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ART. I.—*The works of John Owen, D. D.* Edited by the Rev. William H. Goold, Edinburgh. New York: Carter and Brothers, 1850, 1851, 1852. 8vo.

THAT this is the best edition of Owen's works, we do not doubt for a moment. It is identical as to every letter and point with the Edinburgh edition of Messrs. Johnstone and Hunter, everywhere known for the beautiful impressions which they have produced, under the auspices of the Free Church. The series of volumes is rapidly coming out, and five have already appeared. For such a book, the price is surprisingly low. What is of more importance, the edition is a critical one, under the eye and hand of a clergyman of Edinburgh, Mr. Goold, who unites for his task several admirable qualities; extensive reading, accurate scholarship, a turn for minute collation, indefatigable labour, and a thorough acquiescence in the theology of the seventeenth century.

It was fit that the great Puritan champion should be introduced to our generation by a Calvinist and a Presbyterian, rather than by any laxer descendant of the nonconformists, who, if they should revisit their old haunts, would scarcely recognize their ancient Independency among the Congregationalists of England.

ART. VIII.—*Parrhesia, or Christian and Ministerial Freedom of Speech.*

THE history of the Christian Church, as such, begins with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Until that time the New Testament history is a history of our Saviour's personal ministry on earth. Till then the Apostles were in a state of pupilage, preparing for the great work upon which they were so soon to enter. It was no part of our Lord's purpose to establish an organized society during his personal presence. This he reserved for his Apostles, and for this they were fitted by the great effusion of the Holy Spirit at the time in question. Before this they were ignorant, confused, and liable to continual mistakes as to the nature of Christ's kingdom and the means of its establishment. These crude and false conceptions were now exchanged for clear and just views. Selfish ambition gave way to a noble and disinterested zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of men. Henceforth the Apostles became models of Christian and ministerial fidelity, from which, without a slavish imitation, we may learn important lessons, as to our own rights and obligations, both as preachers and hearers of the gospel.

To facilitate this use of their example, inspiration has recorded some of the most striking and instructive incidents in the early periods of the apostolic ministry. Among these one of the most interesting is that recorded in the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Peter and John, going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, performed a miracle of healing, in the name of Christ, upon a man who had been crippled from his birth, and then took advantage of the general attention which the miracle excited, to preach Jesus as a Saviour, and as the Messiah of the prophecies. In consequence of this they were arraigned before the Sanhedrim, or national council of the Jews, and forbidden to speak further in the name of Christ, a prohibition which they publicly avowed themselves resolved to disregard. Being thereupon dismissed by the council, they returned to their own company, who, hearing what had taken

place, lifted up their voice to God, with one accord, in a sublime prayer, which is still on record. The petition of this prayer is in these words: "Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." This prayer was heard; for we read that "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

The point to which we would direct attention is the stress laid, both by the assembled Christians and by the inspired historian, on the *boldness*, or, as the original word (*παρρησία*) properly means freedom of speech, with which the first disciples wished to speak, and did speak, in the name of Christ. The importance which they attached to this particular quality of faithful preaching could not be more clearly shown, by any thing short of a direct assertion, than it is by the fact, that in such solemn circumstances, this was the burden of their prayer, that they might speak the word of God "with boldness," and that in describing the result, the sacred writer singles out this fact, which in itself might seem a slight one, that they did, under a special divine influence, speak the word of God "with boldness."

That this view of the matter was not an accidental one, confined to that occasion, may be easily established by comparing the subsequent statements of the same kind in the course of the same history, which is the more important as the terms employed by our translators in rendering the same Greek noun and verb are not entirely uniform, and thus the frequency with which they recur is, in some measure, lost to the English reader.

When Paul, soon after his conversion, was made known to the apostles at Jerusalem by Barnabas, the latter told them as a proof that he had undergone a real change, not only that "he had seen the Lord by the way," but also that "he had preached *boldly* at Damascus in the name of Jesus." Acts ix. 27. And the history adds that "he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and speaking *boldly* in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts v. 28. It was therefore no personal

peculiarity of Paul, but a sign of his conformity, in spirit and practice, to the example of the twelve. Nor was this conformity restricted to the time of his personal presence in the holy city; for we read of the same thing incidentally afterwards, as when it is said that Paul and Barnabas, at Antioch in Pisidia, "waxed bold," (Acts xiii. 46,) the verb used is the same translated "speaking boldly" and "preached boldly" in the passage before quoted.

It is also certain that this quality of the apostolical preaching was a constant one; for we read of it, not only on particular occasions, but as a habitual practice. Thus it is said expressly of the same two missionaries, that "they abode a long time (in Iconium,) *speaking boldly* in the Lord;" (Acts xiv. 3;) and of Paul alone, that "he went into the synagogue (at Corinth), and *spake boldly* for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Acts xix. 8. The same thing was practised before kings and governors; for Paul, when speaking before Festus and Agrippa said: "The king knoweth of these things, before whom also I *speak freely*," (Acts xxvi. 26,) using precisely the same word that is elsewhere rendered "speaking boldly." The same spirit and the same practice may be traced to the end of his recorded history, which closes with the statement, that "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house (at Rome), preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, *with all confidence*, no man forbidding him." Acts xxviii. 30, 31. The word here rendered "confidence," is still the same repeatedly translated elsewhere "boldness."

