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"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING; THEREFORE GET WISDOM."

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Theology.

PAPAL PERSECUTION.

Though it could not be expected that persecution should cease, yet it could never have been imagined that persecution should be augmented, instead of being diminished, when Paganism ceased, and that Christians should suffer more from bishops and sovereigns who professed Christianity than they had ever done from the Pagan priesthood and the Pagan emperors of Rome.

Yet the persecutions of Pagan Rome are not to be compared to those of Papal Rome, either in frequency, in duration, in cruelty, or in success. When the Christians were punished by the Roman magistrates, it was generally on the information of voluntary informers. The Papists do not trust to this alone, but have established a system of permanent and salaried accusation against all real Christians, by the appointment of a regular inquisition. The furnace of persecution was only occasionally heated by the Pagans, but, by the Papists, it is kept continually and intensely burning. A general persecution was resorted to by the Pagans, only at particular times: with the Papists there are no seasons of relaxation or intermission; and not only those who oppose the church of Rome are persecuted, but even those who are merely suspected of differing from it. All might re-enter the Pagan church by a single act of conformity, in casting incense upon the flames; but the idols of modern Rome are not so placable; suspicion is almost equivalent to guilt, and can scarcely ever be entirely wiped away.

In the Inquisition, we see an order of proceeding at war with the good government of the world, and emanating directly from the source of evil. Every natural feeling is violated, every principle of justice reversed. The divine attributes of mercy and justice are trampled under foot. Fiend-like cunning, falsehood, and insatiable malice triumph and prevail; and the earth, where the inquisition has fixed its seat, seems changed into the vestibule of hell.—James Douglas, Esq.

MAN MAGNIFIED BY THE DIVINE REGARD.

God hath "magnified" man by the gift of an intellectual nature. This circumstance, as illustrative of the Divine goodness, and of our obligations to grateful affection and right conduct, is frequently adverted to in the Scripture. He "made us to know more than the beasts of the field, and to be wiser than the fowls of heaven." There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. In the process of forming this lower world, and the system connected with it, various degrees of creating grace, so to speak, were dispensed. This was righteous; no creature has any claim to being at all; nor to any particular mode or circumstance of being; and therefore, the dispensation of existence in various modes was wholly at the pleasure of the Creator; and none has the right petulantly to say to him "Why am I thus?" It was also wise; being necessary to variety, as variety is to perfection. We see, therefore, in this vast mass of created beings, unorganized matter without life; matter organized, as in vegetables, with life, but without sensation; and in the inferior animals, with life, sense, and a portion of knowledge; but without reason. But in man the scale rises unspeakably higher; and his endowments are extended beyond mere animal life and sensation, however delicate and varied, and beyond instinct, whatever that mysterious power may be, to a rational soul, to deep and various mental affections, and to immortality itself.—Here, then, we see him magnified; amidst the beings which surround us in this visible

universe, he alone is capable of surveying the whole with thought and reflection; of tracing the Author of the whole work, and marking the display of his perfections; of yielding to him adoration and homage; of sanctifying the varied scene to moral uses; or of improving his capacity;—and he alone is susceptible of the sentiment of religion.

And as God has thus "magnified" him, he has also, "set his hand upon him." Man is the only visible creature in the heavens, and in the earth, which God, in the proper sense of the word, could love; for no creature is capable of being loved, but one which is capable of reciprocal knowledge, regard and intercourse.—Other things might be approved and pronounced "very good," but man alone was loved. He was the only being with whom the Maker of all could hold intercourse. Him, therefore, he admitted into fellowship; with him he conversed, thought to thought, and made his presence vital, and interiorly sensible to him, delighting in him, and teaching him to delight in God. The same regards he has to us, though fallen; and by methods we shall afterwards mention, still seeks man as his beloved son, invites him to his forgiving bosom, and makes the human heart his favourite and his chosen temple.—Rev. R. Watson.

Biblical Literature.

RULES OF INTERPRETATION.

