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ARTICLE I.

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century.
Volume Fifth. By J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D. D.

We have found the new volume of Dr. Merle to be even a more readable one than either of the preceding volumes. It contains some preliminary notices of the early British Church,—its “oriento-apostolical formation,”—its “national-papistical and royal-papistical corruption,”—the lingering of truth on the island of Iona,—the teaching of St. Patrick, of Columba, of Oswald, and of Aidan,—and the recognized equality of the office of Bishop and Presbyter, in those earlier and purer times, which will doubtless be new and refreshing to many of the thousands of readers which the volume will attract. This volume only comes down to the death of Cardinal Wolsey, in the year 1530. It will be apt to suggest to many of its readers, who have also been readers of the former volumes of the series, a comparison between the Reformation in England, and the Reformation in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Scotland. How was it that the results in England differed from the results in all other countries? We make use of the occasion of the appearance of this volume, when the subject will be in many minds, to present the solution of this question, as it appears to us, without confining our view to the small

when God presents us with one, it lives and breathes and smiles: it combines, like the Word of whom it testifies, the attractions of humanity with the awe-compelling majesty of God.

ARTICLE V.

ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY OF ALUMNI OF UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, VA.*

Permit me, dear Brethren, to offer you my hearty congratulations upon this re-union of our Society, and the enjoyment of another year of mercies and of happy labours. A member of any of the successive classes which have issued hence, in an assemblage gathered from all those classes, meets some to whom he is a stranger in person, though a child of the same *Alma Mater*. But there is no distance between our aims and our hearts. While we meet our own fellow-students with peculiar delight, we meet all as fellow-labourers. I need not suggest how much the enjoyment of each of us would be enhanced, could we gather around us all who studied and prayed with us here; for, doubtless, the busy thought of each one has already surrounded him with the familiar band. Probably, such a meeting would be as impossible for all of us, as it would be for me. Some of those whom I here learned to love, I can see at no anniversary, till we meet the general Assembly and Church of the first-born in Jerusalem, the mother of us all. What stronger evidence of the noble and holy influence of these annual gatherings, than that fact, of which, I doubt not, every heart has already been conscious; that they do not fail to carry our thoughts upward to that glorious re-union? Let it be our aim to make this momentary resting point in our warfare, as like as possible to that eternal rest.

But we are reminded that we have not yet entered into that rest. To-morrow we return again to the struggle.

* Delivered at the Annual Meeting, June 1853.

And, therefore, the appropriate mode of observing this season, will be to make it such as God has made those Sabbaths, which are his type of the eternal rest; a season for sharpening our weapons, and girding our loins afresh for the contest.

I have thought anxiously in what way I could best contribute to this purpose. And it has seemed that, perhaps, as appropriate a topic as any whose discussion the times demand, would be *simplicity and directness of pulpit style*. Many share with me the conviction, that the renewed discussion of this topic is needful. Unless I am greatly deceived, a comparison of much that is now heard from educated clergymen with the pure standards of classic English, will prove that the vice is far gone.—Our ears have become viciously accustomed to a degree of wordiness, complexity, and ornament, which would have been called bombast, by Addison, Swift or Pope. Even Dr. Samuel Johnson, the proverb of his day for his love of the *os rotundum*, seems simple and natural beside us. But let us compare ourselves with the great ancient masters of style, as to the length and structure of sentences, the employment of useless epithet, and the mode of using figurative ornament. Let us compare ourselves, for example, with Horace, as distinguished for the sparkling beauty of his language, as for the hatefulness of his morals, and we shall comprehend something of the excess of our fault.

The profusion of reading matter among us, and the careless speed with which men write and read, must naturally tend to the same vice. Perhaps, after all the rules for style that may be laid down, the real source of transparency and beauty is the possession of the sterling ore of thought and feeling. He who has the most numerous, just, and weighty ideas, in most natural order, and whose own soul is most fully possessed and penetrated with them, usually has the finest style. It is only when the sentiment so fills and fires the soul of the speaker, that he looks wholly at the thought, and not at all at the words in which it clothes itself, that the perfection of eloquence is approached. Hence, as the art of writing much with small materials is extended, wordiness and complexity must increase. The hurried and

shallow author continually strives to outdo his rivals, and his own previous exploits, by tricking out his productions more and more with these ornaments, which are so much cheaper than great or sparkling thoughts.

