

## ARTICLE V.

## POWER IN THE PULPIT.

By Edwards A. Park, Bartlet Professor in Andover Theol. Seminary.

THERE are some who dislike the phrase, 'power in the pulpit.' They think that it derogates from the honor of him who saith, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." The sacred Scriptures, however, attribute an efficacy to the whole word of God, and in a special degree to his gospel; why then may not we ascribe a like efficacy to this word, to this gospel, when *preached*, or which is the same thing, a kind of power to the pulpit? This is indeed a secondary power, one which worketh upon hearers while God worketh in them; but although subordinate to the influences of the Holy Ghost, although dependent upon them for all its success, it is still an energy, an effective instrument, or an instrumental efficiency. That absolute Sovereign who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, hath chosen, (and who shall resist his will?) to bless such methods of preaching his word as are in themselves most wisely fitted to improve our moral nature. In the depth of our conviction that the renewal of the soul requires a direct agency of the great First Cause, we should not overlook the influence of those second causes which are also, under the Spirit's operation, and in a subordinate way, effective in elevating the character of men.

If then there is an instrumental power in certain methods of preaching the gospel, the question arises, what are these methods, or what are the elements of this power? When we call to mind the tens of thousands of ministers who are exerting an influence Sabbath after Sabbath on hundreds of thousands of laymen; when we consider that the effectiveness of the pulpit has, in comparison with other efficiencies, declined among us to an alarming extent within the last fifty years, and that an extensive religious apathy is one result of this decline; when we see that our intellectual and moral growth, our social order and even our civil freedom are under God dependent on the preacher's instrumentality, and that the popular wants, if not the popular wish, demand a soul-reviving dispensation of the word, we feel constrained to say, that the question, what are the most efficient modes of preaching the gospel, is the great question of the present age.

Various measures of moral reform have been proposed, but we have reason to believe that the chief and radical reformation of men will be the effect of the divine word orally delivered, and accompanied with the influences of divine grace. This is a question, therefore, which concerns not the minister only, but laymen also; for as a minister ought to preach, so ought his people to hear; they are bound to encourage him in the path which he is obligated to pursue, and they should never condemn but always defend that style of discourse which is, in its own nature, the most effective. By sustaining an efficient ministry they become the benefactors not of the church alone, but of the nation and world also. To specify a few of the elements of power in the pulpit, will be the design of the present essay; not those elements which are insisted on most frequently, but those which are mentioned more seldom, and of which at the present day there is the greatest need.

In the first place, then, preaching, in order to be powerful, must often be argumentative. It is thought by some that a minister should assume the correctness of what he declares, and should expend his energy in applying, not in proving the truth. They who attend the sanctuary, it is said, profess by their very attendance, that they believe the doctrines which are there advanced. But the mere fact of being present in the house of God, does not imply a faith in the teachings of the pulpit. Many will ostensibly unite in a worship which they deem unreasonable. They must be convinced by argument, that the minister's assertions are solemn verities, or they will remain merely ostensible worshippers.

Nor is the argumentative discourse needful for the positive unbelievers alone. It is also requisite for that large class of men who yield a formal assent to the truth, but still have no vivid nor well defined conceptions of it; no strongly fortified confidence in it. Such men demand a new, a more distinct impression of religious doctrine upon their intellect. When they have worked their way through a process of argument, they begin to feel that the objects of their vague belief are momentous realities. Their previously dull assent is brightened up into a luminous conviction. Their cold and weak belief is warmed and strengthened into an energetic faith.

Nor is it merely for the purpose of freshening men's confidence in propositions which they had before idly believed, that argument is useful. It is also a means of moral excitement. It wakes up the intellect, and when the mind is enlivened, the heart is the more

easily aroused. Besides, there is an alternation in the soul; and when the reasoning powers have *been* tasked, there rises a predisposition to indulge in feeling. The hearer is inclined to relieve himself from the tension of the mental faculties by the play of the affections. As when the mind is sluggish the heart will be stupid, so when the intellect is in vigorous activity, it will stir up the fountains of feeling; it will in time become wearied with its reasoning processes, and then the soul will refresh itself in a change from thought to emotion. Nor is this all. The heart is not to be taken by direct assault. It must be carried captive ere it is aware. If we forewarn the hearer of our intended appeal to his sensibilities, he will brace himself against us. He must be intellectually interested in the subject, before he will be morally affected by it. Now there is no better way of engaging the intellect of man than the way of argument. Talk of his idleness as you will, he loves to reason. Speak of proofs as cold and hard, they do quicken his powers. He was made for discussing the truth and for living conformably with it. And when we have once allured him to a rational investigation of a theme, we may easily direct his thoughts to the moral influence of it; and the affections will often steal out unnoticed, when they could not be forced out by an imperative summons, nor begged out by soft entreaties. An abrupt exhortation will repel; a mere exhortation will satiate and disgust the inquisitive hearer; but when a principle has been demonstrated by absorbing argument, there will be sidelong influences of it, insinuating themselves upon his heart; and he who thought to be a mere philosophical examiner, finds himself a weeping child of the truth. Further, the use of argument gives a prominence to religious doctrine. The reasons are like pillars on which the truth is seen to rest; and on the summit of which it lies, attracting the attention of all men to itself. It is this conspicuous position, this prominence of truth which adds dignity and power to the pulpit. Moreover, that which is reasoned out is, therefore, highly valued and revered. Costing labor, and that of a manly kind, it is so much the better esteemed. Deduced from fundamental principles, it seems impregnable and commands deference. It is proved to be not an individual opinion, but a truth founded in the nature of things, or expressly revealed from heaven. Audiences may look down upon their preacher as a man, but, entirely depraved though they are, they will in some way defer to the authority of Jehovah and the eternal laws of being. The minister is shorn of his strength, when

