

**LECTURES ON PREACHING:
DELIVERED BEFORE THE DIVINITY
SCHOOL OF YALE COLLEGE IN
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1877**

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Lectures on Preaching: Delivered Before the Divinity School of Yale College in January and February 1877 by Phillips Brooks

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PHILLIPS BROOKS

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LECTURES ON PREACHING

BY THE

RT. REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS"

"THE LIFE WITH GOD" ETC

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EMMANUEL

*From the Records of the Corporation of Yale College,
April 12, 1871.]*

"*Voted*, to accept the offer of Mr. HENRY N. SAGE, of Brooklyn, of the sum of ten thousand dollars, for the founding of a lectureship in the Theological Department, in a branch of Pastoral Theology, to be designated 'The Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching,' to be filled from time to time, upon the appointment of the Corporation, by a minister of the Gospel, of any evangelical denomination, who has been markedly successful in the special work of the Christian ministry."

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LECTURES ON PREACHING.

THE TWO ELEMENTS IN PREACHING.

SINCE I received, some months ago, the invitation to deliver these lectures which I begin to-day, I have been led to ponder much upon the principles by which I have only half consciously been living and working for many years. This is part of the debt which I owe to those who have honored me with their invitation. It is interesting to one's self to examine and recognize and arrange the ideas which have been slowly taking shape within him during the busy years of work. I shall be very glad if you too are interested, as I try to recount them to you, and very thankful if you find in them any help or inspiration.

The personal character of this lectureship is very evident. It is always to be filled by preachers in active work, who are to come and speak to you of preaching. It is not a Homiletical Professorship. It is each man's own life in the ministry of which he is to tell

But certainly you do not expect from your successive lecturers a series of anecdotes of what has happened to them in their ministry, nor a mere recital of their ways of working. It cannot be intended that this lectureship should exalt the interviewer into an organized and permanent institution. The hope must rather be that as each preacher speaks of our common work in his own way, whatever there may be of value in his personal experience may come, not directly but indirectly, into what he says, and make the privilege of preaching shine for the moment in your eyes with the same kind of light which it has won in his.

I feel as I begin something of the fear which I have often felt in commencing a new sermon. It has often seemed to me as if the vast amount of preaching which people hear must have one bad effect, in leaving on their minds a vague impression that this Christian life to which they are so continually urged must be a very difficult and complicated thing that it should take such a multitude of definitions to make it clear. And so there is some danger lest these multiplied lectures upon preaching should give to those who are preparing to preach an uncomfortable feeling that the work of preaching is a thing of many rules, hard to understand, and needing a great deal of commentary. For my part, I am startled when I think how few and simple are the things which I have to say to you. The principles which one can recognize

in his ministry are very broad and plain. The applications of those principles are endless; but I should be very sorry indeed if anything that I shall say should lead any of you to confound the few plain principles with their many varied applications, and so make you think that work complicated and difficult which to him who is equipped for it, and loves it, is the easiest and simplest work in life.

Let me say one word more in introduction. He who is called upon to give these lectures cannot but remember that they are given every year, and that he has had very able and faithful predecessors. There are certainly, therefore, some things which he may venture to omit without being supposed to be either ignorant or careless of them. There are certain first principles, of primary importance, which he may take for granted in all that he says. They are so fundamental, that they must be always present, and their power must pervade every treatment of the work which is built upon them. But they need not be deliberately stated anew each year. It would make these courses of lectures very monotonous; and one may venture to assume that there are some elementary principles upon whose truth all students of theology are agreed, and whose importance they all feel.

I cannot begin, then, to speak to you who are preparing for the work of preaching, without congratu-