

revolutions. A great general is found, not in the piping time of peace, but when the thunder of war wakes the dormant soul in him. The great statesman is only made when his country is threatened or overwhelmed with disaster. So the great preacher is only possible when revolution is upon the Church—when some protest has to be launched forth in the name of God and man's rights. Luther's preaching shook the Vatican until the walls heaved apart, and cries and curses came out as the light of day went streaming in. The echoes aroused Christendom; but those sermons are tame reading now—the emergency is over. John Knox by preaching crushed Popery in Scotland and changed the face of politics, but as we read those discourses now, we barely get beyond wondering how the old man could have been so unkind to so beautiful a woman as Mary, Queen of Scots. Wesley and Whitfield were great preachers, and by their words wrought mighty things in their day. The best of their sermons would cause no sensation now. They preached to their day, and with the passing of the day passed the power of their sermons. And yet people tell us we are not to preach to our day as they did. They had the advantage of great and stirring times when words had a chance to effect something—we have the disadvantage of mean and dull times, and we are to be denied the right to preach even to them. With the example of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Jesus Christ, and Luther and Wesley before me, I am told I must not speak about politics—my discourse will not be a sermon, only a lecture or essay if I do. All such things must be left to the press. I must not say much about philosophy, nor science, nor commerce, nor social questions; I must only come with my bag of chaff, and hand out firstly, secondly and thirdly every week, just that you may comfort yourselves with the delusion that you are recognizing religion. Well, those who want chaff must go to the professional and licensed vendors of the article; only let them acknowledge that they seek after and have a liking for chaff.

We have no great revolutions throbbing around us, but the now of life is always great with incident and surprise, and the function of the preacher is to throw a strong religious light upon that now—upon its manifold complexities and quaint perplexities—its miracles of goodness and its mysteries of pain. All the week you have looked at politics from under—from your place in the party—