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THE MINISTRY FOR THE TIMES.

The following is the principal portion of Mr. Rogers' address, from the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, bearing on this important subject. We bespeak for it a careful perusal :—

Among Nonconformists, at all events, a decline in the power of the pulpit would be one of the most certain and melancholy symptoms of decay—a decay which might for a time be hidden by the superficial and temporary advantages gained by the attractions of more artistic and elaborate Ritual, but which would not be the less sure in its operations, and the less fatal in its results. The pulpit has always been a power amongst us, and if its influence was to be lost or materially diminished, we have nothing which could take its place, and win back for us that hold on the popular mind which we had sacrificed by madly rejecting the instrument by which alone it has been obtained. Other communities, on the loss of pulpit power, might fall back upon tradition, or national prejudice, or authority, or on perfect organization ; but we have none of these things, and unless we have men who can preach the grand old message of “repentance and remission of sins” by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in such a manner as to arrest attention and compel conviction, I do not merely say that the day of our power is gone, but the days of our life itself may be numbered.

THE AGE AND THE PULPIT.

Never, surely, was there a time when power, power of the highest and noblest kind—soul-power, first of all, but also brain-power, and power of speech to stir men's hearts—was more needed than at present. Whether the extreme liberty which prevails, and by which young people are exposed to the insidious attacks of error before they have acquired any power of resistance, is altogether wise, is open to consideration ; but it is only part of another and much wider question as to the wisdom of the relaxation of family discipline, now so common, amounting in many cases to the entire reversal of relations between parents and children, by which the latter give the law which they ought to accept from their elders. It is the fact alone we note. It would be extremely difficult to establish a religious quarantine. It would be unwise to attempt it, and if the attempt were made, it would certainly fail. It is better, therefore, instead of discussing impossibilities to recognise the increased responsibility resting upon Christian teachers, who have to deal with minds that are under the strong influence of a literature, much of which, where not avowedly antagonistic, is of a cynical and scoffing temper, which helps to foster the worst kind of scepticism. The voices that are to make themselves heard by minds exposed to these and other influences hostile to religion, must be voices in which there is a ring of authority and a consciousness of power that is felt by the intellect, as well as a tone of earnestness and sympathy which goes home to the heart.