History shows also, that an artificial and luxurious mode of living surely affects the literary taste of a nation. The simplicity of thought is banished. The manliness of soul, which proceeds from labour, struggles with difficulty, and intercourse with nature becomes rare. The mawkish mind of such a people, demands the same tawdry profusion and frippery in literature, which it loves in its bodily enjoyments. We know how the manly eloquence of republican Rome faded away, as the people were corrupted by luxury, into the feeble bombast of the Byzantine literature. If the rapid increase of luxury can give any ground for expecting a similar result now, that ground surely exists among us.

Hence, the impression has grown strong with me, that we need to be recalled to what would seem, to our exaggerated tastes, a severe simplicity. When one so young as myself, and so little entitled by his own skill to teach on this subject, offers his humble contribution towards this reform, he should do it with great modesty. And you will please receive what I shall offer, not as dogmatical, but suggestive. I do not dictate anything to you, but only offer, as subjects of your more thorough and wise reflection, those ideas by which I have attempted the repression of my own faults.

Permit me also to say, at the outset, that when I advocate a severe simplicity, I am waging no war against Rhetoric. I am not presuming to impugn that argument, by which I know I should be met, that since it is our duty to do our utmost for the salvation of souls, that Christian minister is faulty, who does not avail himself of every innocent aid or ornament, by which the truth can be commended. I only question, whether anything which violates a natural simplicity and directness of speech is ornament, and has any efficacy in commending truth. Let rhetoric be truly defined, as "the art of persuasion,"—the art of so addressing the human understanding, conscience and affections, as best to enforce our views, and I heartily shake hands with it. I will

say, let us have as much true rhetoric as possible. My objection to all meretricious aid is, that it is not ornament, but deformity.

Indeed, throughout this discussion, it is on the principles of a sound rhetoric itself, that I would ground all the considerations to enforce simplicity. The truest art is that which is most natural. The finest statue is that on which the strokes of the chisel are unseen; and the marble is most like native flesh. The finest painting is that in which the beholder is not for a moment reminded of the cunning union of lights and shades, but seems to see the living and breathing man, standing forth from the canvas. And so, considering our profession of public speaking as an art merely, he is most perfect in the art, in whom the hearer perceives no art, but seems to hear nature pouring forth her voice in her own spontaneous simplicity. I have seen somewhere an incident which well illustrates this proposition. A simple countryman was taken by his friends in London, to see Garrick act in Hamlet. He seemed to be intensely interested in the performance. But at his return, when his friends examined the effect of the scene upon his mind, they were astonished to find him perfectly silent concerning the great tragedian. He seemed to have made no impression on him, while he was loud in his praise of all the subordinate actors. When they asked directly, what he thought of Hamlet, they learned the explanation. "Oh!" he answered, "as to the man whose father had been so basely murdered, it was nothing strange that he should feel and act as he did. No son could help it. But as to those other people, who were only making believe, their imitations were wonderful." So true to nature, and so unaffected had been Garrick's manner, that the countryman had utterly overlooked the fact that Garrick was acting! But this was he whom the cultivated taste of Britain decided to be the prince of theatrical eloquence. One of the most just objections therefore, which can be urged against artificial ornament is, that it is a sin against art. Much that is now heard from the pulpit with admiration, would be as explicitly condemned by rhetoric, by Hamlet's instructions to the players, or by Horace's Epistle to the Pisos, as by Christian feeling and principle.

But let us introduce the more direct discussion, by reminding you of the topics and aims of our public addresses. Our subject is the most august that can fill and fire the human soul—the perfect holiness of the Divine law, redemption from eternal ruin, and the winning of eternal happiness. Our aim is to persuade men to embrace this redemption for the salvation of their souls. It is an established rule, that the grandest subjects should be treated with most sparing ornament. The greatness of the topic commends itself sufficiently without such aids. Labouring attempts to give it adventitious force, seem to be a confession that the subject does not itself possess weight enough to command the heart. Ornaments which might be graceful and appropriate when connected with a lighter topic, would seem meretricious, when applied to a grand one. We do not surround the majestic temple with the same tracery, which would be in place upon the graceful pavilion.

