

easy of comprehension, not requiring much effort of an ordinary mind to analyze and comprehend them. The language is simple, and the ideas familiar and experimental. From such passages a preacher may address his congregation without much mental labour. But there are many other portions, not so easily comprehended. The Bible student cannot, at a glance, discover the substance which lies beneath the verbal covering. It can be reached only by a thoughtful, prayerful, and critical examination; each word and phrase being carefully considered, to ascertain its strict and legitimate meaning in the passage and its context; that no uncertain sound be given, through a wrong interpretation, but the whole sense be presented with such precision, order and clearness, that an ordinary mind may understand it. Without writing, and reading too, this cannot so effectually be done;—neither can extracts be made so appropriately and accurately, nor the result of reviews, examinations and comparisons so well expressed, in any other method.

2nd. It gives an opportunity of making choice of suitable words, and a systematic arrangement of ideas.

The selection of suitable words is an important consideration, in a language so ambiguous as the English. There are thousands of words which possess a double meaning, and can be made to express an idea the very opposite of the one intended, whereby a false impression may be left on the mind. There are few men so well acquainted with our language as to be able, without a manuscript, to express themselves with all that clearness, pointedness and earnestness desirable, before an intelligent and educated audience. Such an acquirement is possessed only by those who have had the most thorough education, and daily practice in the best society—privileges enjoyed by few. But with pen in hand the discourse can be prepared in the most suitable language, and with the best arrangement possible, without interrupting the train of thought passing through the mind: for when the thoughts have been thus secured, however crude or irregular they may be, both they and their expression can be subjected to such a rhetorical and logical scrutiny, that each word, proposition, division and illustration may be placed in its appropriate place, that there will be presented to the hearer a clear, connected and correct exposition of truth, which even the illiterate may understand.

3rd. It gives greater calmness and confidence to the speaker, during the devotional part of the service.

The pulpit does not place the minister above that feeling common to men in the performance of any important work—nervous anxiety. The degree of this feeling depends principally upon the temperament of the speaker, his self-reliance and state of health. If he is of an excitable temperament, the anxiety may be so great, in reference to what he has to say, and the end for which he should say it, that it will prevent him, during the devotional and meditative exercises previous to the sermon, from keeping his mind in a proper frame; often, therefore, causing memory to fail, so that he will lose the thread of discourse, or recal his ideas so sparingly that he will wander in considerable doubt and discomfort through the discourse, and thereby generally beget a listless indifference in his congregation. With manuscript on the Bible, however, there is no need of such nervous fear; all that is required is good sight and utterance, as the mind is not called into severe exercise during the address—a fact which enables the minister calmly to wait on God, and exercise himself in praise, as if he were seated with the congregation.