he seems to be uttering his own notions, or the dogmas of his sect. He must appear to be enforcing those immutable verities which are not so truly said to be made for our race, as the race was made for them. He must conceal himself behind his subject; the doctrine must stand out foremost, not as his doctrine, but as God's. It must speak, rather than the man himself. But for this end, it must be proved; be urged forward by strong reasonings. Projecting out into full view, it must be propped up by massive buttresses; and thus it strikes the eye and fills the mind with an impression of strength which no man, *as such*, can make. Let the vanity of a preacher induce him to hold up a doctrine in his own hands, and claim obeisance to it because he asserts it, and he will lose the very regard which he aims to secure; but let him show that the doctrine is self-sustained and is unassailable on its own foundations, that it is a principle which God has revealed and for which Christ died, and it will have authority over men; it will command their homage, involuntary perhaps, but still homage; it will excite feeling, wrong it may be, but yet feeling. "My word shall not return unto me void," saith the Holy One.

Accordingly we find that the ablest ministers of the gospel have been those who "applied their hearts to seek out wisdom and the reason of things." In reading the sermons of the elder Edwards, we stand in awe; for he speaks not as one who sings a pleasant song, but in the name of him who says, "Preach the preaching that I bid thee." There is something in his discourses that presses us, crowds upon us, follows hard after us; and if we flee from it, it is close upon our footsteps; and there is no sense in our trying to escape it. It is the power of God's word, shown to be God's word, identified as such, and therefore we cannot stay it in its onward urging. Overcome by his argument we fall a prey at once to his appeal. His discussion interests us; we are first surprised, then taken captive, and afterward borne along "whithersoever the governor listeth." So was it with Paul. "He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath," and as he once "reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment, Felix trembled." He was not afraid of abstruse preaching, nor of metaphysical preaching, but he uttered words hard to be understood and liable to be wrested by the unlearned and unstable; still he enforced them by such compressed ratiocination as to make his hearers feel, that in striving against him they were striving against God. The direct tendency of strong argument is, to transfer the reasoner's appeal from the sphere of his own opinions to the sphere of

divine inspiration ; and he who braces himself against this appeal, strikes and presses against a brazen wall. Hence it is characteristic of every preacher who fortifies his words by giving the reason for them, to speak as with authority. " My words are not my own," he seems to declare, " but I have proved them ; and you know them to be true. He that receiveth them receiveth not me alone but him who sent me. He that despiseth them poureth contempt not upon me alone, but upon his own mind, and upon his Maker, and shall at last wonder and perish."

In the second place, the preaching of divine truth in order to be powerful must have a *positive element*. Firmness, decision, independence, courage, we all admire ; but we despise pusillanimity, cowardice, a timorous, irresolute, fluctuating mind. As a man will not be respected unless he respect himself, so a doctrine will not be efficacious unless it be seen to stand erect, to be itself a *something*, to have claims of its own, and to insist upon controlling the life of men.

The positive style of preaching is opposed to all superabundance of qualifying remark. It is needful to modify our statements, just so far as the truth requires ; but it is wise to adopt such a phraseology as calls for the least qualification possible. It is a weakening process to recal our words ; to advance and instantly recede, to propound a truth and then explain so disproportionately as to explain it away. There is a kind of shrinking back from masculine thought, which leads some men to overlook the main principle, in their anxiety about the minor qualifications of it. These men may be cautious guides *from* certain forms of error, but they are not successful leaders *into* the truth. We must qualify remarks which are too bold, if we have been inconsiderate enough to make them ; but when we would impress the popular mind we must speak the truth outright ; not covering it up with modifications, nor seeming to take back the words which we have just given out. We must be wary in our statements, but should not have that diseased caution, that feebleness of mental grasp, which prevents our going *straight forward* from the Bible to the consciences of men.

The positive style of preaching is also opposed to an excess of liberalism in religious doctrine. We are strong while we are just as liberal as the truth will allow, but we only enfeeble ourselves when we become latitudinarian and indifferent. There are some doctrines which are important and a belief in which is salutary ; but they are not essential to our future life, and if we

insist on them *as such*, we are chargeable with the vice of exclusiveness.<sup>1</sup> By this exclusiveness we may overawe the imbecile, but we lose the respect of the judicious. We should preach on these subordinate truths occasionally, but if we preach on them too often, our ministrations become only insipid. There are other doctrines, not only important but necessary for salvation. The deliberate, wilful rejection of them is death. They cannot be compromised. They must be lifted up and rallied around as the standards of our faith; they must be enforced strongly, rarely, sternly, if need be. The preaching of *these* doctrines should be our great aim, for in them is the hiding of our power, and the genius of them is manliness and strength. These doctrines have a right to be heard, and it is in their very nature to insist on all their claims and remit not one jot or tittle. They are suasive indeed, but imperative; not only imperative but aggressive also. Upon every form of moral evil they make an attack. They *have a work to do* and therefore lie not idle. They assail the conscience, they go forward against a perverse will; there is movement in them, progress, swift, sure, and therefore forcible. When we appear to *patronize* the things that we preach, and notwithstanding our good feeling toward them, yet acknowledge that they may be disbelieved without serious harm; when we recommend a love to them and still confess that the want of love may not endanger the soul; when we *advise* to the doing of right as more judicious than the doing of wrong, but take it nothing amiss if our advice be unheeded, then we miscall ourselves, if we take the name of preachers of that gospel which is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. There is command, there is penalty; there is a strict condition; there is a "believe and be saved;" "a disbelieve and be lost;" and if we waver in enforcing this positive law, we cut the sinews of our strength. *It is impossible* for men who deny the reality of future rewards and punishments, to have as great power in the pulpit as if they enforced this truth. They may urge their negative creed, but they cannot make it appear really worth while for others to agree with them. It may seem well enough to acquiesce in their negation, for eternal life will follow such an acquiescence; but so will eternal life ensue from the opposite belief, and on their own principles it is about as well to affirm what they deny, as it is to sanc-

