

we shall endeavour to show that in every respect, the Preacher has the advantage.

I.—In regard to the *subjects* which are discussed. 1. The subjects discussed in the Pulpit are confessedly the most important.

They do not refer merely to outward prosperity, but they are connected with the soul. It is not only an individual citizen, or a single nation that is concerned, but they interest the whole human race. It is not a temporary interest that is at stake, but they embrace the concerns of eternity. It is not the will of a monarch, or the laws of a community that is the subject of consideration, but the commands of God, the creator of the universe.

2. In the Pulpit the range of discussion is more extensive.

The Pleador is confined to law, and the Senator to politics. Here the Preacher has a considerable advantage. The science of Theology, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is in itself an extensive field of discussion, and she places under tribute all the other branches of knowledge. Human nature becomes naturally the subject of investigation. Ethics, deducing her laws from reason and experience, exhibits their conformity with the dictates of revelation. From history the Preacher derives information respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the wonders of Providence. Natural philosophy opens her stores, and exhibits the wonderful attributes of the Creator in the constitution of the world. Even grammar and philology are often introduced to fix the meaning of disputed texts, and to prevent the holy word from being wrested to the support of erroneous sentiments. There is in short no branch of science from which the Preacher may not gather materials for illustrating or enforcing the truths of religion.

3. The subjects discussed in the Pulpit are those in which the hearers have the deepest interest.

At the Bar, that part of the audience which is immediately interested, are exceedingly few. The greater number are spectators, who listen only to gratify their curiosity, or to please their taste. In the Senate, though the subject discussed interests a greater number of persons, yet it is only a general interest which affects them in their collective capacity, and it makes but a slight impression on any one person. But the subjects of the Pulpit are closely united with the feelings of every auditor—each feels a personal interest—an interest not capable of being transferred—an interest peculiarly his own—*one* which affects him in his most important relations, and is intimately associated with both his present and his eternal happiness.

4. The subjects discussed in the Pulpit admit of being enforced by appealing to the passions.

Passion is the soul of eloquence, but it can be admitted in only a limited degree at the Bar and in the Senate. The Pleador would render himself ridiculous, or be suspected of a wish to defeat the ends of justice, were he to address the feelings of the jury. And though this kind of address may be employed to a great extent in the Senate, yet even there it can be introduced only on particular occasions. And a crafty opponent will always represent the warmth of the disputant as a substitute for the deficiency of argument. But in the Pulpit energetic appeals to the passions of the audience form a legitimate and effectual means of persuasion. The subjects are adapted to rouse into action all the powers of the mind. Their importance warrants the strongest appeals to the heart. The Holy Scriptures present the sublimest models, and the prophets and apostles supply the most brilliant examples. With what zeal did those holy men exhaust all the power of language and all the force of metaphor, in order to break the fetters of indifference, and to cause anger and gratitude, hope and fear, joy and contrition, to exercise their alternate and beneficial influence on the mind!

II.—Compare the Pulpit, the Bar, and the Senate, in reference to the Speaker.

1. In the Pulpit the Speaker appears in a more dignified character.

He is a messenger from heaven. The doctrines he delivers have been revealed from above. The precepts he inculcates are the mandates of the Eternal. We listen with greater attention to the language of a man of superior rank, particularly when he appears as an ambassador from a powerful monarch, and more especially if the immediate object of his mission has a close connexion with our national

or personal interests. What an advantage, then, over all other speakers is possessed by the Preacher, who appears before his audience as an ambassador of Christ; as belonging to an order of men appointed by the Deity himself to explain his will, and who claims attention in the name of the Lord.

2. In the Pulpit the Speaker can choose the subject of discussion.

This is not the case with either the Barrister or the Senator. One is guided by his brief, the other by his question. Nothing is more frequent than to hear Pleadors complain of the difficulties they experience from their imperfect knowledge of the cause they advocate. This often occurs in questions connected with maritime affairs and with the mechanical arts. Men who have passed their days in legal or political studies have but an imperfect knowledge of other sciences, or of other modes of life, and necessarily feel a difficulty when their profession compels them to discuss questions connected with pursuits so different from their own. From this difficulty the Preacher is entirely free. His subject is not fixed for him; but he can select for discussion those topics which are most congenial with his own talents and inclination.

3. The Preacher has the advantage of previous preparation.

In some cases the Senator and the Barrister have this advantage. But this is chiefly when the Senator has to propose any resolution, or when the Barrister is counsel for the plaintiff in a civil, or for the prosecution in a criminal cause. In other cases they are often called upon to speak extemporaneously, to reply to argument which they never before heard, and against which they could not have been provided. The Preacher, however, can arrange any part or the whole of his address; and he would not sin against modern practice were he even to write out his discourse, and read it from the Pulpit. But though an opportunity for previous meditation is an advantage to the Preacher, the practice of reading his sermons is so far from being such, that with respect to oratory, that custom alone is a sufficient counterbalance to all the advantages which he may possess.

