

Plain preaching<sup>1</sup>

Let your speech [in preaching] be plain, as Paul's was. "Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power."<sup>2</sup> Use sound words that "cannot be condemned."<sup>3</sup>

Rhetorical flourishes are like painted glass in a window that makes a great show but darkens the light,<sup>4</sup> as some schoolmasters will flourish letters so much as few know what they are but themselves. To have more rhetoric in a discourse than logic is condemnable. What doth it signify to have a dish daintily set off about the brims, if no meat be in it? Be sure you always speak plain to the capacity of the people. Let us never speak words we do not understand ourselves, nor they which hear us. The prophets and apostles generally spoke in the vulgar and common languages which the ordinary people understood.

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1. From *The Temple Repair'd*, 28.

2. 1 Corinthians 2:4.

3. Titus 2:8.

4. This is a very revealing comment about Baptist—and Puritan—preferences when it came to church architecture. Unlike the Anglican churches that were often adorned with stain glass windows, the Puritans and their Dissenting children preferred windows with plain glass. The latter admitted far more light, making it easier to read one's Bible and follow the preacher as the Word was expounded.

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They did not only speak to the understanding of a king upon the throne, but to the understanding of the meanest<sup>5</sup> subject.

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5. That is, the lowest, or by implication, the most uneducated.



