

"But he, whom God raised up again, saw no corruption."

These examples are sufficient to show how much the meaning regulates the duration of comma-pauses. The comma is, indeed, more frequently used to point out the grammatical divisions of a sentence, than to indicate a rest or cessation of the voice,—so much does good reading depend on skill and judgment in making those pauses which the meaning of the sentence dictates, but which are not marked in books; that the sooner pupils are taught to make them, with proper discrimination, the surer and more rapid will be their progress in the art of reading.

§ 2. The Semicolon (;).

1. The pause at the semicolon is generally twice as long as at the comma. But the length of the pause depends so much on the meaning of what is read, that the only guide in shortening or lengthening the pause, is a *thorough knowledge* of what is read.

2. Therefore, endeavour to understand well the character of the composition you are about to read, or on which you are going to exercise your class; the relation of the different divisions of sentences, being immediate and dependent, or distant and little connected either in sense or construction; the peculiar character of the style or diction,—as being, brisk, easy, fluent or abrupt, and the sense not changed; or grave and solemn,—requiring a slower movement of the voice, and pauses more prolonged.

Examples showing the differences in the pauses indicated by semicolons. Let the figure 1 indicate the shortest, 2 the ordinary, and 3 the prolonged semicolon pause.

If the luminaries I have chosen err, it is in a heavenly region; 1 if they wander, it is in fields of light; 1 if they aspire, it is at all events a glorious daring; 2 and rather than sink with infidelity into the dust, I am content to cheat myself with their vision of eternity.

The writings of Locke, have diffused throughout the civilized world the love of civil liberty; 1 the spirit of toleration and charity in religious differences; 1 the disposition to reject whatever is obscure, fantastic, or hypothetical in speculation; 1 to reduce verbal dispute to their proper value; 1 to abandon problems which admit of no solution; 1 to distrust whatever cannot be clearly expressed; 1 to render theory the simple expression of facts; 2 and to prefer those studies which most directly contribute to human happiness.

The Bible presents the idea of One Supreme Being, the Creator and Governor of all things; 3 a Being of unbending justice, the rewarder of the good, and swift to avenge himself upon the workers of iniquity; 3 and One who watches over and interests himself in the concerns of mortals, the hearer and answerer of prayer.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; 3 in honour preferring one another; 3 not slothful in business; 3 fervent in spirit; 3 serving the Lord.

§ 3. The Colon (:).

1. The pause at a colon is nearly as much prolonged as at a period; and the passage ending with it, is to be read with a full suspension of the voice, unless depending less or more on the part of the sentence which follows it.

2. When that part of the sentence preceding the colon, is not dependent on that which follows it, there should be a *total cessation of the voice*; and the *tone should indicate* this independence in meaning.

3. Observe, that the modulated quality of the voice should be indicative of the stop; and the construction of the sentence and character of the composition, should direct how long the pause should be. Generally its pause is much longer than the ordinary stop of the comma, and somewhat longer than that of the semicolon.

Examples.

Nay do not leave me, dear mamma,
Your watch beside me, keep,
My heart feels cold—the room's all dark—
Now lay me down to sleep:

And should I sleep to wake no more,
Dear—dear mamma, good bye:
Poor nurse is kind, but, oh, do you
Be with me when I die!

The composition, and ideas in these touching verses are such, as to require the *long* pause at the colons, accompanied with the deep emotional tone.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your-

selves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

This Scripture quotation requires, from its construction, the pauses at the colons to be a little shorter than in the preceding example.

This event was sudden and unexpected, and his feelings on the occasion are well expressed in the following remark, extracted from his letters:—"She was the only woman in the world that loved me."

The part of the sentence which precedes the colon in this example, has its completion in what follows it: the pause, therefore, should not exceed that of the semicolon; and the tone of the voice should show that the sense is not complete.

These examples are sufficient to show that the pauses of colons, like those of other points of punctuation, vary much in length. The subject of pausing, therefore, should be specially studied by every educator, who wishes to succeed in making fluent expressive readers. So much, indeed, does good reading depend on proper pauses, that unless scholars be trained to pause with reference to the *meaning* of what they read, *fully more* than with reference to the characters of punctuation, reading in our schools will never reach a very high standard.

§ 4. The Period (.)

See my preceding remarks on the period.

§ 5. The Note of Interrogation (?).

This character requires a pause about as long as that of the period—counting distinctly, one, two, three, four.—I would call this the long interrogative pause: very often its pause is as short as that of the comma. When questions are followed by answers, the intervening pause sometimes is little more than perceptible; and not unfrequently it is considerably prolonged.—The tones peculiar to this point are various. Sometimes they are sharp, bold and commanding; sometimes, soft, nervous, and hesitating; sometimes they are indicative of doubt, as if no answer were expected; and how many are put, not for answer, but to command or direct the attention?

Perhaps no point requires so great a variety of tone, or peculiar quality of sound, as the note of interrogation. The few following examples will farther illustrate what I have stated.

Examples.

Where is Drury Lane? There, Sir. (Pause the shortest. Tone loud and firm.)

What can I give you for your continued kindness?—Your gratitude is over pay. (Pause short. Tone of the answer low and firm.)

Have you heard the news?—Why not answer me?—Pardon me. The news, I heard; and it deeply concerns me. (Pauses long. Tone of answer low, and characterized by earnestness.)

When a number of questions follows in succession, and they relate to the same thing or subject, the pauses between them are generally short. Their duration, however, depends on the nature of the subject.

Examples.

Where is all this to end? Is the increase of this already enormous city to be limitless? Are the wealth, power, and population of this one spot to go on till Britain becomes London, and London but another name for all Great Britain? (Pauses short,—voice to be kept up,—tone continuous, clear, distinct and firm.)

Who would go backwards now? Who would stand still? Who would not face perils on the way to the regions of eternal day? Are its bright inhabitants with hearts glowing with love not inviting us? The trials of life are not worthy to be compared with the glory there to be to us revealed. (Pauses long,—tone those of gladdened hope,—strong, steady and firm.)

When two or more questions succeed each other, the pauses after the questions are not always to be *equally* prolonged.

Ex. What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?—But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?—Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

In this example the pause after the *second* and *fourth* question should be longer than after the other questions.

Questions put to command attention, generally require a prolonged pause.

Ex. Is it possible that you do not meditate on eternity and infinity as subjects in which you have the highest interest?—The