<sup>1</sup> I say the *vice of exclusiveness*; for there is a virtue bearing the same name, an *exclusiveness* that insists on the difference between the spirit of the Bible and the genius of irreligion.

tion their denial. Either creed is safe, and there need be no outlay of strength in exhorting to one or the other. But there is power in a strict alternative; obey *or* be lost. There is power in a dividing line, if it be wisely drawn; and "thus far but no further" seizes the heart with a strong grasp. It is impressive to look at the door that opens, *but* also *shuts*, and no man can remove the bar that closes it. There is a narrow way, and the thought of it makes men agonize to struggle into it; because it is a narrow way and few there be that find it. There is a broad road that leadeth downward; and men who hear of it quicken their footsteps to escape from its easy descent; because it is the broad road, and many there be that go down thereon. If we even invert the proportions of truth, and represent the *wide gate* as the entrance into *heaven*, and the *narrow path* as the way to *death*, we are more latitudinarian than the gospel sanctions, or the efficiency of the pulpit allows. There may be difficulties around this doctrine as around every other, but the force of our teaching is to press the doctrine through its difficulties and move onward with an unflinching step, in a right line.

The positive mode of preaching the gospel is opposed to a merely controversial method. We have no right to banish controversy from the pulpit. It sharpens the attention of hearers and animates their zeal for the truth. It enlivens the monotony of discourses, and monotony is the evil to which our ministrations are peculiarly exposed. The controversial style appeals to a distinct principle of our natures, a principle which cannot be neglected without harm, which is innocent and useful enough to be addressed repeatedly by prophets and apostles. Indeed the preaching of our Saviour, the mildest of men, is oftener than we seem to be aware, enlivened by an encounter with spiritual antagonists. As false doctrine naturally leads to wrong practice, we are no more forbidden to resist the former as a cause, than the latter as an effect. The positive style of preaching being in its nature decisive, has been stated to be aggressive upon sin, and must therefore be controversial against the errors by which sin is fostered. "I was born," says Luther, "to fight with devils and factions. This is the reason that my books are so boisterous and stormy. It is my business to remove obstructions, to cut down thorns, to fill up quagmires, to open and make straight the paths."—"Philip has a different nature; he advances silently and softly; he builds, he plants, he waters in peace and joy of heart." If all preaching, however, were like that of Melancthon, it would lose

at least one element of power. For the highest influence on a large class of minds, there must be severe, indignant reprimand, bold commination against sin. Our discourses are emasculated when they include none but soft and pleasant words.

Still the controversial element, even when employed against practical evil, must not be the predominant one in the pulpit. Much less can it be thus prominent when armed against mere theoretical mistakes. It will not suffice to beat down all error under our feet. We must build up some truth. What though we convince our auditors that this or that heresy is ruinous; we have not thereby edified them in the faith. We have administered to them a medicine which may counteract the poison of falsehood, but have not fed them with strong meat or even with milk, that they may grow thereby. If the Reformers had confined their labors to a mere protesting against the Romish creed, they had failed. The world would have defended the church against all her assailants, had not a positive faith been held up as the only sure refuge from ecclesiastical misrule. In our own day we see that taste and learning and genius are insufficient to give vitality to that creed which prominently insists on "not believing." A preacher may not believe in the divinity of Christ, he may not believe in the atonement, he may not believe in our entire depravity, he may not believe in regeneration, he may not believe in the final judgment. And what of all this? What good ever comes of a mere want of faith, which is a bare nothing? What man was ever awaked from his slumbers by simply not rousing him? What family were ever alarmed in their midnight danger, by simply repeating to them that their house was not on fire? Man was never made for a mere denial of what is FALSE EVEN, but for the direct affirmation of what is true. He has cravings which must be met with something more than a proof that they cannot be satisfied in this or that specific form. They are cravings which are met precisely by the pure gospel. This is in its nature positive, self-sustained, independent, and adapted wondrously therein to our constitution. It teaches not that man is partly good and partly evil, *half and half*, but totally depraved; not that Jehovah is somewhat indifferent with regard to us, and somewhat inclined to be influenced by us, but that he is a sovereign, and keeps in his own hand the power and the dominion, and overturneth and overturneth as he pleases, and giveth no account of his matters to us, his servants. It does not affirm that our salvation depends upon gradually cultivating our native good principles until they have gained some-



what of a predominance over our evil propensities; but it does affirm that our future life depends on crossing one plainly marked line; on taking one positive step; except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven; and if he have faith even as a grain of mustard-seed, he shall be a king and priest unto God. The truth of the gospel is thus definite, open, firm, striking, pointed, and therefore effective; and hence when set forth in its due prominence, it makes the pulpit "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" it causes the kingdom of heaven to suffer violence, and the violent to take it by force.

