

THE  
CHRISTIAN BANNER.

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"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."  
'This is love, that we walk after his commandments.'

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LETTERS TO THE PREACHERS, No. 3.

DEAR BRETHREN :—It is said in Acts 14. 1, that the apostles *so* spake that many believed. The most fastidious stickler for an old favorite style of preaching must admit that much depends upon the manner of preaching the gospel—upon the "so"—if we would gain access to the hearts and heads of mankind. Every christian preacher is as much bound to study the best *method* of preaching as he is to preach at all, or, to say the least, the obligation in both cases is of the same kind. Mistaken notions of what constitutes "plain" preaching has led some to adopt a harsh, untutored, abrupt and often insulting style, especially when addressing those of a different religious belief. They seem to think that when Paul came "not with excellency of speech," that he came with an utter disregard of all the courtesies due from one man to another, ignoring all the policies by which the human mind may be most successfully reached, and reproaching with immeasurable abuse the sectarian Jews for not surrendering at his discretion—that because most of the apostles were plain, uneducated, common men, they were of course gruff, severe, taunting and unmannerly.

The preaching of a few I think seem to indicate the above mistakes. Others of more judgment and piety, while condemning this course, are seriously in doubt as to what is the best policy. Smooth preaching it appears, often has no effect—the unbarded arrow falls inefficient to the ground. The soft, respectful and polite style fails to break the spirit of slumber. Twenty years ago the bold, abrupt, daring manner drew attention and added many to the church; and yet the servant of the Lord is commanded to be "*gentle* toward all men,