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ART. I.—*The Manner of Preaching.*

SOME years ago we offered some views to our readers in regard to the "Matter of Preaching."* Intimately associated with this, of course, is the Manner of Preaching. It was within our purpose and hope to present some thoughts to them on this latter subject when an opportune season should arrive. Various circumstances have deferred the execution of this design thus far. But we propose now to call the attention of our readers to some simple and obvious views on the subject, which, we hope, will commend themselves as neither unseasonable nor unprofitable.

We do not propose to offer any novel theories; nor to essay any formally scientific or exhaustive view of the subject; nor to bring it under the canons of formal rhetoric, the technics of art, or the methods of the schools. These are all valuable in their place. We are the last to disparage or supersede them. What we have to offer will be concentric with, and, if to any extent outside of, not in opposition to them. Or rather, it will aim to assist in more fully realizing the best principles of science and art as related to this subject. Our standpoint for remark and suggestion is simply that of a somewhat extended

* See *Princeton Review*, October 1856.

observation—made, too, in the light of considerable personal pastoral experience—of the points in the manner of preaching, which augment or impair its efficacy. Following this method, it is very likely that we shall advance little that is novel, or unfamiliar to our readers, including even those most deeply concerned. Our object is not so much to say new things, as true things; which, however well they may be understood theoretically, are widely disregarded in practice; whereby the preaching of the word and the services of the sanctuary suffer great loss of power and efficacy. And we do not mean to limit our observations to the sermon, but to be free to touch upon whatever affects the edifying power of any part of public worship. The plainer, more familiar, and acknowledged any truth is, the greater is the necessity of urging attention to it, if the cause of religion is seriously suffering from its being widely unheeded and ignored by those whose prime duty it is to obey and exemplify it. Because it is a commonplace and undisputed truth that men ought to live within their incomes, or to give systematically, as God prospers them, to Christ, his cause, and his poor, it does not follow that such truths do not require to be set forth and urged, often and emphatically.

Here one or two preliminary questions demand notice. What is to be understood by the “Manner of Preaching,” and of other parts of divine service? Whether we succeed in the answers and definitions called for by this question, or not, few probably will misunderstand our subject. Supposing the matter of preaching to be right, *i. e.*, to be the truth as it is in Jesus, rightly divided, in due scriptural proportions, to the various classes for whom it is designed, then the great difference between different preachers lies in their manner of setting forth this truth. Now since, for substance, the great mass of our preachers, at least in our own church, may be presumed to preach this truth, the greatest differences among them lie in their manner of presenting it. The former is the fixed, the latter the variable quantity. And it is in this fluctuating element that we find the secret of the vast difference of power and effectiveness in the preaching of different ministers—a difference so vast, that the same glorious gospel falls dead from the lips of one preacher upon audiences, to which it comes, from

another, all aglow with light and warmth, kindling the most earnest attention, conviction, and persuasion; and, when it pleases God to give the increase, penetrating their souls with the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Now, it is undeniable that, supposing the orthodoxy and piety, and the distribution of the different elements of truth, substantially the same in these two sorts of preachers, the difference lies in the *manner* of putting it. And this *manner* reaches all those points in the *expression* of this divine truth by the preacher, on which the *impression* of it upon the hearers depends. Again, this depends on the structure and style of the discourse itself—its clearness, freshness, both its penetrating and finding a response in, the consciousness of the hearer, its aptness of application; in short, its *FORCE*, argumentative, emotive, pathetic, and persuasive. Nor is this all. Suppose the sermon, as to its structure, perfect, a model in the foregoing points; and suppose it be so spoken, either that it cannot be heard; or, if heard, that it be so faulty in articulation and emphasis, that its meaning is only feebly and partially conveyed to the audience—is not all frustrated through this fundamental failure? Whatever merits the discourse has, if it be so spoken as to be lost upon the people, is not all lost? "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14. Or, with a preacher who so speaks as to be unheard, or heard to no purpose? These questions are clearly self-answering, whatever contempt any may cast upon style and utterance in preaching.

But the question meets us, is the success of the gospel dependent upon the manner of the preacher, and not rather upon the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? We answer, that this is raising a false issue. We admit and insist that the whole success of the gospel, however and by whomsoever preached, is due to the power of the Holy Ghost, causing the hearers to "receive it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe." 1 Thess. ii. 15. This, however, no way militates against our position. The Holy Ghost operates through the truth. We are begotten and sanctified through the truth instrumentally; and although this work of the Spirit

be above nature, it is nevertheless in harmony with, not in subversion of, our rational and voluntary faculties, and their normal action. Such is the explicit testimony of Scripture. But why argue this? Is not the command explicit to "preach the gospel to every creature"? But why this, unless the presentation of it to the human soul be indispensable to win such soul to the obedience of faith? "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. i. 21. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" This settles the whole question. If the gospel must be presented to men in order to their salvation, it is a part of this necessity that it be really, truly, effectively set forth. That is all. The manner of preaching becomes important only as it has to do with the real and effective presentation of the gospel—as it clears away impediments, and supplies helps to the due apprehension and appreciation of the great objects, truths, and duties of religion; to their being duly received and believed, loved and obeyed; and so exercising that moulding and transforming influence which, through grace, they are designed and fitted to exert.

"In Homiletics, as in Rhetoric, we must begin with a just notion of eloquence. The notion appears to us to include two elements: one, subjective, which is but the power of persuading; the other objective, which is moral truth or goodness. It is not, in fact, we who are eloquent, but the truth; to be eloquent is not to add something to the truth, but to render to it its own; it is to put it in possession of its natural advantages. It is to remove the veils which cover it; it is to leave nothing between man and the truth. We may be eloquent in a bad cause, but never without giving to evil the appearance of good. Eloquence dies in an infected air."—*Vinet's Homiletics*, p. 252.

This representation is entirely just. Eloquence does not add to the truth, but simply affords it its natural advantages, by fairly displaying it. The difference, therefore, between the modes of preaching, is simply this: that a good and genuine manner allows, while a vicious manner denies, to the truth, its intrinsic and legitimate force.

