

than ordinary quickening of his emotions and affections, as he begins the work of immediate preparation for the pulpit. It is difficult to lay down rules for the attainment of this state of feeling that will be suited to every one. Each individual Christian is apt to know the best means of rousing his own mind and heart, and hence it is better to leave the person himself to make a choice out of the variety that are at his command. Generally speaking, however, anything that contributes to awaken in the soul a livelier sense of the excellence of divine things, anything that tends to stir and quicken the Christian affections, will furnish the preacher what he needs in order to vigorous composition. Probably, therefore, no better advice can be given to the sacred orator, in the respect of which we are speaking, than that very same advice which he gives to the common Christian when he asks for the best means and methods of quickening his religious affections. It has been said by one of the most profound and devout minds in English literature, that 'an hour of solitude passed in sincere and earnest prayer, or the conflict with and conquest over a single passion or subtle bosom sin, will teach us more of thought, will more effectually awaken the faculty and form the habit of reflection, than a year's study in the schools without them.' If prayer and Christian self-discipline do this for the habits of thought, most certainly will they do the same for the habits of feeling. If an hour of serious self-examination and self-mortification, or an hour of devout meditation and earnest prayer, does not set the affections of the preacher into a glow, probably nothing in the way of means can. The greatest

preachers have, consequently, been in the habit of preparing for composition by a season of prayer and meditation. The maxim of Luther, *Bene orasse est bene studuisse*, is familiar to all. Augustine says, 'Let our Christian orator, who would be understood and heard with pleasure, pray before he speak. Let him lift up his thirsty soul to God before he pronounce anything.' Erasmus, a man in whom the intellectual was more prominent than the spiritual and devotional, yet observes, that 'it is incredible how much light, how much vigour, how much force and vitality are imparted to the clergyman by deep earnest supplication.' And the pagan Pericles, according to Plutarch, 'was accustomed, whenever he was to speak in public, previously to entreat the gods that he might not utter against his will any word that should not belong to his subject.'

By filling his mind with his theme, and awakening his religious affections by prayer and devout meditation, the sacred orator will bring his whole inner being into that awakened and exalted condition which prepares for direct and rapid composition. He will become a *roused* man, and will find all his faculties of cognition and feeling in free and living action.

2. And this brings us to the second maxim for facilitating the process of composition, which is, *Compose continuously*. When the preacher has made all the preparation, general and particular, of which we have spoken, and his mind and heart are ready to work, he should proceed in the composition of a sermon without intermission. The intellect works with far the greatest intensity and energy