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ARTICLE V.

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL METHODS OF PREACHING.— THE WRITING OF SERMONS.

BY EDWARDS A. PARK.

[Continued from p. 598.]

II. Rules for the Writer of Sermons. — "There was a politic sermon, that had no divinity in it, was preached before the king. The king, as he came forth, said to Bishop Andrews: 'Call you this a sermon?' The bishop answered: 'And it please your majesty, by a charitable construction it may be a sermon.'"[1] A man may easily write what is charitably called a sermon, and "make nothing of it"; but in writing what is actually a sermon, he must carefully train both his body and his mind. The following suggestions are expressed in the form of rules, because they are generally and more conveniently made in this form, and are adopted as rules by eminent authors, whose remarks will be quoted in illustration of them. Some of the suggestions refer to the minister's discipline in preparing to write, more than in his actual writing; some, to the general habit of composition, more than to the act of composing a single discourse.

1. Strive to make your external circumstances, and especially your physical state, conducive to your facility in writing. The associations and conveniences of a place may be made thus conducive. Moving under the shades of "Addison's walk" at Oxford, a man comes as near being a poet as he ever will come. Sitting in Sir Walter Scott's chair at Abbotsford, with his noble library easily accessible,

[1] Lord Bacon, Works, Vol. i. p. 401.

a student catches the inspiration of genius as fully as he ever will receive it. Bishop Berkeley wrote parts of his "Minute Philosopher" at the Paradise Rock on Rhode Island, and could never have written them so well elsewhere. We may smile at the whims of Kant and Neander in regard to their positions in their lecture-rooms; but there are certain reminiscences and fitnesses of a study which will facilitate the work of almost any writer. It is a singular, if not a mortifying, fact, that if his lexicon or concordance be on a high shelf at a distance of ten feet from him, he will not consult it as often as he should; if it lie within reach of his arm, he will be more rigid in his fidelity. A minister would be ridiculed as whimsical, if he should be so dependent on outward circumstances as Goethe was; yet Goethe is regarded as the model of a mind acting healthily in a healthy body. He says of himself, when composing his Faust: "I daily think and invent more and more upon it. I have now had the whole manuscript of the second part sewed into books, that it may be a palpable mass before my eye. The place of the yet wanting fourth act is filled with white paper; and, undoubtedly, what is finished will allure and urge me on to complete the whole. There is more than is thought in these matters of sense, and we must come to the aid of the spiritual by all manner of devices." [1]

As many writers are particular in the choice of their place, so many are particular in the choice of their time, for study. Johnson in his Life of Gray informs us that the poet "did not write his pieces at first rudely, and then correct them, but labored every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion, not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times or at happy moments — a fantastic foppery to which my kindness for a man of learning and virtue wishes him to have been superior." [2] It is said that Washington Irving was very fitful in his habits of writing — would sometimes not compose a line for

[1] Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe, p. 366.
[2] British Classics, Vol. xi. p. 336.

several weeks, and sometimes would leave his bed at midnight, and continue his composition for hours, because then he felt "in the mood." Doubtless there are some men who should or can do what other men cannot do, and should not if they could. An attempt to coerce Byron or Shelley or Burns to adopt the exact habits of Reinhard [1] would have been useless. If those poets, however, had been early trained to the regular and healthful methods of Reinhard, they would have lived longer, if not written better. We must pay some regard to the fantastic conceits of certain geniuses, especially poets,[2] and allow them to wait for "the right moods," which come without being waited for to others. Still, there are laws of the body and the mind which prescribe certain hours of the twenty-four as peculiarly adapted to severe intellectual exertion. Here and there a student may be in such an abnormal or extra-vigorous condition that he may not be aware of any evil result when he violates these laws. In the general, however, some evil result, sooner or later, perceived or unperceived, will come from such a violation. Dr. Doddridge sacrificed his health, scores of scholars have sacrificed their soundness of vision, to the habit of studying in the morning by lamp-light, before their bodies had been fortified by a particle of food. A sermon written soon after dinner is apt to be an after-dinner sermon, and a discourse written in the night is apt to be characterized by the prurience of emotion and the artificial excitements which give it the name of a night effort. Exceptions apart, the morning hours, between breakfast and dinner, are best fitted for the vigorous and healthy action of the mind. With all his idiosyncrasies, Mr. Macaulay, on the whole, preferred these hours. That preacher is wise who forms the habit of writing *regularly* in these hours. There is a periodicity of the intellect and brain — a kind of

[1] Reinhard's Confessions, pp. 153–158.

[2] A recent letter of Mr. William Cullen Bryant goes far toward redeeming the reputation of poets from the charge of capriciousness in regard to physical regimen. Few clergymen govern themselves by such scientific rules as those adopted by Mr. Bryant. Dr. Edward Hitchcock would exact no more.

cycle of the mental and cerebral systems; and this is aided by the natural love of order, and by the power of habit, so that between certain periods of every day the mind has its surest and safest opportunity for hard work. "The tendency to periodical and associated activity," says Dr. Combe, "occasionally becomes so great, in the course of time, that the faculties seem to go through their operations almost without conscious effort, while their facility of action becomes so prodigiously increased as to give unerring certainty where at first difficulty and doubt were the only results."[1] It is, in part, by neglecting this law of periodicity that so many writers feel obliged to lie idle at the pool, and wait until the waters move. They cannot proceed in their work, because "the fit is not on them." It is by a rigid observance of this law that other writers may safely calculate on receiving their inspiration at regular hours of the day.

If scholars are dependent in any degree on the place and time of their writing, still more are they dependent on their physical condition. The brain will not be pliant when the digestive organs are oppressed. Sometimes the thoughts will not be fresh when the skin is not pure. Several of Daniel Webster's happiest paragraphs, delivered in the senate chamber, were mentally written by him when his physical system was in a glow, as he hunted or fished at Plymouth or Marshfield. An ancient philosopher is said to have made one of his favorite discoveries when he was coming out of a bath. If the body be an instrument of the mind, then a student should learn a lesson from the surgeon who is careful to keep his knife and forceps in good order, and from the musician who sees to it that his violin or piano-forte is in tune. "A minister," says Mr. Cecil, "must keep under his body, and bring it into subjection. A Newmarket groom will sweat himself thin, that he may be fit for his office. Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." An eminent preacher, having eaten an indigestible substance between his morning

[1] The Principles of Physiology, p. 239.

and afternoon service on the Sabbath, was compelled to apply for medical aid. As soon as the physician entered the room, the imprudent minister exclaimed: "Doctor, I am not *afraid* to die; but I *am* ashamed to die."

