to, and be founded in the facts related and the virtues celebrated in some part or other of the body of the discourse.

I must further observe, that the pathetic is more easily attained, and that the transition to it appears more natural in the conclusion of a commendatory sermon, than in that, either of an explanatory discourse or of a controversial. In these two kinds, during the whole tenor of the discourse which is of a nature merely speculative, the understanding and memory only are exerted, as the whole consists either in explanations or in reasonings. This is rather unfavorable for emotion, and it requires a good deal of address to pass successfully from one to the other. The mind cannot all at once from a state of perfect coolness, enter with warmth and keenness into the views of the speaker. It behoves him, therefore, in beginning such an address, to take up the point on the key, if I may so express myself, to which he knows their souls are at the time attuned, and gradually to work them up to that pitch to which he wants to bring them. If he act a contrary part, and break out all at once with heat and violence, when they are perfectly cool, so far from ope-

rating on their affections, or influencing their will, he will appear to them like one distracted, who flies into rage for he knows not what. No axiom is more important for bringing us to succeed in the pathetic, than this, that in addressing the hearers, we must enter with them on the subject in the same tone which their minds are predisposed at the time to take it up in, and then insensibly work them up to ours. A prudent speaker, who perceives a coldness or indifference in his audience, will judge it necessary to disguise his own warmth, and to appear willing to canvass the matter as coolly as they can desire. If he succeeds thus in entering on it, and has the address for a little while to manage them, he may carry them at last, to what pitch he will. We have an excellent example of this kind of address, in the funeral panegyric which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Antony on his friend Julius Caesar, immediately after his murder in the senate-house.

But to return, I repeat the sentiment as an important one, that nothing tends more strongly to make us deaf to what another says, than if he appear to be in a passion, when we are quite tranquil. Now the panegyric discourses much more easily pass into the pathetic, than either the explanatory or the controversial. There is a near affinity between the moral sentiments with the emotions they occasion, and the passions and affections of the mind. The gradation is perfectly smooth and natural from approbation to admiration, from admiration to esteem and love, from esteem and love of the virtuous and praiseworthy, to detestation and abhorrence of the contrary dispositions, and from these to corresponding desires and aversions. The orator has only to take the advantage of this gradation, and that frame of spirit which the whole scope of the discourse was calculated to produce.

LECTURE XII.

OF PATHETIC DISCOURSES, OR THOSE ADDRESSED TO THE PASSIONS. OF PERSUASIVE DISCOURSES, OR SUCH AS ARE INTENDED TO OPERATE ON THE WILL.

I HAVE NOW gone through the explanation of the principal parts of the three first kinds of pulpit discourses, the explan-

atory, the controversial and the commendatory, and the rules to be severally observed in composing each. I come now to the fourth kind, the pathetic, or that which is addressed immediately to the passions, and which is specially intended to rouse the mind from a state of languor and indifference to the impressions of fervor and affection. The occasion of discourses for this kind with us, it must be owned, are not very frequent. For though in some of the other kinds, particularly in the persuasive, a great deal is addressed to the passions, yet these are, in that species of sermon, only employed as means to persuade to the particular practice or duty recommended. Whereas in the pathetic, properly so called, the rousing of suitable affections is apparently the ultimate end. I acknowledge, that the whole of preaching either directly or indirectly points to persuasion. But I denominate that only, the end of any species of discourse, which is the declared and apparent end of the speaker. I have observed, that the occasions of discourses of this kind are few; there are however some. None is more remarkable or occurs oftener, than those calculated for disposing a congregation to a suitable commemoration of the sufferings of our Lord, in the sacrament of the supper, or Eucharist, as it is commonly named in Ecclesiastical History. I do not say, however, that this is the only kind of discourse that is adapted to such occasions. By no means. If that were the case, as the subject of exciting the affections on such occasions is always the same, it would lay a minister in his own parish under the necessity of recurring so often to the same topics, as could not fail to prove tiresome to the majority of the hearers, and that though the things advanced by him were ever so good. An explanatory, a commendatory or a persuasive discourse, may also at such times be very pertinent. A little of the grace of novelty in form and manner, is exceedingly necessary for commanding the attention of the greater part of audiences. The only kind that I think ought to be excluded entirely from occasions of this nature, is the controversial. When the pathetic at such a time is made choice of, the preacher's aim is not to persuade the people to communicate. He supposes, that they have come to church with that intention. It is not to persuade them to the performance of any preparatory duty; all this he supposes to have been performed already. But it is to operate on all the grateful and devout affections of the heart, and to put his hearers, I may

say, in a proper frame of spirit for discharging the duty for which they are assembled, in such a reverend and pious manner, as may produce the best effect upon their minds, and tend most to the edification and confirmation of themselves and others. The subject for this purpose may be more or less comprehensive, as the preacher shall judge convenient. Indeed, for the sake of giving a little variety to what does not, from its nature, admit a great deal, it may not be improper at different times to follow different methods; at one time, for instance, the subject may be the love of Christ as manifested in the whole scheme of redemption; at another, the same thing, as manifested in his sufferings and death. It is discourses of the last kind, which are commonly called passion-sermons.

