Therefore the core of the sermon is the first thing. This commonly "comes to" the preacher first. A text strikes his mind by force of an idea he has never before seen in it. His mind works the idea over until a theme evolves itself. Up to this time, the best preachers seldom put pen to paper. When the theme gets into clear light before the mind, it is often well to go back and see whether the text is the best text for that theme. No matter how the sermon is to be preached, whether with heads having horns, or without them, it should be worked out from the theme. The rule about a weak sermon is that it has no core; it is all rind and bark. There are also good sermons which are coreless, but not many. The preacher who has gotten hold of a fresh theme will get a good sermon out of it, if he keeps at it, putting his mind against it, and keeping up the contact until he has the main features of it. It is doubtful—experience differs—whether it is best to write at all until the outlines of the theme are tolerably full. We believe it is generally true of strong, robust, effective preachers, that they whack away at the theme without pen-work until they *could* write the sermon at a sitting. A solid core for the discourse may come to one suddenly; usually, however, it is built by mental work. The rhetorical rule requiring unity in a discourse is not met merely by taking a text; and it is a sound rule resting on the nature of the human mind. "What was the sermon about?" is the most natural and proper of questions. Let the young preacher get into a habit of asking himself, "What is this sermon about?" That will help him to grow sermons with solid cores.

THE RHAPSODIC PREACHER.—We pity him, for, as a rule, he has next to nothing to say, and tries to make the most of what he has. We pity his congregation as we would a hungry man who had to make a meal on syllabub and whipped cream. For a thoroughly profitless pastor give us the one who is ever in a rhapsody; who insists upon making a tabernacle and abiding on the Mount of Transfiguration; who is so rapt with the visions he has seen, that he cannot bear the thought of the valley below, with its sinful throng, the grieving father, and the child vexed by an unclean spirit. What right has a preacher to be ever losing sight of earth and its needs, to contemplate the glories that await him above? He was planted on the earth to do a man's work; the seraphic state is to come after. It is the law of nature that every time an emotion is stimulated without resulting in action, it becomes weakened. A high spiritual plane is never to be reached by the stairway of mere rhapsody. Hear what Emerson says:

"Often it falls that this winged man who will carry me into heaven, whirls me into the clouds; then leaps and frisks about with me from cloud to cloud, still affirming that he is bound heavenward; and I, being myself a novice, am slow to perceive that he does not know the way into the heavens, and is merely bent that I should admire his skill to rise, like a fowl or a flying-fish, a little way from the ground or the water."

CRITICISM OF A SERMON.—"C. C. T." sends us a sketch of a sermon based on Joshua xxiii: 11: "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." The introduction is upon the needful warning, "take heed." The divisions are: I. The Reasonableness of Supreme Love to God; II. The Characterizations of that Love; III. The Means of its Attainment. Under each of these heads are several subdivisions. The plan of the sermon is a good one, but a much better text for it would have been Matt. xxii: 37: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. But the subject is altogether too large for a single sermon. Each general division has abundant matter for one or more discourses; and to attempt to cover so much ground in a single discourse makes the treatment necessarily imperfect and superficial. A better treatment of Joshua xxiii: 11 would be: An introduction referring to the circumstances and general purpose of this address of Joshua: theme, *The love of God that in-*