Men are predisposed to gluttony. Students are so, perhaps, in an unusual degree. Therefore dietetists have been especially emphatic in prescribing rules of abstinence for scholars. Some of these rules have been too severe for some men. They have been rigidly, perhaps injuriously, followed by others. President Edwards, in his homely, honest way, writes: "By a sparingness in diet, and eating (as much as may be) what is light and easy of digestion, I shall doubtless be able to think clearer, and shall gain time; first, by lengthening out my life; secondly, shall need less time for digestion after meals; thirdly, shall be able to study closer without injury to my health; fourthly, shall need less time for sleep; fifthly, shall seldomer be troubled with the headache." Sir Isaac Newton, while writing his Treatise on Optics, restricted himself entirely to bread with a little sack and water. Dr. Franklin says that in his early life he habitually "confined himself to a biscuit and slice of bread and bunch of raisins only, with a glass of water or basin of gruel at a meal"; and he adds: "My progress in study was proportionate to that clearness of ideas and quick ness of conception resulting from temperance in diet." But, while many clergymen need lessons of abstemiousness, there are not a few who need the prescription of a liberal table. The mind will not long act healthily, if the body receive too little nourishment. A generous diet is sometimes essential to the most intellectual student. The poet Keble, although he wrote like a disembodied spirit, did not eat like one. A writer of good sermons must not be perpetually thinking of bran-biscuit and oatmeal cakes. Still, as his sleep is "of pure digestion bred," so is his successful study. He must avoid those articles of food which he finds unfavorable to his mental efforts. The suggestive counsel has been given to him: Eat enough; but eat cheerily, slowly, temperately,

of any food which is agreeable to you, unless it be some book on dyspepsia, or some other substance which you have reason to think is indigestible. Above all the *private* and *personal* rules which are unwisely given for *general* practice, there is one principle too rational to be neglected: During the hours when the mind is severely taxed, the main strength of the system should be given to the brain, not to the stomach. The writer of sermons should not devote himself to his intellectual labor while his energies are required for the digestive process. He has only a certain degree of force. When this is needed for the physical apparatus, it cannot be safely directed to the mental. Hence it is the fact, not universally, but commonly, that those writers who perform their chief labor between their morning and their noon repast, preserve longer than others their power of healthy and vigorous composition.

As men are predisposed to gluttony, so to indolence; and as the more emphatic rules are given in favor of abstemiousness at the table, so the more frequent admonitions are given in favor of redeeming time from sleep. Many sermons present evidence that the writers of them sleep too long; but too little sleep makes as dull a sermon as too much. Poets have celebrated the still hours of the night as conducive to meditation; but the danger is that a clergyman who performs his main labor during these hours will undermine his health and lose his mental energy.[1] Poets, too, have celebrated the habit of early rising; but a man may rise too early, and thus remain languid through the entire day. It was said of a divinity student: "He does nothing through the twenty-four hours except rise early in

[1] In defence of "stealing hours from the night for study," we are referred to Astronomers; to Galileo, who attained the age of seventy-eight years; Hevelius, seventy-six; Copernicus, seventy; Flamsteed, seventy-three (and yet "in spite of a disordered body, he toiled by night and by day, harder, as he said, than a corn-thrasher"); Bradley, sixty-nine; Maskelyne, seventy-nine; the elder Herschel, eighty-four; the younger Herschel, eighty-one. But a system which can be pursued by philosophers tranquilly watching the stars cannot, in the general, be pursued by clerical students, whose life is one of comparative excitement and anxiety.

the morning." He sacrificed his education to a *visionary* method of attaining it. Every minister must judge for himself how much sleep, how much corporeal exercise and mental relaxation, as well as how much food his constitution requires. Still, he must not "take anxious thought" about his physical regimen (Matt. vi. 25). He must eat and drink what he pleases, but must please to do that which corresponds to the scientific laws of health. He must consult his own will, but that will should be conformed to good rules. He should obey these rules because they are good and he chooses to obey them, not because they are followed by some other man. If he turn his attention anxiously to any organ of his body, he will be apt to turn some disease into it. He cannot give himself wholly or fitly to his work of writing sermons, if he give his mind fearfully to his physical sensations. The pride of asceticism, the slavish subjection to rules, the fear of bodily ailments have made invalids out of men who would have been robust if their good sense had been equal to their imagination. One of the healthiest methods of obeying wise prescriptions is to obey them without knowing it. It is not easy to compress into a brief paragraph so many actual, though unrecognized, rules (some of them bad) as are given by Dr. Jackson, an eminent physician in the British army, who says: "I have wandered a good deal about the world, and never followed any prescribed rule in anything. My health has been tried in all ways; and, by the aids of temperance and hard work, I have worn out two armies, in two wars, and could probably wear out another before my period of old age arrives. I eat no animal food, drink no wine or malt liquor or spirits of any kind; I wear no flannel, and regard neither wind nor rain, heat nor cold, when business is in the way." It is often said: "We want no other rules of health than our own common sense." But common sense is the power of framing a good rule, when no one has been provided, for an exigency; of perceiving the wisdom of those maxims which are adapted to the constitution of the race; of determining the time and the mode of

making an exception to a law which is generally useful. Archbishop Whately says: "Since the sailor, the physician, and every other practitioner, each in his own department, gives the preference to unassisted common sense only in those cases where he himself has nothing else to trust to, and invariably resorts to the rules of art, wherever he possesses the knowledge of them, it is plain that mankind universally bear their testimony, though unconsciously and often unwillingly, that systematic knowledge is preferable to conjectural judgments, and that [our own individual, unaided] common sense is only our *second-best* guide."

2. Hold up before your mind a high ideal of a sermon, but consent to sacrifice perfection in its *minutiæ* to the usefulness of your general ministrations. Commonly a volume of sermons is unsalable. Publishers refuse to print them in the form of sermons. The clerical student is told that they have no disciplinary power, and is warned not to read them. There are current maxims which are often misunderstood in such a manner as to degrade the compositions for the pulpit below the standard of other compositions. One is: "A minister should never preach beyond his experience." No rule can be more important than this, if it be understood as meaning that a minister should not pretend to feel what he does not feel; should be an honest man — practising what he professes. But the rule is understood, sometimes, as prescribing that a minister should delineate no more of a joy or sorrow, hope or fear, desire or aversion, than equals the standard of his own experience. This is to prescribe that he is to preach himself rather than the gospel, and bring all truth down to his own level. Who is he that is thus entitled to circumscribe the religion of Jesus, the religion for the world, within the limits of his own narrow mind or heart? Shall not a preacher delineate the emotions of the Redeemer, of prophets, and apostles, of modern saints like Martyn and Brainerd; the feelings which *ought* to be evoked by the character and works of God? Do not these affections transcend the ordinary bounds of human con-

sciousness? Shall a preacher therefore dwarf to his own stature all his portraitures of virtue and its rewards? May he not describe certain degrees of sin and remorse without implying that he has experienced them all? The true ideal of a sermon requires, not that the writer of it bring all his representations of the Christian life *down* to the level of his own experience, but that he endeavor to bring his experience *up* to the most exalted representations of the Christian life. That is fitly, rather than "charitably," termed a *sermon* which expresses the most appropriate emotions in regard to the most elevated truths, and awakens in the hearer a sympathy with the preacher as one who feels all that he expresses. Mr. Everett's celebrated description of the sunset would have been shorn of half its power, if he had said that he borrowed his ideas from a book, instead of saying that he beheld the scene with his own eyes. Whitefield, Summerfield and all the most effective pulpit orators have been indebted for their effectiveness to the variety and depth of their Christian experience. Men love nature; they love personal history; they love to feel the throbbings of another's heart. "When I touch a human hand," says Malebranche, "I touch heaven." The sympathy with heaven makes a sermon great. No language can be too rich for a discourse thus instinct with truth and living sentiment.