4. The Preacher has no opponent.

In other cases the orator may have produced a powerful impression on his audience, and immediately a speaker on the opposite side may rise, and destroy the impression he has produced; and this is not the case merely when the speech itself is defective, for often the soundest argument is attacked with equal effect by the weapons of wit and irony; and the speaker has the mortification to see the impression which his laboured eloquence had produced, gradually subside before the influence of ridicule. In the Pulpit the Preacher stands without a rival. His words sink into the mind, and there rest, like nails fastened in a sure place by the master of assemblies.

5. With the Preacher the frequency of his public exercises must tend to the improvement of his talents. The Barrister can speak only when the courts are held—the Senator only during the session of Parliament; and during those seasons, one individual claims but a comparatively small share of attention. The Preacher has his stated times of speaking all through the year. There are no seasons in which he is prohibited, and he cannot be preceded by another, who will pre-occupy the attention, or anticipate his arguments. Nothing tends so much to improvement in public speaking as speaking frequently. It may require more previous study to collect ideas, but it necessarily tends to increase the power of the orator.

III.—Compare the Pulpit, the Bar, and the Senate, in regard to the audience.

1. The assemblies addressed by the Preacher include a great variety of character.

In the other cases the audience is composed of individuals, who, in regard to rank, education, and talents, may be supposed to be nearly on an equality. It is certain there is a less variety than is to be found in our religious assemblies. Here we have persons of both sexes, of all ages, of different pursuits, and of various moral characters. This appears to increase the difficulties of the Preacher. It is almost impossible for him to deliver a discourse adapted to the condition of every individual. But, while this circumstance renders perfect success very difficult to be attained, it in the same degree prevents the possibility of a total failure. For it is almost impossible to deliver a discourse which shall not be adapted to some of these characters. A Barrister

must convince the whole of the jury, and the Senator the majority of the parliament, to obtain the object they have in view; but the success of a Preacher admits of an infinite number of degrees. And hence, while he has the consolation to reflect, that he has not laboured in vain, he has, at the same time, the strongest inducements to "stir up the gift that is in him," that by an abundant success he may increase the splendor of "his glory and crown."

2. The audience of the Preacher is the most numerous.

In the other cases the assemblies do not generally comprise more than five or six hundred persons. We have churches and chapels capable of seating several thousands, and these, too, crowded to excess every Lord's day. It may be said, we have also many smaller places of worship, and therefore this is not a fair point of comparison; but it is fair to compare the most eminent of these speakers, and it is certain, that the most eminent Senators and Barristers have not so large an assembly to address as the most eminent Preachers. This circumstance produces a great influence on the speaker; the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the voice of one man, has a tendency to give him an elevation of mind, that will prompt the most vigorous conceptions, and inspire the happiest results.

3. The audience entertain no doubts of the Speaker's sincerity.

A persuasion that an orator is himself really convinced of the sentiments he utters, has a great influence in producing a similar conviction in the minds of his hearers. We hesitate to admit the force of arguments which the proposer himself believes to be inconclusive. Here the Pleador is at considerable disadvantage. It is well known that he speaks for hire; and had the opposite side applied first for his assistance, he would, with equal ability and with equal warmth, have assailed the party whom he now defends. And though the disadvantage of the Senator is not so great, yet, as party spirit has a great influence in the formation of opinions, and as the Senate is divided into parties, with both of which it appears to be a maxim, that individual sentiments should be surrendered to those general principles which the parties may embrace, we do not listen to the address of a speaker who openly acts in connexion with a party, with that confidence we should place in a speaker who, we are convinced, follows the dictates of his individual judgment. The Preacher is beyond these suspicions. He has voluntarily embraced the doctrines he inculcates. The fervor of his address arises from his conviction of their importance, and his whole life is a practical exhibition of their influence.

4. The audience have no previous intimation of the subject to be discussed.

In the other cases, the audience are acquainted with the subjects, and are often especially summoned for the occasion. But a religious assembly is totally unacquainted with the topic of discourse, till the Preacher has announced his text. Hence the attention of the audience is maintained, and the interest is not exhausted by previous anticipation.

5. The audience assemble under circumstances of peculiar solemnity.

It is the Sabbath-day. Labour is called from the field; Trade has shut up her windows, and Pleasure has closed her gates,

The man arises in the morning with his mind serene, free from the vexatious anticipations of business, and awed by the sanctity of the day. He arrays himself in those habiliments which he assumes when about to visit a superior. Accompanied by his wife and children, the objects of his tenderest affection, he travels the accustomed road to that venerable sanctuary, endeared to him by habit, and by many a pleasing recollection. He takes his seat beneath the sacred roof. Music has soothed his passions, devotion has calmed his mind, and now, in solemn silence, he listens to the messenger from heaven, proclaiming truths, on which is suspended his eternal welfare. With such an audience how immense is the power of the orator: the minds of his hearers are as softened wax, and he has only to affix the seal of heaven.

History bears witness to the mighty power of Pulpit eloquence. It is to this we owe our emancipation from the fetters of superstition: it is to this we owe the increasing honours of the Christian church: it is to this religious benevolence is indebted for her most costly offerings.