

time in forcing salvation on people who were not first made to feel their need of it, not only would Protestant temples have been as well filled as Catholic ones, but, by pointing directly to an Atonement inconceivably great, to Blood infinitely precious as the only escape from all guilt, the awakened conscience of the Christian nations would have awakened the conscience of the world, and have prepared men everywhere to receive the Gospel. Justice and Mercy Infinite are the stimulants of religion, and they are most fully expressed by the Incarnation and the Cross: facts that are becoming meaningless common-places by familiarity and flippant repetition. What is needed is an adequate realization that "the Word was made flesh." Wonderful! Yes; a Being so great as God is cannot but do what is calculated to excite wonder. Overlooking this is a starting-point of error.

But any clergyman who is unaware that one of his functions is to raise the dead; who does not know that he is sent to preach to spirits in prison as really as Noah was—to men and women, many of them yet bound in unconsciousness in chains of darkness, awaiting the judgment—has mistaken his calling and could be less injuriously employed along some other walk in life. To the mental fertility and ingenuity of the modern age Churches owe the credit of a royal road to salvation; by applying spiritual remedies lovingly to the lips of the dead, and by letting the conscience tenderly alone in its sleeping beauty. Such an alarm to prepare men for Christ as was sounded by the Baptist would be considered heresy now. These are the latter days.