Thirdly, the power of the pulpit requires that the truths of the gospel be often presented singly. One doctrine will often suffice for one sermon; it is ample enough, momentous enough; nor can it within a smaller compass be faithfully analyzed and enforced. It must be made to stand out, unobstructed like the Parthenon at Athens, exposing all its symmetry and majesty to the free, full vision. By thus making a single doctrine the prominent theme of one sermon, the way is prepared to introduce a new truth as the chief attraction of another discourse. We may thus impart to every address its own distinctive peculiarity, and may invest the whole series of our ministrations with that various interest, that freshness, that copiousness which comes from unity in each individual part of the series. Often when several topics are crowded into a single discourse, no one of them can be radically discussed, and all of them in a half-developed form will be again and again introduced into succeeding homilies; so that every sermon will appear to be a stale repetition of others which preceded it, and the whole course of preaching will be superficial, undiversified, wearisome, and therefore powerless. When a single doctrine is held out steadily to our gaze, we may view it with distinctness, its lineaments are not confused with the lines of other truths, nor distorted into a space too narrow for it. Thus open to our undistracted examination, it penetrates deep into our feelings. The intellect is affected by general views, but the heart requires particulars. It is a single thought, now condensed and now expanded, here proved and there illustrated, portrayed in its details, pressed home upon the conscience; it is this which calls out emotion. Vague generalities are like moon-beams. Monotonous reiterations of commingled truths are like the successive strokes of a bell; but one doctrine coming upon the soul drop by drop, wears away the hardness of the sensibility. Paul in his letters to the Romans and Galatians, has a single impres-

sion to make, "the just shall live by faith;" and no one who has studied those epistles can ever forget this central point to which all parts of them converge. James has a different aim in his Epistle, that of commending an obedient life, and he fills the mind of his reader with the one idea, that faith without works is dead. A man of merely scientific associations, unused to impressive statements, may condemn each of these apostles as making an incomplete representation. But they knew where was the secret of their power. They knew that he who could gain too much at once with the common mind, loses all; that *one* thing is needful; and when this one is secured, a second and a third will follow in its train.

Among the successors of the apostles, there is no man who has made a deeper impression on the church than Martin Luther. He is in a civil and religious aspect a father to his native land. His memory is still preserved fresh and green among his countrymen as if he had died but the last year. It has been a great query, whence came his power? How was he enabled to disenthral a church from its iron bondage? The answer of some is, that he broke the benumbing spell of the schoolmen and restored the taste for classical learning. The reply of others is, that he combined the chivalry of the knight-errant with the benevolence of a Christian, and that his manly onsets upon the foe awakened the sympathies of high minded men. The solution of one is that he gave a new language to his countrymen and plied them with a vocabulary before unwritten, but yet genial to their natures. "He grasped," it is said by another, "the iron trumpet of his mother tongue, the good old Saxon from which our own is descended, the language of noble thought and high resolve, and he blew a blast that shook the nations from Rome to the Orkneys." But all these elements of power, vigorous as they are, would have availed but little were it not for a single influence which is overlooked by the world. He held forth and held up high and broad and distinct and bright one stirring truth, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Morning and evening, from the towers of Erfurt and before the Diet at Worms, from the castle of Wartburg, in the church and in the palaces at Eisleben, and from his still retreat at Wittenberg, it was faith in Christ that he preached and urged home, until he absolved men from their penances, and emptied the confessional and broke down the walls of the monastery. It was this one idea that concentrated upon itself all his energies, and worked with indivisible force upon

him and his hearers and his readers, and at last redeemed the nations. There never was a great object secured without this identical oneness of view, that elicits a simplicity of feeling and a singleness of aim. Whether the evil to be resisted be intemperance or slavery, sabbath-breaking or war, it is the one evil which must for a season engross the mind and loom up as the prominent thing to be dreaded, or men will not be aroused for its extirpation. This is the teaching of history. It is corroborated by the analogies of all the fine arts, by the simplicity of painting and sculpture and architecture. It is to be inferred from the very structure of our own minds.

When we thus insulate a doctrine, and waive for the present some collateral truth which we mean to dilate upon in the future, we must guard against appearing to deny that which we merely defer. Can we not pass over a dogma for a time without nullifying it in the popular apprehension? Of two principles, can we not raise the first into a prominence above the second, without severing the cord which binds the two together, and without hiding the fact that both of them are truths combined? If the range of the human soul were not a contracted one, we might impart a vivid idea of a complicated system without first analyzing it into its constituent members, and without protruding one of them at a time into a bolder relief than the others. But so narrow is the avenue to the heart, that we must often pass our doctrines through it *one by one*. It is to be remembered, however, that what we should *often* do, we need not do *always*. As we may now insist upon *this* isolated truth, and then upon *another*, so may we afterwards develop the relation between the two; and this correlation of distinct principles may be itself a single and an impressive subject of a discourse. It is therefore perfectly consistent for me to add as my *fourth* remark, that a minister, in order to preach with power must frequently exhibit the proper combination of related doctrines. As he should often but not always present them in their insulated beauty, so he should often though not always present them in their reciprocal harmony, their interdependence. We must sometimes collect all the scattered rays of light upon one bright focus. Union, combination is strength. The ancient writers are fond of exhibiting the duality that pervades the universe. "All things," says Ecclesiastics, "are double one against another."—"Good is set against evil and life against death; so is the godly against the sinner and the sinner against the godly. So look upon all the

