



The Preacher's Manual: Lectures on Preaching, Furnishing Rules and Examples for Every Kind of Pulpit Address (Classic Reprint)

S. T. Sturtevant

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Excerpt from The Preacher's Manual: Lectures on Preaching, Furnishing Rules and Examples for Every Kind of Pulpit Address

The most perfect science is but a well-ordered arrangement of thoughts and observations framed for practical utility; or, as Dr. Chalmers says, "it is a record of observed phenomena." Science had birth, not in theoretical books, but in the anima and genius of competent experimentalists, which must necessarily direct to the safest and readiest way to practice. The science of preaching thus arose to view, furnishing valuable facilities to the gospel publisher; for with the advantage of an arranged system, and any tolerable ability for communication, great superiority must be acquired over the desultory preacher.

The first preachers of the gospel did not follow the rules of art; but in succeeding ages, as learning rose or declined, attention to the arrangement of the several parts of a discourse was encouraged or neglected. Yet as the declensions had longer periods than the revivals themselves, which were partial and slow in gaining strength, so no science suffered more interruptions in its progress toward perfection than that of preaching; otherwise it would, ere this, have attained to such strength and beauty as wholly to supersede the necessity of new works to teach it. Many great and learned men have lived and died leaving the work of improvement where they found it; while preachers of an inferior order have contented themselves with antiquated rules, and have been satisfied to perform their work as well as their predecessors so fatal to improvement is the want of emulation.

It would be unjust to state that no attempt has been made to raise the standard of preaching. Bishop Wilkins wrote an elaborate treatise suited to his own times; and he remarks that others had done the same.

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