The only other fact which we shall cite from the historical part of the New Testament, is that this characteristic of Paul's preaching was not confined even to Apostles, but appeared in the ministrations of their most eminent contemporaries and co-workers, as we learn from the statement that Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, even when his own views were imperfect, being fervent in spirit, and having some acquaintance with the way of the Lord, began to *speak boldly* in the synagogue at Ephesus, and after he had been more perfectly instructed, "helped them much which had

believed through grace, for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Acts xviii. 24—28.

From the apostolical history let us now turn for a moment to the apostolical writings, and see how far the attribute in question is there recognized as necessary or important. Paul, addressing the Philippians, and referring to one of the severest trials of his ministerial life, says: "I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that *with all boldness*, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." Phil. i. 19, 20. He exhorts the Ephesians to pray always for all saints, "and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth *boldly*, to make known the mystery of the gospel." Eph. vi. 19. That this desire of his heart was not ungratified, we learn from his own appeal to the Thessalonians: "Your-selves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you that it was not in vain; but even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know at Philippi, *we were bold* in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." 1 Thess. i. 1, 2. In all these cases the leading terms employed are identical with those which we have already seen so often used in the apostolical history.

There is another application of these terms, particularly common in the epistle to the Hebrews and in those of John, where they often denote boldness of access to God in the exercise of faith and in reliance on his promise. "We are Christ's household if we hold fast the *confidence* and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb. iii. 6. "Let us therefore come *boldly* unto the throne of grace, &c." Heb. iv. 16. "Having therefore, brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Heb. x. 19. "Cast not away therefore your *confidence*, which hath great recompense of reward." Heb. x. 35. "And now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have *confidence* and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John ii. 28. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we *confidence* toward God." 1 John

iii. 21. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have *boldness* in the day of judgment." 1 John iv. 17. "And this is the *confidence* that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." 1 John v. 14. The word rendered "confidence" and "boldness" in these passages, is still the same that we have met so frequently before; nor is there any real departure from its essential meaning elsewhere, *freedom of speech*, whether towards God in earnest and believing prayer, or towards man in faithful declaration of the truth. It is, however, with the latter that we are concerned at present. We shall therefore set aside, as unconnected with this theme, not only the passages last quoted, but a number of others where the terms are employed in a lower sense, to signify plainness of speech, or freedom from obscurity in ordinary intercourse. Confining our attention then to those texts where the words in question have explicit reference to the communication of religious truth, we may draw two inferences from them all viewed in connection so as to illustrate and interpret one another. The first is, that the Apostles, and particularly Paul, attached, both in theory and practice, great importance to freedom of speech, or boldness in the preaching of the gospel. The other is, that after all allowance for a change of circumstances and relations, this characteristic quality cannot have wholly lost its value, but must still be desirable and still incumbent upon those who preach the gospel now.

. This last proposition may seem to concern only the ministry as a distinct order or profession. But for several reasons, it is interesting also to the great mass of those who hear the gospel. In the first place, all these have, or ought to have a kind of inofficial share in the work more especially entrusted to the ministry. All who hear the truth are thereby bound to make it known to others. All such are called, in a wider or a smaller sphere, to preach the gospel, and to do it boldly. But even in reference to the public duties of the ministry properly so called, the body of the people have an interest in this matter, because connected closely with their own peculiar rights and obligations. If the ministry are authorized and bound to preach the word of God with boldness, it is surely a correlative duty of the church to hear it when so preached. And if, on

the other hand, there is a sense in which, or a point beyond which, boldness is unlawful, then it is no less certainly the right of the hearers to condemn such boldness, and withhold their countenance and even tacit approbation from it. It is therefore no official or professional inquiry, but one of general interest and importance, wherein the legitimate boldness of the pulpit, or freedom of speech in the promulgation of the gospel, does or does not consist.

This is one of those cases where the truth can be most fully ascertained by a joint use of the positive and negative methods of investigation, or at least of statement. And in deference to the rights of Christian people, we begin by stating negatively, wherein this apostolic boldness or *parrhesia* does not consist.

And first, it might appear almost insulting to our readers if we should appear to think it necessary to announce, as a distinct and formal proposition, that this apostolical boldness does not consist in any thing external, such as loudness of voice, or violence of gesture, or severity of countenance. All this is perfectly compatible with radical deficiency in boldness or liberty of speech, such as Paul approved and practised. Nay, it may even be adopted as a mask to conceal that very deficiency. Men may assume the look and language of defiance, not only when courageous, but when most afraid. And even when this is not the case, and when they really are bold, their boldness, so far as it resembles that of the Apostles, does not lie in any thing corporeal or external. Experience shows that those are not always the most searching and effective strokes at the conscience or the heart which are given with most violence of manner; and that saving truth is just as frequently conveyed by the still small voice as by the fire or the earthquake. The boldness, then, of which we speak, is not mere boldness of delivery.

Nor is it boldness of expression or of language, the investing of familiar thoughts in new and startling forms of speech. Besides the confusion of mind, and the perversion of the truth arising from this practice, it is utterly devoid of any tendency to vanquish or conciliate the adversaries of the gospel, and without the slightest countenance or warrant in the doctrine or example of the apostolic ministry. In the pregnant dialect of

Scripture, the idea never falls short of the expression, though it often very far transcends it.

But even boldness or audacity of *thought* is not the characteristic boldness of the apostolic preaching. It may be mistaken for it by ambitious minds, infected with a morbid craving for originality. But the two things are none the less distinct and independent of each other. The same man, it is true, may be bold in both ways; but the two ways are not, therefore, to be merged in one. The utmost boldness of original speculation is compatible with utter want of it in the promulgation of revealed truth.

