

not the reality. And I have seen, under powerful and eloquent sermons, stout-hearted sinners start from their seats. I have seen them weep; I have seen them pray. Well, they are alive? Not they—they are only the dead acting the living. Let the electric current which flows from the preacher subside, and they will fall back to their former torpor and indifference. What are many of the so-called revivals? Electric shocks disturbing the dead, but leaving them dead notwithstanding. Eloquence can move men, but it cannot save them. Eloquence, like the wind, moves the sea from without, but that which saves must move it from its own depths. Eloquence works *upon* the soul; that which saves must work *in* the soul. I do not disparage elegance of language and eloquence of style; but this I know, that Paul's preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. It is generally acknowledged that the New Testament diction is not in the best classic style. The fact is—there is danger in polishing too much. One can easily compose a sermon that the most critical hearer cannot detect a flaw in it. Ask him an hour afterwards what he remembers of it, and he finds it difficult to tell you. The sermon was so refined that it shot right *through* the soul instead of entering *into* it and remaining there. Polish is commendable up to a certain point—to the point of showing, instead of concealing, the material underneath. I never like to see an article of furniture so highly polished that I cannot say of what timber it is made—whether it is pine or oak, ash or mahogany.