

tion, or flutter of spirits, which excites their compassion, or at least diminishes their respect. In a devotional exercise, the influence is much worse than in any other kind of speaking. Whatever apology, in behalf of a very young preacher, may be made by his fellow-worshippers, still they will inevitably lose all interest in his prayer if he proceeds in it with difficulty himself.

In some cases where there is no special mismanagement as to pauses, the speaker may inflict pain on his hearers, amounting in some cases to distress, by unskillfully going back to correct some slight verbal mistake in what he has uttered. This unavoidably fixes the attention of his fellow-worshippers on what might otherwise have passed without notice. If there is neither impiety nor absurdity in his language, though it may not have been happily chosen, to correct the mistake is generally worse than to let it alone.

The same pauses are required in prayer as in any other grave delivery; and for the same reasons—to distinguish the sense, and to give opportunity for taking breath. But when pauses are made between words, too closely connected to admit of any pause, it occasions an appearance of embarrassment which the hearers certainly observe in prayer, and certainly observe with pain.

4. Another fault is, too great familiarity in addresses to God.

Some acquire the habit, as Newton says, "of talking to the Lord," in much the same careless manner as to language and voice, as though they were addressing a fellow-worm. "A man in pleading for his life before an earthly king, would speak with seriousness and reverence; much more is this proper in speaking to the King of kings." Zealous and fanatical men have acquired an unseemly boldness, in this respect, from some things in a kind of sacred pastoral poetry; and in such poeticoprose writings as Mrs. Rowe's "Devout Exercises;" and in the example of some eccentric preachers such as Whitefield. It is not uncommon to hear from those whose devout feelings are questionable, such expressions as these: "Dearest Jesus, come and sit down with us at the table which thou hast spread;" "Come and make one with us." "The apostles," says a sensible writer, "will not be thought cold or lukewarm in love to their divine Master; yet they never prefixed to his name fondling epithets." They were too sensible of the infinite distance between him and themselves to venture on such irreverence. They spoke to him, and of him, in terms not of equal familiarity, but of respectful and awful veneration. Let those who are accustomed to use such phrases as, "dear God," and "dear Jesus," study the example of the apostles.

5. I have already glanced at the language of censure and of compliment as being improper in prayer.

On the latter point a few additional remarks are required. I suppose there can be no doubt that, on the simple principles of the gospel, flattery is wrong in all cases. Suppose then, as pastor of a congregation you make the closing prayer on the Sabbath, after a brother in the ministry has kindly preached for you through the day. You allude to his sermons in terms such as worldly politeness employs on common subjects, that is, in terms of direct compliment. In thus cancelling an obligation to a fellow worm do you not offend against the sanctity of the place and the occasion, and the dignity, so to speak, of devotion?

6. The practice of some excellent ministers to introduce into public prayer a direct reference to their individual infirmities and sins, I consider as improper.

My first reason is, that this is turning aside from the common ground in which the devotions of an assembly can unite. To acknowledge the insufficiency of all means in themselves, and the weakness and unworthiness of human instruments, is proper. To implore Divine assistance in the dispensation of the word, and the Divine blessing to give it efficacy, is of course proper. The whole assembly can unite in such expressions of Christian feeling. But if the preacher goes into confessions of his own individual weaknesses and sins, can the assembly join in his confessions, or shall they suspend their devotions in the meantime?

There is a second difficulty on this point. The decorum belonging to the pulpit makes it less proper for the preacher than for any other public speaker to bring himself into view in any prominent manner; hence, as I have before remarked, personal apologies, which might be proper perhaps in a secular oration, could not be tolerated in a sermon. For obvious reasons every thing of this sort is still less tolerable in prayer. But if I mistake not, the preacher's confessions to God of his own infirmities and defects often have the aspect of an apology to the audience. For myself, I must say, that the most marked cases of this sort which I have witnessed have made an indistinct impression on my mind, even from childhood, of something like ostentatious humility.

I have left myself room, in the close of these Lectures, for only a few hints of advice as to occasional prayers. The most general one is—Shun yourself, at all events, things which you have marked as prominent faults in the prayers of your brethren.

Another and more particular advice is—Take care to make your occasional prayers appropriate. I have more than once heard a minister pray at a funeral with all manner of prayer and supplication, but with no other reference to the occasion than might be expected in a common prayer on the Sabbath when the notice of a death had been requested. Instead of this miscellaneous, unseasonable mention of every thing, remember at a funeral you are limited to one subject. With that your prayer should begin and end. I say the same thing respecting prayer at a marriage, an

ordination, a baptism, at the communion table, and in the chamber of sickness. On every such occasion your petitions should have respect to one leading subject.