CHAP. III.

Other means to assist in finding the sense of words besides the *usus loquendi*.

1. *Design of the following chapter.* The preceding chapter treated of the method of finding the *usus loquendi*, i. e. the meaning which usage has attached to words, by direct testimony. This testimony, it was shewn, might be deduced from three sources; viz. from the author interpreted, or his cotemporaries; from foreigners who understood his language; and from scholia, glossographies, and versions. With these was united a knowledge of the peculiar style, idiom, country, circumstances, &c., of the author, as also the kinds of composition which is to be interpreted. We come now to treat of indirect testimony, to which we must frequently resort in order to find the meaning of words.

2. *Necessity of indirect testimony.* The *usus loquendi* cannot always be found with sufficient certainty, by those means which have been pointed out. Proper evidence respecting it is sometimes wanting; sometimes usage is varied or inconstant, even in the same age, or in the same writer; or there is an ambiguity of language, or of grammatical forms; or an obscurity covers the subject or thing spoken of; or novelty of language occurs; or a neglect of the *usus loquendi*, which sometimes happens even in the most careful writers. Other means therefore must be used, by which the true sense can be elicited. (Morus, p. 148. 1.)

3. *Scope of a writer the first and best means.* The most important of these means for discovering the sense of any particular passage, is found in resorting to the general tenor of the discourse. The design of the discourse in general is to be compared with the passage investigated. (a) The ground of this rule is, that we ought not to suppose a good and judicious writer has said what is inconsistent with his design. Absolute certainty, however, is not always attainable in this way; for it sometimes happens, that several interpretations may agree with the scope of the writer. Hence there are cases, in which only a probability in favour of a certain meaning is to be found; and even cases where not so much as this can be attained. (Morus, p. 149. iii—v.)

(a) But how in this scope of the writer to be ascertained? (1.) From the express state-

ment of the writer. E. g. John xx. 31. Rom. iii. 28. (2.) From the occasion or circumstances which originated the discourse. E. g. the parables of Christ, and many passages in the Epistles. (3.) From history, i. e. when the accounts of facts, that would very naturally give rise to the discourse in question, and would serve to explain it; e. g. the Epistle of Jude is directed against teachers who lived licentiously. 2 Cor. xiii. 10. throughout, has reference to facts which existed at that time. If none of these things cast sufficient light on the scope of the writer, the whole must be perused and re-perused carefully; by which unexpected light often breaks in.

But some caution in respect to the rule in section 3 is proper. All parts of a discourse have not invariably a strict connexion with its general scope. Many things are often said, which are wholly irrelevant to it, and which are mere *obiter dicta*. These are not to be interpreted by the general scope of the discourse, but agreeably to the subject that is treated of in the place where they occur. Recurrence to this principle is very important, in many parts of the New Testament.

4. *Caution in regard to the rule above.* In regard to this means, then, of attaining the sense, we must take care not to trust too much to it, nor to rely solely upon it. Nor must we rest satisfied with only some tolerable agreement of the sense given with the general scope of the writer. This the unlearned are very apt to do, for want of skill in the languages; whence have arisen many idle conjectures. We must insist upon an evident and necessary connexion with the scope of the discourse.

But how shall we know when it is evident and necessary? (1.) Where a meaning plainly contradicts the tenor of a discourse it is to be rejected. (2.) When it violates the principles of parallelism and the conclusions drawn from them, as to the sense of a passage. (See Chap. ii. § 6—12.) (3.) Reject a meaning which gives an inept and frigid sense. By a frigid sense is meant one which contributes neither to argument, nor perspicuity, nor ornament.

A meaning which infringes upon none of these negative precepts, will be found to harmonize with the subject of which the author is treating, unless he has violated all the rules of language and reasoning.

