

hoast of the elegant appearance for which we are indebted to the sheep or to the silk worm? Do not these children of the spring whispur in our ear, "Fools that ye are, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of us?" Does misfortune so thicken and lour around our dwellings that we are compelled to enquire, despondingly, "what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Then they address us in the language of expostulation and reproof, saying, "If God so clothe the grass of the field which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Nor are the budding beauty of Spring; the Summer, redolent of blossom and fragrance; or the Autumn, rich with the bounties of a beneficent Providence, mute in their Creator's praise. They call upon us to unite in devout exclamation, "O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches," and to render the homage of our grateful hearts to him who "causeth the grass to grow for cattle and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth."

But the most direct and perhaps the most impressive of these heavenly messengers are the dispensations of divine providence. Prosperity may, and it must be admitted too often does, lead the vain, the presumptuous and the worldly-minded to forget Him who gives them "their corn and their wine, and their oil, and multiplies their silver and their gold;" but, to the properly constituted and pious mind, the language suggested by the bounties of Providence is, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits! and the course of action which they prompt is to "honour the Lord with our substance and the first fruits of all increase," in works of pity charity and Christian munificence.

No tribulation for the present, it is true, seems to be joyous, but, on the contrary, grievous, nevertheless "sweet are the uses of adversity" to him who thus "he rs the rod"—The Father of our Spirits chasteneth us for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness." Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways;" and who goes, in lowly penitence and child-like humility, to the throne of grace with the prayer, "I beseech thee show me wherefore thou contendest with me,—Guide me with thy counsel," while I live, "and afterwards receive me to glory."

The diseases to which our bodies are liable, and with which we are from time to time visited, are startling and emphatic messengers; and their language is, "Prepare to meet thy God;" for soon, by our successive assaults, or by sudden distraction, must "the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken, and the pitcher be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern."

Last, and most terrible messenger of all, comes Death with the imperative mandate: "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest." Woe unto us, if, ere this grim executioner of the sentence pronounced upon all flesh appear, we have not listened to the calls, the warnings, and the invitations which have been addressed to us; for then the day of grace and mercy will have for ever fled; and, while those who have made their peace with God through the blood of his Son, shall shine in Heaven as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever, we shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Let us not therefore reject "the counsel of God against ourselves," nor put from us the admonitions tendered by so many agents and under such varied forms; but let us, in this our day of merciful visitation, attend diligently to the things that concern our everlasting peace, that we may, through the mercy of God and the intercession of the Saviour, experience the blessedness of "those that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—the heavenly Jerusalem.—*Halifax Guardian.*

SUMMERFIELD ON PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

Baltimore, Jan. 4. 1825.

"My very dear friend,—For a fortnight past I have been interdicted all exercise of any kind, mental or bodily, and I am still confined to my

chamber. My physicians are now beginning to relax their restrictions, and I am permitted to a certain extent to correspond with the friends of my heart. That you may not be uneasy with regard to the nature of my present indisposition, I would simply state, that it is but temporary, and is the effect of artificial causes. I have been submitting to a course of mercury, at their recommendation, and the process of salivation having arrived at its highest state, my debility was extreme, and I had no rest out of my bed. That course is now suspended, and I am slowly recovering: very favourable results are anticipated, and when I shall see you in the spring, by the will of God, I hope you will find them realized.

"I very sensibly feel alive to the confidence your letter reposes in me; and I feel thankful, also, that you let me so freely into your *inside heart*; I see its workings, and how tremulously sensitive it is, on the great subject to which all the energies of your mind are tending. Will it be any relief to my dear friend, to assure him, that these anxieties are the counterpart of my own, even unto this present hour? Yes, for I will not scruple to declare it, that although I am now in the seventh year of my ministerial labour, the agony with which I entered it is unabated. I still feel it a crucifixion, a martyrdom, a dying daily! Human science may become familiar by incessant application, and practice may make perfect; but the science of salvation *passeth knowledge*. "I cannot reach the mystery, the length, the breadth, the height!" Angels themselves are represented as *desiring* to look into these things; and yet, with all the weight of all their bending minds united, they fail to comprehend them, and join us in the Apostle's cry, "O! the depth, the depth!" And it ever must be so, so long as we retain the spirit of our commission; dependence upon the Holy Spirit will continue to be as sensibly felt in our last sermon as in our first, unless we have learned to preach without Him, and then we shall be sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, noisy instruments, of no value. But let not my dear friend, therefore, be weary and faint in his mind; be not unwilling to harbour the incessant cry in his breast, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and let the faith which moves the mountain, triumphantly rejoice, "My sufficiency is of God—I can do all things through Christ strengthening me!" Ever lean upon this promise of the great Head of the Church, "Lo! I am with you always;" and you also shall find, even if your record be that of the brightest luminary of the Church—"No man stood by me, but all men forsook me;"—nevertheless, the *Lord stood with me*." Be not thou therefore moved at the afflictions of Christ, but endure hardness as a good soldier. Remember the recompense of the reward.