Again, this apostolic boldness must not be confounded with a strong disposition to exaggerate particular features in the system of divine truth, or at least to render them unduly prominent in reference and proportion to the rest. This may be done with an express design to shock the prepossessions of the hearer; but although this may be bold in a popular and worldly sense, it is not the apostolic freedom of speech. The first preachers of the gospel did not show their boldness by insisting on the terrors of the law, to the exclusion of the offers of the gospel; or on future torments, to the exclusion of the joys of heaven; or on those mysterious doctrines which are most repugnant to the natural man, without the qualifying adjuncts which are commonly joined to them in the word of God. Life and death, blessing and cursing, hell and heaven, reprobation and salvation, go together in the Bible, and are seldom to be found there far apart. The man who thinks it better to divorce them, and to hold up the dark side of the picture by itself, may glory in his boldness; but if so, he only boasts that he is bolder than the apostles, and wiser than the Holy Spirit. Such boldness, need we say, is infinitely far removed from the boldness of the apostolic preaching.

Lastly, this apostolic boldness did not show itself in what is now familiarly called personality. There is indeed a sense in which all effective preaching must be personal; that is to say, it must not spend itself in barren generalities or abstract speculations, but be so framed as to bring the truth to bear, with force, upon the individual mind and conscience. This is essential to the effective preaching of the gospel; but this is some-

thing very different from personality. The difference is this, that in the one case the statement of truth, or the description of character, being derived from inspiration, suits the case of every individual to whom it was intended to apply, and commends itself at once to every man's conscience in the sight of God. In the other case, the uninspired preacher sets out from an individual subject and endeavours to describe it in accordance with the teachings of God's word.

To this method there are two objections. In the first place, it provokes a just resentment, which effectually seals the heart, and even steels the conscience, against the truth which is really presented. Nothing more certainly protects men from the power of the truth than a sense of injustice or of any other moral defect in the mode of its administration. And in the case supposed, there is a ground for this resistance, in the actual departure of the preacher from the scriptural method of procedure, and his presumptuous exchange of what is there laid down by an infallible authority, for the precarious dictates of his own uninspired reason or experience. Forgetting that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," we are too apt to endeavour to improve upon the truth as he has given it, in the hope of making it more searching and effective.

But in the next place, this hope is a vain one. All experience teaches that the consciences of men are most effectually reached, not by descriptions made expressly for them, in the exercise of a mere human wisdom, but by the presentation of more general truths, revealed in Scripture, and applied to the individual subject by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a fact easily established, that while pulpit personalities most commonly rebound without effect, or any but a bad one, from the objects at which they were specifically aimed, the strongest impressions ever made upon the conscience are produced without a special or immediate reference to the person thus affected. A striking illustration of this statement is afforded by the fact, familiar to the readers of religious biography, that men have frequently supposed themselves to be the objects of a personal attack, when the person charged with making it was not so much as aware of their presence, or perhaps of their existence, or when the imaginary libel was delivered, without any change

whatever, as prepared many months or even years before the date of the supposed assault. This is a general fact of great importance, both to the preachers and the hearers of the gospel, that the strongest effect upon the conscience is produced, not by invidious personalities, but by the clear and faithful exhibition of the truth as suited to whole classes or to men in general. Those who pique themselves upon the kind of "boldness" here condemned, are usually influenced by vanity, and sometimes by an envious malignity, sufficiently obvious to others, even when it seems unsuspected by themselves. A sense of honour, no less than of duty, ought to put the preacher, and especially the free-and-easy preacher, on his guard against this spurious *παρρησία*, which derives a character of spiteful meanness from the very security with which it can be practised; because what might justly be admired as manly in the fair fight of the legal or political arena, may be dastardly when shot forth as a Parthian if not a poisoned arrow from the pulpit, without any risk of chastisement or even refutation. By nothing, perhaps, more than by this, has the ministry been lowered in the eyes of an intelligent and high-minded laity; and in reference to nothing is the pulpit-prater more in need of the caustic but most wholesome charge, "Let no man despise thee." Titus ii. 15. The apostolic boldness or freedom of speech is as far removed from this invidious personality, as from violence of manner, singularity of language, paradoxical audacity of thought, or a morbid disposition to exaggerate, distort, or mutilate the system of divine truth, with a view to mere effect.

The fulness and minuteness of this negative statement will make it less important to enlarge upon the positive side of the same picture. We shall aim not so much at exactness of detail as at a clear presentation of a few leading elements which enter into the scriptural idea of apostolic boldness or freedom of speech.