works of the Most High and there are two and two, one against another."<sup>1</sup> "Omnium verum," says Pythagoras, "initia esse bina; ut finitum et infinitum, bonum et malum, vitam et mortem, diem et noctem."<sup>2</sup> If there be light, then there is darkness; if cold, then heat; if height, depth also; if solid, then fluid; hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, calm and tempest, prosperity and adversity, life and death. In fine, says Harris, "the periods of nature and of human affairs are maintained by a reciprocal succession of contraries."<sup>3</sup> As in the human body there are antagonist muscles, one for moving the arm forward, another for moving it backward, one for turning the eye up, another for rolling it down, so in the spirit hope finds its opposite in despair, joy in sorrow, confidence in fear; in short every emotion has its correlate, and one cannot be fully understood apart from its connection with the other. As there is always a correspondence between truth and the soul, we find a duality among doctrines, like that among our mental principles, and one theory must be weighed by its counterpoise. We may alternate from a single member of a duplicate truth to another, but the very idea of this alternation implies that the two members are preserved to alternate from, and that the same eye which temporarily confines itself to one branch of the comprehensive doctrine may afterwards extend itself to the union of the two branches. We may insist to-day on the humanity of Christ alone, and to-morrow on his divinity alone, each for the sake of a vivid impression; but if we permanently separate the two truths, we do injustice to both of them. We then "split the ray of light," as Southey says, in order to see one of the prismatic colors, but we shall never live in the clear day unless we at length unite the rays in the proper compound. Sometimes the doctrine of natural ability may have been down-trodden and our usefulness may demand a special care to raise it up from its obscure hiding place. At other times the doctrine of moral inability may have been overlooked, and we may be required to summon up all our energies in pressing it forward into conspicuous notice. But if we preach unintermittingly and exclusively on free will, our audiences will become too restless for a patient submission to the will of God; and if we dwell disproportionately on human dependence, we shall leave our people waiting to be moved, and rejoicing that they are unable to move

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiasticus*, 42: 24 and 33: 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* L. IV, also Arist. *Metaph.* L. I. c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Hermes. Book I. ch. VII.*

themselves. The doctrine of human inability is in one respect a kind of centripetal force, which, if it act alone for a long time, will draw truth out of its orbit on one side; the doctrine of human ability has some likeness to a centrifugal power which, if it act without its antagonist, will propel the truth far away on the other side of its orbit; but when the two agencies are combined, the whole truth will hold on in its appropriate path, with more uniform velocity, with a doubled momentum.

A similar remark may be made with regard to other principles. The insignificance of man is an important truth; but if we only convince him that he is nothing and less than nothing, then he will infer that nothing can be expected of him, nothing required; he will lose that regard for his own worth, without which he cannot fully adore his Maker. The dignity of man is another valuable truth; but if we *only* convince him that he was made little lower than the angels, he will debase his original power with a pride which is one of his most humiliating faults, and his self-respect will degenerate into vanity. If we teach man nothing more than the entire perverseness of his will, we shall hide from him that vileness of sin which contaminates even the amiable sentiments of his nature. If, again, we teach man nothing more than the innocence of this or that animal or natural emotion, we shall conceal from him the most winning evidences of divine love, that love which gave an only son to die for those who never keep their innocence when they have the power of sinning, and who never put forth a choice but in disobedience to God's law. There is a bone, and there is a muscle in the system of truth; we may have wise reasons for occasionally severing the one from the other, but if we never exhibit the union of the two, we shall disgust men by constantly showing them a skeleton instead of a full body. Truth exerts its whole influence when it is sooner or later set forth as *many-sided*, as living in all its sides; but if we benumb one limb of it with a paralysis, if we lame any member of it, we make it at last unsightly, unattractive to the view, slow and halting in its movement. For a time, indeed, men will be stimulated by the continuous pressure of a doctrine which they had previously neglected; but after a certain time they will become wearied by it, annoyed by it, driven perhaps into heresy by it; for their sensibilities are never relieved by a view of the symmetry and the grace with which this doctrine is combined into a system. Whatever may be the efficiency of a single appeal aimed at one point, the whole course of our ministrations must affect all points; must

so group doctrines together as to disclose the exquisite beauty with which they are affiliated. They must be seen to supply and balance one another, or they will not be viewed as a panoply. If one part of them be selected as the exclusive matter of our consideration, then will our ministry be like the car that has lost its wheels from one side, and if it move at all, will grate upon the earth and drag. It will be like the eagle that is shorn of one wing, and flutters and moves round and round in a circle, but never takes its flight to the sun. "As the beauty of truth," says Robert Hall, "consists chiefly in the harmony and perfection of its several parts, it is as impossible to display it to advantage" (by never displaying it except) "in fragments, as to give a just idea of a noble and majestic structure by exhibiting a single brick. By detaching particular portions from the system to which it belongs, we break the continuity of truth, we interrupt that vital communication between its respective parts, on which its life and vigor depend, and thus we corrupt the few doctrines which we may happen to possess, and consign others of equal importance to contempt and oblivion."

In the fifth place, the preaching of the Gospel, in order to be powerful, must be free. It is impossible for a minister to exert the highest influence over his fellow-men, unless he utter his own ideas in his own way. "We are all knit together by a strange tie of sympathy," and if we think out and speak out what seems good and true to ourselves, we shall find a response in the mind of others; for as face answereth to face in water, so doth the heart of man to man. Nature will sooner or later interest its beholders, and he who represses the spontaneous outgushings of his soul, only cuts off thereby his communication with his race.