In regard to the exordium or introduction, there will be less occasion for much art, when the solemnity of the time or the purpose of their meeting tends itself to rouse the attention of the hearer, and to supersede the address of the speaker. The topics for introducing the subject may then very pertinently be raised either from the intention for which the day was set apart, or from the nature and importance of the matter to be treated in the sermon. There is nothing peculiar to be observed in regard to the explanation of the text and context. If the discourse is intended merely to display the sufferings of our Lord, from his being betrayed into the hands of his enemies to his death, the cruelty which was exercised upon him, and the meekness, piety and patience with which he bore it, it does not appear to be necessary formally to lay down a method. It is enough in your narrative to follow the order of the history. In the manner of the exhibition, there will not be here a very material difference between that of the commendatory or panegyric discourse and this of the pathetic. Only the latter admits less show and ornament, and requires that we dwell longer on the most affecting circumstances. When the preacher's subject is such as doth not confine him within so narrow a compass, but affords an opportunity of expatiating on topics in themselves very distinct, but as it were concentrating in the tendency they all have to kindle the same affection in the breast; this common tendency gives a sufficient unity in discourses of this kind. The reason is obvious.

It may be remarked, that in this sort of discourses, more of the common textuary method may sometimes be followed, than any other species of sermon will properly admit. Thus

suppose the text to be 2 Cor. 8: 9, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The whole intention of the discourse being to stir up grateful and devout affection, these topics may severally and very pertinently be touched as tending all to the same important point. First, the consideration of the person, whose grace the apostle here celebrated, the Lord Jesus Christ who was rich. Secondly, the consideration of the persons, on whom this grace was bestowed, *you* (it was for your sakes) the posterity of fallen Adam, poor and helpless. Thirdly, the evidence and effect of his grace, "he became poor." Fourthly, the happy fruits and purchase of his grace, "that ye through his poverty might be rich." It is manifest that each of these considerations, as it were, assists the other, all conspiring to kindle the warmest return of gratitude and love. Thus all pointing to one end, a grateful commemoration, gives unity to the discourse. Another instance of a text, which on such an occasion, and for such a purpose, may very properly be divided in a similar manner, is that in 1 Pet. 3: 18, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." This is all of the verse, that, in a consistency with the unity of scope and design, should be taken into the text. The subject in effect, perfectly coincides with the former; and the distribution may be in other words the same. First, Christ the just. Secondly, us the unjust. Thirdly, "he suffered for sins." Fourthly, "that he might bring us to God." Each consideration severally enhances the obligation, and consequently the gratitude. In the manner of treating the different topics, one ought carefully to avoid all dry, minute, abstract and metaphysical explanation, as well as everything, that may savor too much of argumentation and dispute. We are to remember, that this kind of discourse is very different in its nature and complexion, both from the explanatory and from the controversial. These are intended only to enlighten, but the other to warm. The view of the speaker, in these several topics in a pathetic discourse, is not to inform the hearers of what they did not know before, it is not to convince them of what they did not believe before; but it is to bring to their remembrance truths which, though both known and believed, require often to be depicted in the most striking colors, that they may produce their congenial effect on the susceptible

heart of the Christian. It is manifest, therefore, that cold and formal explanations, critical discussions and abstract ratiocinations are here carefully to be avoided. A few lively strictures on the several heads, exhibiting all the principal considerations in the most glowing colors, are the surest way of raising such images in the fancy, as not only will give a greater permanency to the perception of the truths themselves, but will make them more effectually operate on the passions. In discourses of this kind, there is less occasion also for a formal peroration or conclusion than in any other. The reason is, that whereas a certain application in the other kinds, of the points discussed in the body of the discourse, requires a particular address to the passions, there cannot be the same propriety of ending in this manner here, where the whole discourse is addressed to the passions. Something, therefore, which in few words may serve to set the whole object full in view, to recall and infix the impressions already made, is all that is necessary in discourses of this nature.