The first is that of perspicuity or clearness, as opposed to all obscurity, arising either from excessive refinement and abstruseness of thought, or from rhetorical abuse of language. Lively figures are indeed more natural than abstract formulas, and where they serve to deepen or define the intellectual

impression of the truth, contribute mightily to its effect. But where they only tend to darken or to dazzle, they are inconsistent with the apostolic openness and freedom of speech. This is frequently contrasted, in the Gospels, and particularly that of John, with speaking in enigmas or in parables. When our Lord, before setting out upon his last visit to Jerusalem, began to speak of his own sufferings in literal and explicit terms, the inspired historian says, "he spake that saying *openly*," (Mark viii. 32,)—*παρρησια*—the same word used so often to characterize the preaching of the first Apostles. After he reached the holy city, and was walking in Solomon's porch, "the Jews came round about him and said, 'how long dost thou make us to doubt (or hold us in suspense)? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,'" (John x. 24,)—*παρρησια*—that is, without enigmatical or figurative forms of speech. Again, when Jesus spoke of Lazarus as sleeping, his disciples thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep; wherefore, in order to correct their error, "Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead," (John xi. 14,)—*plainly*—*παρρησια*—that is, simply and explicitly, in so many words. In another place, these two modes of speaking are expressly contrasted. "These things have I spoken unto you in parables; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in parables, but shall tell you *plainly* of the Father" (John xvi. 25;)—still *παρρησια*. . . . . "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now thou speakest *plainly*, and speakest no parable (or proverb)." John xvi. 28, 29. Simplicity and clearness, as opposed to enigmatical obscurity, may therefore be presented as the first essential element of apostolic freedom, in reference to which Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Great is my boldness of speech (*παρρησια*) toward you"—2 Cor. vii. 11; and again, still more explicitly, "seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech (*παρρησια*), and not as Moses which put a veil over his face," &c. 2 Cor. iii. 12. In this he well deserves our imitation. The reasons which induced our Lord himself so often to wrap up the truth in partially disclosing it, can furnish no rule or example for his uninspired followers, whose business is to make known, not to hide. This

remarkable difference between our ministry and that of Christ, was strongly set forth by himself when he said to his disciples, "what I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops." Matt. x. 27. Where this plainness of speech is wanting, neither novelty of thought, nor eccentricity of language, nor audacity of manner can supply the want of apostolic liberty and boldness.

But this essential quality stands opposed, not only to rhetorical defects, but to a moral obliquity. Plainness of speech implies also freedom from disguise, duplicity, or cowardly suppression of the truth. As on the one hand it is said of Christ's last visit to Jerusalem, "no man spake openly of him, (*παῖξινσία*), for fear of the Jews," John vii. 13; so on the other hand, some of the people said, "is not this he, whom they seek to kill? but lo, he speaketh boldly, (*παῖξινσία*)," John vii. 25, 26, *i. e.* without fear of those to whom the truth must give offence. In like manner Paul calls the elders of Ephesus to witness his fidelity: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Acts xx. 26, 27. What this was, we learn from his words in a previous part of the same discourse—"and how I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have showed you and have taught you, publicly and from house to house, testifying, both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts xx. 20, 21. The boldness of the apostolic preaching was not more opposed to the distorted exhibition of some truths in undue prominence, than it was to the suppression of these same truths, or of any other, because humbling to the pride of the human understanding or the human heart.

But in addition to this fair and equal or proportionate disclosure of the whole truth as a system, there is still another kind or rather another exercise of candour and impartiality required. This is the faithful exhibition of the truth, not as a matter of mere speculation, but of practical concern and obligation, so that the appeal shall be made not only to the understanding and the sense of truth, but to the conscience and the sense of right. Where this is not done, but the truth is

left in frigid contact with the memory and judgment, or in warm but inert contact with the fancy or the sensibilities, there may be strength and clearness, there may be brilliancy and beauty; but there is not apostolical *παῖσις*, plainness, boldness, or freedom of speech.

Again, it is essential to this character, that men should be constrained to view the truth, as connected not only with their obligations but their destiny—not only with their present standing in the sight of God, but with their everlasting state as suspended on his justice or his mercy. Here the pride of man revolts, and the insidious desire of pleasing men begs hard for some suppression or some softening of the odious truth. And this prayer is seconded by plausible appeals to the extravagant and dangerous excess to which some go in their description of the future state, and in their constant threatenings of hell-fire and damnation. But such errors can in no wise change the truth of God, or the duty of those who are commissioned to proclaim it. We are bound to practise the same wise reserve that is characteristic of the Scriptures in relation to this awful subject. We have no right to indulge a meretricious fancy, or to feed a morbid curiosity with wild imaginations of realities so fearful and unutterable, that the word of God affords only passing and imperfect glimpses of them. But if in avoiding this extreme, we rush into the other of allowing men to think that the effects of sin are limited to this life, and that the awful retributions of eternity have no reality, at least in reference to them, however loud, or paradoxical, or personal our statement of the truth may be, we do not, after all, speak the word of God with boldness.

The errors which we have described may spring from various sources; from defective views of truth in those who undertake to teach it—from their shallow experience in religion—from a false view of the end to be attained by preaching—or an error of judgment as to the best means of attaining it. But the same effects may also spring from outward causes, and of these we shall name one, both on account of its extensive influence, and as a means of bringing this whole subject home to ourselves, and to our readers, as a matter not of mere official and professional, but personal and universal interest.

The cause in question is "respect of persons," or judicial partiality—a disposition to discriminate, in the application of the truth, between those who are perfectly alike in character and standing before God. Having already shut out an invidious personality, as altogether foreign from the boldness of the apostolic preaching, let us now guard against an opposite evil, by declaring that this boldness comprehends, as one of its essential elements, a willingness to speak the clearly revealed truth of God, with all its pungency and strength, before the face, and to the conscience of the wisest, richest, and most powerful, as well as of the proudest, most fastidious, and most sensitive of men, without the least desire to offend them, but without the slightest fear of their displeasure, if offence be unavoidable. The possibility of such an issue, after all, with its causes and effects, may be profitably pondered, in connection with the searching question put by Paul to the Galatians: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Gal. iv. 16.