It is only presenting the same truth from another side, to say that the essence of all that is valuable in the manner of

preaching is FORCE. And by force is meant simply those kinds of energy in the representation of gospel truth which aid it in penetrating the intellect, the conscience, the affections, and the will—all that clears the way for truth to work with its own appropriate power. It does not necessarily mean vehemence, much less violent extravaganzas of argument, or noisy appeal, or mock pathos, or profuse imagery, magnificent or vulgar, or stentorian explosions, with proportionally formidable gesticulations, stampings, and grimaces. Much of this sort often destroys genuine force. The most gentle, deliberate, tender, subdued modes of address are often the most effective, and therefore the most forcible. It is in this manner of preaching that we frequently witness the word of God endued with its most ethereal temper and penetrant edge—a very sword of the Spirit, “piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. iv. 12.

It may not be amiss, withal, just here, to put in a *caveat* against one not impossible nor unnatural misconstruction. A good manner of preaching, as of speaking or writing, universally, is at a heaven-wide remove from *mannerism*. A good manner and *mannerism* are mutually exclusive. *Mannerism* is the unvarying adherence to a certain manner, for the sake of that manner, and making the matter and shape of the discourse subordinate and subservient to this manner;—the former a mere frame-work on which to exhibit the latter. The *mannerist* makes a certain manner his end, and sacrifices all else to it. A good manner, on the other hand, is simply subservient to the matter, to rendering the truth manifest, conspicuous, and effective. It varies as it may best subserve this end. It does not exist for itself, or as an ultimate end at all, but as the instrument for powerfully manifesting the truth, the glass through which it is most completely displayed and beheld. *Mannerism* in any literary or oratorical production, so far as it goes, tends to a spurious and feeble product. In the pulpit it is simply nauseating, a badge of impotence. We have sometimes seen preachers otherwise quite respectable, or more than respectable, greatly impairing the efficacy of their performances by a pet *mannerism*, so demonstrative as to subordinate

all else to its overbearing dominion. But by far the worst cases of this kind have been young preachers, imitating the tones and ways, even to the faults, of eminent preachers whom they admired. How common was it for the pupils of the late Dr. N. W. Taylor, and of Dr. Archibald Alexander, to try to repeat them, as to style, manner, and voice, in the pulpit! How is this sometimes attempted, even with regard to oddities, endurable or even pleasing in extraordinary men, in whom they are natural and original, but absolutely shocking and intolerable when copied by small and mediocre men, in whom they are simple monstrosities! However the late Dr. Lyman Beecher might interest his auditors by his strange swinging to and fro of his spectacles, what more ridiculous than the aping of this, or the like things in other celebrated preachers, by their juvenile admirers? The contortions and gyrations of some celebrated living preachers, greatly as they may infringe the canons of the schools, are often interesting and impressive, because original and spontaneous; but when poorly mimicked by second or third-rate imitators, they become disgusting and horrible enormities. In short, affectation of any sort in literature and oratory, but especially in the preaching of the truths of God, is its bane. It is to all products of the mind, and especially to sacred oratory, precisely what hypocrisy is to religion—its negation and ruin. And this truth cannot be too intensely realized by all concerned.

Preliminaries thus being cleared, and the true point at which we aim defined so as to preclude all misconstruction, we ask the attention of our readers to a few things in the manner of preaching and conducting public divine service, which are requisite to give the truth its own inherent efficacy, or to afford it a fair chance to exercise its power.

1. It is obviously true, not only of the sermon, but of all the exercises of the sanctuary, that, however excellent otherwise, they are of no avail, unless they are HEARD. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" In this negative sense we may subscribe to the canon of eloquence attributed to the prince of orators, that in oratory the first, second, and third thing is delivery. All is lost without effective delivery.

A man may, indeed, be a mere empty declaimer, a *brutum fulmen*. This makes it none the less true that all else, however good, is lost without an effective delivery.* Now this does not mean merely that a rumbling, or thundering, inarticulate sound can be heard. The glory and power of the human voice lies in its articulate speech—articulate in the speaker, and to the hearer. Speaking, therefore, whether soft or loud, which fails to reach the hearer in perfectly distinct and easily understood articulate sounds, is no better than preaching in an unknown tongue. Does this seem too obvious to need stating? But so long as it is constantly and widely violated—so long as there are greater or less portions of the preaching and worship, as conducted by multitudes of ministers, which cannot be distinctly and intelligibly heard by any effort of attention—does not this simple principle need echoing and reëchoing, till every minister attends to it, and makes it sure that, in any event, he is heard by all who have ears to hear?

2. But it is not enough that the words and syllables be distinctly enunciated and heard. This may be, and be wholly meaningless and powerless. It may convey no sense, or a wrong sense; no thought, or the contrary of that intended; no feeling, or what is wholly alien and unsuitable. It is not mere words and syllables, but propositions or sentences that affirm or deny anything, and series of such sentences that convey any consecutive thought. Now the force of these sentences cannot be spoken without appropriate emphasis and accent upon the significant words. Whateley gives the following sentence as capable of six different meanings, determined by the emphasis.

* "We cannot take leave of these illustrious preachers, (Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon,) without inquiring into their *manner of delivery*. Like the ancients, they regarded it as an essential branch of oratory, paid to it eminent attention, and are said to have carried it to a high degree of perfection. Bossuet (as we have already intimated) seldom wrote all that he said. Retaining in his memory what he had composed in his closet, he filled up the unfinished sketch in the pulpit, and found a readiness of expression, marked with energy and grace. Bourdaloue and Massillon wrote their discourses in full, and preached *memoriter*; the latter so accurately that, when asked which he regarded as his best sermons, he replied, 'those which are the most exactly remembered.'"—*Thoughts on Preaching*, by Dr. J. W. Alexander, p. 415.

“The organon of Bacon was not designed to supersede the organon of Aristotle.” It is easy to see that six different meanings may be given to it by making as many different words emphatic. In short, nothing is more evident, than that appropriate emphasis and pauses are indispensable to bring out the meaning of any language, however simple and lucid, to a popular audience. How much, then, depends upon manner of delivery, beyond mere audible, distinct, and articulate utterance! All the inflections, tones, swells, cadences of the human voice, with accompanying signs in the eye, the face, the motions of the body and limbs, are but wondrous powers of *expression* in order to *impression*. Let each one so master his own powers, that, in his own way, free and natural, yet corrected of faults, not in any stiff, artificial conformity to cast-iron rules, he may truly utter the meaning, the thought, the feeling, which the case requires. There can be no minute or rigid prescriptions how to do this. Each one, in order to genuine force, must act out himself—which he will do all the better, not by negligent or indolent following of nature, but by training his powers to play in that natural, yet correct, easy, and forcible manner, in which art conceals art, by perfecting nature. The principle that delivery ought to be such, as most effectually to express the sense and feeling of the speaker, is universal. No uniform and unrelenting rule can be laid down by which every man can reach this result. Graceful and forcible gesticulation often adds to the impressiveness of speaking. Yet we know of some of the celebrated and permanently commanding preachers of our country, who seldom, if ever, move an arm or a hand in preaching; and unless such motions are spontaneous and natural, they detract from, more than they add to, the sermon.

