

**HINTS ON
PREACHING: A
CLOUD OF WITNESSES**

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Hints on Preaching: A Cloud of Witnesses by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

The Pulpit, in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs,
Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.

COWPER.

CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK AND WALDEN.

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PREFACE.

THIS little book is only what its title indicates,—a book of “hints on preaching.” But on matters here set forth, many may pause to take a hint and profit by it, who have no time for extended reading and patient reflection. These hints are mostly from acknowledged high sources, and may be regarded, in the words of Cervantes, as “short sentences drawn from a long experience.” They are the abridgments of wisdom. In very many cases, they are the central ideas which their authors have elaborated into chapters.

For wider reading, the “Yale Lectures” by Beecher, Taylor, Hall, Dale, Brooks, and Bishop Simpson, are fresh and to the point. The treatises by Claude, Vinet, Theremin, Porter, Ripley, Holyoake, Spurgeon, Shedd, Hoppin, Dabney, and Broadus, are standards. Fenelon’s “Dialogues on Eloquence” are full of intelligence and spirit. Bautain, Ware and Storrs have written wisely of extempore preaching. But Quintilian is the teacher of the teachers. He wrote of this great art of speaking in the interest of lawyers, but clergymen may read between the lines a meaning of vast importance to themselves.

THE COMPILER.

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HINTS ON PREACHING.

I

ELOQUENCE.

Many are the friends of the golden tongue.—*Welsh Proverb.*

Eloquence is speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak.—*Dr. Blair.*

Eloquence has been well defined as truth clearly perceived, deeply felt, and distinctly expressed.—*E. P. Hood.*

The eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly drunk with a certain belief.—*R. W. Emerson.*

It is of eloquence as of a flame: it requires matter to feed it, motion to excite it, and it brightens as it burns.—*Tacitus.*

The office and duty of eloquence (if a man well weigh the matter) is no other than to apply and command the dictates of reason to the imagination, for the better moving of the appetite and will.—*Lord Bacon.*

To feel one's subject thoroughly, and to speak without fear, are the only rules of eloquence.—*Oliver Goldsmith.*

Eloquence is the language of nature, and cannot be learnt in the schools; the passions are powerful pleaders, and their very silence, like that of Garrick, goes directly to the soul; but rhetoric is the creature of art, which

he who feels least will most excel in; it is the quackery of eloquence, and deals in nostrums, not in cures.—*Colton*.

We may therefore consider it as a capital maxim, that the eloquent speaker we are inquiring after cannot be formed without the assistance of philosophy. I do not mean that this alone is sufficient, but only that it will contribute to improve him in the same manner as the palaestra does an actor.—*Cicero*.

Eloquence must be grounded on the plainest narrative. Afterward it may warm itself until it exhales symbols of every kind and color, speaks only through the most poetic forms; but, first and last, it must still be at bottom a biblical statement of fact. The orator is thereby an orator, that he keeps his feet ever on a fact. Thus only is he invincible.—*E. W. Emerson*.

He attends much more to things than to words. We forget the orator and think of the business. He warms the mind and impels to action. He has no parade and ostentation; no methods of insinuation; no labored introductions; but is like a man full of his subject, who, after preparing his audience by a sentence or two for hearing plain truths, enters directly on business.—*Dr. Blair on the style of Demosthenes*.

The foundation of all that can be called eloquent is good sense and solid thought. Let it be the first study of public speakers, in addressing any popular assembly, to be previously masters of the business on which they are to speak; to be well provided with matter and argument; and to rest upon these the chief stress. This will always give to their discourse an air of manliness and strength, which is a powerful argument of persuasion. Ornament, if they have genius for it, will follow of course.—*Dr. Blair*.

There are two kinds of orators, the distinction between

whom might be thus illustrated. When the moon shines brightly we are apt to say, "How beautiful is this moonlight!" but in the daytime, "How beautiful are the trees, the fields, the mountains!"—and, in short, all the objects that are illuminated; we never speak of the sun that makes them so. Just in the same way, the really greatest orator shines like the sun, making you think much of the things he is speaking of; the second best shines like the moon, making you think much of him and his eloquence.—*Archbishop Whately.*

True eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others,—when such a man would speak, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places.—*Milton.*

Of what kinds of discourse do we predicate eloquence? What gives to a passage that mysterious power by which it fastens a spell upon our hearts? In what part of a discourse do we expect to find it? Rarely in the introduction; not often in simple narration; never in appeals to pure reason. To be eloquent, a passage must speak to the imagination and the passions. It must emanate from a mind that feels deeply and conceives vividly, and must be clothed in language which paints rather than describes; causing the distant to become near, and the absent or invisible to start up before us with a living power.—*A. Potter.*

The right eloquence needs no bell to call the people together, and no constable to keep them. It draws the children from their play, the old from their arm-chairs, the invalid from his warm chamber; it holds the hearer fast; steals away his feet, that he shall not depart,—his