

be twisted or tortured to make it the basis of such teaching. It seems trifling with Scripture to force such an unnatural and utterly foreign meaning upon it. By the "woman clothed with the sun," we are to understand the Church of God, glorious, and of divine origin; with the moon under her feet to signify the conquest which the Church should gain over sublunary things; and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, or, as others think, to the twelve apostles, by whom the Gospel was first preached. Had "Clergyman" read the context and got a vision of the "great red dragon," which "stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born," he must have seen the absurdity of his interpretation. Such amazing conceits and blunders weaken the power of the preacher, and serve to inspire his hearers with distrust as to the soundness of his exegesis of God's Word.

**MAKE POINTS.**—Without them a sermon is fatally defective. A few weeks ago a candidate stood in a Brooklyn pulpit. He was young, he was pious, and said many good things, but failed utterly. One of his hearers remarked of him, "He talked and talked and talked, but said nothing!" That is, he made no points. The query of any common mind, "What is he driving at?" could not be answered.

Lecturing before a class of colored students of theology, the late Dr. Colver remarked, in that vivid, quaint style for which he was distinguished, "Always have at least two mule's ears to every sermon." The white visitors saw no sense in the simile, but the students seemed to enjoy it greatly, for they were wont to ride mules with neither saddle nor bridle, and were compelled to lay firm hold of the two ears in order to keep their seat.

Ordinary congregations fail to keep up with a speaker who has no points. Not only the ignorant but the cultured crave them. The best thinkers think orderly, and the best talkers talk orderly. A pointless discourse is but an

arrow shot at random into the air; but a definite, personal, pointed argument or appeal is like the nail that Jael drove clear and sheer through the brain of the Canaanitist captain, Sisera. God's word is sharp and pointed, and the diction and style of the pulpit should be modeled after the same pattern.

Brooklyn.

E. P. T.

**TOO MUCH ILLUSTRATION.**—There are too many preachers who feel called upon to illustrate truths which are already as clear as sunlight. They light their little match of illustration to guide their hearers to some glorious Gospel truth that has been glowing on the world ever since they were born, and before. I see so much here, there, and everywhere, about the necessity of "illustrating," that I really feel like a heretic in making the above observation; but I don't propose to sign my name, so I shall be brave and finish. Old Diogenes never found the man he sought. Of course not; he didn't deserve to find him. If he had thrown away that lantern of his, and depended upon the clear sunlight streaming all about him, he might have been more successful. Lights are for the dark, and illustrations are for obscurity. Let us have them flash upon every dark corner, and in every night of ignorance; but if you are so fond of them you must use them at high noon, go down into the cellar where they are needed, and frighten away the rats.

G. J. P.

**NEW TEXTS FOR OLD SERMONS.**—A great many good sermons have been preached from "The Anchor of the Soul" (Heb. vi: 19). The best plans are those which show how human hope is an anchor, how these anchors fail, and how the Christian hope is sure and steadfast, and therefore gains "a strong consolation." Of course the "anchor" is clung to all through such a sermon. The worst use of this text which we have noticed is that of a very good preacher, who refers neither to the anchor nor to hope in his discourse. He apparently had a sermon on "Be ye steadfast"