

### Profitable Study of the Masters.

SOME profit may possibly have arisen from such study of the old masters as that adverted to below; but the dangers from it are manifestly very great, unless it is carefully guided and guarded, and wisely supplemented.

The young preacher should be guarded against mere mechanical imitation, by being led so to grasp the aim of preaching that the thought of reaching and saving souls shall be the dominant, all-controlling principle of his life. With this he can not become a mere machine.

He should be brought to understand that every race or age has its own modes of conceiving and putting practical truth, and that the wise adaptation of means to ends is nowhere more important than it is in the pulpit. This will help him to discriminate the non-essential, temporary, and peculiar features of the masters—such as have no suitableness for an audience of the present day or of a particular class—from what is essential, permanent, and catholic. Nothing could be more ridiculous than preaching to an audience of factory-workers after the manner of Massillon, or Robert Hall, or Chalmers!

Above all, the young preacher should supplement the study of the old masters by equally careful study of the men of the present century who are in touch with the masses, and with the age. There is rhetorical and oratorical inspiration and uplift in the sermons of Charles H. Spurgeon, Robertson of Brighton, and Henry Ward Beecher, however much one may differ from them in doctrinal views. What Dr. Boyd called "the art of putting things" may be learned from them; while from the old masters may be caught the no less important inspiration that comes from comprehensive doctrinal views, and a constructive power hardly surpassed by the great epic and dramatic poets.

Such broad study will tend to make

preaching more aimful in its Christlikeness, more apt in its presentation of truth, and more artistic in its oratorical construction; and will thus better fit it to please, reach, and save men. We fear that there is now too little of this kind of study of sermons, as there may once have been too much of the other kind.

### Harmful Study of Sermons.

THE teachers of homiletics used often to advise their students not only to study, but also to pattern after, the old masters of pulpit eloquence. Chrysostom, Bossuet, Massillon, John Owen, Isaac Barrow, Jeremy Taylor, of earlier times, and Robert Hall, Thomas Chalmers, John M. Mason, and others, of later times, were to be the young preacher's models. The tendency of the young men, under the influence of such advice, was to forget the great aim of preaching—reaching and saving men—and to become mere imitators of the productions of genius. This was dangerous work for men who were not geniuses, and who were thus induced to pattern after what to them became dull, dead forms. The inevitable result of such aping of genius was a plentiful crop of dull preachers, whose utterances were marked by stilted or bombastic stupidity, ridiculous verbosity, or dry-as-dust profundity.

### Evil and Devil.

Each of these words is to be pronounced as one syllable, *ev'l*, *dev'l*. *E-vil*, *dev-il*, with emphasis on the short *i* and equal accent on both syllables, are miserable affectations, characteristic of some callow preachers. "Deliver us from the *e'-vil*' one"—think of it! The pronunciation *e-vul* is a sheer vulgarity. CRITIC.

### Should Rhime with Wax.

I heard a clergyman pronounce the name of the poet, John G. Saxe, giving the cognomen two syllables—*Sax-e*. Is this correct? QUESTIONER.