

A FEW PLAIN WORDS ON PLAIN PREACHING.

The writer of the following communication has been known to us for considerably more than a quarter of a century. We believe him to be as devoted a member and office-bearer, as we have within the bounds of the church. The following reasons induce us to publish his communication. (1) We believe him to be actuated by no personal motive, but by a sincere desire to do good : (2) It is right that ministers should sometimes hear the honest thoughts and feelings of hearers : (3) The views of the writer, although somewhat quaintly and perhaps strongly expressed, are worthy of being pondered by all who are called upon to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.—EDITOR.

To the Editor of the Record :

I wish to address a word to the Presbyterian ministers of Canada, not to the whole of them, *far from it*, but to all those that make a boast of their multiplicity of words and speak so fast, that it is hard to understand what they say. This is very unprofitable, and unedifying to poor souls on our way to eternity, and not knowing how soon we must enter. Sometimes they speak too high, and sometimes too low, so that we can make nothing of it, but only hear the sound, and you know if the pipe or harp make no distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped. You know, also, that the people's preparation for war depends upon the sound of the trumpet, for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle ? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken ? for ye shall speak unto the air. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Paul had rather speak five words in order to teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue, 1st Cor. xiv. 6. You cannot blame us for not dancing to your piping, when we do not understand the tune, Mat. xi. 7.

I wish I may be wrong in what I am going to say, but I fear that some do not care whether we understand or not. If they will repeat a certain amount of words, and that fluently, they will be called *smart* preachers. In that case they have their reward, only from some, *but not* from the most serious, for they are not nourished, nor edified ; and very few brought to light through such teaching. Some too, I am sorry to say, do only run on the surface of the ground, instead of digging deep, which is more likely to meet the precious metal, and that is what this poor and sleepy generation stand in need of, to find the hungry, and rouse up the careless and unconverted, to fall in love with the prize, the one thing needful.

I compare some preachers to a foolish, ignorant, and careless hunter, that goes out to the field with his gun, and begins to fire away, and fire away without ceasing, paying no regard to the result, or whether he killed any game or not, but making a boast of the number of shots he has discharged in such a short time. Whereas, on the other hand, the good and wise hunter considers his ammunition too precious to lavish it away so carelessly as that. He looks anxiously after every shot for the fruit of his labour, and is sorry for every shot that will be fired in vain. Then the consequence will be, he will come home, bringing his weighty spoils with him, when the other is coming home empty. May the Lord grant to fit and prepare labourers for his own harvest, and enable them, as He did his apostles of old, to preach the gospel to every creature. We have great need of such men in our day, to let us know our lost and miserable state by nature and practice,—how we lost the image and favour of God in the first Adam, and then direct and recommend us to