Another maxim often laid down for the minister is: "He should not preach beyond the experience of his hearers." It is true that he should "speak to their condition," to their "business and bosoms" in the sense of uttering what they can understand and what they need. But the maxim is often understood to require, that he should make his hearers his library; should spend his time in learning their style of thought, should retail in the pulpit what they utter in their homes, should give to them what he has taken from them, and thus keep all his sermons on the same plane with their speech. But is the shepherd to be one of the sheep? Is he not to utter truths which will elevate his auditors and also himself? Is not the gospel higher than men? Shall it not

introduce them into new experiences of the divine life? Should not a sermon be a transcript of the gospel, and, therefore, the most perfect of human compositions? By holding up the loftiest ideal, the preacher may be stimulated to make his sermon approximate toward an equality with its theme.[1]

But while a minister should adopt the levelling process in the way of levelling *up* and not of levelling *down*, he should remember the German proverb: "The best is oftentimes the enemy of the good." By waiting until he can preach what is the best possible, a man may lose the opportunity of preaching what is of great value. If he be a real man he can never equal his ideal. His high standard represses his pride, while it stirs him to effort. "During the nine years that I was his wife," says the widow of the great artist Opie, "I never saw him satisfied with one of his productions, and often, very often, have I seen him enter my sitting-room, and throwing himself in an agony of despondence on the sofa, exclaim, 'I never, never shall be a painter as long as I live.'" On the other hand, we read of a sculptor who stood sorrowful before his masterpiece, and to the inquiry why he was so gloomy, replied: "Because I am satisfied

[1] It is interesting to notice the estimate which was formed of a sermon, as a mere work of art, by the poet Schiller. In his early life he preferred to prepare himself for the clerical profession. After he had given up that preference, and devoted himself to writing for the stage, "he entertained ideas of dramatic dignity, too lofty for the social life of the moderns. Still did his manhood desire that for which his boyhood had been destined — the vocation of a preacher, — and the stage still but suggested to him the office of the pulpit. 'The pulpit and the stage are the only places for us,'" said he, referring to himself and Goethe. "And this brings us to the material distinction of Schiller — his singular ardor for truth, his solemn conviction of the duties of a poet; that deep-rooted idea on which we have been more than once called upon to insist, that the minstrel should be the preacher; that song is the sister of religion in its largest sense; that the stage is the pulpit to all sects, all nations, all time." — "Morally one of the least selfish of men, intellectually he is one of the most egotistical. Who that held the doctrine that the dramatist, the poet, should be the preacher, could fail to be so? He loved truth too much to suffer her to be silent, whenever he had occasion to make her oracles be heard." Memoir of Schiller in Tauchnitz's Collection of British Authors, Vol. lix. pp. xi, lxxxiii, xci, xcvii.

with it." He had attained his ideal, and saw no prospect of his future growth. Leonardo da Vinci was celebrated for commencing pictures, and not completing them. He erased many of his best figures when nearly finished, because they did not satisfy him. Roscoe says, that in his great picture of the Last Supper early writers all agree that he left the head of Christ unfinished. He found his powers inadequate to his conception. To diffuse over these features (Christ's) a ray of divinity, was his bold but fruitless attempt." When a minister refuses to preach what he considers an imperfect sermon, "his usefulness is at an end."

3. Cultivate an appropriate interest in what you are writing. This interest needs cultivation and will reward it. The student at the college or professional school is apt to say: I should be more regular in my studies if I were left to my own conscience, and not urged on by the marking system or the monitor's bill. But he may be mainly stimulated by his interest in his studies, while he may at times feel the adventitious influence of the teacher's record. So it is said by many a clergyman: I should write better sermons if I were moved by my personal desire to write, and not impelled by professional duty. But he may derive his chief stimulus from his delight in his work while he may occasionally feel the exactions of his parish. A man may write under the inspiration of his theme while, like Shakespeare, he sometimes recognizes the subordinate impulse of obtaining a livelihood. The lower necessity may rouse up the higher inspiration. But the higher inspiration must come, or the lower necessity will result in dull efforts. We hear much of an author's magnetic power, and are led to think of it as something magical or talismanic. It is nothing of the kind. It consists partly, if not chiefly, in his having, and therefore expressing, the emotions which his theme naturally elicits. The present rule is a general one, and includes several others.

A. Select a theme on which you desire to write. A special interest in a subject is often a call from heaven to write upon that subject. Sometimes no other reason need be given for

discoursing upon it than the fact that the pastor is strongly attracted to it. If a hearty inclination impels him to express his thoughts, he will express them better than if he is merely goaded on by a sense of duty. Nil invitâ Minerva.

B. Write with a hearty love to the subject when it is fitted to excite love. We listen to a speaker with ease when his theme is a pleasant one and he seems to be pleased with it. The charm of Izaak Walton and Charles Lamb is their cheerfulness in describing cheerful scenes. They sympathize with their subject and we sympathize with them. We love to reperuse certain discourses of Jeremy Taylor, because we love the truths of which he is evidently enamored. One secret of writing so as not to tire the reader, is to write in love with a subject which is fitted to excite the reader's love. Often when a minister composes a sermon because he *must*, he fails to consider the reasons why he must; he fails to consider the relations of his theme; and if he does not feel the influence of it, he cannot expect that his hearers will. It has been said that a writer must be borne upward by his subject, and must not, like a bird of prey, bear his subject up after him. If he be stimulated by the mere necessity of having something to say, he will not stimulate those to whom he says it. That was a dismal confession of Coleridge: "Composition is no voluntary business. The very necessity of doing it robs me of the power of doing it. Had I been possessed of a tolerable competency, I should have been a voluminous writer. But I cannot, as is feigned of the nightingale, sing with my breast against a thorn."[1]

C. When your theme is fitted to elicit the emotions of sorrow, pity, or dread, discipline yourself to feel these

[1] Cottle's Recollections, p. 180. Goethe says: "The mannerist is always longing to get through, and has no true enjoyment of his work. But genius is happy in finishing out the details necessary to express its idea. Roos is unwearied in drawing the hair and wool of his goats and sheep, and you see by his nicety in details that he was truly happy in his work, and had no wish to bring it to an end. People of little minds are not happy in art for its own sake; while at work they always have before their eyes what they shall get by what they are doing. Such worldly views and tendencies never yet produced anything great."—Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe, p. 92.

emotions. One reason why a sermon on the sinfulness and danger of men, or the threatenings of the law, fails to produce its normal effect is, that it was not written under the influence of the sadness, or compassion, or awe which the theme demands. The very structure of the sentences indicates that their author did not care for the evils, or bow down before the majesty, which he was portraying. He exposes himself to the charge of foretelling punishment with joy, and of being glad that so many pains are in store for his hearers.

