

"So indeed," exclaimed the minister. "Well, I see there is no one but myself to squeeze, and that I am out of the reach of hard times. If I was able to perform miracles, like our Saviour with the loaves and fishes, your plan would answer. I have called upon all the members that sell anything for the use of man, to see how your plan was likely to answer, but you must all have a particular price for your goods—the owner of my house, the miller, the shoemaker, the tailor, the butcher, and yourself likewise. You will not let me have a pound of sugar or an ounce of tea out of your shop unless I pay a *stated price* for it. How then, do you expect me to pay my way without a stated salary, and that, too, proportionable to my family? Before I can agree to receive what you collect monthly for me, you and others must be willing to receive that between you, in proportion to what I may have had from each, and I will promise to live quite moderately; or if you prefer it, I am willing to live on the money wasted weekly by the members in liquor, snuff, and tobacco."—*Welsh Baptist Magazine*.

TWO VIEWS OF A SERMON.

There are two ways of regarding a sermon: either as a human composition, or a Divine message. If we look upon it entirely as the first, and require our clergymen to finish it with their utmost care and learning, for our better delight, whether of ear or intellect, we shall necessarily be led to expect much formality and stateliness in its delivery, and to think that all is not well if the pulpit has not a golden fringe round it, and if the sermon be not fairly written in a black book, to be smoothed upon a cushion in a majestic manner before beginning. All this we shall duly come to expect; but we shall, at the same time, consider the treatise thus prepared as something to which it is our duty to listen, without restlessness, for half an hour or three-quarters, but which, when that duty has been decorously performed, we may dismiss from our minds, in happy confidence of having another whenever it shall be necessary.

But if once we begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us which is a matter of life and death, whether we hear or refuse; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and having allowed him an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them; if we make some endeavor to conceive how precious these hours ought to be to him, a small vantage on the side of God after his flock have been exposed for six days together to the full weight of the world's temptations, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and the thistle springing in their hearts, and to see what wheat had been scattered there snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other, and at last when, breathless and weary with the week's labor, they give him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them from all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master himself has stood and knocked, and yet none has opened, and to call at the opening of these dark streets where Wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands and no man regarded; thirty minutes to raise the dead in; let us but once understand and feel all this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon that frippery of gay furniture about the place from which the message of judgment must be delivered, which either breathes upon the bones that they may live, or if ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation, perhaps, against the utterer and listener alike, but assuredly against one of them. We shall not so easily bear with the silk and gold upon the seat of judgment, nor with ornament of oratory in the mouth of the messenger; we shall wish that his words may be simple, even when they are sweetest, and the place where he speaks like a marble rock in the desert, about which the people have gathered in their thirst.—*Ruskin*.