Here and there a preacher puts a constraint upon himself, through fear of being deemed theatrical. He knows that frigidness of expression and of mien characterizes the inhabitants of our cold northern climes, and that a certain stiffness and staidness seem to be in unison with the canons of our pulpit. He dislikes the cramping influence of our provincial habits, and yet he fears that unless he smother a fervid emotion he will be despised for a *love of display*. He dares not light up his countenance with a *kindling sentiment*, lest he be rebuked by the chilling gaze of a *hearer who mistakes* the apathy of our ungenial manners for real nature. But nature is not rigid and straight laced. It is living, moving, glowing, rushing, outpouring. Listlessness in discourse is affectation; stupidity is the *artificial vice*; and he who restrains

the ardor of his soul for the sake of avoiding a theatrical appearance, sacrifices himself as God made him, to the awkwardnesses of a conventional taste. It is disagreeable for him to manifest his own excitement before an audience who look with cold unmeaning eyes upon the spectacle; but let him disregard the repulsive stare, and heed the mandate, "be not afraid of their faces." If he will not, as he should not, yield to the critical and derisive lip of the multitude, the multitude will yield to him. Nature will conquer in the end; life will prevail over deadness; and men who came to scoff will, through grace, remain to pray.

Here and there also the fear of being thought fanatical, puts a check upon the freedom of the minister. If he allow an unobstructed egress to the feelings of his soul, he expects to lose cast with *orderly* men, and to be regarded as an effervescing, but not as a solid or edifying preacher. Now the term fanaticism, although often used as including the malignant principle, is employed in this objection simply to denote a higher degree of excitement than is required by the objects calling it forth. This superfluity is an evil, but no worse than the opposite deficiency. Redundance of feeling is unnatural and so is coldness. That man is sure to fail, who preaches with the main design of avoiding excess of emotion. Higher, nobler, freer should be his aim, that of speaking as the Spirit giveth him utterance, and not as his reputation demands. No man can preach with power, unless he regulate his feelings by the nature of his theme, resigning himself to the influences of truth, and letting his emotions well upward and outward, according to their own sweet will. A minister must be childlike in the unveiling of his heart, if he would bring the hearts of his people into unison with his own. He should smile or weep as his subject constrains him; and if he suppress his feelings or his tears through fear of attracting observation and provoking criticism, then he contendeth with himself; and 'no man goeth to a warfare' against his nature, 'except at his own charges;' then he steels his sensibilities against the truth, and 'no man ever hardened himself against God' or the divine word, 'and prospered.'

Here and there also a minister abridges the freedom of his pulpit through fear of opposing the doctrinal views of his audience. When hearers have been long inured to one unvaried style of presenting truth, they are inclined to associate the very substance of truth with that specific form of statement. Any deviation from the popular phrase, is suspected of being a want of reverence to a fundamental doctrine. The preacher, therefore, who desires to

win golden opinions for himself, is induced to melt down his natural style into the mould of some fashionable theory. He shrinks from expressing his true, spontaneous feelings, lest they should not fit precisely what is looked upon as the standard measure. But this will never do. It is a good omen for men to be watchful over their pastor's doctrine, his spirit and his style; but they should never make him an offender for a word, and he should never stifle his hearty faith from the vain love of being called by them Rabbi. His soul should be a *fountain* of living water springing up within himself, and flowing on from its own resources; and should never be a mere *reservoir* of foreign streams, walled around and dammed up, pinched in time of drought, and stagnant when full. 'He must speak with a free heart what his Bible bids him.' If his people will hear, let him speak it; if they will not hear, *let him speak it*, in the hope of aid from on high. He may incur their dislike for a time. No minister ever moved his people with strong impulses by his theological discussions, without sometimes going athwart their previously cherished theories, and being suspected of harboring some false doctrine. It was so with Augustin and Calvin, Luther and Zwingli. It was so with John Owen and Richard Baxter. It was so with Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall. It was so with the two Edwardses, with Bellamy and Hopkins. It will be so while truth continues to be viewed as narrow and steelbound; while its various phases, its multiform relations, its diversified modes of exhibition are lightly esteemed; while the copious and affluent, ever old and ever new phraseology of the Bible is sacrificed to the shibboleths of contracted partizans. But our laymen are too generous to insist for a long time, on their pastor's surrendering his individuality and becoming a slave to their own habits of speculation. They choose that he utter forth with a good conscience, what his soul is penetrated with and stirred up with in its deep recesses. Thought has a spring in it which must not be coiled up too severely. When its elastic force is gone, it ceases to impel men, and for practical effect all is gone. If therefore there be an idea in the preacher's mind, which he regards as essential to the full and free expression of his own doctrine, let it come out. It may seem unwonted to his hearers, but *let it come*. It may cost him some trouble, some jealousy, perhaps some reproof; still *let it come*. A living opinion, even if it be a suspected one, is better than a dead formula. A word that gushes out of an honest heart, even if it give offence, has a vitality in it which gives it power. Every sermon



should be a transcript of the writer's own mind, should be free from guile, from all manoeuvres to gain the applause of a party, should never crook for a by-end, but simply and sincerely should move straight onward; and if this pure minded sermon be instinct with the spirit and the truth of Jesus, it will, so fully do we trust his good promises and his grace, it will 'be quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing through the philosophies of gainsaying men, even to the dividing asunder of the joints and the marrow.'