The different grammatical constructions, which have been put, or may be put, upon this sentence, are without importance as to its essential meaning, or in reference to the use which we propose to make of it. If we choose to give it an affirmative form ("so that"—or "so then"—"I am become your enemy,") it is only a more pointed expression of the same idea now conveyed by the interrogation. So, too, it matters little whether we retain the word "because," or substitute a more exact translation of the participle—"speaking the truth to you." Even the latter represents the enmity supposed as having been provoked at the time, or in the act of telling them the truth, and therefore, by a natural implication, as the effect of his having done so. The same is true of the different senses which may be attached to the phrase "become your enemy." Whether "enemy" be passively explained as denoting the "object of your hatred," or taken in its proper active sense, but so that the whole phrase shall mean "regarded by you as an enemy"—the general import of the sentence will remain the same. It still implies the possibility of men's becoming enemies in consequence of the telling of the truth. How far this was really the case with those to whom the Apostle is here writing, we shall not stop to

inquire; nor what specific declaration of the truth is here referred to, as the cause of this effect, whether real or supposed. It is sufficient for our purpose to regard Paul as asserting, or at least assuming, that the speaking of the truth may be a cause or an occasion of hostility; a fact which, even in its vaguest and most general form, may claim our serious attention and suggest important subjects of inquiry.

The very statement of this proposition must remind us of our Saviour's solemn and repeated declarations, that he came not to bring peace, but a sword, to kindle flames of discord among men, to be the author of division in communities and families, to set parents against their children, and children against their parents, so that a man's enemies should be those of his own household. These and other like expressions partake largely of a quality, by which our Lord's instructions were distinguished, and which cannot perhaps be better described than by the use of the word *paradox*, as properly denoting that which shocks men's prepossessions, and appears, at first sight, to do violence to essential and acknowledged principles. The paradoxes, by which some now seek to gain distinction, are the affectations of vanity or weakness, the abuses of a method, which is not without its uses in the hands of an infallible instructor, as appears from the example of our Lord himself, who often roused attention and excited to inquiry, by adopting that form of expression least adapted in itself to conciliate the prejudices of his hearers. And that this was done with a deliberate design, is clear from the unquestionable fact, that when his discourses of this kind were cavilled at, instead of explaining away the cause of the dissatisfaction, he enhanced it by the use of terms still stronger. A remarkable example of this usage is afforded by the long discourse recorded in the sixth of John, in which the figurative exhibition of himself as food to the believer is repeated and enforced, after every expression of surprise and incredulity, until it reaches what his hearers reckoned a revolting and incredible extreme, so that even some who had been known as his disciples, pronounced it "a hard saying," and walked no more with him. This is only one marked instance of a practice which may be described as characteristic of our Saviour's method of instruction, and to

which we must be careful to pay due regard, when we attempt to understand or to explain his teachings. This is highly important, for example, in the cases just referred to, where he speaks of his appearance in the world as tending to confusion and discord among men. The attention is at first aroused and fixed by what appears to be a paradoxical description of this discord and confusion, as the legitimate designed effect of his appearance and the preaching of his gospel.

This, however, is so utterly at variance with his own explicit declarations elsewhere, as well as with the character and spirit of his doctrines, that it needs no long continued or profound reflection to convince us, that in all such cases he is speaking of himself and his religion, only as the innocent occasion of the evils mentioned, which are genuine fruits of human weakness and corruption. But this is very far from rendering the fact alleged less interesting and appalling. It is no alleviation of these feelings to be told, that although the gospel is a message of peace, and the Holy Spirit the Author of peace; and Christ himself the Prince of Peace, the proclamation of the truth and the extension of his kingdom has never failed to be accompanied by painful separations among men, as an incidental but invariable consequence, just as the pageantry of earthly triumphs is always overshadowed, to the eyes and hearts of some, by the sacrifice of life which purchased it. This indirect effect of Christ's appearance and the spread of his religion might be less affecting, if confined to those who never feel its power or assume its obligations. If it merely threw the elements of discord which abound in our apostate world into more antagonistic combinations, and excited into fury the revengeful passions which were only awaiting an occasion to display themselves, this could hardly have been thought more strange than the analogous effect produced upon the devils and the lost, by every fresh manifestation of God's power, holiness, and wisdom. If this is to constitute, throughout eternity, a principal ingredient in the cup of torment, it is natural enough that it should enter into the anticipated punishment of those who obstinately reject salvation, and continue true to the inspired description of our fallen race, as "hateful and hating one another." Titus iii. 3. But the case assumes a very different aspect, when we find the

advent of the Saviour and the spread of his religion tending, not merely to exasperate the mutual hostilities of wicked men, but also to excite their enmity against his people. Even this, however, might be borne with patience, as a part of that necessary "persecution" to be suffered by "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus," and of that predicted "tribulation," through which "we must enter into the kingdom of God." But what shall we say to the continued operation of the same cause within that kingdom, to the fearful effect wrought upon the latent corruption, even of believers, not by the hatred of the world or the devil, but by the very truth in which is grounded their hope of salvation. In many cases where this effect becomes apparent, it is no doubt, wholly or in part, a proof of insincerity, impenitence, and unbelief; while in others it may only prove the remaining power of corruption over hearts in which it has already lost its paramount dominion. But between these cases it must often be difficult, if not impossible, for any human eye or judgment to discriminate. Nor is it necessary even to attempt it, for our present purpose. It will be sufficient to confine our view to those who "profess and call themselves Christians," and to the causes of hostility existing among these, without regard to any foreign opposition, or to any provocatives even of mutual hostility, except such as are connected with the speaking of the truth, either directly or by way of contrast.

