

since. And from the pride which, in their folly, men too frequently indulge towards one another, comes haughty, contemptuous, violent, abusive language; the language of haughty command, haughty censure, haughty scorn. This is "the *rod of pride*" which is in "the mouth of the foolish." The foolish smite with it; and by doing so, they expose themselves to many dangers, from envy, resentment, and the spirit of strife. By some the word rendered "*rod*" is understood of a *shoot* or *branch*, from the only other place in which it occurs—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots," Isa. xi. 1. But even in that passage, there is probably in the shoot springing from the stem of Jesse, an indirect reference to the *sceptral rod*—the emblem of the royalty of which the prophet proceeds to speak; and the figure of smiting with the tongue as with the "*rod of pride*" is far more natural (when the mouth is spoken of) than that of a branch springing from pride as a "*root of bitterness*."

The general import of the antithesis in the second clause is sufficiently plain: "but the lips of the wise shall preserve them." "*The lips of the wise*" are the lips, not of pride, but of humility—not of the contempt and wrath which arise from pride, but of meekness, gentleness, kindness, and peace. And there are two senses in which the *preservation* spoken of may be understood. First, by prudent and humble-minded dealing—by language well weighed and well adapted to the characters of the individuals with whom they have to do, and to the circumstances in which they happen to be placed,—they preserve themselves from this very "*rod of pride*," and from its sometimes mischievous consequences. Or, *more generally*; while by their proud and overbearing insolence the foolish bring severe retaliation and correction upon themselves, by the provoking use of their "*rod of pride*,"—the discretion of the wise, laying restraints upon their tongue, "setting a watch at the door of their lips," preserves them from many contentions, perplexities, troubles, and wrongs; it gives them favour and good understanding, and thus brings upon them benefit and blessing, instead of ill-will, and angry frowns, and muttered curses—the natural returns of pride.

The Fragment Basket.

APHORISMS FOR PREACHERS.—The same truths uttered from the pulpit by different men, or by the same man in different states of feeling will produce very different effects. Some of these are far beyond what the bare conviction of the truth, so uttered, would ordinarily produce. The whole mass of truth, by the sudden passion of the speaker, is made *red hot*, and burns its way.

It is impossible to close a sermon well, that is warmly, unless the train of thought has been so conducted as to bring the heart into a *glow*, which increases to the end.

Having chosen a subject, it is well to think over it deeply, day and night, and to read on it carefully before putting pen to paper. Take few notes, but as far as may be, let the matter digest itself in the mind.

To be worth much, a sermon must begin like a river, and flow, and widen, and roughen, and deepen, until the end; and when it reaches this end, *it is hurt by every syllable that is added.*—Dr. J. W. Alexander.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.—The Christian propriety and profitableness of the practice are so obvious, that like the household altar and the Sabbath-school, which are nowhere in terms enjoined by the Scriptures, it commends itself to every sympathy of a renewed heart.