D. Aim to do justice to your subject, and thus enliven as well as express your interest in it. Sometimes a clergyman takes out his six sheets of paper, and designs to fill them with his sermon. His introduction must be only five inches long; his arguments, seven inches each; he leaves nine inches for his improvement. His thoughts are measured not weighed. They are compared with the extent of his paper, not with the demands of his subject. He ought to be borne along by the truth which he discusses; to move as the truth moves him; to reason or to persuade where and when and as the truth impels him. Cultivating an interest in his doctrine, he adjusts the proportions of his sermon to the suggestions of that doctrine. Giving himself up to it, he becomes so much influenced by it that "he will shine in the dark."

E. Avoid all those processes which damp your ardor in writing. What these processes are every man must determine for himself, as he must determine what are his own best methods of physical exercise or mental relaxation. The query is often started: "Shall I, while I am engaged on my sermon read the books which treat of my theme"? The answers to this question should be as various as are the different characters of men. One answer is: You must think for yourself. As the wheel becomes heated by its own revolutions, so the mind gains warmth and fire from its original and independent thought. Another answer is: You have the same right and the same duty to consult other authors

while you are investigating the subject of your sermon, as you would have if you were investigating the subject for your own private advantage. A third answer is: By reading other treatises you may intensify your enthusiasm in your subject. When travelling in a strange land, and overtaken by a resident in it, you may gain from his company a new delight in your travels, and a new desire to pursue them. A fourth answer is: The inferiority of what you write to what you read may dishearten you, and if you do not altogether abandon your sermon you will work your way through it by force rather than by free-will. A different answer is: You may be tempted to imitate the author whom you consult. You can no more compose a true sermon while you are copying another man's style, than you can swim while a drowning man is grasping your limbs. An old poet has written:

> "As on the yielding wax the seal we find
> Left in strong likeness with imprinted glow,
> So does the reader steal the author's mind,
> And to the bias lent inclining go."

Still a different answer, and one appropriate to many but not all clergymen, is: Defer reading on your theme until you have finished your writing upon it. You may thus lay up the materials for a future improvement of your work, and learn a lesson of present humility.

F. Make the theme of one elaborate sermon your prominent object of interest until that sermon is finished, and do not allow your enthusiasm to be divided between two or more sermons of the same high character. While preparing such a discourse the preacher may intermit his effort, and model one or more discourses after a subordinate standard (see § 2. I. 1.). Few authors, however, can treat one great subject with the requisite fulness and warmth while a different one is equally prominent in their regard. The single great subject exhausts them; if they discuss a different theme it should be less intricate and critical. Seldom can a man roll forward two wheelbarrows at once. Gesenius confessed

that he could not succeed in a single investigation unless he gave himself up to it entirely, and allowed no other, which was like it in importance, to occupy his mind. The prominence of the second diverts the attention and alienates the interest from the first; perhaps also it distracts the soul and confuses the ideas. An inferior topic may furnish an agreeable change to the mind, and may heighten the prominence of the superior, as the background makes the central figure of the picture more distinct. The depth of feeling depends upon the concentration of thought, and this concentration depends upon the singleness of aim, and this singleness of aim implies that one mind is absorbed in one theme.

G. Cultivate the hope of seeing good results from what you write. Hope is a tonic, and makes the style energetic. The characteristic of a philosophical temperament is: Much hope, little faith. The characteristic of a true minister's temperament is: Much hope that he will see the good influence of his discourse; great faith that this influence will come, whether he see it or not. "He who does not expect a million readers should never write a line," said Goethe; but a true minister of Christ may hope to do more for eternity than a mere poet can do for his million admirers.

H. Cherish the expectation of *immediate* benefit from your discourse. Sometimes a writer may be so absorbed with his theme that he will express the emotions awakened by it without regard to the sympathies of men. At other times, he may write in the ideal presence of his congregation, as if he were in actual colloquy with them, and may vary the order or style of his discourse, as if he saw them approving or disapproving, assenting or questioning. He may write foreseeing, as if he were seeing, a good effect from every sentence. This foresight inspires him. His thoughts and words are more apposite and energetic than they would be if he were thinking of his paper and inkstand. Napoleon Buonaparte, dictating a sentence of his bulletin, would sometimes clap his hands in the vision of its influence on his readers. Many a minister has dropped his pen, and begun

to speak aloud, imagining that his congregation was before him.

4. Write when you are in a state of awakened *religious* feeling. The appropriate feeling, described in the preceding topic, is religious. Mere natural sensibility will not supply the place of true piety. We may as well hope that a man will be a skilful musician because he has a taste for painting, or an exquisite sculptor because he has a fine musical ear, as to hope that a mere constitutional instinct will perform the services of that feeling which results from the influences of the Holy Spirit. The outward developments of the natural emotion may be somewhat like the outward developments of true piety. But they will not strike that chord in the spirit of the hearers which vibrates to nothing but to the touch of sincere devotion. That is a mysterious chord, and, like the poetic sentiment, "needs only to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music." The unlettered Christian will be unable to explain it, but yet will always feel that, somehow or other, his minister who is animated by mere animal sensibility does not reach the heart. The main discipline of a preacher, then, should be moral, rather than intellectual. If he commune with God, he will have a community of feeling with good men. A sail-ship can no more be wafted forward without a breeze than a true sermon can be carried forward save by the breath of prayer. Pericles never ascended the rostrum without imploring a blessing from the gods. It is an oft-cited remark: "Orabit ecclesiastes pro se, ut in suo ipsius animo vivam illam efficacem et penetrantem verbi divini vim experiatur et sentiat; ne videlicet ad ignem quam aliis exsufflat et accendit, ipse frigeat, sed ignis ardens in suo ipsius corde verbum predicatum fiat."

5. Regard an appropriate excitement of your sensibilities as an aid to the accuracy of your composition. Some writers consider it a hinderance. They think of the feelings as lawless, but the judgment as conformed to the rules of propriety. The sensibility, however, has its own laws. They are the

laws of God. Science explains them. True, the heart is more quickly perverted than the judgment; but it is not necessarily wrong; and a sound heart may be trusted as well as a sound head. Indeed, a mere unimpassioned intellect is sure to err. It may make a sermon "coldly correct and critically dull"; but the dulness is the gravest sin against substantial correctness. The soul of the sermon does not reside in the accurate phrases of it. It is the ardor of emotion, and not the calm judgment, which starts the rapid transitions, the vehement course of thought, the pathetic strain, all pertinent to the subject of the sermon. When a traveller has no ardent desire to see the distant cathedral, he may leap over every hedge to gather flowers, and go out of his way to the right hand or the left. So the preacher, if he be not stimulated by an intense interest in his subject, may ramble abroad in search of tropes; but, as he goes out of his way for them, they are a blemish to his style. If his emotions be fitly excited, he will take the flowers which grow up in his path, which do not need to be sought after and run after, and they will give to his sermon that ease which is one secret of strength. "The language of strong feeling," says Walter Scott, "is always pure." [1]

