

## LECTURE XXXII.

## THE CONCLUSION: DEFINITION, CAUSES OF WEAKNESS.

I. IN what respect is the conclusion of a sermon distinct from the other parts of it? This inquiry is answered, in part, by the titles given to the conclusion in the nomenclature of the pulpit. In the practice of the older preachers we find it under the title of "uses" of the subject of discourse. President Edwards and many others commonly call the conclusion the "application" of the subject, and of its discussion. Dr. Emmons and often Dr. Finney term this part of a discourse the "improvement" of the subject. Dr. Dwight almost invariably designates it by the word "remarks," yet rarely by the term "inferences." Others adopt the less specific title of "reflections;" and some propose to conclude a sermon with "observations." This diversity of nomenclature is no evidence of indefiniteness in the conception of the thing. A single element distinguishes every variety of conclusion technically so called.

1st, The characteristic idea of the conclusion is *application* of the subject to results in advance of its discussion. President Edwards has the most exact and comprehensive title for it. The theory of the conclusion presupposes a theme discussed, which is now to be applied to something. It is to be used for a further