The above views have full application to the reading of hymns, scripture, and public prayer, in connection with the preaching of the word. Who has not been pained to hear the loftiest and tenderest hymns, the most pregnant and touching portions of Scripture, so mauled and murdered in the reading, as to fall dead upon all the audience who were not thrown into spasms of torture? How often do ministers, not without deserved repute on other accounts, render this portion of their

public services totally unedifying by their mechanical, dead, unmeaning, and unfeeling manner of conducting it? How often does the voice reflect as little of the force and beauty of the original, as the sound of a wood-saw? How often do they appear to undertake it as if it were a schoolboy task set them, and to be got through with at the least possible cost of time and effort? Sometimes the opposite extreme prevails, of overwrought and misplaced emphasis, artificial solemnity of intonation, and intolerable mannerism. But either way, the sense, force, and edifying efficacy of these services are lost—a loss of most serious magnitude. The true style of utterance here, as in preaching, is that of earnest conversation, modified by the subject and the attitude of the reader, and intensified in proportion to the greatness of the theme and of the audience. It is a grievous error to suppose that these parts of divine worship are too unimportant to require serious effort for duly performing or leading them. Every one who has given attention to the different effect of these exercises, as conducted by different preachers, knows the contrary. One of the ablest jurists of our country, but of a sceptical turn, was brought to tears on hearing a hymn so read as to express its real meaning, by a minister of our church yet living. The simple story of Absalom's death, and David's lamentation over it, as recorded in Scripture, when read in the most unaffected and unostentatious manner, but with fit emphasis, never fails to enchain assemblies as by a spell. Who has not seen and experienced it? But when otherwise read, how does it fall dead, its exquisite pathos being evaporated, and “wasting its sweetness on the desert air”?

Essentially similar observations, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to public prayer. Where the thoughts and aspirations expressed are devout, scriptural, and appropriate, the extent to which they touch the heart of the congregation, and enlist the people in united worship, in spirit and in truth, greatly depend on the language and tones employed. In order to the best devotional effect, the language of prayer should be simple, chaste, and elevated. The order of topics should be appropriate, each flowing out of what precedes, in a natural order. The whole thought, style, and utterance should be devout, fervent, tender,

simple. It should be fitted to kindle sympathetic feeling, and concurrent outpourings of soul to God, in the congregation.

3. As to any more minute details in regard to delivery, whether of the sermon or other parts of divine service, it is not our purpose to expound them. If any are aroused to seek further light in this regard, we can only refer them to the masters of the art. We will only offer a single caution. Let no remorseless artificial rule be set up to constrain all sorts of ministers, as if an enforced conformity to it would make them orators. Such precepts, however suited to promote effective delivery in some, often crush out all oratory in others, by fettering their proper individuality. As we have before indicated, appropriate gestures often add greatly to the force of delivery. But, however correct, according to the strict precepts of the art, if they are mechanical, and not a spontaneous outgoing and demonstration to the auditor's eye, of the speaker's mind when uttered to the ear, they burden and weaken, instead of strengthening the utterance. Hence, none should be fettered in this matter. As we have said, some of the most forcible preachers rarely gesticulate. The same may be said of other points in delivery. Monotony is fatal. In order to avoid it, a great variety in the intonations of the voice, abundant alternations from loudness to softness, from vehemence to gentleness, from swells to cadences, are requisite. Most preachers greatly impair their delivery through excessive monotony, arising from the want of such variations. And yet, such is the mysterious manifoldness of the powers of expression in different persons, that cases are not wanting of eminently powerful speakers and preachers, who have held the riveted attention of their hearers, under a continuous and almost monotonous loudness of delivery. The want of variety in the stress of the voice was compensated by extraordinary richness, fervour, and distinctness, combined with unusual force, beauty, and aptness of matter and style. Such cases, however, are anomalous—interesting to note, dangerous to follow. We remember an instance, in which a preacher confined his eyes to his manuscript, and kept his voice almost at one unvarying pitch, through a discourse marked by deep and compact thought for over an hour; and yet, in spite of these drawbacks, he

contrived, by the affluence of his thought, diction, and imagery, and by an almost impassioned earnestness of utterance, to infuse a *vis vivida* into his performance, which enchained all hearers to the end. Of course, imitation of such an example would be fatal for ninety-nine out of every hundred. And scarcely less so would be the imitation of the few preachers, who have been successful with any thing like a monotonous elevation or depression of voice in delivery. Variety in this matter is a prodigious relief both to preacher and hearer. The effort of the speaker is far less exhausting, and continuous attention in the hearer becomes far less difficult. This needs no proof to the careful observer.

It also deserves notice, that mere variety in tone and stress of voice is not of itself sufficient. The variations must be intelligent and appropriate. Vehemence of delivery must be employed where the sentiment or feeling uttered is so likewise. So of the subdued tones. They should come where they are the fit utterance of corresponding phrase, thought, or emotion. We have known good discourses spoiled or damaged by the violation of these principles—by stentorian vociferation and thunderous explosions of tame and common passages, while the more significant places were allowed to drop upon listless ears through a dull and spiritless utterance. This mock animation or oratorical variety is among the most distressing and tantalizing of pulpit crudities.

4. Without setting forth minute rules, if such there are, for attaining propriety and force in this respect, we will indicate one great principle of oratory, peculiarly liable to be violated by the ministry, the due observance of which will help to regulate all else, and set all preachers essentially right, each after the order and manner of his own native endowments. The orator must always bear in mind that he is speaking *to* others, and not soliloquizing his own thoughts to himself in the hearing of others. Such thoughts and utterances, however splendid, truthful, and important, are not oratory. Here is the secret of the utter failure of some magnificent thinkers and writers, who are truly devout and evangelical, in the pulpit. The orator speaks not merely in the hearing of others, but *to* others, in order to enlighten, convince, persuade, and move

them. This is fundamental. Now, the more fully the preacher realizes this standard, and approximates it, the more fully he addresses himself to his audience as one who is bent on convincing and persuading them in reference to matters of inestimable importance; the more simply and earnestly he reasons with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, arraying before them the terrors of the Lord which persuade, and the love which constrains; the more completely will he fulfil all the conditions of true eloquence; the more certain will he be to reach the tones, emphasis, vehemence, variations, which render delivery forcible and effective. There is no substitute for this attitude of mind and address towards the assembly. Where it exists, the most essential requisites to good delivery, according to the native capacity of the speaker, will rarely be wanting.