6. While meditating on the subject of your discourse, give to the mind, at certain times, free and full play. The rules of rhetoric are expressions of psychological laws; they are forms of mental science, they tend to make men natural in their speech. But we have acquired such habits of thought and expression, that even good rules half obeyed make us unnatural. One of these rules prescribes, therefore, that we occasionally forget all rules, and leave the mind to itself. While we insist that we should cultivate the habit of study-

[1] Notice the literary merits of Matthew xxv., Psalm lxxx., 2 Sam. i. 17–27, etc. When the homiletical rule is given that a minister should write as the Holy Spirit gives him utterance, the rule is sometimes regarded as the result of superstition; but when Thomas Carlyle gives his own heathenish rule it is regarded as the dictate of sound philosophy. He says: "Utter with free heart what they *daemon* gives thee; if fire from heaven it shall be well; if resinous firework, it shall be, — as well as it could be, or better than otherwise."

ing with our apparatus of books and notes around us, we allow that we should sometimes let our minds take their own course; let our thoughts come and go; let them enjoy their lawlessness and keep up their *abandon* so far as it is orthodox. We may think that we are wasting an hour in idle musing or reverie, while in fact we are letting the ground lie fallow for the sake of gaining the richer harvest. Something is due to that law of our nature which calls for change and rest. By constantly forcing ourselves up to rules which our wrong usages have made irksome we may acquire a forced style. If our hard work be too uniform we become hard writers and speakers. When law is always in the fore-ground and freeness in the back-ground the picture is dull. Now and then leave the study for the grove; go from the library to the running stream; stand not always at the high desk, but lie down on the grass; the sight of birds will be more suggestive than the sight of books. The ideas which come of their own accord at such times will form a standard of ease and naturalness.[1] There is a degree of truth in the saying that the thoughts which rise unbidden are the best. Men have something to justify them when, forgetting their gardens, they tell us that the wild flowers are the most charming. The thoughts and expressions which present themselves to the mind in its hours of license will need to be examined with care and perhaps modified; still there is danger of spoiling in attempting to improve them. Mr. Cobbett presses his rule too far, yet there is a measure of good sense in it: "Use the first words that occur to you, and never attempt to *alter a*

[1] When Sir Walter Scott composing his Rokeby was "at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter," etc. — Life of Scott, Vol. iii. p. 215. "Oh, man," he once said, "I had many a grand gallop among these braes when I was thinking of Marmion," etc. While in quarters with his cavalry, he "used to delight in walking his powerful black steed up and down by himself upon the Portobello sands, within the beating of the surge; and now and then you would see him plunge in his spurs, and go off as if at a charge, with the spray dashing about him. As we rode back to Musselburgh, he often came and placed himself beside me, to repeat the verses that he had been composing during these pauses of our exercise."—Vol. ii. p. 252.

thought; for, that which has come of itself into your mind is likely to pass into that of another more readily and with more effect than anything which you can by reflection invent. Never stop to *make choice of words.* Put down your thought in words just as they come. Follow the order which your thought will point out, and it will push you on to get it upon the paper as quickly and as clearly as possible."[1] The exact truth is: There are valid reasons for treating with deference the thoughts and expressions which most readily occur to us; for suspecting that the ideas which come are better than those which are acquired; still we must scrutinize them and sometimes change them, even when in their general character they are conformed to the right standard.

It is well at times to give ourselves up to our subject without any regard to the use which is to be made of it; to let it carry us whither it will in its windings; to let our theme be a root springing up and branching out free from all our efforts to cut and clip it. Professor Convers Francis, complaining of his Lectures remarks: "There is something in this using the mind wholly *for others*, and with reference to others, which I do not like. It seems to nudge one's faculties on the elbow, and tell them that they are not to move at their own sweet will, but to produce a certain tale of brick for an employer. What would be the effect if the mind of every one were set free from tasks, and could flower out in musing, in speech, in writing, like shrubs and trees? We should have more true men and women, and fewer repeating machines."[2]

Aiming to encourage the genial working of his faculties, it is not uncommon for a preacher, after he has chosen a theme for his sermon, and before he has selected the materials for it, to write down just such thoughts as it may happen to suggest, to spend no time in classifying them, to let them follow each other as rapidly as possible, until, per-

[1] Cobbett's Grammar, Letter xxiii. Lord Byron says: "In composition I do not think *second thoughts* are the best, though *second* expressions may improve the first ideas."—Galt's Life of Byron, p. 176.

[2] Discourse at the Funeral of Dr. Francis, by Rev. John Weiss, pp. 49, 50.

haps on a sudden, they fall, like the beads of a kaleidoscope, into the order which satisfies him. Desiring to catch the same kind of inspiration, another preacher addresses a small and simple audience, on a theme which he intends to discuss before a great congregation, but on which he has not begun to arrange his thoughts. Speaking to such an audience he feels no fear of criticism, no restraint from rules, his ideas are suggested in the glow of sympathy with the common people, thought crowds upon thought, and in the end the best materials suggest themselves, arranged according to the best plan. What Bacon says of speaking to a friend may be said of speaking to a small but earnest religious assembly: "Whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation." "In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statue or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother."[1] It is notorious that many a minister has educated himself by commencing his professional life in a parish where he could allow free vent to his feelings, and form a more flexile style than if he were trammelled by critics. Some of the most effective sermons which he has published in mature life were suggested to him in a strictly unpremeditated address which he delivered during his novitiate, to a class of unlettered men. The most startling sermons ever preached have sometimes been the natural out-gushings of minds which knew nothing of written rules. "If" says Cardinal Maury, "there remains among us any trace of that ancient and nervous eloquence, which is nothing else than the first cry of nature imitated, or repeated by art, it is in the missions, it is in the country, that we must seek for examples of it. There apostolic men, true and worthy orators of the people, endowed

[1] Bacon's Works, Vol. i. p. 92.

with a strong and bold imagination acknowledge no other success than conversions; no other applause than tears. Sometimes I admit that, lacking in taste, they descend into too familiar details; but they open a breach; but they reach the goal; but they place themselves in the midst of conscience; but they inflame the imagination; but in their presence all their hearers become their people; they forcibly strike the senses; the multitude follows, and hears them with enthusiasm, and finally, many of them have sublime qualities."[1]

7. Before you begin to write your sermon obtain as full a mastery of your theme as you can. Study the nature and relations of it, the biblical texts which explain it; anticipate the objections which it may suggest and the most effective answers to them; take a prophetic view of your plan from the exordium to the conclusion; select the precise distinctive terms, and the more apposite illustrations which may illumine the subject; also various synonymous words[2] which may relieve the hearer's attention to it. Neglecting to arrange these preliminaries before writing, some authors are compelled to interrupt their flow of thought for the sake of examining an intricate question or searching for an apposite phrase. Their look-out for words confuses the thought, and their confusion of thought hides the right words. They repress their emotion and acquire a stilted or nerveless style, by writing carefully, without thinking previously what and how to write. They ought to make haste by delay. They would build their temple with the greater ease, if it went up without the sound of the hammer. Mr. Cobbett says: "Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what

[1] Essai sur l'Eloquence de la Chaire, Tome i. pp. 85, 86.

