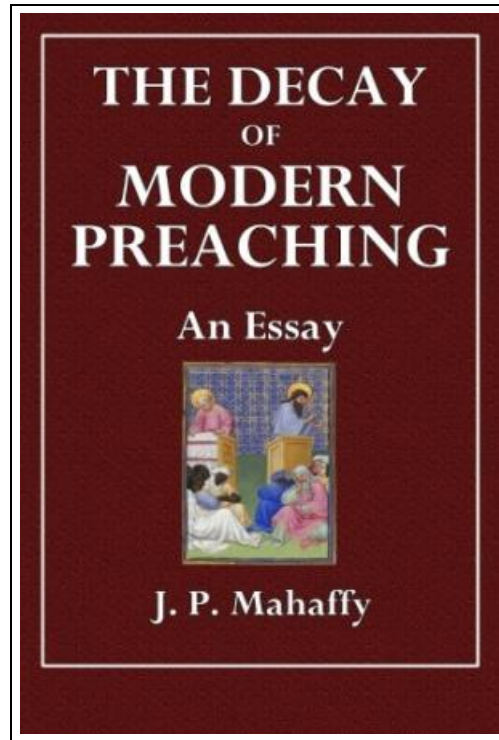


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Mr. Mahaffy s interesting essay on the Decay of Modern Preaching : a work which we strongly advise all clergy to read, although we do not mean to say that we agree with all the remarks in it, and we are inclined to think that the title is a misnomer. It is true that a great deal is talked about the decay of preaching and the decline of the power of the pulpit, but it may fairly be questioned whether the average of good preachers was ever higher than at present. Mr. Mahaffy speaks rather as if the present day had a monopoly of bad preaching, and refers to the age of Queen Anne as a time when the Christian pulpit was raised to a position of power and authority (p. 83). But this is just the very time when Swift uttered the piteous complaint that churches were public dormitories; and the various notices of preaching scattered about in the pages of the Spectator do not look as if the preaching of that day was uniformly excellent. It must be remembered that we judge of a past age mainly by the few great preachers whose names and works have lived on and been handed down to us, and not by the many who are forgotten, and who were probably quite as dull as the average preachers among us. Indeed, at many periods in the history of the Church they were probably far duller; and we believe that, taken all round, the preaching of the present day would compare favourably with that of almost any age. In this matter we have certainly learnt much in the last few...

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