As to praying with the sick, you will find it sometimes a delightful, but oftener a very trying duty, calling always for the exercise of kindness and wisdom, and occasionally of a resolute pastoral fidelity. The points to which I refer vary so much with the age, intelligence, rank in life, religious character, degree and kind of sickness, with its probable termination, the bodily and mental state of the sufferer, &c., that I cannot pretend to give advice adapted to circumstances so diversified—circumstances, indeed in which nothing but your own experience and judgment can be an adequate guide. When you are called to pray with a sick person who has been both ignorant and careless concerning religion, and whose apprehensions are now awakened by present danger, let your language be so chosen as not to give a mistaken impression. Considering how liable those of whom I speak, are "to catch at every shadow of hope," the wisest ministers have avoided using the common appellations, "Thy servant, thy handmaid," lest the individuals concerned should ignorantly draw from it a favourable opinion of their state.

In the family prayers of ministers the most common faults that I have observed are—too much length especially at evening; too little variety of matter and expression; or, which amounts to the same thing, too little adaptation to the state of a family. When you are called to perform this service, especially when abroad, for various reasons, the youthful part of the family, as children and servants, should not fail to be mentioned in these seasons of devotion.

JOHN HUSS—THE BOHEMIAN MARTYR.

Our English word, *stare*—expressive of the last degree of misery and degradation, was originally the designation of a race, who are destined, it would appear, to take a prominent place in the future history of the world; and to reclaim for their name, its original signification—"glory"—in the worldly, or at least, the martial import of the term.—"The Slavonic nations occupy a much larger place on the earth than in history"—it has been truly said of the past; but the verdict may soon be reversed, in the presence of victorious arms. As a race, they are the most numerous in Europe, and occupy the largest portion of its territory; though, as yet, they are not united under any common head.—They number, in all, some eighty millions; of these, over fifty-three millions are subjects to Russia; about seventeen millions, subjects of Austria, and six millions are, nominally, subjects of Turkey. All of them are, nominally, Christians, save some 80,000 Mohammedans, in Bosnia, the only instance in which that superstition has laid a permanent hold upon Europeans. By far the greater number belong to the Greek church, and only a million and a half chiefly in Poland and Hungary, call themselves protestants. The place which Russia now occupies in the eye of the world, is a chief but not the only ground for the impression that this race is about to perform a prominent part in the affairs of the world. They have been oppressed and outraged by the other races, with whom they have been placed in contact; especially by the Germanic nations. They have many well-remembered injuries to redress; and as the governments, under which they have been placed, become perplexed or enfeebled, they become formidable. It happens, at the very time that the ancient thrones of Germany are least secure, that an extraordinary intellectual activity pervades the Slavonic nation; and a number of circumstances conspire to encourage a tendency which has been further promoted by recent ill-judged endeavors to inflame national animosities, or rather, animosities between different races, politically united under the same governments. This tendency is what has been known of late, as *Panslavism*, from which, it is impossible to say how much humanity has to fear.

Beside the bond of a common religion—by which Russia seeks to bind to herself the members of the Greek church everywhere the fact, that she stands at the head of the race of which we speak, furnishes her with another important instrument, both of extending her own influence, and placing other governments in jeopardy. The result of the late attempt of Hungary to throw off the Austrian yoke, has been a great accession to Russia, of influence over the southern Slavonians; and has opened her way to gain over to her interest those portions of them who endure, with reluctance, the dominion of Turkey. How far she has improved the opportunity, will be known only when the Ottoman forces or their allies, meet with any serious reverse; or when the presence of a sufficient Russian army hold out the hope of protection in rebellion. When we reckon the various elements which threaten the world's peace, and render the state of affairs complicated beyond all the reach of human sagacity; this must not be overlooked.

It has been suggested, that the most successful means of averting the danger which threatens the world from this quarter, would be to promote the spread of protestant principles among them. And alas! too many nominal protestants have no higher faith than that which might be fairly played off against the politico-religious influence of Russia. But, it would be a strange sight in the world—a band of christian Missionaries going forth, backed up by such a policy, and preaching with such an aim. And if the Czar may go on, unimpeded, till the fruits of such a mission shall block up his path, the world is undone. There is a higher mission for true disciples of Christ than to make proselytes to a protestant faction, as an antidote to Panslavism and the political intrigues of Russia. The