[2] The frequent reiteration of the same word is one cause of the alleged tediousness of a sermon. Hence the value of Roget's Thesaurus, Soule's Dictionary of English Synonyms, and similar works. Mr. Choate says: "In translating, the student should not put down a word till he has thought of at least *six synonyms* or varieties of expression for the idea. I would have him fastidious and eager to go, not unfrequently, half round his library, pulling down books, *to hunt up a word, the* word." — Parker's Reminiscences of Choate, p. 249.

you shall write."[1] "The style of a writer" says Goethe, "is almost always the faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wish to write in a clear style, let him begin by making his thoughts clear; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul." Speaking of a poem which he had recently finished, Goethe says: "I have borne this subject about with me for forty years; so that it has had time to get clear of everything extraneous."[2] Thus when he was writing he knew just what to say next.

8. When fully prepared according to the foregoing rules, pen your discourse rapidly. In this manner you may acquire that freshness and concinnity of style which writers, as distinct from speakers so often want. "Tears dry fast"; emotion subsides quickly; it must be expressed as soon as it rises, or it will die away, never perhaps to revive. As a man will not pray with a full heart while he is studying the philosophy of prayer, so a man will not write with the requisite enthusiasm while he is thinking of rhetorical rules. Words must be carefully selected, but if the right term do not occur to you while you are intent on the thought, leave a blank and suffer not your ardor to be cooled down by a research into lexicography. You may think of some felicitous quotation; but do not pause to search for it; you are working on the solid wood and have no time for veneering. There are laws for the division of a discourse into paragraphs, for the apposite termination of sentences, for capital letters, for orthography; but let these laws go for nothing while you are penning your discourse. Do not pause if you find that you have spelled the name of the poet Ossian as the first Napoleon spelled it, "Ocean." He finished but little for the press; he was on the whole a slow composer; yet while he wrote, he wrote. Bourrienne says: "When Buonaparte dictated his proclamations—he was, for the moment, inspired, and he evinced all the excitement which distinguishes the Italian Improvisatori. To follow him it was necessary to

[1] Cobbett's Grammar, etc., Letter xxiii.

[2] Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe, pp. 102, 63.

write with inconceivable rapidity."[1] Dr. Samuel Johnson was noted for the swiftness of his composition. "I wrote," he said, "forty-eight of the printed octavo pages of the Life of Savage at a sitting; but then I sat up all night."[2] When on a visit at Oxford he asked a friend, "How long it was till the post went out; and on being told about half an hour, he exclaimed, 'Then we shall do very well.' He upon this instantly sat down and finished an Idler, which it was necessary should be in London the next day." His friend desired to read the paper, "Sir," said Johnson, "you shall not do more than I have done myself."[3] In order to defray the expense of his mother's funeral and pay some of her small debts, he wrote his Rasselas in the evenings of a single week, and sent it to the press in detached portions as soon as he had finished them. He once said that he often wrote three columns of the Gentleman's Magazine in an hour, and yet it would be difficult for an amanuensis to transcribe those three columns in so short a time. It must be remembered, however, that before he began his writing he had already arranged his thoughts, and, although he had accustomed himself to converse in the style of books, and would therefore not seem to require those correcting processes which careless talkers need, yet after he had published some of his essays he performed almost incredible labors in amending their phraseology.[4] Chalmers' comparison of the first draft with the last copy of some of Johnson's writings is a curiosity in letters. The Doctor's own method of composition suggested to him his directions to a clergyman: "Take this text, and see how quickly you can write a sermon on it." When the sermon was written, he said: "Now take it, and see how good you can make it." Dr. Thomas Brown

[1] Memoirs of Napoleon (American ed.), Vol. ii. p. 213. See also Scott's Life of Napoleon (American ed.), Vol. iii. p. 330.

[2] Boswell's Johnson, Vol. i. p. 136.

[3] Ibid. p. 259. The chief difficulty which the Doctor seems to have found in writing for the press is expressed in the words: "If I had but good pens."

[4] Some of his works, however, as his Rasselas, he never read after they were first published.

in writing his Lectures on Mental Science, generally dispatched one lecture at a single sitting, and delivered it on the very day on which it was finished. Hence the vivacity and vigor of those lectures. It cannot be said, however, that each of those compositions was the product of the few hours which he spent in writing it. The substance of it had been diligently prepared before it was committed to paper. He did not live to review and rewrite what he had written, to condense and correct it. The labor of revision has been performed by others, and he suffers as an author because he did not perform it himself.

9. When equipped for writing rapidly, write continuously. If Giotto had paused in making his O, or had made it slowly, he would not have made it right. The mind will not be thoroughly aroused in a moment. After it has begun to exert itself, it acquires a new vigor and continues to accumulate energy as it continues its exertion. At length it reaches that state which is called a state of inspiration. It can now accomplish more in five minutes than in another state it can accomplish in fifty. Now the outgrowths of the mind will be the richest and most healthful. Now the worthiest thoughts will come first. Unless seized and noted with pen and ink, they will flit away never to be recalled. In this state of mental elevation, the minister scarcely knows himself. During its continuance he must not be interrupted. The loss of a few minutes is the loss of a day. He must be diverted by no domestic avocation. His parish must not intrench upon his hours of study. Mr. Cecil says: "Having some business to transact with a gentleman in the city, I called one day at his counting-house; he begged I would call again, as I had so much more time to spend than he had, who was a man of business. 'An hour is nothing to you,' said he. You seem little to understand the nature of our profession [I replied]; one hour of a clergyman's time rightly employed, Sir, is worth more to him than all the gains of your merchandise."

10. After you have written your discourse, criticise and

amend it. It may be sometimes improved after it has been preached. While the minister is yet speaking, his best thoughts may occur to him, and these should be afterwards incorporated with his written sermon. Dr. Edward Payson wrote sometimes so rapidly that when he turned over his sermon leaf the ink of one page would be distinctly impressed upon the other; and when he delivered the sermon he would utter sentiments more affecting than any which he had written, and his hearers, when they perused that sermon, as printed, searched in vain for its most eloquent passages. If he had inserted them, on Monday, in the manuscript which he had preached on Sunday, he would have made the world his debtor. But whether a sermon be modified or not after it has been preached, it should be corrected at some time after it has been composed. A written discourse has this advantage over the extemporaneous; the false or crude sentiments, the wild or odd conceits, the inapposite or ungrammatical expressions of the writer are secretly committed to paper, and may be as secretly exchanged for better thoughts and phrases. But the blunders which are made in speaking extempore are made before the entire audience, and cannot be dislodged from the minds which are offended or perhaps injured by them.

The careful elaboration of a discourse appears to some inconsistent with the celerity of penning it. Men often complain of a contradiction between the different maxims of rhetoric. Thus it is an old adage:

> "Toil forms the thoughts and polished style that please,—
> The writer's labor makes the reader's ease."