Again, we observe that man's nature is such that all powerful operations of the soul are simple and one.—Complexity of the affections enfeebles all. Multiplicity of figure distracts the attention, and by distracting, weakens. It is the single, mighty, rushing wind, which raises the billows of the great deep: while a variety of cross-breezes only roughen its surface with trifling ripples. A moment's thought will show us, that a multiplication of ornaments or epithets must disappoint its own object. The minds of men cannot attend effectually to a large number of impressions in rapid succession.—Although thought is rapid, yet a certain lapse of time is necessary, to allow the mind to receive, and become possessed with the idea presented to it. Hence, he who listens to the verbose speaker, is compelled to allow many of the words which fall upon his ear, to pass through his mind without impression. The mind of the listener cannot fully weigh and feel each phrase addressed to it in so rapid and complex a stream; and, consequently, it suffers them all to pass through it lightly. It cannot do otherwise, though there was, at the outset, a sincere effort of attention. Every writer or speaker, therefore, who indulges himself in heaping up useless epithets, or in the multiplication of adjectives not dis-

tinct and strongly descriptive, or in any other luxuriance of language, should remember that he is himself compelling his reader or hearer, to practice the habit of listless attention. And, then, there is an end of all vigorous impression. The speaker can no longer hope to infuse a strong sentiment into the soul of his audience. Hence the maxim so strongly enforced by Campbell, that "the fewer the words are, provided neither perspicuity nor propriety be violated, the expression is always the more vivid." To admit into our discourse any word, phrase, or figure, which has not its essential use as a vehicle of our idea, is a sacrifice of effect. The effort which the mind of the hearer is called to make towards these unessential phrases, in the acts of sensation and perception, is just so much taken from the force with which it receives the main idea. The highest species of eloquence is that which is suggestive, where clear and vigorous phrases not only convey to the hearer's mind distinct ideas, but point it to tracts of light which lead it along to higher conceptions of its own. But such phrases must be brief. Our language should, therefore, be pruned, till every word is an essential part of the clearly defined idea, which the sentence holds up, like a strong picture, to the mind of the hearer. If we wish to strike a blow which shall be felt, we will not take up a bough laden with foliage. We will use a naked club.

I suspect that the correctness of these views is confessed, even by the consciousness of persons of the most perverted taste. However they may laud their literary idol, they cannot conceal it from themselves, that their listlessness grows more and more dreary under the most brilliant sparklings of his rhetorical fire-works; that the more his sparks are multiplied, the more feebly they strike. There is, indeed, a large class of listeners, whose minds are so utterly shallow, and who are so thoroughly unconscious of the real nature and aims of eloquence, that they are pleased with the mere lingual and grammatical dexterity with which surprising strings of fine words are rolled forth. Their idea of fine speaking seems to be, that it is a sort of vocal legerdemain,—like that of the juggler, who can twirl a plate on the end of a rattan as no one else can,—an art in which the perfection of

skill consists in connecting the largest quantity of a certain style of words, with the greatest fluency, so that they shall have the semblance of meaning and melody. With minds so childish, of course he who can carry this verbiage to the greatest length, will be the greatest orator. But none here, surely, are capable of so base an ambition, as to desire this low and ignorant applause.

There are still stronger considerations, drawn from the nature of the preacher's subject, and of his purpose, in addressing his fellow men. All must admit that appropriateness is the very first element of good taste, in every art. It is needless to argue this. Now, if we consider what the preacher of the gospel professes to be, and what is the topic on which he addresses his fellow men, we shall feel how utterly inappropriate every artificial ornament is. Every minister professes to be actuated by the love of souls, and by a strong sense of their danger without the gospel. He professes to be a man who is speaking, not to amuse, nor to gain money, nor to display his talent, but to do good. Even if he is so lost to the feelings proper to his high office, as to harbour these ignoble motives, as a mere matter of taste he must conceal them; for their display in connexion with a subject so awful, cannot but be loathsome to all hearers. His motive, then, must be benevolent sympathy, and love to the Saviour. And his subject combines all that should awe the mind into sincerity, all that should unseal the fountains of tenderness, and all that should fire the soul with warm and ennobling emotions. His themes are the attributes of an infinite and jealous God, and his perfect law, that fatal lapse which "brought death into the world and all our woe," the immortal soul, with its destiny of endless bliss or pain, the tomb, the resurrection trump, the righteous Judge, the glories of Heaven, and the gloom of hell, the gospel's cheering sound, the tears of Gethsemane, the blood of Calvary, and the sweet and awful breathings of the Holy Ghost. His mission is to lay hold of his fellow men, as they hang over the pit, and draw them from perdition by the love of the Redeemer. How unspeakably inappropriate is every artifice here, which glances at self-laudation! And, how utterly unnatural is all complexity of figure! If ever man should

