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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE KIND OF PREACHING FOR OUR TIMES.

No. II.

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FIRST of all, the preacher should cultivate a *certain quick sensitiveness* to the demands of his place and time. The most important qualification for the physician is that he have the diagnostic instinct. Let him detect the nature of the disease; the books will indicate the treatment. For a preacher to dwell continually upon one set of principles would be as though the physician were to confine himself to one or two remedies for all sorts of disease; while for the former to satisfy himself with administering to his people merely a whole body of divinity in regular course, and say, "this now should make them all right," would be as though the latter were to treat his patient with the entire contents of the pharmacopœia, and say, "I can do nothing more for you than this!"

The quick sensitive apprehension of his people's spiritual requirements, this is a primal necessity. Not some generic but special sense of it. Not merely a scholarly comprehension of the world's general ailments, but those of his own people. A genuine sympathy indeed with the great problems the great world is thinking about, so that if any of those problems are vexing his hearers he may be able to help solve them; but, more than this, a subtle understanding of individual wants among his people, which comes partly out of a natural aptitude and largely out of the cultivation of the spirit of love, enabling him to give to every man his portion in due season. What are called sermons for the times may on occasions be altogether untimely, and if continuously dealt in will become most utterly so; while yet it shall be the height of cruelty to close one's eyes to the public, social, literary, political, and philosophical situations and needs, and let the most thoughtful and practical minds in the congregation suffer for lack of sympathy, stimulation and wisest direction. The old simile holds, and the preacher is a fisherman, and must cast different flies for different sorts of fish, and may not foolishly complain against God or nature if the trout will not take to a bait intended for a sturgeon.