I shall now, in the last place, consider the fifth species of discourse mentioned, that which was intended to operate upon the will, and which was denominated persuasive. Under this I include not only those sermons, whose end is to persuade to good, but those also which are calculated to dissuade from evil; for the structure and the rules of composition in both kinds are much the same. Here the distinguishing excellence results from a proper mixture of the argumentative and pathetic, as it were, incorporated together. Let it be observed that I use the word pathetic, in the largest acceptation, for whatever is fitted for exciting passion, affection or desire. The argumentative is necessary, because the intention of the speaker compriseth in it to convince the judgment, that is, for example, to satisfy me that the conduct which you recommend is agreeable to my duty, that it serves to promote my true interest, or is conducive to my honor or my peace. The pathetic is also necessary, because the speaker's intention does not terminate in the conviction of the judgment; he intends also and principally, by means of the judgment to influence the will. To make me believe, it is enough to show me that things are so; to make me act, it is necessary to show that the action will answer some end. That can never be an end to me, which gratifies no passion or affection in my nature. In order to persuade, it is always necessary to move the passions. Passion is the mover to ac-

tion, reason is the guide. Good is the object of the will, truth is the object of the understanding. It is only through the passions, affections and sentiments of the heart, that the will is to be reached. It is not less necessary, therefore, in the orator to awaken those affections in the hearers, which can be made most easily to coöperate with his view; than it is to satisfy their understandings that the conduct to which he would persuade them, tends to the gratification of the affections raised. But though both are really purposed by the speaker, it is the last only that is formally presented to them, as entering into his plan. To express a formed purpose to work upon their passions, would be like giving them warning to be upon their guard, for that he has a design upon them. *Artis est celare artem.* Such a method, on the contrary, would be to lay the artifice quite naked, and thereby totally to defeat its end. The emotion with which they perceive him agitated, and the animation of his language, far from being the result of a deliberate settled purpose, ought to appear in him, the necessary, the unavoidable consequences of the sense that he has of the unspeakable importance of the truths he utters, joined with an ardent desire of promoting the eternal happiness of them who hear him. It is not, therefore, here one part that is pathetic, and another argumentative; but these two are interwoven. The most cogent arguments are earnestly urged and pathetically expressed.

With regard to the whole of the introductory part, and explanation in this sort of discourses, I have nothing peculiar to remark. I shall only observe, that as to the text, it suits this kind better than any other, that it be in the form of a precept. I do not say, however, that this form is absolutely necessary. The end of the speaker may be, either to persuade to a Christian life in general, or to the performance of any Christian duty in particular. On the other hand, it may be to dissuade from a vicious course in general, or from the practice of any sin in particular. Nay further, it may be a persuasive or a dissuasive general or particular, either from all the motives that the nature of the subject will afford, or from one class of motives only. There is such a richness and variety in the motives that may be urged, where religion is in the question, that in order to avoid being superficial, it may be very proper for a pastor amongst his own flock, as he has frequent opportunities of addressing them, sometimes to enforce the same duty from one set of motives and sometimes

from another. If the speaker's design be to comprehend in the same discourse all the arguments which the nature of the subject admits, his text should be either a simple precept, wherein the duty is enjoined or the sin prohibited but no motive urged ; or perhaps a simple proposition, wherein such a practice is barely pronounced right or wrong. If the intention is to persuade from one class of motives only, there should be something in the text, that points to these motives.

Thus in the first case, suppose the speaker's intention be to persuade to repentance from every motive which either reason or Scripture affords, his text may be the simple command *Repent*, which occurs in several places of the gospel ; or if he does not like one so brief, he may take these words of the apostle Paul, Acts 17: 30, " God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." But if he would persuade to repentance from the single consideration of its connection with the remission of sins, these words of Peter, Acts 3: 19, will do better, " Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ;" for the words *be converted* are merely explanatory, and therefore do not render the sentiment complex, whatever may be said of the expression. Or, if the speaker's intention, (which is near of kin to the former,) be to persuade to repentance from this consideration, that future misery is the inevitable consequence of final impenitence, he may take these words of our Lord, Luke 13: 5, " Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." To a Christian life in general one may persuade from various motives. Suppose from the native excellence of genuine virtue or true righteousness ; the text in that case may be Prov. 12: 26, " The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor ;" or from the present felicity to be found in the ways of religion ; these words, Ps. 19: 11, " In keeping of them there is great reward," may serve as a text. Let it be observed, that such a text as this requires some explanation of the context, without which the subject is not to be understood, the matter spoken of being expressed by a pronoun. When this is not the case, and when the passage adopted appears independent and perfectly intelligible by itself, it may stand for a general rule that such explanations are better let alone, and deserve to be considered but as a sort of digressions at the best. If the intention were to persuade to a good life from the consideration of the comfort it brings in trouble, and especially in the views of death, this passage might answer, Ps. 37: 37,

“Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” Bourdaloue, a celebrated French preacher of the last century, persuades to the same thing from the consideration of the future happiness of the saints from these words of our Saviour, Luke 6: 23, “Behold your reward is great in heaven.” It deserves to be remarked, that there is here not only a reference to the context for the character or conduct to which the reward is promised, but that when you recur to the preceding words, they seem rather to refer to this in particular, the suffering of persecution and reproach for righteousness’ sake. Yet as this itself is one of the noblest fruits and surest evidences of real sanctity, the choice cannot justly be deemed an inexcusable liberty. The reward is very properly considered, as ultimately to be attributed to that principle from which the conduct flows. In persuading to particular duties, or dissuading from particular vices or temptations to vice, when the speaker intends, (as it is not indeed so common here to confine one’s self to one class of motives,) to employ every argument of weight, which the subject presents to him, a single precept, briefly and plainly expressed, seems the most convenient choice for a text. If the design is to persuade to the love of God, these words are proper, Matt. 22: 37, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” If to the love of men, verse 39, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” These passages may, in like manner, serve as foundations for discourses explanatory of these duties. And as was remarked on the controversial sermon, we may observe here, that the minister in his own parish may, if he thinks it necessary, begin with a discourse explaining the duty enjoined or the vice prohibited, (if the text contains a prohibition,) and in his next discourse from the same words make it his business to persuade them to the one, or dissuade them from the other. But in many cases it must be acknowledged, that such previous explanatory discourse is not necessary; the full import of the precept being perfectly level to every ordinary capacity. Thus if the subject were to dissuade from the vice of lying, a proper text would be these words of Paul, Col. 3: 9, “Lie not to one another.” If against detraction, James 4: 11, “Speak not evil one of another.” In such plain cases, it must be owned, there would be little occasion for many

words, and much less for a separate discourse, in order to explain the import and extent of the prohibition.

In regard to the method, however different the matter be, as something of the argumentative form must be preserved, the rules laid down in the controversial discourse may be of some use. One may begin, with showing the weakness of those pleas or arguments by which the dissolute, the vicious or the profane commonly defend their own conduct, and seduce others into the same track; and then produce positive arguments or motives to influence his hearers to that conduct which he recommends. Or it may not be necessary, to make a separate article of the adversary's plea; a place for whatever is requisite in this way may be found by the preacher, as he proceeds in the support of his own cause. In this case the different topics of argument may constitute the heads of discourse. Bourdaloue, on the text above mentioned, proposed to persuade his hearers to a pious and virtuous life from the consideration of the recompense that awaits the just in the world to come. And from these three different qualities of that recompense, its certainty, its greatness, its eternity, he finds topics of argument for influencing his hearers to a proper regard to it. And these three topics divide the discourse. In treating each, he contrasts that quality he is illustrating with something of an opposite nature ever to be found in the rewards or pleasures of sin, their precariousness in opposition to its certainty, their insignificance in opposition to its greatness, and their transitoriness in opposition to its eternity. As to the method, in which the different topics are to be arranged, the same observations will hold that were made on the controversial discourse, and therefore shall not be repeated. The arrangement above mentioned seems to be the best in that particular subject, yet I could not say it were absolutely necessary. You may begin perhaps with equal propriety with the greatness of the reward, as with its certainty; but in any case, it seems most fit that you should conclude with the eternity. When the different motives are mentioned in the text, the preacher may very properly take notice of the different clauses, as the foundations of his different heads. But when they are not explicitly mentioned, it savors of conceit and puerility to make them out by straining the words. This is a fault into which the last mentioned orator, misled by the taste of the age and nation, frequently falls. Of the three topics aforesaid, only

one can properly be said to be expressed in the text, namely, the greatness; yet he finds something in the words to serve as separate foundations to the several heads. First, says he, I shall consider the certainty pointed out in the emphatic term with which the sentence is introduced, *Ecce*, behold. Secondly, the greatness, *merces vestra multa est*, your reward is great. Thirdly, the eternity, *in coelo*, in heaven. It may not be amiss to observe, that in making the transition from one topic or head of discourse to another, it will often prove very helpful to the memory, to point out in brief how much you have already evinced, and what you are in the next place proceeding to evince.

As to the conclusion, it is very proper, first, to give a sum of the argument, in order to infix the whole more effectually on the minds of the hearers, and then more warmly to address the passions. If the preceding part has been suitably conducted, the people will be prepared for entering into the subject with all the warmth that the speaker can desire. The way of practical inferences or speculative corollaries is not well suited to this kind of discourse. With regard to the first, the whole tenor of the sermon is practical, and therefore needs not a formal application of this kind; besides, that to enforce anything else than what was the direct aim of the whole, is really diverting the hearers' attention, and in some degree undoing the effect of what was said. Still more unsuitable are inferences, relating merely to the truth or the falsehood of certain tenets. When the discourse is a persuasive to the Christian life in general, or to some necessary and important duty immediately connected with the whole, as to repentance; in the peroration, one may very pertinently urge some motives to induce the hearers to enter without loss of time on doing that which they must be sensible, it is both their duty and their interest to do. This is no other than advancing the aim and effect of the whole. In this part, however, he ought carefully to avoid the formality of proposing and arranging his topics. For this would give the appearance of a new and a separate discourse, to what was intended only as corroborative of the discourse preceding.

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