Another requisite intimately implicated with the preceding, is, that the discourse bear largely the impress, the life, the warmth of the speaker's own thinking. The interest and ardour begotten by careful meditation on any subject are obvious and familiar. The effect of this in infusing propriety and animation into the delivery, as compared with saying off commonplaces at once threadbare by repetition, and however important, yet to the speaker lifeless, because his mind has not been kindled by reflection upon them, needs not to be argued. While we muse the fire burns. Dullness in the apprehensions of the mind is apt to betray itself in deadness of utterance.

It may, however, be replied, that the fundamental truths of the gospel on which salvation depends, are few and immutable; moreover, that the preacher has no commission to proclaim his own thinking, but to preach the gospel, the word of God, the preaching that God bids him; not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. This is true, properly understood. And, so understood, it does not militate against, but rather confirms what we have advanced. Although these truths, in one aspect, are few and immutable, yet are they vast any many-sided. To discover and unfold this amplitude and manifoldness, constantly opens up new fields of reflection to the greatest mind. Take the Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption. What mortal eye can take in all that belongs to these ineffable truths, and their prac-

tical bearings too, at any single survey, or series of surveys? If the mightiest intellect, during the longest life, cannot exhaust the knowledge of our globe, even that which is practically beneficial, how much less the knowledge of the Infinite God? Or even of that immeasurable love in Christ, which while we are to seek and pray that we may comprehend with all saints, yet evermore passeth knowledge?

Not only in themselves, but in their applications, have these truths an immense variety of adaptation to the ever-varying circumstances of men. We see in the Bible itself these endlessly ramified applications. In no other book do we find such unity in such an inexhaustible variety. Its truths, though unchangeable, are living roots, which run out into endless branches, leaves, and fruitage. So they are

“ Ever new and ever young,
And firm endure while endless years,
Their everlasting circles run.”

Hence thought and study are indispensable to all effective and genuinely animated preaching. This is a divine requirement. “Meditate upon these things. Give thyself wholly to them: that thy profiting may appear to all.” “Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Without such study there can be no adequate insight into divine truth or its applications; no ability nor aptness to teach it; no warm and life-like presentation of it. Those who have thought and felt powerfully on any subject; who have reached clear views and strong statements; whose souls have come to be aglow with the ardour of earnest thought; and who yield themselves to the natural utterance of a soul thus animated and earnest; can hardly fail of an effective delivery.

5. It is but a further specification under this head, to say that preaching will be effective in itself, style and delivery, in proportion as it aims to accomplish some certain result upon the whole or a portion of the audience. A sermon will take effect, other things being equal, in proportion as it is prepared and delivered for the purpose of moving the hearers, or any of them, to some particular convictions, feelings, purposes, or

conduct; and in proportion as it is without any such object or aim, it will be likely to be feeble in thought, style, and delivery. All this is so true, that we constantly hear sermons, in one sense brilliant, and even magnificent, in thought, imagery, and language, which are yet powerless, because they are aimless; and many discourses otherwise pleasant, are destitute of all force and edifying efficacy, mainly for a like reason. On the other hand, discourses which aim to work some definite conviction, feeling, or purpose, in the assembly, or any portion of it, if sufficient time and labour be given to their preparation, seldom fail to be given forth in a clear and forcible style, and with spirited and effective utterance. This is so apt to be true, that we have known discourses prepared for one class of hearers especially, characterized by a force and point which rendered them interesting and powerful with very different sorts of hearers. We have known sermons originally prepared for and delivered to college students, abounding in special allusions to their peculiar pursuits, temptations, necessities, delivered with still more marked effect to promiscuous congregations. We have known some go so far as to say that a sermon, prepared for and aimed at a single individual, and surely hitting its mark, would tell with power and profit upon any assembly. However extreme such a judgment may be, as a universal proposition, there is no doubt of its truth in some instances. Still less can we doubt the principle of which it is an exaggeration.

In saying that a discourse, to be effective, and to induce good delivery, should have a purpose, we do not mean that it should never have any aim but to move to some immediate action. It may aim to overthrow error, and establish right belief in its place. It may aim chiefly to exhibit, in an impressive manner, attributes and works of God, so as to awaken devout admiration, trust, and hope, and excite to "wonder, love, and praise." But this, and much else the like, is none the less preaching with an aim and purpose, fitted to evoke the best powers and efforts of the preacher. Such are sermons on the Attributes, Works and Ways of God, the Kingdom of Christ, the Glories of Heaven.

This carries with it the unity which the rhetoricians demand in a discourse; a unity sustained by early fastening the atten-

tion on some proposition or point, on which the preacher concentrates the mind of his hearers, and around which all his arguments and illustrations cluster. Loose and scattering discourses will not command earnest and continuous attention, or make any decided impression. It is a psychological law, that the intensity of attention is inversely as the number of its objects. All the lines of thought and imagery in an effective discourse, should converge to one bright, burning, focal point, thus concentrating a light and heat that cannot be unfelt. This principle adhered to will spontaneously correct a multitude of minor faults, and tend to remove whatever obstructs its force in style or delivery.

6. It is, moreover, but another form or necessary implication from what we have just been saying, to add that preaching will have power just and only in proportion as the preacher throws his whole soul into the message he delivers. This will show itself in earnestness, the life of all preaching. He is an ambassador. He is to plead the cause of his Master as though God did beseech by him; as a "dying man to dying men;" as though an eternity, the fate of the deathless soul were at stake; as though the honour and glory of his adorable Lord were involved in the issue. This zeal for God must not only be according to knowledge, but it must be the earnestness of love—love to Christ and the souls for which he died. Fanaticism is earnest, but it is also malignant. It luxuriates in denunciation, wrath, and terror. It hurls anathemas, not as being constrained, in love and faithfulness, "by the terrors of the Lord to persuade men" otherwise immoveable, but in frigid indifference, or as sporting with the arrows of the Lord, the imagery of woe. McCheyne, in so many respects the model of a pastor and parish preacher, asked a ministerial brother who told him that he had been preaching on the eternal torments of the lost, "Did you do it tenderly?" When Dr. John M. Mason, in his return from Scotland, was asked wherein lay Chalmers' great strength, he replied, "It is his blood earnestness." The following language of John Angell James, also a rare model of the pastor and preacher, vindicates itself.