earnestly feel, he who presents these themes, from the motives which the preacher professes, should be instinct with earnestness. But who is there, that does not know that the eloquence of native emotion is always simple? When the wail of the bereaved mother rises from the bedside of her dying child, ah! there is no art there!— We have heard it, my brethren; and we know that our art cannot equal the power of its simplicity. When the story of his wrongs bursts from the heart of the indignant patriot, and he consecrates himself upon the altar of his country, it is in simple words. When the almost despairing soul raises to the Saviour the cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” he speaks unaffectedly. So should the preacher speak. Let me urge it, then, with all the emphasis which language can convey, that the very first dictates of good taste and propriety, for him who speaks of the Gospel, are unaffectedness and directness of style. To turn away the mind’s eye, for one moment, from these overpowering realities, towards the mere accessories of rhetoric, is the most heinous sin against rhetoric. It is as though the man who desired to rouse his sleeping neighbour from a burning house, should bethink himself of the melody of his tones, while he cries fire. It is as though the champion, fighting for his hearth-stone and his house-hold, should waste his thoughts on the grace of his attitudes, and the beauty of his limbs.

Do I advocate, then, a directness and simplicity so bald as to exclude every figure? By no means. A certain class of figures is the very language of nature. Such we should use in their proper place. They are those figures which, every one sees, are used to set forth the subject and not the speaker. They are those figures which the mind spontaneously seizes when enlarged and strengthened by the earnestness of its emotions, and welds, by the heat of its action, into the very substance of its topic. Such ornaments are distinguished at a glance from the epithets, tropes and similes which the artificial mind gathers up, with an eye turned all the time upon the meed of praise it is to receive. Within the strict bounds of this directness and simplicity, there is ample scope for the exercise of genius and imagina-

tion. Indeed, it is when a vigorous logic, and a truly original imagination are stimulated by the most intense heat of emotion, that the most absolute simplicity of language, and at the same time, the grandest heights of eloquence are reached.

There is no stronger conviction with me, than that the preacher should never attempt to rescue his discourse from baldness or tameness, by those supposed rhetorical ornaments which are collected with deliberate design.—The moment an ornament is felt to be introduced “with malice prepense,” it becomes a deformity. It is always a futile and degrading resort. There is a rule of architecture propounded for some styles by the greatest masters, which speakers might profitably adopt. It is, that while every essential member of the structure shall be so proportioned as to be an ornament, no ornament shall be admitted which is not also an element of construction: no column which has nothing to support,—no bracket which has nothing to strengthen. Next to the possession of native genius, the proper sources of literary ornament are in the warmth of an honest, earnest emotion, co-operating with a clear and logical comprehension of the thing discussed. Unless our ornaments come spontaneously from this, their proper mint, they will inevitably be counterfeit. When, therefore, the preacher, after he has done all in the preparation of his subject, which clear definition, just arrangement, and sound logic can effect, feels that his work is still too tame to take hold on the people, it is worse than useless for him to seek, in cold blood, for ornament. He should seek feeling. He needs to sacrifice, not at the shrine of Calliope, but at the altar of the Holy Ghost.

Let us remember that all men have a native perception of consistency and appropriateness. And all men instinctively judge whether the tones, countenance and language of the person speaking to them, are spontaneous or artificial. The cultivated do not surpass the ignorant and the young, in the strength of these perceptions; for they are the direct result of intuitive capacities, which are often perverted by the habits of a faulty cultivation. Not even does dramatic eloquence offer any exception to the statement that all artificial speaking is inevitably

felt, by all hearers, to be artificial, and therefore naught. For I am sure, that there never has been, and never will be a good actor, whether on the stage, at the bar, or in the forum, who did not become eloquent, by so palpably conceiving the emotions proper to the part he was acting, as to merge his personality, for the time, in the part, and to become sincerely inspired with its feelings. Let us, then, remember, that the prompt and spontaneous perception of every hearer decides absolutely, whether our manner seems to him artificial or hearty; and if it decides us to be artificial, it has forthwith, with equal certainty, the feeling of our inconsistency. But what is worse than this, the chief motive which the world will naturally impute to us, for this insincerity of manner, is the desire of self-display. We may plead that if there is an error of manner, it has arisen from a well-meaning mistake, in our disinterested effort to impress the truth. The world will not be so charitable as to credit us. It will say that the natural language of disinterestedness is simplicity, and that the natural language of self-display is artifice; and it will persist in imputing the latter as our motive.