"In reply to your remarks on extemporary discourses, I am glad to find your own soul in such perfect harmony with mine. You very much magnify the difficulty of it,—but you have not yet been called to grapple with it,—and I am fully persuaded that, even in infancy as a minister of Christ Jesus, you will strangle the serpents: such is my decided impression, from the views you have already taken of the subject. And yet you cry, *Hic labor hoc opus est!* I do not know that anything I could suggest would be applicable to your circumstances, because the mode of training for the ministry in our Church differs so totally from yours. On admission into our Church, each member is put into a class, (so called) composed of a dozen persons, more or less. This class is under the care of a judicious man, well experienced in the things of God; we call him the *class-leader*: it is his business to meet this class collectively once a-week, and speak to each member in relation on his Christian experience. This method gives a young man, at the very outset, a facility in describing his own views and feelings, without embarrassment, and improves him by hearing his class-mates speak their experience in like manner. Then he is appointed a *leader* himself, and this affords him an opportunity of addressing a word of advice to others. Thence he is licensed as a leader in a prayer-meeting, then as an exhorter, &c.; and, finally, upon full trial he enters the ministry, with much less of that embarrassment than the man who is launched out from scenes of inexperience, and made at once the subject of criticism.

"In your case, I would recommend the selection of a companion or two, with whom you could

accustom yourself to open and amplify your thoughts on a portion of the word of God, in the way of *lecture*. Choose a copious subject, and be not anxious to say all that might be said: let your efforts be aimed at giving a *strong outline*; the filling up will be much more easily attained. Prepare a *sketch* of your leading ideas: branch them off into their *secundary relations*: this you may have before you. Digest well your subject; but be not careful to choose your words preparatory to your delivery. *Follow out* the ideas in such language as may offer at the moment. Don't be discouraged if you fall down a hundred times: for, though you fall, you shall rise again; and cheer yourself with the prophet's challenge, "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

"To be a correct extemporaneous preacher, you will need to write a *good deal*, in order to correct style, and prune off the exuberance of language; but I would not recommend you to write on the subject upon which you intend to preach. If you fill up on paper the matter of your text, you will contract a slavish habit of lumbering your mind with the words of your previous composition. Write on other subjects, but leave your words free and spontaneous for pulpit exercises.

"If I were near you, I would show you my plan of skeletonizing. As I hope to have that pleasure in the spring, I will then let you into my plans, if you think them of any value:—I never preach without having prepared an outline, but I *never* write a sermon out at length.

"May the Lord direct you in all things! Write again and again. Yours, in love,

J. SUMMERFIELD."

MAXIMS OF BISHOP MIDDLETON.

- MAINTAIN dignity without the appearance of pride
- Persevere against discouragements.
- Keep your temper.
- Be punctual and methodical in business, and never procrastinate.
- Preserve self-possession, and do not be talked out of conviction.
- Never be in a hurry.
- Rather set, than follow example.
- Rise early, and be an economist of time.
- Practice strict temperance.
- Manner is something with every body, and every thing with some.
- Be guarded in discourse, attentive, and slow to speak.
- Never acquiesce in immoral or pernicious opinions.
- Be not forward to assign reasons to those who have no right to ask.
- Think nothing in conduct unimportant and indifferent.
- In all your transactions, remember the final account.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

WHILE Mr. Williams, the Martyr Missionary of Erromanga, was labouring in one of the South Sea Islands, the people at one of the stations in Rarotonga became very negligent in their attendance upon divine worship. This was a source of great grief not only to the missionaries, but to the zealous chiefs, who were so much accustomed to the use of force to accomplish their purposes, that they proposed at once to send the *constables* to compel them to come in.

This resort to extreme measures the missionaries resisted, and begged the chiefs to allow them to try another method. Accordingly, several of the more pious and active Christians were selected, who appropriated a part of every Saturday to visiting the people from house to house, to set before them the importance of constant attendance upon the ordinances of the gospel. The effect of this measure was so happy that the chiefs never afterwards proposed to send the constables.

It occurs to us that this islandic measure might be adopted with great usefulness in many cities and villages of our own country. There are families, nominally connected with Christian congregations, who are rarely represented in the house of God, and there are many in every place that never darken the doors of the sanctuary. The voice of Christian faithfulness would rouse some of them from the stupidity into which they have sunk; the hand of Christian kindness would lead them to the courts of the Lord, where the truth and the Spirit of God might win and melt their hardened hearts.

By the adoption of a systematic and extended plan for the visitation of the neglectors of divine worship, it cannot be doubted, that multitudes, now far from the way of life, might be reached and brought within the power of the appointed means of salvation.