

may hold; dead men are soon much alike. If we will have living men in the pulpit, we must tolerate diversities. Many kinds of preaching might be mentioned, all of which are good, perhaps equally good. "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that." An affectation of eccentricity is always bad; but where the manner is the natural outcome of the character, and is accompanied by real excellences, we should bear with some peculiarities which may not be pleasing in themselves. Almost any manner that is natural to the man is better than tameness and insipidity. The dignity of the pulpit is, no doubt, to be preserved; but what is more undignified than to sleep in public, especially in a church, but above all in the pulpit? Colloquial freedom and uncouthness may be forgiven when there is an impressive presentation of God's truth. The important thing is to convert the people and build them up in the ways of holiness. All kinds of preaching not conducive to this end are of course radically bad; and foremost among them we must put that dignified and solemn dulness which from time immemorial has been the dry-rot of the pulpit. A flippant sensationalism is an opposite error of which we are now in danger; but even that will not prove an unmixed evil if it should at last render obsolete the old proverbs, "As dull as a preacher," "As prosy as a sermon."

Akin to this freedom and variety, so essential to power, is a certain Saxon homeliness of diction, and the use of illustrations drawn from common life, or at least from real life. These do not altogether harmonize with the traditionary ideal of a sermon, and are especially displeasing to some persons; but the Great Preacher used them freely, and secured this high praise, that "the common people heard Him gladly." It is not easy, indeed, to draw the line between homeliness and offensive coarseness, nor will what is effective with one congregation be always suitable for another; but he who has the tact to keep just within the safe limit will find his power augmented by the nearest allowable approach to the speech of the common people. Boys who have nothing to do but amuse themselves may mount on stilts, but a man with a journey to make will ply his busy feet along the beaten road. Let him who has nothing to say use grandiloquence, but the preacher of the Gospel, burdened with his burning message from heaven, should pour it out with an impassioned direct-