"Do not these two words, *affection* and *earnestness*, include the very essentials of a successful ministration of the gospel?

They are intimately related, for can there be affection without earnestness, or earnestness where there is no affection? In listening to some preachers of the gospel, you perceive a deplorable want of both of these. All is didactic, heartless intellectuality. The preacher is a lecturer on the gospel; and the sermon is a mere lecture; all true, perhaps clear, but there is nothing which makes the audience feel that the preacher loves them, or is intensely anxious to save them, and is preaching to them the gospel for this very purpose. No minister can be a good and effective preacher of the gospel who does not produce on the minds of his hearers the conviction, 'This man is intent on saving our souls. He would save us if he could.' What can interest us like the interest manifested for us? How weighty a motive power is the exhibition of a sincere and ardent affection! To see a man rousing up all the energies of his soul to do good, using all the powers of persuasion, the tear starting in his eye, the flush spreading over his face, the very muscles of his countenance working, till we seem to feel his very hand laying hold with a grasp of our soul to save us from perdition! Oh, the force there is in such preaching! This gave the charm, the power, and, in subordination to the Spirit of God, the success to Whitefield's preaching."

The mention of Whitefield, a name which lives from generation to generation, while he has left to posterity no sermons or other literary monuments except an occasional fragment, that would exalt him above the most commonplace sermonizers, is a standing and stupendous illustration of all that we have said, and more than we have said, of the power of fine delivery, when kindled by holy earnestness and seraphic love. Such of his sermons as were published and have come down to us, though fervent and evangelical, seldom rise above a decent mediocrity, and furnish no clew to his power and fame. These had their origin in other qualities, to some of which we have referred, and which gave him an ascendancy, in public address, over vast assemblies of men of all descriptions, which has been rarely paralleled in ancient or modern times.

This was partly due, in connection with the qualities already noted, to his extraordinary histrionic power, and his marvellous tact in seizing all circumstances and occasions which he

could turn to account, in making the truth stand out as a living and present reality to his audience. This vivid and life-like portraiture, whether by verbal description, vocal representation, or the dexterous working of the eye, the face, the limbs, the entire person, whatever, in short, contributes to graphic expression, is unquestionably one of the elements of might in the preacher. And while the histrionic gift is a perilous one for ministers of unbalanced minds or feeble piety, it is a powerful instrument in the hands of those wise and devout preachers who know how to use it without abusing it.

“Sometimes he (Whitefield) would set before his congregation the agony of our Saviour, as though the scene was actually before them. ‘Look yonder?’ he would say, stretching out his hand, and pointing as he spoke; ‘what is that I see? It is my agonizing Lord! Hark! hark! do you not hear? O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!’ . . . Sometimes, at the close of a sermon, he would personate a judge about to perform the last awful part of his office. With his eyes full of tears, and an emotion that made his speech falter, after a pause which kept the whole audience in breathless expectation of what was to come, he would say: ‘I am now going to put on my condemning cap. Sinner, I must do it; I must pronounce sentence upon you!’ and then, in a tremendous strain of eloquence, describing the eternal punishment of the wicked, he recited the words of Christ, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’ When he spoke of St. Peter, how, after the cock crew, he went out and wept bitterly, he had a fold of his gown ready, in which he hid his face.”

“Remarkable cases are related of the manner in which he impressed his hearers. The man at Exeter is an instance, who stood with stones in his pocket, and one in his hand, ready to throw at him; but he dropped it before the sermon was far advanced, and going up to him after the preaching was over, he said: ‘Sir, I came to hear you with an intention to break your head; but God, through your ministry, has given me a broken heart.’ A ship-builder was once asked what he thought of him. ‘Think!’ he replied, ‘I tell you, sir, every Sunday

that I go to the parish church, I can build a ship, from stem to stern, under the sermon; but were I to save my soul, I could not lay a single plank under Mr. Whitefield.' The story of Franklin, who went to hear him preach a charity sermon, predetermined to give nothing, being so moved as first to empty his pocket of his coppers, then of all the silver, and finally of all the gold, he had with him, is doubtless familiar to all.

“The manner in which he once turned a thunder-storm to his purpose has been thus narrated: Before he commenced his sermon, long, darkening columns crowded the bright, sunny sky of the morning, and swept their dull shadows over the building, in fearful augury of the storm. His text was, ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ ‘See that emblem of human life,’ said he, pointing to a shadow that was flitting across the floor. ‘It passed for a moment, and concealed the brightness of heaven from our view; but it was gone. And where will ye be, my hearers, when your lives have passed away like that dark cloud? O, my dear friends, I see thousands sitting attentive, with their eyes fixed on the poor, unworthy preacher. In a few days we shall all meet at the judgment-seat of Christ. We shall form a part of that vast assembly that will gather before the throne; and every eye will behold the Judge. With a voice whose call you must abide and answer, he will inquire whether on earth ye strove to enter in at the strait gate; whether ye were supremely devoted to God; whether your hearts were absorbed in him. My blood runs cold when I think how many of you will then seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Oh! what plea can you make before the Judge of the whole earth? Can you say it has been your whole endeavour to mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts? that your life has been one long effort to do the will of God? No! you must answer, I made myself easy in the world by flattering myself that all would end well; but I have deceived my own soul, and am lost!

“You, O false and hollow Christian, of what avail will it be that you have done many things; that you have read much in the sacred word; that you have made long prayers; that

you have attended religious duties, and appeared holy in the eyes of men? What will all this be, if, instead of loving him supremely, you have been supposing you should exalt yourself in heaven by acts really polluted and unholy?

“And you, rich man, wherefore do you hoard your silver? Wherefore count the price you have received for him whom you every day crucify in your love of gain? Why, that, when you are too poor to buy a drop of cold water, your beloved son may be rolled to hell in his chariot, pillowed and cushioned around him.”

His eye gradually lighted up, as he proceeded, till towards the close, it seemed to sparkle with celestial fire.

“O sinners!” he exclaimed, “by all your hopes of happiness, I beseech you to repent. Let not the wrath of God be awakened. Let not the fires of eternity be kindled against you. See there,” said he, pointing to the lightning which played on the corner of the pulpit—“’Tis a glance from the angry eye of Jehovah! Hark!” continued he, raising his finger in a listening attitude, as the distant thunder grew louder and louder, and broke in one tremendous crash over the building, “It was the voice of the Almighty as he passed by in his anger!”

