

was in session he was "lecturing" through the prophecies of Haggai and had suggested thereby many powerful and pungent things bearing on the reorganization of the Scottish Church, on which the States of the Realm were then engaged. There is evidence also that he favored, as a general thing, the practice of continuous exposition, as being fraught with profit both to preacher and hearer; for in his Book of Discipline we have the following direction regarding the public reading of the Scriptures: "We think it most expedient that the Scriptures be read in order—that is, that some one book of the Old and the New Testament be begun and orderly read to the end. *And the same we judge of preaching, where the minister for the most part remaineth in one place;* for this skipping and divagation from place to place, be it in reading, be it in preaching, we judge not so profitable to edify the church as the continual following of one text."

In his style he was plain, direct, homely, sometimes humorous, and always courageous. At a time when anonymous writings were freely circulated against him, he did not flinch, but averred that from Isaiah, Jeremiah and other inspired writers he "had learned, plainly and boldly, to call wickedness by its own terms; a fig a fig, and a spade a spade"—thus using for the first time words which have become proverbial in the language. Occasionally, too, he brought in withering irony to bear on that to which he was opposed. His prologue to the report of his disputation with the abbot of Crossraguel reads like a bit of a sermon on the idolatry of the Mass, and is an excellent illustration of his most trenchant manner. Here is a specimen: He has been comparing the making of what he calls the "wafer-god" to that of the idols so sarcastically described by Isaiah in the 40th and 41st chapters of his prophecies; and after speaking of the workmen engaged in both, he proceeds as follows: "These are the artificers and workmen that travail in the making of this god. I think as many as the prophet reciteth to have travailed in making of the idols; and if the power of both shall be compared, I think they shall be found in all things equal, except that the god of bread is subject unto more dangers than were the idols of the Gentiles. Men made them; men make it: they were deaf and dumb; it cannot speak, hear, or see. Briefly, in infirmity they wholly agree, except that, as I have said, the poor god of bread is most miserable of all other idols; for, according to their matter whereof they are made they will remain without corruption for many years; but within one year that god will putrefy, and then he must be burned. They can abide the vehemency of the wind, frost, rain, or snow; but the wind will blow that god to sea, the rain or the snow will make it dough again; yea (which is most of all to be feared) that god is a prey, if he be not well kept, to rats and mice, for they will desire no better dinner than white round gods enow. But oh! then, what becometh of Christ's natural body? By