

did. In whatever doubts philosophy may leave the subject involved, the language of revelation is clear and conclusive. The questions, by what particular medium the mind becomes acquainted with the eternal world; whether we learn by experience to measure with the eye distances and the size of objects; by what process the mind rises from known to unknown truths; these questions, together with the analysis and classification of the emotions of the mind, belong directly to the philosopher, and indirectly to the theologian. But all those questions which involve moral character and obligations, necessarily belong to revelation, not philosophy. For example, the questions whether holiness and depravity belong to the mind, or are to be sought, as phenomenologists affirm, in a well-balanced and healthy brain, or in a badly-balanced and diseased one; whether holiness and sin are predicable only of intelligent volitions, and consequently regeneration is the first right volition, or as a western theologian gravely announces, properly a *nolition*; or whether holiness and sin are dispositions of the mind, aback of mere volition—these questions belong more properly to revelation than to philosophy. Why? Because the decision of these questions affects radically some of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and on these points, consequently, it was absolutely necessary that the inspired writers should speak unequivocally, and should make themselves understood; and they have so spoken. Now there is no man who has noticed the varying and contradictory conclusions of men of eminent talents and learning on these subjects, who would not at once decide that it is far safer to rely on the plain language of inspiration, than upon the speculations of any professed philosopher. I am far from admitting that mental philosophy, so far as it can decide such questions, is at variance with the Scriptures; but I do mean to assert for the Scriptures supremacy in their own particular department of instruction. The conclusion, then, to which we come is, that our metaphysics are certainly erroneous, whenever they require us, in interpreting the Scriptures, to depart from the obvious meaning of the language; we are in danger when it requires the ingenuity of learned criticism to produce apparent harmony between our metaphysical opinions and the declarations of inspired men. Such ingenuity is required by some of the speculations already referred to. Let any one, for example, take the inspired declaration that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' and make it harmonise with the philosophy that finds depravity in a badly-balanced or diseased brain; or let any one take David's prayer, 'Create in me a clean heart,' and reconcile it with that philosophy which finds sin and holiness only in intelligent volitions.

"The history of the past, and the state of things in our own day, demonstrate that there is no safety but in the constant recollection that our office is that of *interpreters*, not that of *philosophers*."

In accordance with these sentiments, Dr. Rice also advocates in his sermon, a very frequent introduction of Scriptural proofs and illustrations. In other words, that direct Scriptural quotation should be less sparing than it often is in pulpit discourses. We quite accord in this, and for the reasons so well insisted on by the reverend author. The literal word comes with its own peculiar authority. The word of God, in fact, cannot be explained without quoting its own language, especially on its higher mysteries.—Christ and his apostles have set the example of frequently, if not constantly, appealing to Scripture in its own words. Such a course best guards against error, and finally it fills the minds

of hearers with the language as well as the idea of Scripture. In short, the "word is the sword of the Spirit." We are reminded by this of our Scotch divine, Haliburton, who advocated the plentiful use of the Scripture as being "God's own weapon." Nor is the recommendation of Augustine to be lost out of sight, who, when speaking on the subject of eloquence, urges on preachers how much they lose by omitting to point their discourses with the language of inspiration so fitted to compensate by its peculiar strength, majesty and beauty, for the defects rhetorically of many a faithful and earnest pastor.

Dr. Rice adverts to the contrast in this respect between preachers of the present and of the preceding generation. "I am inclined to believe that one of the sermons of Waterspoon, Edwards, or Davies, contains as large a number of Scripture passages, literally quoted, as one could find in half-a-dozen sermons of our time. Those great men never seemed to feel that they had established any truth till they had confirmed it by the language of inspiration. This defect in modern discourses which, it is to be feared, is not only real, but growing, demands the prayerful attention of the ministers of Christ."

