

don't preach very long; we think about half an hour long enough." Said B, "Half an hour! why it takes me that long to get started." "Then," said A, "if it takes you that long you had better begin now, and you will be in good speaking order when we get there." There is a moral in this for a lengthy speaker. Get up steam before you begin to speak, and so save much of the time of your hearers. We have no more right to take their time in "getting under way" than we have to finish dressing ourselves in the presence of the guests whom we have invited to take tea with us.

Several times, in sympathy with a large congregation, we have suffered by being obliged to sit and listen to a sermon protracted to an unreasonable and wearisome length; and the preacher, after concluding and finding that he had very unwisely occupied too much time, dispensed with singing, and dismissed the congregation. This last error was worse than the first. The public praise of God by the whole congregation should not be abridged, for the reason that a minister cannot keep within proper limits. Some ministers have no ear for music, and without care such will, under temptation, undervalue the ordinance of praise.

Do not try to explain to your people doctrines that are confessedly inexplicable. Much mischief is done by inadequate explanations of great mysteries. Better exclaim with the Apostle,—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!”

“It is not well to spend time in attempting to establish what reasonable men freely admit. It is far better to urge home upon the conscience the great lessons which freely admitted doctrines teach. The true idea of preaching is to make the doctrines of the Bible practical to the heart and the life. Reason avails but little in the work of making men better when it does not use its strong weapons in such a way as to touch human experience and effect a change in the very motives and characters.”

A shrewd writer remarks that many preachers study their sermons without studying the people to whom they are to preach them. Hence their preaching, though good in the main, is not suited to the tastes and wants of their hearers.—They either speak of things at a distance or else in such a way that the people do not feel themselves much interested in what is delivered. Their words do not come home, do not reach the heart and conscience, but fall, like pointless arrows, short of the mark.

Dr. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, President of Princetown College, New Jersey was considered one of the greatest preachers of his time. He was remarkable for his dignity of manners, almost to bombast. He had a brother, Dr. John B. Smith, of Union College, New York. The brothers met in New York, and the Princetown doctor preached. On the way to their lodgings, Dr. Samuel said to Dr. John, “Brother Jack, what do you think of my sermon?” John replied, “It was all very well, perhaps; but I could not help thinking you preached, instead of Jesus Christ and him crucified, Sam Smith and him dignified.”

It is stated that Dr. MACFARLANE, late of Glasgow, and now of London, spoke in company in a rather self-congratulating way of what he had done in the way of improving his congregation by missionary and other operations, an old lady who had been listening with much apparent interest to the enthusiastic diatribe of the glowing divine, during a short lull in the conversation very quietly interposed the remark, “Eh, Doctor, but ye hae muckle need to pray for humility.”

JOHN WESLEY, addressing preachers, says, You have nothing to do but save your souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work. Observe it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many lost sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.