Passing by several other elements of power in the pulpit, I will only mention in the sixth and last place, an affectionateness, a simplicity and an humbleness of Christian feeling. Better were it for the preacher to have no kind of freedom if he fail of that "liberty wherewith Christ maketh free." He may violate all other rules with comparative harmlessness, but if he violate this first, second and third rule, that all his reasonings and all his exhortations be conceived in the spirit of a servant and son of God, it is in vain to prescribe for him anything further. He cannot have power, unless his discourses be radiant with evangelical truth; and piety is needful to guide him into the truth. He cannot have power, unless he compose his sermon with a hearty interest in its moral bearings; and piety is essential to the liveliness of such an interest. He cannot have power unless he utter his words with pathos and unction, nor can he attain this appropriate utterance without a depth, and a tenderness of Christian sympathy. The theologian, then, the rhetorician and the elocutionist all unite in requiring, that the preacher be enthusiastic in his religious love at all times, but in a special degree at the precise time of his addressing an auditory. The man of plain common sense, will urge the same requirement, perceiving at a single view, that if ministers would make religion attractive to others, they must be delighted with it themselves; if they would awaken a pious sympathy, they must have piety to be sympathized with, and must not say, "Go to the Redeemer," but "Come to him,—come *with us*."

I have said that the spirit of the minister should be affectionate. Aristotle and Quintilian and Cicero demand, that an orator manifest a kindly feeling to his audience. Had they written for the pulpit, they would have required that a preacher exhibit an earnest love to the souls of his people; that he feel and display an interest in their welfare for this world, much more for the world to come. It is very easy to translate the prescriptions of heathen rhetoricians into a virtual demand that the sacred orator,

aiming to persuade men to a holy life, shall exhibit a fellow-feeling with those whom he addresses, and win their confidence in his personal regard for them. The winds may blow, the lightning may strike, the tempest may beat upon an ice-mountain, but it remains a mountain of ice. Only the heat of the sun melts it away. It is the warmth of love that subdues the soul "which laugheth at the shaking of a spear." When the heathen poets feigned that Amphion moved the stones and raised the walls of Thebes by the sound of his lyre, and that Orpheus subdued the ferocity of beasts and attracted to him the mountains by the sweetness of his music, they meant to describe the attractiveness, the persuasiveness of a refined benevolence expressed in its own alluring way. The cross of Christ is eloquent; for it shines upon our hearts with the warm radiance of his love. It is the goodness of God that *does*, as well as *should* lead us to repentance; much more than his grace; and therefore the minister must infuse into his discourses this same element which works in the heart, as the heat of the sun operates on the plant, and gives life and beauty, the blossom and the fruit. His benevolence must flow downward to his hearers and upward to God, and thus with one hand at the hearts of his people, and the other upon the throne of the eternal, he must be the medium for the transmission of those influences which are conducted softly and silently from heaven to the bosom of the church. In a psychological view of Christian oratory it seems to be a fixed law, that 'although a minister have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; though he speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and yet have no real charity toward his hearers, and manifest no affectionate interest in them, he is become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.'

I have said that the religion of the minister should be simple. There is a kind of piety which is exercised in agreement with human standards; it conforms to the practical rules of commentaries, and is governed by the example of certain good men. It always appears respectable, because it has the authority of church-worthies in its favor; but it is not so graceful nor winning as it is correct and safe. There is another kind of piety which is not harbored because other men have done the same, but is indulged because it *will* rise in view of its appropriate objects. It is the simple-hearted love which comes forth at the fresh opening of one's own heart to the influences of one's own meditations. It does not learn from books whether and how it ought to be exer-

cised, but it springs up without a calculating process and without a tasking of the imitative faculty. It is like the music of the Æolian harp, not hampered by rules, but sweeter than all the artificial symphonies of human contrivance. The religion of our Saviour is a winning specimen of that simplicity with which the feelings of a minister ought to flow out into a spontaneous expression. It was original, artless, unforced, ever new, always becoming. He did not borrow from the men whom he respected, but felt, as well as thought, for himself. He did not wait for a set formula of devotion before he could adore the Providence of God, but it was enough for him to see a field-flower, and that was a rich expression of a biblical truth. He did not enquire for the example of his predecessors, or for the probable opinion of the world, before he gave vent to his feelings in regard to the beloved city; but he looked upon it from the opposite hill, and wept over it, and cried, "Oh Jerusalem, how often would I,—even as a hen her chickens,—but you would not." He never consulted his own dignity by allying his kingdom with venerable priests, or the sacredness of local scenes; but he took little children in his arms, and ate with publicans, and extended his feet to be wiped by the hair of the head of a woman that was a sinner, and all not because he calculated that such things would work well, but because his simple piety was gratified by such unostentatious benevolence. Hence came his power. What he says we feel, because we know that he felt it. His tones were rich with earnest conviction, and were all his own, and therefore they linger and linger still and ever linger in our ears, making a strange melody. When we turn from his melting yet stimulating, his softened yet authoritative words, to the pages of his ministers, we feel that they are unlike him; they speak for effect, they speak so as to be esteemed, they are punctilious about rules of Rhetoric and of Logic, they copy after great men, they are faithful to a party, they are like each other, and therefore monotonous, they are constrained, frigid, inept, formal, we soon tire of reading them, there is little of nature in them, they are ashamed to be simple, they wish to have everything manly, and are afraid to be childlike, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, *in the comparison* with him who spake as never man spake, because he felt as never man felt.

