

The Teacher For The Times

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THE teacher plays upon the chords of the inner life. Most men are hewers of wood and drawers of water; they minister to our material needs. The teacher moulds and guides the deeper life of the spirit, and enters thus the very holy of holies. The dweller in the temple is always greater than the dweller in the market-place, and even so the teacher's mission raises him to a peculiar and exalted station, and gives him a unique place amongst men. By virtue of his office he is the guardian of youth. He builds character, imparts culture, disciplines the will, and prepares the mind for practical and efficient service in the world.

There are at the present time two questions which vitally affect the teacher in his plans and in his work. They concern, the characteristics of the age, and the extent to which the teacher should obey the spirit by which the age is governed.

A controlling element in the life of the time is *the passion for change* which is consuming men. We are rushing with headlong haste after that which is novel and startling. Discovery and invention are throwing back the shadowy curtains of the unseen universe. We are certainly on tip-toe with excitement, watching eagerly the wheel of fortune as it turns. The heavens are revealing their secrets, the earth is unlocking its mysteries, the deeps are yielding up their treasured stores. Man is remaking Nature on a new and improved model. He is tunneling her mountains, bridging her chasms, chaining her cataracts, directing her lightnings, and winging her winds with messages of victory. The Spirit of the Times bends all things to its will. It is a restless and arrogant spirit. It strikes the root of the old tree. It demolishes the ancient watch-tower on the heights, and flings an electric jet into mid-air. It leaves the dusty highway road and the caravan-wagon, and starts across the country with rock-ballasted railway tracks and pullman cars. It multiplies novelties and we poor children grasp them eagerly, and laugh at the foolish, slow old folks who went plodding on and on in their quaint and quiet fashion, long ago!

The log-cabin on the marsh has disappeared. The genius of the age has spoken, and the Marquette Building and the Woman's Temple rise in stately splendour. The scythe and the spade must follow the spear and the tomahawk; the horse must follow the mastodon into oblivion; machinery is king!