

THE PEW TO THE PULPIT

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649351725

The Pew to the Pulpit by David J. Brewer

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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**THE PEW TO
THE PULPIT**

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Suggestions to the Ministry from
the Viewpoint of a Layman

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New York Chicago Toronto
Fleming H. Revell Company
M D C C C X C V I I

The substance of this monograph was originally given as an address to the students in the Divinity Department of Yale University, New Haven, Conn., on April 2d, 1897. It is now published in response to numerous requests.

THE PEW TO THE PULPIT

"TIME at last sets all things even."
For fifty years I have sat in the pew
a target for the pulpit. Unnumbered
arrows have been shot at me from
the ministerial bow, feathered with
logic and rhetoric, sharpened with
appeal and exhortation, and some-
times poisoned with denunciation
and abuse. All the ill I have ever
done, all I have ever attempted to
do, or even thought of doing, and all

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that any man believed I had done or even thought I might be tempted to do, has been held up before a sometimes admiring and sometimes amused audience, even as the results of a washerwoman's toil are spread out on the afternoon clothesline. Is it any wonder that as I have heard the anathema "woe unto you lawyers" rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue, I have felt like shouting, whoa unto you ministers. And this I have had to receive, sitting in silence and without the luxury of talking back. Now all is reversed. I have the pulpit before me. I am to talk and you must listen. I can fire away at you and you have no escape. Would it be strange if the words of Shylock came to my mind, "If I can

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catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him." Would it not be sweet revenge if I could gather in this single hour all the shafts that have been launched at me, and hurl them back at your devoted heads? You may say that personally you never did any of these things; but you teach the doctrine and justice of vicarious suffering and should not object to furnish an illustration.

We hear much to-day about the decay of the pulpit. And if you were to heed some of the would-be scientific critics you might be led to believe that it was an institution fit only for semi-civilized times, and now slowly passing out of existence in obedience to the scientific law of the

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survival of the fittest. We also sometimes hear a wail coming from the ministry itself, as if Christ and His religion were losing their hold on earth because the pulpit was not in all things accepted as leader and guide. Analyzing the thought thus suggested it finds expression in these propositions: First, the time was when the pulpit was the great place of attraction for young men of brains and power, and the intellectual force was found in its service. To-day other professions and other work are more attractive to men of brains and power, and the pulpit is recruited only from the ranks of the second or third class. Secondly, in those days the minister was the recognized leader, and the pulpit was the power