As the sound died away, he covered his face with his hands, and knelt beside his pulpit, apparently lost in inward and intense prayer. The storm passed rapidly away, and the sun bursting forth in his might, threw across the heavens a magnificent arch of peace. Rising, and pointing to the beautiful object, he exclaimed, “Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it. Very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heavens about with glory, and the hands of the Most High have bended it.”

7. The one thing which all this illustrates is the great importance of vivid representation, and graphic portraiture in pulpit as well as other oratory. This may be, and in its best estate is, the product of a combination of powers, argumentative, imaginative, descriptive, vocal, histrionic. Or it may more prominently arise from some one or a part of them. It may be, in greater or less degrees, attached to a spinal column of solid thought and adamant logic. But in some form,

this graphic power is observable in all preachers, who have long been able to command promiscuous crowds of hearers. It is marked in the great French pulpit orators, in the McLaurins, Chalmers, Irvings, Guthries, Melvilles, and Spurgeons, of Britain, in the Davies, Bellamys, Griffins, Masons, Alexanders, Summerfields, Larneds, and others of the commanding preachers, living and dead, in our own country—not excepting the metaphysical Edwards, who had his vein of poetry too.

8. If discourses, *ceteris paribus*, have power in proportion as they are vivid and graphic, it is far more fundamental that they be intelligible to the audience, including, as far as may be, all classes of hearers. As already set forth, the great truths of the gospel, in their manifold applications, must constitute the staple of preaching. As the gospel is to be preached to every creature, so it follows that it must be adapted to the understanding of every creature, and should be so presented as to be intelligible to every creature, *i. e.*, every creature who is held to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a requisite to salvation. This, to be sure, does not mean that preaching is never to have any special adaptation to the class of persons to whom it is addressed. It does not mean that a missionary to the Zulus should preach in just the same style as the pastor of a highly cultivated American congregation; or that an address to young children should be precisely like a discourse to an assembly composed largely of liberally educated men. Divine authority requires milk for babes in Christ, and meat for strong men—a grade of instruction for those advanced in Christian knowledge and experience, which would ill befit those who have need that one “teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” Yet, as illustrating the importance of “great plainness of speech” in preaching, we may remark in passing, that we have more than once known ministers make their strongest impression on the maturer portion of the congregation, in felicitous discourses especially prepared for and addressed to children.

Making due allowance, however, for the more or less rudimentary character of Christian teaching, according to the stage of experimental and doctrinal knowledge in the hearers, and possibly some other slight exceptions, we are of opinion that

the style of preaching which is most effective and profitable for one class of hearers, is so for all. There is much less ground for what may be called class-preaching than is generally supposed. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all." The same apostle, mighty at once in learning, logic, eloquence, and zeal, was a "debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." Rom. i. 14. No philosophic or literary preaching, which was yet a true preaching of Christ, could make him other than foolishness to the unregenerate Greek; no concessions or explanations which did not sacrifice the gospel, could make it otherwise than a stumbling-block to the unrenewed Jew. But it was one Christ crucified, clearly set forth, that, to both Jews and Greeks, was the power of God and the wisdom of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 28. For we have a "common salvation." "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv. 4—6.

As Christianity is thus one for all, presenting the same glorious objects, meeting the same wants, appealing to the same radical susceptibilities, in all, of every class, it might be inferred *a priori*, that the style of preaching which is most profitable to all classes is essentially the same. There is less need of different sorts of sermons for people of different grades of culture, wealth, social rank, and occupation, than is generally imagined. After a somewhat extensive observation, and leaving room for such exceptions as must qualify all such general rules, we are of opinion that the style of preaching which is powerful and profitable for the highest, is so for the humblest classes in society, who have been equally instructed in religion. We think this principle will find its verification in the highest and largest congregations, and under the ablest pastors of our land. In a large proportion of these, many of the poor and humble meet on the same platform as the rich, learned, and refined. They are enlightened and every way edified by the same discourses. Those sermons which most penetrate and

electrify one class, most stir and command the whole assembly. In a congregation which we personally know, comprising in itself all grades of people, from a numerous body of blacks, to the first civilian in the State, we always observed that, ordinarily, the sermons which wrought most powerfully upon one class, did so upon all. When the congregation was vacant, and had been unable to unite upon a pastor, a young preacher, wholly unknown and unexpected to all, was providentially sent. On coming out of church, and before any opportunity to hear the remarks of others, the eminent lawyer just referred to, and a simple-minded coloured man, each said that the preacher they had just heard would be their pastor. This proved speedily to be the case. We well recollect that in a neighbouring congregation, embracing much culture and social rank, which had dwindled under an inefficient pastor, a young man was called of powerful intellect and great attainments. He delighted the most educated hearers by the depth, energy, and beauty of his thought and expression, accompanied by a rough but vehement delivery. While they compared his style to that of Macaulay and the other great masters of sentences, the most plain and unlettered people flocked to hear him, and during his whole incumbency there, crowded spacious galleries that had previously been empty. The same results attended his second pastorate over another and larger congregation, and in its measure, his occasional preaching in other congregations. This was due to the clear, nervous, vivid presentation of the simple gospel in its manifold relations to man as man, to the sinner as a sinner, the Christian as a Christian. This is a type of a whole class of living preachers, as each one may easily ascertain for himself; and it is no less true of the great masters of pulpit oratory among the dead. Examine McLaurin's great sermon on "Glorying in the Cross of Christ;" that of Dr. Griffin on the "Soul;" that of Dr. J. Addison Alexander, from the text, "All things are now ready;" and they are striking illustrations in point. The simplicity of the late Dr. Archibald Alexander's preaching, and its great adaptation to all classes, have often been remarked. His son, Dr. J. W. Alexander, supplied the coloured congregation in Princeton most acceptably before his eminently successful pastorate in New York.

