

the commencement of the late war, is said to have been the hasty composition of a single evening. And it will be found true, I believe, of many of the best sermon writers, that they revolve the subject until their minds are filled and warmed, and then put their discourse upon paper at a single sitting. Now what is all this but *extemporaneous writing*? and what does it require but a mind equally collected and at ease, equally disciplined by practice and interested in the subject, to ensure equal success in *extemporaneous speaking*? Nay, we might anticipate occasional superior success, since the thoughts sometimes flow, when at the highest and most passionate excitement, too rapidly and profusely for any thing slower than the tongue to afford them vent.

There is one more consideration in favour of the practice I recommend, which I think cannot fail to have weight with all who are solicitous to make progress in theological knowledge,—namely, that it redeems time for study. The labour of preparing and committing to paper a sermon or two every week is one which necessarily occupies the principal part of a minister's time and thoughts, and withdraws him from the investigation of many subjects which, if his mind were more at leisure, it would be his duty and pleasure to pursue. He who *writes* sermons is ready to consider this as the chief object or perhaps the sole business of his calling. When not actually engaged in writing, yet the necessity of doing it presses upon his mind, and so binds him as to make him feel as if he were wrong in being employed on any thing else. But, if he have acquired that ready command of thought and language which will enable him to speak without written preparation, the time and toil of writing are saved, to be devoted to a different mode of study. He may prepare his discourses at intervals of leisure, while walking or riding; and having once arranged the outlines of the subject, and ascertained its principal bearings and applications, the work of preparation is over. The language remains to be suggested at the moment. Preparation for the pulpit doubtless demands, and should receive, the best of a man's talents and labours, but a habit of mind may be acquired which will enable him to make a better and more thorough preparation at less expense of labour and time than that of writing his discourses. He may acquire, by discipline, that ease and promptitude of looking into subjects, and bringing out their prominent features, which shall enable him at a glance, as it were, to seize the points on which he should enlarge. Some minds are so constituted as 'to look a subject into shape' much more readily than others. But the power of doing it is in a great measure mechanical and depends upon habit. All may acquire it to a certain extent. When the mind works with most concentration, it works at once most quickly and most surely. Now the act of speaking extempore favours this concentration of the powers more than the slower process of leisurely writing, perhaps more than any other operation; consequently it increases, with practice, the facility of dissecting subjects and of arranging materials for preaching. In other words, the completeness with which a subject is viewed and its parts are arranged