

too little. They scarcely know what abstraction of mind, in its best sense, means, and have formed such a superficial mental habit that it is easier for them to talk, or compose, or read, or even study, than to think, all that they say or do being marked by the absence of intellectual vitality and vigor. "Sit down to write what you have thought," says Corbett, "and not to think what you shall write." This is good advice to the sermonizer.

(b) So as to the composition of sermons.

While there is a valid sense in which this part of sermonizing is literary and has to do, as such, with what is called style, it is not to be forgotten that, in sacred as in secular composition, style itself is, first and last, an intellectual act and method. What Professor Bain has called the intellectual element of style is here in place. Herbert Spencer terms it the philosophy of style. Just to the degree in which there has been an antecedent originating mental work, to that degree will style, so called, take on an intellectual type and commend itself to those who look for substance and mental quickening in what they hear and read. In sermons, as elsewhere, nothing has been fraught with more harm than the pernicious teaching that literary art is a something quite independent of subject-matter, and is rather expected to sacrifice solidity and thought to mere external finish.

Style is in no sense an end in itself, but always takes its character from the mental life behind it, and simply exposes a writer to ridicule when not so interpreted. Thinking is not one thing and composing another, but they are rather different forms of the same intellectual action, and mutually affect each other.

Writing a sermon is simply embodying thought in sermonic form, to reach and affect the minds of thinking men.

The one respect in which the great French preachers of the time of Louis XIV. are open to criticism is seen in the fact that they too often sacrificed subject-matter to artistic form. The school of English divines of which Jeremy Taylor was the center were guilty of a similar error.

(c) So as to the public presentation of sermons in oral form and for immediate effect.

While, in the delivery of discourse, it is true that specific mental elements are less prominent than in its preparation and written expression, still, even here, such elements are present and actively present. Just as composing is a mental exercise to the degree in which thinking has preceded it, so will public preaching be mental in tone and type to the degree in which all the antecedent processes have been such. Though the impassioned and popular features of discourse are more pronounced in delivery than elsewhere, these are to be held in abeyance to what is distinctively mental. Nor are we speaking now of sermons that are delivered directly from the mind without the intervention of pen or paper, nor of sermons delivered from a prepared