It is true, indeed, that many preachers have a measure of success as pastors of cultivated congregations, whose preaching is suited to no other. But it is equally true, that were their discourses so simplified as to be useful and acceptable to the humbler class, they would exert still greater power over their present hearers, and a much more powerful attraction upon others. The celebrated exordium of Massillon, in his funeral discourse at the interment of Louis XIV., when, having uttered the text, "I became great, and got more wisdom than all they that were before me in Jerusalem; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit,"—after a short pause, he slowly said, in a solemn, subdued tone, "God only is great," upon which all the audience spontaneously arose, and looking at the altar, reverently bowed,—no less than his wonderful sermon "on the small number of the righteous," is alike fitted to command, to startle, and to awe all grades of hearers.* Illustrations of this nature, as our readers are doubtless aware, might be indefinitely multiplied. Dr. John M. Mason, in his great sermon entitled "The Gospel for the Poor," itself a grand illustration of the views we have advanced, says:

"Unlike the systems of men, and contrary to their anticipations, the gospel is as simple as it is glorious. Its primary doctrines, though capable of exercising the most disciplined talent, are adapted to the common understanding. Were they dark and abstruse, they might gratify a speculative mind, but would be lost upon the multitude, and be unprofitable to all as doctrines of consolation. The mass of mankind never can be profound reasoners. To omit other difficulties, they have not leisure. Instruction, to do them good, must be interesting, solemn, repeated, and plain. This is the benign office of the gospel. Her principal topics are few; they are constantly recurring in various connections; they come home to every man's condition; they have an interpreter in his bosom; they are enforced by motives which honesty can hardly mistake, and conscience will rarely dispute. . . . From this simplicity, moreover, the gospel derives advantages of consolation. Grief, whether in the learned or illiterate, is always simple."

* See *Thoughts on Preaching*, by Dr. J. W. Alexander, pp. 412—14.

9. We, of course, cannot complete our survey of this subject without some remarks upon written and unwritten sermons. In our view, if the requisites to efficient preaching already spoken of be realized, it is of less consequence how it is accomplished. Different men have their special modes of reaching the most free and buoyant intellectual activity, and of most facile and effective preparation for the pulpit. Some are hampered by any use of the pen. It is very rare, nevertheless, that any preachers, however gifted in extemporaneous oratory, may not strengthen their productions by some use of the pen in the study. Some prefer to preach from written skeletons, sometimes before them while preaching, and sometimes left behind them. Others prefer to write out more fully, but not completely. Others, and, in some sections of country, the great majority, write out their sermons in full to the last word. Of those who do this, some few memorize their sermons more or less perfectly, and leave their manuscripts behind, or pay little attention to them. The most of those who write sermons preach from their manuscripts, and are at a loss without them. There are few, however, who are so enslaved to manuscripts that they do not easily and effectively preach in the lecture-room, and on occasions less formal and exacting than the public services of the Sabbath, without written preparations. And no one can impose laws upon others in these matters, much less determine for them, that their gifts can be made more effective without than with the use of the pen; and its free and abundant use, too, to the extent of a complete manuscript sermon.*

It is obvious that the absence of a manuscript is likely to have the advantage of leading the preacher to conform to the first great requisite of oratory, that he speak *to* his audience, and have the aspect and attitude of directly addressing them. And if he be quite self-possessed, it favours ease and freedom, and, so far forth, the force of the address. We have, however, known preachers who, after giving up the practice of writing sermons, lost the power of facing and eyeing the audience, because they became so absorbed in the process of invention,

* See note on p. 183, in regard to the practice of the great stars of the French pulpit.

in thought and language, as to divert them effectually from looking at their hearers.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that written preparations have the advantage, on the score of accuracy, clearness, condensation, method, fluency, self-possession, and ensuring something like a due care of preparation. Still, there is a large class, and in some sections quite the largest, who have an invincible repugnance to what they call reading of sermons, which they put in contrast with preaching, or denounce as a corruption of the ordinance of preaching. Another class, who in other sections are quite as predominant, have a great aversion to unwritten discourses. They think of them as unprepared, superficial, rambling, repetitious, crude, and tedious. The true explanation of this we apprehend to be, that so small a proportion of those who write sermons, prepare them on oratorical principles, in the form of a sufficiently direct address to the audience; and still fewer give them an oratorical delivery. *They have not acquired the art of speaking, instead of merely reading, from a manuscript.* They have probably never sought, with any due painstaking, to acquire it. They do not, at least many of them, even appreciate it. They do not so prepare their sermons, as to chirography and previous effort to become familiar with them, as to be able to lift their eyes from their paper, to face the congregation, and emphasize and gesticulate, as propriety, and force, and impressiveness may require. This is the secret of the aversion and prejudice against written sermons. This is all the more so, as the few written sermons preached in regions where the people are unaccustomed to them, are usually poor specimens of their kind, at least as to delivery. Ministers who seldom use manuscripts, are usually more fettered and awkward in handling them, than those who are habituated to their use. They are apt to appear more like poor readers than good speakers, in the delivery of written sermons. But the point on which we insist is, that the aversion to written sermons, where it prevails, is mainly owing to the want of an oratorical delivery—sometimes aggravated, to be sure, by the want of oratorical structure and style in their composition; and that attention to each of these points, especially the former, is of the first importance in the case of all

who preach written sermons. We agree with Sir H. Moncreiff in his remarks, at a late meeting of the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, on the motion of Dr. Begg, to send an overture to the General Assembly, "urging that body to adopt means in the theological colleges of the church, for training students in the habit of delivering their sermons without reading. On urging his motion, the Rev. Doctor introduced some amusing anecdotes illustrative of Scotch antipathy to the use of the manuscript."

"Sir H. Moncreiff, who considered that it was not so much the reading of sermons as their ineffective delivery to which exception was taken by the people, proposed that to the overture the words should be added, that means should be adopted for training students in the habit of delivering their discourses effectively, with the use of their manuscript on the desk."

On a division, the original motion was carried by a majority of 10 to 9.

If he had moved that they be trained to deliver their discourses effectively, with or without manuscripts, as they might choose, we can hardly doubt that, even in Scotland, this majority of one would have been reduced to a minority. He was undeniably right. Good sermons, spoken forcibly from a manuscript to the people, instead of being read almost as if the preacher had no audience before him, seldom fail to interest and impress all classes of people, as decidedly as if the same things were delivered without a manuscript.

On the other hand, the prejudice in many sections of the country against preaching without a manuscript, arises largely from the fact, that the poorest specimens of preaching which they hear are generally extemporaneous, not only in form, but in fact. Ministers accustomed to preach written sermons at the principal Sabbath service, seldom appear on such occasions without a manuscript, unless, for some reason, they have been cut short of time for preparation. Hence, they rarely feel at ease in this sort of preaching, not only because they are unaccustomed to it, but because conscious of being unprepared. Hence, the people take the absence of a manuscript as a token of the absence of preparation. They expect a crude, undigested, rambling address. This expectation, in

such cases, perfectly well understood by the preacher, reacts upon him, and still further disheartens and disables him. The meagre performance resulting, still further confirms the people in their aversion to unwritten sermons. And so, by a ceaseless action and reaction, the difficulty aggravates itself. And yet, as we have often seen, no people are more delighted and edified than these very congregations, by vigorous, instructive, and earnest preaching, without the aid of a manuscript, when they are favoured with it, which, owing to the causes already specified, rarely occurs.