On the contrary it is an apothegm of Mr. Emerson, "Every man can do his best thing easiest." The seeming contradiction between these two maxims vanishes when we reflect, that the author's labor precedes and follows his process of writing, and while he is engaged in that process, his work becomes what Rousseau and Jean Paul would call play.[1]

[1] It is the correction of what has been written which causes the tedium of composition. "I give," says Coleridge, (Reminiscences by Mr. Cottle, Vol. i.

The elaboration of a sermon consists in the antecedent study of its subject-matter and in the subsequent recensions leading perhaps, to a new copy of it.

Dr. Paley remarks:[1] "The late Mr. Hartley, whose knowledge of the human understanding no one will dispute, whenever he saw a faulty composition, was wont to say it had not been written over often enough. There are no compositions in the language which have been so admired for this very quality of ease as those of Mr. Sterne; yet none, I believe, ever cost their author more trouble. I remember to have seen a letter of his, in which he speaks of himself as having been incessantly employed for six months upon one small volume." Sir Walter Scott said that "the works and passages in which he has succeeded have uniformly been written with the greatest rapidity"; and he is understood to have said, that of his principal poems only one — "The Lady of the Lake" — was written over the second time, and this was completed in six weeks. He generally wrote on subjects which he had made familiar to his mind; he had stored his memory with the words and dialects which he was to use; he was satisfied with the phrases which after this preparatory labor first suggested themselves; but in some of his works he essentially injured his reputation by not reviewing, criticising, and correcting them. Ben Johnson says that Shakespeare never corrected his composition, but was "as tenacious as Pontius Pilate of what he had written." If this be the fact, we may easily account for the annoyances to which he has subjected his editors.

The manner of making the revisions of a discourse is thus described by Dr. Paley:[2]

p. 138), every moment I can spare from my garden and the Reviews, i.e. from my potatoes and meat, to the poems [Religious Musings]; but I go on slowly, for I torture the poem and myself with corrections, and what I write in an hour I sometimes take two or three days in correcting. — The Religious Musings I have altered monstrously, since I have read them to you and received your criticisms."

[1] In his Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Carlisle on the Studies suitable to the Clergy.

[2] In his fifth Charge, cited above.

"It is necessary that these revisions be made at due distances of time. A very simple example will show the reason of this rule. In the easiest operation of arithmetic, the casting up an account, a person may do it twenty times together, and twenty times together commit the same mistake. But if he should repeat the process at due distances of time, it is scarcely possible that that should take place. So it fares with our critical sagacity; very gross improprieties may elude examination, and if they once escape our attention, it is probable they will continue to escape it at that time, let us read over our composition ever so often. It is necessary, therefore, that the mind should come fresh to the subject, that the taste be not blunted by too much exercise, the thought too much implicated in the same trains and habits; and above all, that the familiarity of words and ideas be passed off, which whilst it lasts, renders the perception of faults almost impossible. To me it appears, that this principle was very well known to the classic ages of literature. The *nonum prematur in annum* was not merely for the purpose of frequent revisions, for which surely a much less time would have been sufficient, but to allow such space also and distance between them, as that they might be made with the best effect. It is also of consequence to view a subject in different states of spirits, different moods of temper, and different dispositions of thought. That can hardly be wrong which pleases under all these varieties of mind or situation; that may be very much so which pleases only in one. For instance, an inflamed diction, fantastic or extravagant, bold conceits, violent or daring expressions, may gratify a mind heated or elated with its subject, which, when the animal spirits were subsided and the enthusiasm gone, would appear intolerable even to the same person."

11. In writing and correcting your discourse, let the idea, rather than the manner of expressing it, be the chief object of attention; and prefer that manner which the idea most naturally suggests. One of the most instructive rules ever given by a rhetorician was given by Dr. Emmons to a young preacher: "First, find out what you have to say; secondly, say it." A writer wastes his time, acquires an artificial method of thought and speech, in laboring to say something in a neat or dignified or learned style. "What thought do I really wish to express?" That is the first, second, and third question.[1] In answering this question a wise man

[1] Lord Bacon criticising the literature introduced by the Reformation, says: "Men began to hunt more after words than matter, and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject,

expends his main strength. In mentally answering it to himself he will be impelled to use certain words. They come naturally. The main course of those words is probably the right one. They may be modified in some particulars; the modification of them will require time and care; but the original selection of them is a short work and almost unconscious; and, in the general, if they express his thought really, they express it fitly.

If a writer fails to make the idea his main object of attention, he will often injure his style in attempting to improve it. Many do this, and thereby awaken a prejudice against elaborate composition. "Give us more lays," says Southey to Walter Scott, "and correct them at leisure for after editions — not laboriously, but when the amendment comes naturally and unsought for. It never does to sit down doggedly to correct."[1] Not doggedly, but intelligently; not laboriously in the sense of tiresomely, but in the sense of energetically and cautiously, should a writer improve his compositions by the *multa litura*. Not without severe toil can he obtain the power of Professor Playfair, of whom Lord Jeffrey says: "He wrote rather slowly, and his first sketches were often very slight and imperfect, like the rude chalking for a masterly picture; his chief effort and greatest

soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment..... Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo; 'Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone'; and the 'echo answered in Greek, Ὄνε,' 'asine.'..... How is it possible but this should have an operation to discredit learning, even with vulgar capacities, when they see learned men's works like the first letter of a patent or limned book; which though it hath large flourishes, yet it is but a letter. It seems to me that Pygmalion's frenzy is a good emblem or portraiture of this vanity; for words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture." — Bacon's Works, Vol. ii. pp. 36, 37. These remarks of Bacon are in no way inconsistent with principles laid down under § 2. I. 1. above in regard to the elaborating of a discourse. Dr. Rawley, in his Life of Bacon, says: "I myself have seen, at the least, twelve copies of the Instauration [Instauratio Magna] revised year by year, one after another, and every year altered and amended in the frame thereof; till at last it came to that model in which it was committed to the press." — Bacon's Works, Vol. ix. p. 27.

[1] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. ii. p. 269.

pleasure was in their revisal and correction; and there were no limits to the improvement which resulted from this application." He first drew the outline of his essay, and then performed the most material part of his work, enriching and improving it, "without any risk either of destroying the proportions of that outline or injuring the harmony and unity of the original design."[1]

12. When you are writing one part of your sermon, and such thoughts occur to you as may be needed for another part of it, note down brief hints of them. Unless they are thus fixed in a permanent form, they may never be recalled; and you may labor in constructing an artificial paragraph in the place of that natural one, the plan of which darted through your mind when it was aglow with your theme. Some of our best thoughts flit before us when they cannot be used. It certainly cannot be said of every writer, as is said of Professor Playfair, that "he had no capricious visitings of fancy, which it was necessary to fix on the spot or to lose forever, no casual inspirations to invoke and to wait for, no transitory and evanescent lights to catch before they faded."[2] The ideas which come to one writer and are instantly forgotten, would form a richer sermon than could possibly be written by another man. "Mr. Locke long ago observed that the most valuable of our thoughts are those which drop, as it were, into the mind by accident; and no one exercised in these matters will be backward to allow that they are almost always preferable to what is forced up from the mind by pumping,"[3] etc. "I am in the habit," says Reinhard, and the same has been said by a hundred others, "of writing down those thoughts which occur to me in reading, regular reflection, or incidentally, and are worthy of being treated of in detail in a sermon, just as they present themselves to my mind at the moment, without having any particular object in view. If, then, at any time, I meet with difficulty in finding something appropriate in a text upon which I am

