

out in the tone of a Boanages, "My Lord of Salisbury, don't snore so loud or you'll wake the King."

It is doubtless because they induce or permit a certain degree of somnolence that orthodox evangelical sermons of the dullest mediocrity often seem to give so much satisfaction, especially in the old country. They make no claim on the attention, and the audience settle themselves comfortably during this part of the service, to think either of something else or of nothing at all. The latter condition seems, in spite of what metaphysicians say, to be very easily attainable by some people. I have asked persons who praised a sermon what was the text and what was the leading thoughts, when they could give no account of either. It was evident that they enjoyed the discourse like the sound of music in the distance; it had a calming, lulling influence in general without demanding attention to particulars. An old lady was once asked why she always went to sleep during the sermon. She replied that she could trust her minister any where. She knew he would preach a good orthodox discourse, he thus did his duty; and she did hers by simply being present.

A more natural idea prevails, I believe, among us, and if the people, as a whole, do not give attention it is regarded as the speaker's fault. Preaching instead of losing ground, therefore, as we hear asserted, seems to have regained much of its primitive power. Some years ago I copied the following striking sentences from the *London Spectator*: "The sermon is the embodiment of everything that is most wearisome and tedious. The sermon is the most highly appreciated of human productions. No two things can be more contradictory or more true." Which of these two the sermon is, depends (as it seems to you) on whether it embodies the modern idea of interest, or follows the olden pattern of respectable dullness.

The first *in* of preaching then is Interest. And how is this quality to be promoted? First by clearness. Rev. Joseph Cook has familiarized us in his lectures with the German aphorism—*Das War ist das Klar*—The true is the clear, and clearness is not only essential to truth, but to the pleasantness of a discourse. I have seen persons gaze with rapture on a stream which was so perfectly clear that you could discern the bottom, but I never knew any one contemplate with delight a muddy current. I had the opportunity several times before I left Philadelphia, of hearing a D.D., rector of a wealthy and much frequented church. His language was very fine, but neither while he was speaking nor afterwards, could I for the life of me tell what he was driving at. As however he seemed to do good, the fault may have been in me rather than in him. His discourses gave me the impression that he sat down to his desk and wrote sentence after sentence, as the words were suggested without having any plan thought out beforehand by which he might arrange his material.

There should be a definite aim and a clear idea of the method by which he is to reach his aim, in the mind of every preacher, before he begins his discourse. But I do not hold that the divisions should be made prominent. Skeletons are not pleasing or interesting except to the anatomist, and often it is with sermons as it is with persons; when the skeleton apparent there is not much beside, the whole affair is but skin and bone. Mr. Spurgeon lately mentioned the lamentable fate of an ostrich in the Zoological Gardens, which after swallowing knives, scissors and other odd things, with impunity, was killed at last by purloining from a passing student's pocket a

sermon with three divisions and fourteen subdivisions.

A second element of Interest is an illustration. Illustrations are of the most various kinds, and in obtaining them the whole realm of nature may be laid under contribution. The most popular forcible preachers have followed our Lord himself in making large use of this element, as Beecher of Brooklyn, Dr. Guthrie of Scotland, Archdeacon Farrar of England. Canon Liddon indeed is sparing of this quality, but he makes up for it by his crystal clearness and immense force. Of the use of anecdote and illustration in speaking, Dr. Guthrie very truly says, by awaking and fortifying the imagination the truth finds its way more readily to the heart and makes a deeper impression in the memory. The story, like a float, keeps it from sinking, like a sail fastens it in the wind, like the feathers of an arrow makes it strike, and like the barb makes it stick. The use of anecdote has been brought somewhat into disrepute by the carelessness of some preachers, whether their anecdotes were to the point or not. They are lugged in by sheer force, and it is often evident that in the mind of the speaker the sermon is regarded rather as a vehicle for the anecdotes, than the anecdotes as wings for the sermon. But how attentive are even the oldest and wisest people to an anecdote which is really illustrative. There are also most striking and beautiful illustrations to be drawn from the sciences, chemistry, astronomy, medicine &c. Indeed no sort of true knowledge can come amiss to the preacher. He should know something of everything.

And in order to this he must put up at another *in* and Industry. For my own part I find that the chief need of reading and study now is for the purpose of finding illustrations, and thus giving novelty and interest to what would otherwise be old and tiresome. The subjects of our discourse are not and cannot be new, but they can be presented in new lights. It was said by a certain hearer that if he attended the church fifty-two hours in the year and heard a certain preacher he would obtain at least fifty-two new ideas.