It is very important to observe here, also, that if, from our perverted training, an artificial manner has become second nature to us, this will not prevent the mischief. To the instinctive perceptions of the hearer, it still seems artificial; and he naturally concludes it is purposely such. It is not sufficient, therefore, for the speaker to say, that it is "his manner,"—that to him it is not artificial; that in speaking thus, he is giving free course to his dispositions. He should inquire how it became his manner; whether through the promptings of an ingenuous, humble, and self-devoting love for souls, or through the itchings of conceit, literary vanity, and servile imitation, in the days of his inexperience.

But where the native perceptions of the hearers receive from our manner this impression of artifice, what reason is so dull as not to draw the inference, that the preacher, if he really believed what he proclaimed of the sinner's risk, and if he really felt that generous compassion which is his ostensible motive, could have neither time nor heart to bestow one thought on self-display? When men

listen to one who preaches of their dread ruin and its sacred remedy, with deliberate and intentional artifice, they are driven to one of two alternatives. They must conclude, "either this man does not believe his own words, when he tells me of my hanging over eternal fires, and of Heaven stooping to my rescue; or, if he does believe them, he must have almost the heart of a fiend, to be capable of vanity and selfish artifice, in the presence of truths so sacred and dire." And, indeed, my Brethren, what must be the callous selfishness of that man, who, believing in the reality of the gospel themes, can desecrate them to the tricking forth of his own rhetorical fame!

Grecian story tells us that when the painter Parrhasius was engaged upon a great picture, representing Prometheus, as he lay chained to the crags of mount Caucasus, and eternally consumed by a ravenous vulture, he bought an old man from among the Olynthian captives, sold by Philip of Macedon, and tortured him to death beside his easel; in order that he might transfer to his canvas the traits of the last struggle, in their native reality. Does not the heart grow sick at the devilish ambition of this Pagan, as he steels his soul against the cry of agony, and coolly wrings out the life of a helpless and harmless fellow man, to win fame for himself, by throwing into his master-piece the lineaments of a living death!

But, is this instance strong enough to express the cruel and impious vanity of that man, who can deliberately traffic in the terrors of eternity, and the glories of God, merely to deck his own oratory? He brings the everlasting woes of his brother man, and gathers the gloom and the groans of their perdition, and coolly dips his pencil in the blackness of their despair, to make of them materials for self-display! Nay, he even dares to lay his hand upon the awful glories of the Cross, and those sacred pangs of Calvary, at which redeemed sinners should only shudder and weep, and weaves them into a garland for his own vanity. Now, the impenitent man can hardly believe that the minister, who shows in all his social life, the sympathies and virtues of an amiable character, is thus savagely and profanely selfish. And, therefore, the alternative which he must embrace is, to believe, or,

if he does not consciously believe, to do what is practically more ruinous, to feel half consciously, that the minister is not in earnest; that his preaching is not really prompted by a settled belief of the sinner's ruin and the Redeemer's love; but by the desire to further his own reputation and earn his bread. For, is not this parade of self-display just in character with such a purpose? And when the lover of sin and godlessness thus feels that the appointed ambassador of eternity does not himself believe, of course he will allow himself to doubt.—Let this, then, be the great and final objection to all artifice of manner in the pulpit, that it most surely sows broadcast the seeds of skepticism.

And, in truth, dear Brethren, does not our proneness to such manner,—does not the fact that we can be capable of it, proceed from the weakness of our faith? The true cure of the vice is to feel the powers of the world to come. The reason that Davies, Tennent and Whitefield, Paul and Peter, and above all, He that spoke as never man spake, displayed such directness and power, was that their souls saw heaven and hell with the vision of faith. The more we can feel the love of Christ, and the nearer we can draw to the cross, the judgment, and the eternal world, the more we shall feel that all else than native simplicity and directness is out of place, and that all else is unnecessary.

ARTICLE VI.

THE PROVINCE OF REASON, ESPECIALLY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

1 *Thess. V*: 21.—1 *Peter, III*: 15.—*Matthew, VI*: 23.
Luke, XI: 34.—*Rom. I*: 22.

In the first of these passages of Scripture, we are taught not to receive *implicitly* as the true doctrines of God, what may be inculcated even by the ministers of God. We are to listen to them with reverence, but not with