

icate the knowledge of salvation. But, if the want of them produce inattention to the truth, if they recommend religion, they are exceedingly valuable; and permit me to observe, that religion does not disregard the ornaments of dress. It courts them, and it well deserves them. Blue, and purple, and scarlet, adorned the tabernacle; and the eloquence of Paul and Apollos, was consecrated to the service of the gospel. It is not for us, indeed, to limit the operations of divine grace. Weak and foolish things may be employed to produce powerful effects. But let it always be remembered, that, until the weak and foolish be rendered mighty through God, they gain none of the gospel.

I am the more solicitous to impress upon your minds the importance of pulpit eloquence; because, from the mistaken views of religious men, it has received less attention than it really deserves. Many of them seem to have imagined, that our Lord's selection of apostles, authorizes a neglect of the refinements of language and manner in the church. But it ought to be considered, that he who called them, prepared them for his service. He connected the gift of utterance with the gift of knowledge; and taught them both what they should say, and how they should speak. It is not true, that our Lord undervalued oratorical endowments; he has combined them with a highest honours. He who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel was not, for his eloquent and courtly address, excluded from the apostleship. Christ often selected him to vindicate his gospel before rulers and kings; and also to transmit, to succeeding ages, the principal knowledge of his doctrine. The person best qualified to command the attention of an audience, is most likely to promote their improvement. Like the skilful preparer of food, he creates a relish for what he has provided. The spirit of God only, it is true, can communicate efficiency to the word of his grace. But the holy Spirit operates upon the rational mind, by means agreeable to its nature; and, therefore, in religion a pleasing mode of address may be as useful, as in the ordinary intercourse of life.

Again, I would observe, that the acquisition of knowledge and a capacity of communication will qualify you only in part for ministerial duties. In the church, government is combined with instruction; and both are necessary for the improvement of its members. Experience also exemplifies, that the clergyman who cannot rule, labours unprofitably in the world and doctrine. To correct views of christian principles, therefore, you must add the knowledge which is profitable to direct in the government of the church. This is the more requisite;