

GEMS FROM OLD AUTHORS ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

Reading makes the full man, and writing the correct man.—LOCKE.

LACK OF ADAPTATION.—Ministers are too much inclined to prosecute one unvarying method of doing things. This is well within certain limits, but is carried too far. The sermons are sound, full of thought, replete with instruction, all adjusted in logical order, and with rhetorical skill. They are elaborate, noble sermons; but, somehow or other, when delivered they fail in doing Christ's work on the souls of men. The difficulty is not that it is a written sermon. A written sermon may be charged high with feeling and power; every sentence may be an arrow with a barbed and sharpened point. The difficulty is, that it is not adapted to the souls that hear it; it is not adjusted so as to meet the responses of nature and conscience in the breast of the audience. It falls upon the ear, but finds no passage to the heart.—DR. GEORGE SHEPARD.

FAINED GEAR.—Be strong, says St. Paul, having your loins girt about. Some get them girdles with great knots, as though they would be surely girt, and as though they would break the devil's head with their knotted girdles. Nay, he will not be so overcome; it is no knot of a hempen girdle that he feareth; that is no piece of harness of the armor of God which may resist the assault in the evil day; it is but fained gear.—LATIMER.

PRUDENCE AND CRAFT.—I know it is no part of prudence to speak slightly of those that others admire; but that prudence is but craft that commands an unfaithful silence.—HENRY MOORE.

UNSEEN GUIDES.—In practical art principles are unseen guides, leading us by invisible strings through paths where the end alone is looked at. It is for science to direct and purge our vision, so that these airy ties, these principles and laws, generalizations and theories, become distinct objects of vision.—WREWELL.

PREACHING.—Preaching far excels philosophy and oratory, and yet is genuine philosophy and living oratory. No romance equals in wonder the story of the cross; no shapes of wonder have the divine style of Christianity, and no mode of speaking can surpass in pathos and penetration that of a man to his sinful fellows on the themes of God and eternity, Christ and heaven.—EADIE.

THE PREACHER AN ADVOCATE.—The preacher is an advocate who pleads the cause of God before a bench of corrupt judges, whom it is his first business to render just.—VINET.

JESUS ONLY.—"Lord, to whom shall we go?" To the law?—that curses us. To the world?—that is a delusive bubble. To sin and corruption?—it has polluted our minds, and done us mischief in abundance. Whither can we go? "Thou hast the words of eternal life." We know and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—ROWLAND HILL.

FAITH DEFINED.—Many of the published dissertations on the nature and philosophy of the atonement may be deep, but they are dark. We cannot afford to travel along such weary distances, and through such twilight paths, in order to get at the fact—at what it is that we are to believe and trust in. The Bible puts it directly before us—"Slain for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." We are asked to receive it just on God's testimony, not by the aids of philosophy, but on the declaration of the fact. . . . That is faith. . . . That is enough. Leave it there. . . . The philosophy of religion is just faith, nothing more.—DR. I. S. SPENCER.

THE KIND OF MEN NEEDED.—We want men that can execute and achieve; men skilled in the science of human nature as it is, knowing what it ought to be; conversant with things; versatile in methods of address; men whose weight is felt, whose character is brought to bear on others, and whose magnetic influence will awaken sympathy in listening hundreds—men who desire usefulness more than reputation or applause.—DR. SAMUEL H. COX.

THE IMAGINATION.—The preacher must use the imagination; he must address the imagination. Men who have swayed and thrilled and melted the popular heart have done so. Whitfield, Edwards, Payson, did so. There are images which are the best arguments. There is an elegance which augments strength; there is a polish which touches the temper of the steel. The sword which hung at Eden's gate had the brightness of fire. Rhetorically as well as literally, a blade may be burnished and still have a terrible keenness of edge. A discourse may be ornate, and pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow. The brightness draws the attention; the sharpness cuts the callous heart.—DR. GEO. SHEPARD.

SENSE AND REASON.—Opinion deceives us more than things. So comes our sense to be more certain than our reason. Men differ more about circumstances than matter. The corruption of our affections misguides the results of our reason. We put a fallacy, by a false argument, upon our understanding.—SIR WILLIAM DENNEY.

STRIKING TESTIMONY.—I have seen Universalists and Infidels die, and during a ministry of fifty-five years I have not found a single instance of peace and joy in their near views of eternity. No; nothing but an accusing conscience and the terrors of apprehension. I have seen men die who were of a mercurial temperament, men of pleasure and fun, men of taste and literature, lovers of the opera and the theater, rather than the house of God, and I never saw an instance in which such persons died in peace. They died as they lived. Life was a blank, and death the king of terrors; a wasted life, an undone eternity.—DR. GARDNER SPRING.

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