

LECTURES TO MY STUDENTS

descriptive, that it brings to my mind the droning sound at this instant most distinctly, and reminds me of the parody upon Gray's *Elegy*:

Now fades the glimmering subject from the sight,
 And all the air a sleepy stillness holds,
 Save where the parson hums his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the slum'ring folds.

What a pity that a man who from his heart delivered doctrines of undoubted value, in language the most appropriate, should commit ministerial suicide by harping on one string, when the Lord had given him an instrument of many strings to play upon! Alas! alas! for that dreary voice, it hummed and hummed like a mill-wheel to the same unmusical turn, whether its owner spake of heaven or hell, eternal life or everlasting wrath. It might be, by accident, a little louder or softer, according to the length of the sentence, but its tone was still the same, a dreary waste of sound, a howling wilderness of speech in which there was no possible relief, no variety, no music, nothing but horrible sameness.

When the wind blows through the Æolian harp, it swells through all the chords, but the heavenly wind, passing through some men, spends itself upon one string, and that, for the most part, the most out of tune of the whole. Grace alone could enable hearers to edify under the drum – drum – drum of some divines. I think an impartial jury would bring in a verdict of justifiable slumbering in many cases where the sound emanating from the preacher lulls to sleep by its reiterated note. Dr Guthrie charitably traces the slumbers of a certain Scotch congregation, to bad ventilation in the meeting-house; this has something to do with it, but a bad condition of the valves of the preacher's throat might be a still more potent cause. Brethren, in the name of everything that is sacred, ring the whole chime in your steeple, and do not dun¹ your people with the ding-dong of one poor cracked bell.

When you do pay attention to the voice, *take care not to fall into the habitual and common affectations of the present day*. Scarcely one man in a dozen in the pulpit talks like a man. This affectation is not confined to Protestants, for the Abbé Mullois remarks:

¹ Dun: to plague or pester.