For it may not be without its use to glance, in passing, at the enmities created or fomented by the violation or suppression, as well as by the utterance of the truth. In private life, even among those who bear the Christian name, hostility is frequently engendered by the neglect or violation of the truth, either with or without a direct malignant purpose. The grossest form of this offence is that of deliberate invention. Its more familiar forms are those of exaggeration or false colouring, the suppression of what must be known in order to a fair appreciation of the case, or the suggestion of what does not necessarily belong to it. Such practices may seem, indeed, entirely incompatible with all religious feeling or sound principle, and scarcely reconcilable with even the profession of Christianity. But let

it be remembered that one of the most prevalent and operative errors in the church, from its foundation to the present day, is the error of those who imagine that the essence of religion lies in the hatred of evil, as an exercise altogether separate and distinct from the love and practice of good. Or rather such imagine that the one includes the other, and that there can be nothing better in itself, or in its tendencies, than bitter hostility to sin; as shown in its detection, condemnation, and punishment. The indulgence of this feeling, when controlled by human weakness and remaining corruption, can scarcely fail to seek its objects rather in our neighbours than ourselves, until at last we may be brought, by an insensible transition, to regard our own defects as in some sense made good by detecting and exposing the defects of others. Where religion takes this form, and breathes this spirit, it is perfectly conceivable that truth may be violated, more or less directly, without any conscious purpose to do wrong; nay, with the highest estimation of our own zeal for God and holy hatred of whatever does not wear our uniform or talk our dialect. For nothing is more common in such cases than to make resemblance to ourselves the authoritative standard of comparison and rule of judgment, by which others, without mercy, are to stand or fall. This inexorable law may even comprehend in its exactions constitutional peculiarities, or matters of mere accidental origin, endeared to us by habit, but no more a rule of right to others, than their singularities of temperament and of usage are to us. The existence of this inquisitorial and vindictive piety among our Saviour's first disciples, is apparent from the frequency and point of his attacks upon it, all of which may be summed up in that pregnant exhortation, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Matt. vii. 1. Its continued existence ever since may be read in the history of inquisitors and persecutors, and might be read in that of make-bates and busy-bodies, even in the church, and even among those who are true believers. For strong indeed must be the faith of those who, under this false view of their relation both to God and to their fellow-men, can steadfastly resist the perpetual temptation to discolour, to exaggerate, and even to invent, in the exercise of their self-constituted office as inquisitors and judges of their fellow-Christians. But even where this

is successfully avoided, the same evil may result from the gratuitous, untimely, or ungenerous disclosure of the truth. The worst slander morally, because the most subtle and refined in its malignity, is that which insinuates its virus, not through the vehicle of fiction, but of fact.

It may be hard to draw the line between the commission of this sin and the performance of a sacred duty; but this only makes it the more necessary that it should be drawn, and aggravates the guilt of confounding things essentially diverse, in imitation of him who can transform himself into an angel of light. But the subject to which we have invited attention is not the effect of telling the truth *of* men but of telling it *to* them, and that not merely in reference to the trivial concerns of life, or to personal character and conduct, but in reference to the most momentous interests of the church and of eternity. He who is, in this sense, called to speak the truth, may thereby become the enemy of those to whom he speaks it; that is to say, he may be so regarded and treated by them, for that very reason. This applies not only to the preaching of the gospel, to the public and official exposition of the truth, but to every form of its defence or declaration, whether from the chair, the pulpit, or the press, in public debate or in private conversation. Whoever, in any of these ways, becomes a champion of the truth or an instrument of its diffusion, will sooner or later have occasion and a right to say to some of those whom he addresses: "Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

This effect may sometimes be ascribed to the neglect and inadvertence of the teacher, to his practical forgetfulness of Christ's command to his apostles, when originally sent forth: "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Matt. x. 16. The faith of some men in the truth and efficacy of the gospel is so great as to preclude, in their view, the necessity of all discretion. They cannot see, or do not estimate aright, the danger of misapprehension, even among those who are professed believers of the truth. They cast it forth, without regard to the precautionary measures which may be required to secure its full effect. Their fault is not that they desire or seek to give offence, but that they do not rather seek to avoid

it; that they do not even recognize the duty of avoiding or the danger of exciting it. They simply let the thing alone, and pursue a course which would be wise and right if they were called to deal with sinless beings, or with Christians in the highest state of spiritual discipline and cultivation. No wonder that to such the effects of their instructions or their course on others, even those whom they believe to be sincere, is often the occasion of a painful surprise, under the influence of which they are ready to demand of some who once appeared to be their best friends—"Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

In other cases, the effect is owing, not to sheer neglect or inadvertence, but to want of skill in doing that which is seen to be expedient, or acknowledged to be binding. The necessity of so presenting truth as to avoid offence is fully recognized; but in attempting to apply the principle, it fails through ignorance of human nature, or a want of tact in the selection and employment of the necessary means of influencing men's convictions and their conduct, or the want of just discernment as to the effect of the means used. There is an honest purpose to speak the truth, and so to speak it as to win men to the love of it; nay, more, there is a faithful and laborious application of the means which seem best suited to promote this end; and yet instead of seeing it successfully accomplished, the expounder and defender of the truth is often mortified by seeing his instructions have precisely the effect which he was most solicitous to shun, and finds himself involuntarily saying to those whom he not only wished but expected to conciliate, "Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

