

But farther, in specifying the course of reading most profitable to a theological student, the knowledge of ecclesiastical history ought not to be overlooked. This species of reading, in connexion with the principles of the Christian faith, affords a variety of impressive instructions, which bear alike upon christian belief and deportment. Whoever is unacquainted with those views of the divine government which the history of the church presents, is ignorant of the best evidences of revealed religion, and a stranger to its most solemn warnings and cheering consolations. Now, the Word of God, containing the authentic history of the church during a certain period, will afford you this information in part; and, for a knowledge of succeeding ages, you must apply to the works of the ecclesiastical historian.

In directing your attention to the preceding sources of information, let me also remind you, that, as teachers of religion, you must be qualified to communicate to others the result of your own studies. To this point I would request you particularly to attend; because, though exceedingly important to the usefulness and respectability of a clergyman, it is too frequently overlooked. Students, in their eagerness to acquire information, are apt to forget that a capacity of teaching ought always to be a leading feature of the ministerial character. Yet a facility of instructing the ignorant, is really a clerical endowment of much greater value to the church, than profound research. In all your compositions, therefore, I would again recommend to you the habit of careful analysis; and, at the same time, an attentive perusal of those specimens of public instruction with which our language abounds. Publications in the form of sermons, are a species of composition, to which, I believe, students in general pay too little attention. When these are the productions of men of talents and usefulness, they certainly delineate the course which others ought to pursue. Beside the knowledge of analysis and the doctrinal information which a well composed sermon affords, it exhibits religious principle in its practical bearings and illustrates the mode to which abstract views may be rendered subservient to a holy life.

Upon the subject of composition and address, I have, in the course of your education, made a variety of remarks, which, at present, supersede the necessity of many additional directions. A preacher of the gospel who does not pay a becoming attention to style and manner, injures alike religion and himself. Where it is his object to win affection, he presents a forbidding aspect; and his slovenly exhibitions are repaid with the neglect of his audience. Style and address, it is true, cannot commun-