

T H E

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"The Lord God is a Sun and Shield"

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From the Midnight Cry.

MODERN PREACHERS.

The following extract from an English work by R. M. Beverley, is an illustration of modern preaching:

There are many manifest inconveniences, as there are also some advantages, in applying learning to the study of the Scriptures; but I fear that the disadvantages greatly preponderate, *when the range erudite theology is entrusted to the ministry.* I need not here appeal to history to prove how many disastrous heresies and schisms have sprung up in the church from the hot-bed of human learning, how many wars and tumults have arisen from the controversies and argute disputations of learned divines. Baronius has asserted, that the great part of all heresies have originated not with the ignorant multitude, but with men of much intellect and research, with men of talent and of elevated station in the church, with bishops and high dignitaries, who began with disputations and dexterous cavils, and ended with schism and open rebellion. Dr. Owen, himself one of the most learned of divines, has remarked that it would be difficult to sum up all the mischief that had desolated the church, through the labors of ecclesiastics, with subtle heads and unsanctified hearts: and the truth of this remark we can ourselves verify, by turning our eyes to Germany, where the tribe of neologists and sceptics are constantly rising to the surface, with some curious jewel of unbelief, fished up with infinite labor from the depths of hell; or to America, where the portals of theologic seminaries are pouring forth clouds of Pelagian and Sabellian locusts, "like horses prepared unto battle, and with faces as the faces of men."

He that reads the Bible in the old way, seems to be walking with great delight,

"by a place of broad rivers and streams where goeth no gally with oars;" the waters are silent, majestic, undisturbed; they are "the still waters," and he by faith is constantly catching a glimpse of the Good Shepherd, who leads his flock by the verdant margins, "to make their souls like a watered garden;" he searches that he may find him; but if he finds him not, he is distressed and perplexed, and, in the language of holy love, says within himself, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside from the flocks of thy companions?"

But when he reads the Bible in the new way, when the glare of modern *exegesis* dazzles his eyes, when the German light has been let in upon the scene, he seems immediately to stand upon the shores of a boundless ocean, whose waves are dark, restless, and conflicting; "the galleys pass with oars," and "the gallant ships," in abundance; but it is for an evil trade, and many are shipwrecked before his eyes, swallowed up in hopeless infidelity. The Good Shepherd is gone; he is no where to be found; all the winds of heaven seem to conspire to drown the very sound of his name, and the hubbub of "primary meanings," "orientalisms," "historical allusions," "mythic phraseology," "figurative expressions," "allegorical types," "poetical ornaments," "grammatical constructions," "usus loquendi," are called into the scene, to make confusion worse confounded, and to turn the Scriptures of truth into a volume of dishonest trickery or studied obscurity, whose dark pages none but learned academicians and deep-read scribes can possibly explain.

I give one instance, and it is indeed but one amongst thousands. That portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, beginning with the 13th verse of the 52d chapter, and end-