In addition to these cases there is still another, where the same result is reached, but in a somewhat different way. There is no want either of a disposition to conciliate, or of intellectual capacity and skill to do it; but the end is defeated by infirmity of temper. He who speaks the truth may really desire that others should not only believe it, but receive it, in the love of it; and yet, because he is himself morose or captious, domineering or irascible, he cannot do the good he would. He cannot speak the truth without imparting to it something of his own dogmatical or acrimonious spirit. In this case there is less room

for surprise or disappointment, since the man must be conscious of his failure even while engaged in the attempt. The same strength of mind, soundness of judgment, and extent of knowledge, that enable him to estimate the value of the end proposed, and would enable him to reach it but for the impediments in question, must disclose to him at every step how far he comes short of his purpose. He feels that he is not accomplishing even what he wishes, much less what he owes to God, to truth, and to his fellow-men. He feels, too, that he cannot plead the want of knowledge or the want of skill, in palliation of his failure; for at times he has these at command, and when obstructed by no moral causes, they perform their office. When they fail to do so, he needs no one to inform him that the failure springs from his infirmities of temper, from an unavoidable admixture of the truth, of what belongs to God with a foreign element, with something pertaining to himself, and partaking of his own corruption. Of all this he may be conscious even while engaged in the attempt, and cannot therefore be so easily surprised by the event as those who fail through inadvertence or through want of skill; for these may anticipate success until the moment that decides it to be hopeless. But though less surprised, he may be equally concerned, and even more so, since the very points in which he is supposed to be superior, imply a clearer apprehension and a higher estimate of that which like the others he has failed to accomplish. It is often, therefore, with a bitter sense of disappointment, rendered the more painful by a consciousness of culpable deficiency, that such are forced at last to say, in thought if not in word, to those whom they have laboured to convince and to instruct: "Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

But different as these three cases are from one another in the proximate occasion of the failure which is common to them all, they are alike in this, that they all suppose the failure to conciliate or make the truth acceptable to be in opposition to the teacher's wishes and in disappointment of his hopes. In this respect they differ wholly from a fourth case which we now proceed to mention, and in which the same regret arises, not from inadvertence, want of skill, or infirmity of temper, but from a deliberate attempt to produce it under the guidance of

fanatical delusion. That is to say, some men become the enemies of those to whom they speak the truth, because they purposely excite their enmity, or so present the truth that it cannot but excite it. This they do upon the principle that the truth must be odious to the unregenerate, and that it cannot therefore be supposed to have made its way into the mind at all, unless its presence there is proved by the production of this natural effect. They also justify their course by the example of our Lord himself, in that peculiar method of instruction which has been already mentioned, as apparently intended to shock the prejudices of his hearers. The truth and falsehood blended in this reasoning may be brought to light by simply stating, that the course in question would be altogether wise and right, if he who pursues it were the head, and not an humble member of the Church. The case of one who founds a new religion, and of one who is appointed to maintain it, or extend it, must be altogether different. When those who claim to follow Christ's example as to this point, can assert their possession of his power to distinguish between good and evil, they may safely follow his example rather than his positive command, but not till then. In the meantime, all attempts to excite the opposition of the human heart, as a desirable object in itself, or an essential means to some ulterior end, must continue to be branded as fanatical presumption.

Such are some of the ways in which men may, through their own deficiency or fault, become the enemies of those to whom they really and faithfully declare the truth. In reference to all these ways, the course of wisdom and of duty seems to be a plain one. In the first place, we have evidently no right to combine with the truth of God which we proclaim to others, any invention of our own, which tends to make it odious, even to the unregenerate. The same considerations, which evince that all additions to the truth must be corruptions, here apply with tenfold force, because the end we proposed is in itself a bad one. If we may not do evil that *good* may come, how much less that *evil* may! If he is accursed who adds any thing whatever to the word of God, what must await the man who adds to it what only tends to make it odious, and to close the hearts of men against it?

In the next place, we have no right to exaggerate, or magnify, or make unduly prominent those features in the system of divine truth which experience has shown to be peculiarly offensive to the unrenewed heart. The reason is not, because human tastes are to be gratified at all costs and all hazards, but because God knows best how far it is desirable to shock the prepossessions of the minds to be enlightened, and has adjusted the proportions of the system of revealed truth accordingly, and any attempt to improve upon this method, as revealed in Scripture, is of course both impious and absurd. That relative position and degree of prominence which he has himself given to the several doctrines of religion, may be safely assumed to be the best, not only in itself, or in relation to the system of divine truth as a whole, but also as a means to the attainment of the highest practical or moral ends. And he who, on a contrary hypothesis, attempts to reconstruct or rearrange the system, so as to effect more good than the divine plan could produce, will learn hereafter, to his cost, if not to his undoing, that in this, as in all other cases where comparison is possible, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." 1 Cor. i. 25.

