

§ 161. I hope you will let no kind of reading keep you from looking daily—if only for five minutes—into a class of writers, who are not attractive in regard to letters, but who unite great talents, great Bible knowledge, and great unction. At the head of these stands Owen. My father used to say one should read “Owen’s Spiritual Mindedness” once a year. I add his “Forgiveness of Sin ;” his “Indwelling Sin,” and his “Mortification of Sin.” Here we have philosophical analysis applied to phenomena of experience. Yet more Platonic and seraphic are Howe’s “Delight in God,” and “Blessedness of the Righteous.” Flavel’s “Keeping the Heart,” is less deep, but more clear, purling, and delicious. As to Baxter, I think his English equal to any ever written. One such book kept near at hand, and opened for a few moments every morning, seasons the thoughts. So of good biographies—so one does not seek to copy details and idiosyncrasies ; *Simeon’s Life*—Martyn’s—Brainerd’s (with due allowance of his diseased gloom)—Edwards’—above all HALIBURTON’S. I have no doubt of your becoming sufficiently learned ; but I have great fears lest you should look for happiness too much in the æsthetic, then the divine part of the *To KAAON* ; lest literature and art should occupy the place of spiritual communion. It requires great striving to keep an academical life from promoting habits of mind out of sympathy with the great activities of good men in the arena and battle of the church.

§ 162. In thinking upon any subject, with a view either to writing or speaking, the mind is apt to flit away, or to fall into sterile reverie. Against this, the common remedy is the *pen* ; and it is valuable. But it is not indispensable, or even the best. Let me suggest a device which I never met with in books, but which I have practised in bed and on horseback. *Stake down every attainment in your thinking by a verbal proposition.* The thing of emphasis is the propositional form. We are not now considering whether it is true, or important, or in due sequence ; put your thought into words, as affirming or denying. After a little turning of it, put the result into words. Seek to *deduce* another from