5. *Second caution in regard to the scope of the discourse.* Another caution is, that we compare the meaning, as discovered by the scope of the writer, with that which the *usus loquendi* affords, and see whether they can agree. In other words, we must see whether the *usus loquendi* will tolerate any particular sense given to the passage by the scope of the discourse, especially in respect to words which have various meanings; or whether there be a repugnance to it. Occasionally, the meaning derived from the scope of the writer, will lead to a knowledge of something which may serve to establish its harmony with the *usus loquendi*.

But to interpret solely for the supposed scope of a writer, without the aid and consent of the *usus loquendi*, and even in opposition to it, belongs rather to rash conjecture than to interpretation by rule.—Wherefore this help is not to be used unless in cases of ambiguity, or of words which are *hapax legomena*, and generally in cases where the direct testimony to the meaning of words is either wanting, or is insufficient to determine the sense. (a) (Morus, p. 153. vii. and viii.)

(a) The reason why the scope of a discourse is not to be trusted to, except in cases where ambiguity is seen, is, that the *usus loquendi* is the best evidence which can be had of the meaning of a passage, and nothing can be admitted which shall contradict it, where it can be established by adequate testimony. But in case one doubts what meaning the *usus loquendi* would assign or at least show to any word or phrase, secondary or subsidiary sense, i. e. the scope of the discourse, may be resorted to, for the sake of obtaining the desired elucidation.

To be continued.

Biography.

MEMOIR OF MR. JOHN PATRICK, OF BINGLEY; TRANSMITTED BY THE REV. THOMAS GALLAND, A. M.

From the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.

Continued.

Mr. Patrick, during "the days of his years of his pilgrimage," had frequent occasion to bring into exercise the passive graces of the Holy Spirit. He experienced at times much domestic affliction. Once, in the course of only sixteen weeks, no less than three deaths occurred in his family; and in the year 1831 (and this was the severest stroke of all) he was called to sustain the loss of his dearly-beloved wife. The whole of these bereavements, together with trials from the concerns of this life, in which he did not experience much prosperity, he bore with truly Christian resignation, exclaiming, with Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

During the latter period of his life, when, by reason of his increasing infirmities, he had ceased to be officially occupied in the church, he still went about doing good, by visiting the sick, and conducting prayer-meetings. His usefulness in this way was not a little promoted by his having so long held fast his profession without wavering; his varied experiences; indeed, of the changing scenes of this mortal life, and his acquaintance with the deep things of God, rendered his communications exceedingly valuable. At all times, and under all circumstances, whether seated in his family circle, or waiting by the way, he was in the spirit of prayer; nor could any one be more ready to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." A short time before he ceased to walk abroad, being met in the town by a friend, who asked him concerning the state of his health, he replied, "I am better than I deserve to be: I am a happy man. I have been begging this morning up and down the streets as I have come along, and have had my present wants richly supplied; and beside that, I have a plentiful promise." Then, throwing off the figurative garb with which his ideas had been clothed, he said, "My friend, I have had sweet intercourse with God this morning; and he has abundantly blessed my soul, while I have been lifting up my heart to him." This was not with him an occasional or a fitful feeling; it was the warp that ran through the whole web of his experience, and was apparent whenever a short interview gave him an opportunity of referring to his own spiritual state.

The evenness of his disposition, and the composure of his mind, were maintained during his last illness, which continued but for three weeks. During this period he frequently expressed his gratitude to God, that he felt neither sickness nor pain; he likewise gratefully remembered all the mercies with which he had been favoured in the course of his earthly pilgrimage, and often gave vent to the overflowings of his heart, in his favourite ascription of praise to the Trinity: "Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, and glory be to the Holy Ghost!" And, probably with some allusion to the sermon under which he was blessed at the very outset of his course, he would exclaim, "I have my feet firm on the sure foundation."

At two o'clock in the morning of Friday, Feb. 24, 1833, being the day on which he died, when the power of speech had failed him, and when he had entered upon his last struggle within himself, he stretched out his hand, and pointed with his finger very distinctly three times, as if he had something more than earthly in view. He continued gradually to sink; and in the