In the third place, we have no right so to regulate the circumstances or the manner of presenting truth as to offend the prejudices, even of the wicked, much less of our brethren, any further than the nature of the truth itself may render unavoidable. This is important, as a distinct caution, because both the others may be scrupulously followed, and the same effect result from the neglect of this. A man may think he has discharged his conscience by avoiding all unauthorized additions to the truth, and all exaggeration or distortion of its parts; but if he so contrive the time, the place, the tone; the spirit of his teachings, as to call forth enmity which would not have been called forth by the exhibition of the very same truth in a different manner or in other circumstances, he has no right to appeal to the purity or orthodoxy of his doctrines, in justification of his method of propounding them, and still less right to say, as an expression of surprise or indignation at the indelicacy of those whom he has laboured to enlighten: "Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

In all the cases which have now been mentioned, it is not the truth that ought to bear the blame of men's refusing to receive it. It cannot even be imputed wholly to the native opposition of the human heart, or the remaining power of corruption in believers; because others, subject to these same disabilities, have received the same truth gladly from the lips of other messengers, and it may have been a part of our vocation to facilitate the introduction of the truth into the minds of those who heard us, by the gentleness and wisdom of its presentation, instead of counteracting our own teachings by the heedlessness, unskilfulness, moroseness, or fanatical wildness of the mode in which they are dispensed. When all these errors have been faithfully avoided to the best of our ability, and the wisdom of our teaching bears a due proportion to the weight and truth of what we teach; if men still turn a deaf ear to our calls, and requite our efforts to instruct them, not with mere indifference or unbelief, but with malignant opposition, we may then, with some consistency and show of reason, take up Paul's pathetic yet severe expostulation: "Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

It may indeed seem that when all these precautions are observed, and all these errors shunned, there can be no occasion to adopt the apostolic form of speech. Surely they who *thus* tell the truth cannot incur enmity by telling it. But all experience shows that this is a precipitate conclusion. When all the avoidable occasions of offence have been avoided, there will still be something in the truth itself, or in the feelings of some towards it, which will make them look upon its champions and expounders as their enemies. That this should be the case with those who openly reject the truth might be expected, or at least observed without surprise in many cases. But the wonder is, that this effect is witnessed even among those who bear the name of Christ, and who profess attachment to the very doctrine, into which the offensive truth enters as an element, by virtue of a logical necessity. Even such may regard as enemies to themselves, and to the church or to the race of which they are self-constituted representatives, those who consistently maintain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, against their own distortions, mutilations, and corrupt additions.

The same fanatical delusion that betrays men into voluntary efforts to excite men's enmity against the truth which they dispense themselves, prepares them to assume, with very little provocation, an inimical relation to the unpalatable truth dispensed by others, whether positively or in opposition to their own false doctrines. In reference to such, and indeed to all who count the tellers of the truth as enemies, not on account of any error or defect in the mode of presentation, but because they hate the truth itself—if not in general, yet in some specific case—we need some further rule for our direction.

Such a rule obviously is, that we have no right to suppress the truth, or to withhold the counsel of God from those who ought to be acquainted with it. As to the time, place, and manner of declaring it, we are not only authorized, but bound, as we have seen, to exercise a sound discretion. But if in spite of all precaution, as to circumstances, manner, tone, and temper, men continue to revolt from what we cannot but regard as truth, and as such consider ourselves bound to utter, this residuary opposition must not be considered as affording any pretext or authority for holding back the truth, because it is unpalatable, either to the irreligious world, or to any party, sect, or faction in the church itself. And lastly, the same principle must be applied to any modification or disguise of truth, intended to conciliate opposition, whether practical or speculative, theological or moral, the undissembled spite of the philosopher, or the sanctimonious malice of the pharisee. Not a jot, not a tittle of divine truth must be sacrificed, in order to avoid the disagreeable necessity of saying, either to philosophers or pharisees: "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

How then is the teller of the truth to deal with this residuary enmity, which no precautions can evade, no gentleness conciliate? The answer is a brief one. *Let him bear it!* In one view of the matter, we might safely say, *defy it!* But this form of expression would be liable to misconstruction, and might be maliciously or ignorantly construed into something inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel. Another reason for preferring the first answer is, that bearing is, in such a case, the best mode of defiance, nay the only one effectual. All

violence recoils upon itself; but he who joins the faithful, wise, and temperate assertion of the truth on moral and religious subjects, not excepting such as are the theme of angry and fanatical discussion, even on these "speaking the truth in love," with a meek but brave endurance of the filth with which he is bespattered from "the dark places of the earth," will more effectually shame and silence his assailants, than by any rancour of recrimination. *The most forbearing are by no means the least dreaded by ungenerous opponents.* To such a triumph the steadfast adherent of the truth may, in all humility aspire, if he can but "bear and forbear" when the cause of truth requires. And by the grace of God he can. By that grace, he can do far more. He can not only bear for himself, but, what is sometimes infinitely harder, he can bear for others. Even where it would be little to endure reproach in his own person, he may find it the severest trial of his faith and resolution, to behold the vision of the prophet realized—"the child behaving himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable" (Isaiah iii. 5)—the hoary head dragged in the mire by the hand of upstart petulance—the most venerable forms and faces wet with the spittle of calumnious self-righteousness. At such sights, even he who is callous in his own behalf may feel his blood begin to boil, and the more he gazes at the object, the more difficult it seems to check the rising of unhallowed anger, until God is pleased to do what seemed impossible, by lifting, as it were, a veil beyond the object present to the senses, and disclosing one till then invisible—the form of one arraigned before a judgment-seat, scourged, buffeted, and spit upon; denounced, reviled, abhorred, despised as a traitor, an impostor, a false teacher, a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. In that sight the other is forgotten, while those lips, inexorably sealed to his accusers, seem to say, in soothing accents, to the partners of his shame:—"the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Matt. ix. 24, 25.