

self up as a critic, but beg to take exception to that "bit" of a letter from C. H. Hall, D.D., on page 124, November MONTHLY.

I am a lover and student of the old masters. I have read over a hundred sermons of South, and many of Hall's, as well as others. They are storehouses of wisdom. From them may be gathered things new and old. Where is the modern pulpit orator, except Beecher, Spurgeon, and a few others, as fertile in pointed illustration (which is an element in good preaching) as Robert South? Where do we find a purer diction and more precise statement than in Hall? And, should our younger ministers read and study the "giants" of old more, the pulpit would be much the gainer. I would not be understood by this to ignore the study of modern preachers, but urge a more careful perusal of the ancient.

If they are "exhaustive essays," should they not so much the more be studied? It does a man good to take the dimensions of the "old giants," and feel of their sinews. Dr. Hall himself is an illustration of the thing he slightly condemns. Had he not studied the "ponderous sermons" of South, Barrow and Hall, would he be rector of "Holy Trinity"? Beecher tells us that he was, in his younger days, a great lover and ardent student of South, and the thunder of the old divine of the seventeenth century has not died wholly in Plymouth pulpit even to-day. Broadus tells us, in his paper on Spurgeon, that he "has been a great reader of the Puritan divines." Some of our young preachers, who were a few years since firmly anchored in God's Word, are now anchored in a "quagmire." They sailed over the sea of "old divines," never so much as casting out the anchor to see if they might not find something to which it would catch.

Perhaps I say these things too forcibly. It is the result of actual observation. So I say, study the modern, read the new; but do not neglect the old.

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### Things a Preacher Should Be Sure Of in the Pulpit.

—That he heartily believes and personally experiences the blessed truths he commends to others.

—That he speaks as "a dying man to dying men," and that each sermon and prayer may be the last they will hear from his lips.

—That he stands there to preach "Christ and Him crucified" as the only and all-sufficient Savior of lost men, and not for any personal end or selfish interest.

—That he comes before his people each time on the most solemn and urgent errand that God ever intrusted to a creature, and in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace.

—That if a single sinner go forth from God's sanctuary impenitent, rejecting Christ, his blood will be upon his own head—the preacher having faithfully warned him, and delivered his own soul.

—That he is there fresh from communion with God in His Word and in prayer, fully equipped for his work, and conscious in his inmost soul that without the Holy Spirit to aid him, his message will be in vain.

—That he makes himself heard by every one in the auditory, if a distinct enunciation, life and animation in the delivery, can accomplish it. Failure in this first requisite is common and usually inexcusable.

—That the particular message he is then and there to deliver is a message out of God's living Word, and has been thoroughly studied by him, and that he both comprehends its purport, and his whole being is permeated by and is in full sympathy with it.

—That he makes himself understood, by great simplicity and plainness of speech; by using no words or phrases not familiar to or readily understood by "the common people," and by familiar illustrations, after Christ's own example, and the example of Whitefield, Spurgeon, Beecher, Talmage, and other eminent preachers. "To the poor the Gospel is preached."

### What a Preacher Should Not Be Sure Of in the Pulpit.

—Of his own infallibility. Modesty becomes him. He is no pope. He may well distrust his own wisdom and opinions. He is sure of his ground only when he is firmly planted on the rock of eternal truth. His words are entitled to full credence only when they are backed by a "Thus saith the Lord."

—That his view of any truth, or any mooted question in the minds of his hearers, is the only consistent and proper view, and all who question it are foolish or schismatics. There are many silly, "opinionated," oracular people in the world, and they are not all in the pews. Truth is many-sided. Humility, caution, deference, are still virtues, though they are becoming rather obsolete in this wise age.

—That he can truly interpret the future. He may read the past, and know the present, but God only knows what "to-morrow" may bring forth. Prophecy, "the signs of the times," have made fools of many would-be wise men, and wrecks of many a reputation. Better stick to history, actual realization, truths plainly revealed, and let "God be His own interpreter" of the future.

—That there is not an anxious, inquiring sinner, or a burdened heart, sitting there before him, longing for light and comfort, and the peace of God. Taking God at His word, and going the rounds of his parish in search of such, has rebuked and gladdened many a despondent pastor. Tears and thanks have oft been his welcome.