We heartily join with the Moderator of the American Assembly in his opinion and advice. It is impossible, indeed, to give any precise rule as to the manner of introducing Biblical language into the pulpit; or the extent to which this should be carried. Christian wisdom must direct here as in other things to avoid extremes.—It is quite possible for indolence to add verse to verse, to make up for the want of study, as well as for deep piety to prefer to clothe the thoughts divine in the form which God himself has given to them, from a humble conviction of the inadequacy of all human forms. But considering that the subjects of divine revelation are many of them so far above the power of human words fitly to define, and that the Divine Spirit has condescended to supply the appropriate expressions, yea, often the very analogies and examples and facts, which go to their illustration; surely it is not easy to reconcile the meagre quotation of these with a becoming appreciation of the beauty and fitness of the word as the vehicle of the divine communication. It has been said, indeed, that a sermon composed only of quotations, even the finest quotations, would not be a *discourse*. It would want unity and force, because there would not be perceived in it the continuous presence and action of a tone in which all the truths contained in the discourse are, in a sense personified. Vinet, (see his *Homiletics*), who strongly advocates the plentiful use of Scripture, admits that its beauties may be lost in a discourse without individuality, in a discourse which has no depth, no intrinsic power, "as flowers whose stem is not rooted in the soil hang their head, grow pale and die." But who can fail to agree in his reflection on the whole? "Having," says he, "him for our master, who is the Word, full of grace and truth, to whom the Spirit was given without measure, who teaches with authority, how is it possible that we should

not joyfully and fervently repeat his words, not as common citations, but with reverence and with marked intention?"

In entire harmony with the sermon before us, the author of the *Homiletics* continues:—

"The Bible is more than a source or a document; the Bible, we may almost say is our subject; we have to speak from it, our voice is as its echo; it is as a forest which we subdue, as a field which we reap. What a treasure! This book has in everything reached the sublime. The most perfect models of the grand and the pathetic, of the human and the religious, of the strong and the tender, are here as in their depository. Among all the books which have expressed ideas of the same class, if we were free to choose, if the authority was equal, we should always recur to this. Its manner of expressing things could not without loss of strength be exchanged for any other. The Bible I regard as the true *diapason* of the preacher, who assuredly should gather from it the tone of his discourse: his imagination should be steeped in the Bible; he should come forth in the spirit of this Book, if he would have true power, disguised simplicity, noble and grave familiarity. It seems to me that we cannot suitably treat on what is most ineffable in our religion, unfold the unsearchable mercy of God, repeat his terrible threatenings, without at least starting with the very words of Scripture. Are we not happy to have forms already prepared for truths which man would hardly have dared to pronounce, so greatly do they transcend and overwhelm him." He eloquently concludes:—"Feed upon the Bible, live in the Bible, unite yourself to it; let it abound in your memory and heart; let a frequent personal study of it reveal to you the force, give you the secret of a number of passages which, without such study would remain to you as mere common-places, and take no root in your memory; mix the recollection of them with your most tender affections, with your prayers, your gravest occupations; let the words of Scripture gradually become the natural and involuntary form of your inward thoughts; then meditate on a subject for the pulpit; write; preach; your words will come with the richness, interblended with the colours of the word of inspiration."

There is yet another point on which our American Moderator has made some strictures worthy of attention from ministers and students. We perfectly sympathise in his recommendation of what is natural in style, tone, and gesture. He does not over-estimate the value of *manner*, when he warns his clerical auditors against a colored or artificial delivery, and when he avers that such is calculated, in a serious degree, to counteract the most wholesome instruction. It is true that something must be allowed for constitutional temperament. But warmth and corresponding animation of manner may well be expected from men who are in earnest in the sacred work. "It does seem strange," says he, "that so few ministers of the gospel are natural. The pulpit tone too common in some latitudes, whilst it offends persons of taste, soothes others into a quiet sleep. Feeling is natural and simple in its style, and as natural in its intonations." Certainly so: and whatever insignificant sacredness is supposed to belong to certain artificial cadences, it were desired that whether the drawling whine, or the formal, practised rhetorical intonation were banished from the pulpit; but, above all, the affected mannerism of imitators, who, whatever may be the merits of the proto-