It is unwarranted, and worse than useless, to prescribe any iron rule, or to put all sorts of preachers, with every variety of gifts and training, upon any Procrustean bed, in this matter. To do so, would be to rob the church of the services of some of her noblest sons. We once heard a young man declaiming against preaching from manuscript. When he attempted to answer this argument, by saying that those were not called to preach who had not the requisite gifts, he apparently became embarrassed at the rashness of his own assertions, and was obliged to bring forth his manuscript from his pocket, in order to escape a more mortifying failure. It was once taken for granted, in this country, from the peculiarities of their printed sermons, that Chalmers preached extemporaneously, while Robert Hall carefully wrote his discourses. The reverse turned out to be true. The free, diffuse, impassioned Chalmers carefully wrote his discourses. The severely correct, elegant, classical, yet eloquent discourses of Hall were unwritten. Edwards, reading from a manuscript most closely written, caused spasmodic uprisings and shrieks in congregations, as he depicted to them the case of "sinners in the hands of an angry God." Those sermons of Griffin, that now overawed, and now transported vast audiences of all descriptions of people; now causing the obdurate sinner to tremble on the brink of the bottomless pit, and anon lifting the humble and contrite spirit to the third heaven, "were written with great care, the author often rewriting, and cutting out every thing superfluous." Davies, "a model of the most striking pulpit oratory," probably the prince of American preachers, who almost invariably produced a profound impression on the largest audiences, whose

discourses, heard by Patrick Henry, kindled that great orator to his almost matchless efforts of patriotic eloquence, usually wrote his sermons with great care, and carried them into the pulpit; but, like Dr. Griffin, "delivered them with freedom, without being confined to his manuscript."

We do not deem it important to discuss this matter further. Our aim has been to impress young preachers and candidates for the ministry with the importance of labouring, in the use of all due means, to acquire the power of giving written sermons an oratorical character, in their composition, and especially in their delivery. All facts show that, whatever be their training, the greater proportion of our young preachers will depend upon written preparations, in their more important public discourses. They will not trust themselves to any thing less surely reliable. This being so, it is of the utmost moment that they spare no pains, not only to acquire the power to speak, as they must and will on so many occasions, without a manuscript, but also to wield manuscript sermons effectively. We are persuaded that many of our younger ministers and candidates overlook, or underrate, the importance of this part of their ministerial qualifications. We have often observed young men who excelled as declaimers and speakers in college, and in delivering sermons committed to memory in the seminary, disappointing the expectations thus created, on their first appearance in the pulpit. They have bent to the servile reading of a manuscript, without which they were afraid to venture, and with which they were wholly inexpert, and incapable of effective oratory, because they were wholly untrained to its skilful use. Now, whatever be their powers and attainments for the ministration of the gospel, we scarcely need repeat that, with an insipid or dead delivery, all, or nearly all, is lost, and goes for nothing. It is to prevent this deplorable waste of power, and sacrifice of usefulness, that we thus earnestly call attention to this subject.

Probably no class goes through a theological seminary which does not exhibit phenomena like the following. Occasional members of the class who have been indifferent as students, and inferior in all the exercises in which the students measure their comparative strength, except speaking, go out and command

calls to important charges, while their superiors in every other respect are passed by. The cause is obvious, and confirms what we have maintained. It is true, indeed, that, although they thus get the start, they are at length distanced by their more faithful and accomplished fellow-students, after they have remedied this great deficiency, if they ever, as they do not in all instances, remedy it. But why should they not have done this justice to themselves, and the sacred cause they plead, from the first? Why suffer themselves to be outrun, by laggards in all the more fundamental requisites for the defence of the gospel, and rightly dividing the word of truth? Besides, the sooner attention is given to the exercise and training in this department, while yet the powers are flexible to discipline, the better the result. It is indeed vain for young men to think of sustaining themselves long, without the resources of thoroughly educated and furnished minds, whatever their powers of elocution. It is *vox et præterea nihil*. But it is equally vain to have all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and to be unable to dispense them so that the people can hear, understand, or appreciate them. It is equally futile to have the power to speak without having something to say; or to have a world to say, and be unable to say it to any good purpose.

A word in conclusion as to the degree to which sermons should be elaborated. Here, again, no uniform rule, of course, can be laid down. Much depends on the "man, the subject, and the occasion." Sermons on great and rare occasions are entitled to special labour. Nor can we say that the labour of rewriting and retouching discourses again and again, by Dr. Griffin and others of his type, was wasted. If this rendered them more powerful, and they were to be often repeated to various congregations, as was the real fact, the labour was not misspent. But this is scarcely normal for ordinary pastors; any more than it would answer for them to attempt to follow the method which Dr. Nettleton pursued with such success in times of revival—to make an extemporaneous discourse of successive solemn repetitions of a single text, interspersed with offhand, original, racy, apposite comments. Our own experience and observation, however, authorize few exceptions to the

remark attributed to Dr. Richards, that it takes a poor preacher to write more than one sermon a week. On the other hand, it is beyond doubt that a sermon may be elaborated and polished, till all the freshness and glow of life are worked out of it. It may be overloaded with matter and ornament beyond the capacity of the audience to digest, or it may be pared down to the quick, in the anxiety to remove all defects. A bony skeleton only remains. On the other side, sermons may be extemporaneously written as well as spoken. If this become a habit, as we fear it too often does, it will, in due time, become apparent, that what costs nothing is worth nothing, and that preachers who have not, or have loose habits of study, grow feeble, whether they write for the pulpit or not. This is one extreme. The other is, to elaborate and polish, till all the native and elastic force of the sermon is worn away. The critical faculty is invaluable when it is just sufficient to guide the executive power, and correct its serious mistakes. In this potency, it saves aimless effort, the waste of power, and removes obstructions to the free play of that power. Carried further, it paralyzes, and in many men, in various spheres of action, is a source of impotence. In excess, it enfeebles the preacher and his productions. By fit attention and labour, we may invigorate and perfect living organisms. But to go so far as to anatomize a thing of life, is to kill it. Here as elsewhere extremes meet, and are to be shunned.