And as the preacher's piety should be simple, so, as I have said, should it be humble. He must feel his dependence on the sanctifying Spirit of God, or he is powerless. If he rely upon his

own strength, if he aim to convert men by his learning or eloquence, if he stand up as one who can reason well, or write well, or speak well, and can thereby vanquish the enemies of the cross, *there is more hope of a fool than of him.* All his power is lost, if he confide in it for subduing his hearers. He takes the attitude of a man hoping to overcome a host of his fellow men, while they are behind the barricade of an habitual, a natural, a total selfishness, impervious to his spear, impregnable to his battle-axe; and *they laugh him to scorn.* They are fully set to do evil, and he is but partially inclined to do well; their name is legion, and he is but one man, possibly in some respects an inferior man, and he comes out single-handed, breathing defiance sometimes against the intellect and always against the will of a multitude, an exceeding great army, who have never yet for one moment succumbed, either to their own consciences or to God. Such an attempt is chargeable, on the Christian system, with the same fault which Cicero so often condemns on the Pagan system, with immodesty, inconsiderateness, presumption. It must therefore be powerless, for such qualities are at war with all the principles of persuasion. These principles, while they recognize an effectiveness in the pulpit, require that it be secondary to the special operation of divine grace. The power of the minister presupposes the feeling of his dependence on God, and the felt doctrine of this dependence is the chief element of his power. There is a wheel rolling within a wheel; and he who thinks himself able to transform the hearts of his people, is disabled by that very thought, while he who confesses his inability derives from that confession, if an honest and devout one, the true force of the gospel. When a preacher is weak then is he strong; for then he sues for aid from heaven, and associates his words with the omnipotence of Jehovah. If he saves his power he will lose it, but if he lose his power he will save it; for when he banishes from the heart all pride and self-confidence then and then only "he is filled with all the fulness of God." Fearing to put himself forward he lets the Deity speak for him, and men listen to him not as to an independent declaimer, but as to one who has a commission, who stands as a vicegerent, the acknowledged representative of the Head of the Church. Hiding his own effort in the effectual working of the divine Spirit, he is above the reach of criticism. Men will be disarmed of their opposition to one who is so unassuming, but will be awed down by the presence of that dread Being who dwelleth in the humble and contrite preach-

er. Feeling his dependence, he "does all things through Christ that strengtheneth him," and he speaks eloquently because "it is not he that speaks, but the grace of God which is with him." It is this felt and manifested reliance on the life-giving Spirit which transforms a bodily presence that is comparatively weak, and a speech that is relatively contemptible, and a preaching that is in one sense foolishness, "into the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." It is no paradox, but the soberness of experience to say, that he who fulfils his ministry "in weakness and fear and in much trembling," clothes himself thereby "with the exceeding greatness of that power which worketh mightily" both in and by its ministers, and he who glories as a wise man will "glory in infirmity." A self-sufficient bearing in a speaker, makes his hearers jealous and pugnacious, and so much the more stubborn in their resistance to him as he urges them in his own strength to a good life. But when he feels that he is inadequate of himself to convert them, they feel that they are wrestling with another being than himself, that his sufficiency is of God, and thus having his resources in heaven, he speaks "with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power." So soon as a revival of religion seems to be the work of men, it loses its dignity and becomes a mere fanatical excitement, and in a few weeks dies away like a crackling of thorns upon a cold hearth. And so soon as a sermon either appears to be, or in reality is, the unaided effort of a man, that moment it ceases to be a sermon, and degenerates into any essay or an harangue. It is *the truth* which exhibits power, and the truth is that we are dependent on the special interposition of the Holy One for every wise use of that power. This part of truth, this doctrine of dependence must be believed, must be felt, must be manifested by the preacher, or he will not be a preacher of the whole truth; he will keep back one essential agency, and so doing he must expect that like Ananias, who held back part of the price, he will fall down spiritually dead before the elders.

If in these particulars and in others which might be specified, a minister would be like Apollos, that "eloquent man who mightily convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Christ," then also like Apollos must he be "mighty in the Scriptures," having an intellect well disciplined to understand them, not merely in their letter, but in their general scope and their connection with the principles of science. He must be a laborious and self-denying man, immersing himself in a toil from which he will rest in heaven only. It is not enough for him that he be acquainted with religious

doctrine; he must be familiar with it; familiar not simply with its general principles but also with its details, with its arguments, its controversies, its remote relations. He must have such a mastery over its recondite problems as will give him a power of writing *down* upon them, instead of making an ever confused and confusing effort to write *up* to them. He must live in the truth as Uriel stood in the sun, and must diffuse its radiance around him in ever diverging lines. He must draw the gospel out into his life, and be an impersonation of the duties which he abstractly commends. He must be fascinated with his work, must watch with eagerness and patient hope for the right times and the right modes of influence, must live as a stranger in the world from which he is to keep himself unspotted and for which he is to give himself up to prayer and fasting. He must not forbear to enrich his mind, through fear that his heart will be impoverished, but he should aim to make his intellectual wealth a mere tributary to his spirit of devotion. Above all he should never so misapprehend his nature as to neglect the cultivation of his piety through fear of weakening his mental powers, but should know that *bene orasse est bene studuisse*, that "greater is he who ruleth his spirit than he who taketh a city," and that a sound and healthy moral growth, as it may be a consequent, should also be and will and must be an antecedent of the most vigorous intellectual development. As the body without the spirit is dead, so the intellect without the heart is destitute of its highest life.

---

## ARTICLE VI.

### COLERIDGE AND HIS AMERICAN DISCIPLES.

By Rev. Noah Porter, Jr. Professor in Yale College.

THE name of Coleridge is already splendid and world-renowned. Wherever English Literature is known, there Coleridge is known as a poet, critic, scholar, philosopher, and theologian. As a poet, he has not merely attained the highest fame among those with whom he has measured himself in the accustomed orbs of the poet's flight; but he has created for himself new