[1] Jeffrey's Essays, Vol. iii. p. 687. [2] Jeffrey's Essays, Vol. iii. p. 688
[3] Paley's Works, Vol. vi. p. 413.

called to preach, I recur to this catalogue of interesting thoughts, in order to see whether some of them cannot be made to bear upon the text in question. This often proves to be the case; and in this way I have been led to many happy combinations of which I should otherwise never have thought." [1]

13. So arrange your studies as to avoid unnecessary fatigue. The excitement of writing facilitates both thought and expression, but tends to exhaust both body and mind. Some of the most eminent authors have been compelled by their feeble health to suspend their studies at a predetermined hour, even although the hour found them at the height of their inspiration. Thus they have sacrificed some of their best thoughts to a physical necessity. Others, being accustomed to wait for their inspired moods, have prolonged their work during the continuance of those moods, and ended it in such a state of exhaustion as has disgusted them with their writing, and indisposed them to renew it until they were again visited with one of their mysterious inspirations. This irregular habit is eminently unfit for the pastor of a church. Another class, who are not inclined to "humor their disposition," persevere in writing while they are weary, and thus make it sure that the sermon will be dry, even if, like truth, it should be at the bottom of the well. What is said to all artists, may be said to clerical authors: "When you begin to tire of your work, leave off. You will certainly injure yourself." [2]

One of the most important applications of the present rule is this: Do not continue the work of composition to a late

[1] Reinhard's Confessions, Letter x.

[2] Leslie. It is said that Macaulay, as soon as his writing palled upon him, left it, and took a stroll in the open air. When residing in London "he would throw down his pen at midnight and walk through the silent streets for two or three hours. He thought the silence and solitude of a great city favorable to meditation, and generally returned to his desk with a fresh stock of vivid and picturesque thoughts." Edmund Burke when wearied, "would enter with cordial glee into the sports of children, rolling about with them on the carpet, and pouring out in his gambols the sublimest images mingled with the most wretched puns." — Life of Sir James Mackintosh, Carey's Library, p. 14.

hour in the week. Strive to close the work as early as Saturday noon. The habit of writing late on Saturday and early on Sabbath morning imperils the health of body, intellect, and heart. Entering the pulpit in an enfeebled state, the writer loses the benefit of his previous study. His sermon, however strong as an essay, is lame as an address to the people. A soldier continuing a forced march through the night is unfit, though he may be compelled, to fight in the morning. Bishop Hall considered it his most religious duty not to let his studies intrude upon his evening's quiet. "That student shall live miserably," he says, "which, like a camel, lies down under his burden." Izaak Walton tells us[1] that on the last day of the week Dr. Donne "usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his week's meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversions of his thoughts, and would say that he gave both his body and mind that refreshment that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following, not faintly, but with courage and cheerfulness." "I made it an invariable rule," says Reinhard, "before delivering one sermon to have another already prepared to follow it in my desk. ..... I was never driven to the necessity of preaching unprepared, or of extemporizing. ..... This habit of early preparation made it unnecessary for me to do anything in haste."[2] That remarkable man Julius Charles Rieu adopted Reinhard's plan. "Seldom did he preach a sermon, either in French or German, unless that which was to succeed it was ready in his desk; and thus he was never left to be embarrassed by those accidents which might occur during the week to interrupt the labors of preparation."[3] Tschirner objects to this method. An ordinary preacher will not feel so much interest in delivering a sermon which he finished a week before as in delivering one which he finished the day before.[4]

[1] Library of Old English Prose Authors, Vol. v. p. 86.

[2] Reinhard's Confessions, Letter viii.

[3] Memoir of Rieu, p. 23.

[4] In President Brown's Memoir of Rufus Choate pp. 308, 309, we read: "He could not prepare his cases for trial weeks and months in advance, as is the

One reason why the old divines made so deep an impression on their hearers is, they went not from the laboratory, but from the closet, into the pulpit. When they stood before their people, their faces shone as the face of Moses coming down from the mount. Of Philip Henry we read that, "whatever were the circumstances of his public opportunities, his family religion on that [the Sabbath] day was the same"; only he "was larger in exposition and prayer on Sabbath mornings than on other days," and, "besides his regular Psalms at morning and evening worship, he sang on that day with his family after dinner and supper." In Brooks's Lives of the Puritans, we read that, "having been long troubled," Rev. R. Rogers, one of the giants of those times, "set apart a day to seek of God why he so often hid his face from him. After three hours spent upon his knees, he came down, cheerful, saying he had found it; namely, that, *being busy for his sermon*, instead of praying with his family on the morning of the Lord's day, he had neglected that duty, and left it to his wife."

Various other directions might be added for the writer of a sermon; but they are all suggested or implied in those which have now been given. It must not be imagined that the observance of any rules will result in an essentially good sermon, unless the writer feel a sympathy with Him who spake as never man spake. It must be remembered that if he observe this Rule of all rules, and feel while he writes a oneness with his Redeemer, he will have an essentially good sermon, even if he violate the directions which are given for physical and intellectual discipline. As Ghiberti by the sense of touch could discover those beauties of a statue which are invisible to the eye even in any light, so a preacher by a refined spiritual touch can discover those beauties of the truth which are hidden from the man working by sight and

habit of some of our lawyers. He said to me once: 'I cannot get up the interest until the struggle is close at hand; then I think of nothing else till it is over.'"

not by faith. A preacher may be a servant of Christ, even if his body be shattered by disease, and a discourse may be in the main a good one even if it be composed in defiance of the laws of grammar. The speech of a converted savage derives a certain kind of charm from its expression of sublime thought in an uncultivated style, just as a flower receives a new attraction by its contrast with the mire out of which it grows. Still the tendency of a pious heart is to favor the observance of philosophical rules. These rules, being adapted to the human constitution, are prescribed by God, and hence their observance both aids the spirit of piety and receives aid from it.[1]

ARTICLE VI.

REPLY TO DR. FISKE ON ROM. V. 12-21.

BY REV. J. FORBES, LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

THE new sphere of duty to which I was suddenly called in November of last year, and which required my undivided attention to the work of the College Session, prevented my giving any reply immediately to the Review of my Commentary on the Romans, with which Dr. Fiske favored me in the Bibliotheca Sacra for October, 1870. To an author desirous only of attaining to the truth, the objections of one who has given so much attention to the subject as Dr. Fiske are far more valuable, and even acceptable, than the undiscriminating general commendations with which the Commentary has met in most of the reviews of it which I have seen. I feel not more indebted to Dr. Fiske for the confirmation he affords me of the correctness of my conclusions on those points in which he agrees with me in opposition to

[1] This Article will be followed by others, on the Reading of Sermons, and the Practice of preaching Memoriter and Extempore.