Dr. Wilson, sometime bishop of Calcutta, was a pattern of industry in the preparation of his sermons. He wrote: "If you had seen me in my back study with the folios covering the large committee table, Augustine, Chrysostom, Poole, Owen, Calvin, Scott, Doddridge, Whitby, Hooker, Melancthon, Beza, Henry, Burdett, Bromfield, Quesnel, Beveridge, Simeon, you would have been reminded of old times. In fact I never took more pains in all my life, and what is the consequence? What I have always found, that in proportion to the pains you take is the blessing which follows, because the sermons are better worth attending to."

I do not wish to depreciate the influence of prayer and of the Holy Spirit, but I believe that God helps those who help themselves. And here I am tempted to repeat an anecdote told by Mr. Rainsford at a convention. It only recently came under my own notice, so it may possibly be new to some present. At a meeting of the clergy an old German minister spoke of the heaviness with which the burden of responsibility in preparation for speaking to immortal men often rested upon him. At the close a young minister came to him and said, "You need not feel any such burden. Trust to the Holy Spirit and he will speak to you and tell you what to speak." "Yes," replied the old man, he would speak to me and this is what he would say, 'O Fritz, Fritz, thou hast been lazy, and I will not help thee.'"

Prof. Phelps of Andover, gives the advice to cultivate a "homiletic habit of mind." Then

everything almost that enters the mind furnishes food for that great hydra, which is ever demanding satisfaction from the preacher, viz., the sermon. The late Thomas Binney, Congregational minister of London, when asked the best method of pulpit study and delivery said, "Gather your material all the week and set fire to it on Sunday in the pulpit."

(To be continued).

BOOKS RECEIVED.

THE HOLY LAND AND THE BIBLE. By the Rev. Dr. Geikie. John B. Alden, New York; and DOMINION CHURCHMAN Office, Toronto. Of all the numerous works on the Holy Land, from Roberts' magnificent book downwards, the best in all senses is that of Dr. Geikie, and of all the editions the cheapest is that issued by Mr. Alden. Works on Palestine have been hitherto only for the few. Mr. Alden with his usual shrewdness saw that a subject so identified with the faith of millions should be so placed before the people as to enable all who have any interest in the Bible to possess a book by which its teachings are illustrated, its history confirmed, all its local allusions explained, and the Word of God made a refreshing and interesting study apart from its spiritual aspect. The work contains a splendid map of Palestine, &c., the best yet issued, also 212 pictorial illustrations of fascinating attraction to Bible readers. Allusions to public and domestic life found so frequently in Scripture, most of them so utterly different to Western habits as to be almost unintelligible, are made in Dr. Geikie's work so plain by his graphic descriptions and drawings that a child will at once have the narrative of the Bible made as comprehensible as a story about his own neighbors. The East is styled "The unchangeable," for customs now are kept up that were observed by the Patriarchs, hence the marvellous illustrative power of modern life in the Holy Land as an exponent of Scripture. With a work so cheap as this it would be unfair to give many quotations. There is one passage that groups a number of allusions very pithily and shows the scope of Dr. Geikie's book. The author in a few lines tells us that lentils, used for Jacob's mess of pottage, are still a favourite dish, that a pillow of stone is still common, as its hardness is not felt through the turban, that women still are drawers of water at eventide, that camels still enter the owner's house, that the smelling of his son's clothes by Isaac is in accordance with modern ways in the East. Heavy stones are still placed over wells, the daughters of flock masters still tend the flocks. That Laban kissed Jacob effusively is yet an incident of daily life. To give a female slave to a daughter is usual now, so that Zilpah being given to Leah after marriage is another proof of the unchanging sameness of Eastern life in all ages. There is not a single reference to any domestic incident either in the Old or New Testaments or the Apocrypha which is not illustrated, nor any obscure allusion upon which light is not thrown by Dr. Geikie. The completeness of his work may be judged by there being 88 references to the wells of the Bible, 16 to various trees, and 67 to Olive trees. The same profusion of treatment goes through the book, so that every Biblical name of man, animal, river, hill, race, place, or article, is explained or described or pictured. Prophecies are shown to be fulfilled, and the historic events of Scripture confirmed and explained by secular literature. There are over 500 direct references to the text of the Bible, the meaning or the force of most of which passages are opened up or amplified by Dr. Geikie's graphic pen. We cannot look for copper plate engravings in a book the whole cost of which is not the price of a good lithograph, but those in "The Holy Land and the Bible" are marvels seeing so many are given for so trifling a price. The print is clear, and there is a fine index, not of subjects only but Scriptural references. It is an invaluable companion to the Bible and should be as widely circulated. For pulpit work, or Sunday School teaching, or family reading, "The Holy Land and the Bible" is, indeed, a treasure.