

were things which had existence only in the brain of the Parson, or in the lives of himself and a very few earnest-minded individuals of his flock.

As Dr. Sancroft pondered upon these things, he felt humbled, and earnestly confessed before God that very many had been his own shortcomings; but he knew the goodness and the power of the Master he served, and that so long as His Ambassadors are faithful He will not withhold His blessing because of their many infirmities; and that therefore his deficiencies could not be the cause that he did not see a more popular degree of success; especially, as after a faithful examination, he could not honestly charge himself with wilful neglect of duty; and the worthy man had a hearty contempt for that voluntary humility "which covers itself with sackcloth that others may clothe it with purple!" He felt that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, both as regarded the necessity and the way of salvation. If in any outward matter he was ready to take shame to himself, it was that his parochial visitings had not been more full; and yet, upon referring to his diary, he found that they had not been much short of one thousand, during a year in which he had suffered much affliction, both personal and in his family, and had besides been very largely engaged in literary labours for the good of the diocese in general. And then, though Dr. Sancroft was deeply desirous of leaving no means untried to cause the flock committed to his care to "grow in grace daily and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord;" and therefore was as distinguished for his parochial labours as he was for his ministerial and priestly faithfulness; still he was deeply convinced that it was principally in the House of God that he was commissioned to dispense the blessings of pardon and grace to the faithful members of Christ, and that consequently it was his duty chiefly to urge them to meet him *there*, where Jesus is most honoured by the assembling of His saints, and where the Father has therefore most distinctively promised to meet His people, inasmuch that He has declared that there "His eye and His heart shall dwell."

Again, when he was ready to attribute the slow revival of the church in Thornton to his own want of pulpit talent, he could not but ad-

mit that however humble his abilities, it was yet evident that he was not considered by either his brethren or his flock as peculiarly deficient in this respect; nor was he ungratified, as he remembered the pleasure and the profit which the least polished of his people had frequently expressed as having derived from his pulpit ministrations. But in truth Parson Sancroft did not lay that stress upon the value of pulpit eloquence as a means of extending the kingdom of Christ and causing His members to increase in holiness, which some persons do. He knows that the kingdom of God cometh not by observation, nor by human wisdom, or might, or power, but by the simple declaration of Divine truth and the constant, faithful administration of the Sacraments and other ordinances which Christ and His Apostles instituted, accompanied by earnest supplications for the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. Were eloquence necessary to the spread of the Gospel, how slow must be its progress! Not that we deny that eloquence, like every other talent, may be made subservient to the cause of Christ, and when possessed should be sincerely dedicated to His service. But it is unquestionably far too much idolized in these latter days for its own sake; insomuch that in their eagerness to hear the teaching of eloquent lips, the people too often forget that they went to pray, and to obtain that grace which even the eloquence of an Apollos could not bestow, but only teach its necessity; while it is the office of the least talented priest of Christ to be the agent in importing the sacred influences of the Holy Spirit itself to those who humbly and faithfully seek them.

"Ah!" at length sighed Dr. Sancroft, "I fear the evil lies deeper than any simple ministerial deficiency. It is, I fear, the old story, the offence of the cross has not yet ceased. I have not shunned to rebuke open sin, and this I know has offended a few; but alas, alas! this is not the worst; I have preached Christ in His church, and *this* is, I question not, the true cause that my ministrations are not more popular. In this self-seeking age men insist upon an independent, flesh-pleasing, self-exalting religion! The very priesthood of Christ Himself is flouted, because in the depth of His condescending love He has stooped to meet the wants and infirmities of his people by sharing