

new style of preaching, and what is absurdly called an "up-to-date Gospel." This age of ours, with all its mighty mechanical inventions and its increasing Mammon worship, has not advanced one single inch beyond its indispensable need of the atoning blood of Jesus and the converting power of the Holy Spirit. All the telegraphs and the telephones and all the universities with their boasted achievements in scholarship have not yet outlawned Calvary and Pentecost. Human nature has not changed; human sinfulness and sorrows have not changed; the word of God has not changed; the Holy Spirit has not changed; the precious promises have not changed; and what fallen man needed to lift him Godward nineteen centuries ago he needs to-day. Stick to the old Gospel. When God gives you another, preach it, but not before. Don't waste your breath in defending your Bible; it is self-evidencing. Your commission is, "Preach the Word," and God will take care of it.

One very probable reason why conversions have so lamentably decreased of late in your own and in other evangelical denominations is that there is less direct, pungent, loving, and faithful preaching to the unconverted. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and unless a man is convicted of a sin and feels his guilt he is not likely to come to Christ for salvation. Toward the close of his noble Christian career Gladstone remarked that one of the worst symptoms in this age was "the general decay of the sense of sinfulness." The preacher who belittles or conceals the guilt and retributions of sin is an enemy of souls; he will make but few converts, and those of a shallow experience. The first text of Jesus Christ was "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and when Peter boldly preached repentance and remission of sins through Christ Jesus three thousand souls were converted in that one day! All the mighty soul-winners, the "weight of whose spear was like a weaver's beam"—the Wesleys, the Whitefields, the Finneys, the Lyman Beechers, the Spurgeons, and the Moodys—have never tried to extinguish Sinai's thunders any more than to silence Calvary's loving invitations. To preach effectively to the unconverted requires courage, tenderness, wisdom, faith, and a deep inflowing of the Holy Spirit; prayer will give you all these, my brother, and this year will bring you a harvest.

Through all its first century in America

it was the peculiar glory of Methodism that the "common people" heard its ministers "gladly." It never was the pet religion of the aristocracy and never will be. It costs more labour for you Methodists and us Presbyterians to capture one kid-gloved and lavender millionaire than to convert fifty of the working classes. While reaching up after the cultured classes I entreat you don't neglect what Abraham Lincoln called "the plain people." John Wesley's bones will rattle their protest if you do.

Suffer me, my dear brethren, to offer one more suggestion, and in no captious spirit. One of the masterpieces of Wesley's marvellous polity is the class-meeting. That is about a fair spiritual thermometer in any of your churches. When the class-rooms get below zero it marks an awful frigidity everywhere! Class-meetings up to blood-heat will send a spiritual power through your whole working machinery; and with God's help every preacher can contribute mightily to the engendering of that vital warmth.

Don't mistake or misapprehend these frank words of exhortation, I beg of you; they are the truth spoken in love. To your great Church and to mine God has committed a tremendous responsibility for the salvation of our beloved country.

Past mistakes as well as past successes teach their lessons. Begin your year's work with a fresh and sincere self-consecration. Take the only Bible God has given you, or ever will give, and preach it as if you heard the surges of eternity break against our church walls. Throw yourself into every line of practical love-labour, kindle your church by your contagious enthusiasm, and make this the best year of your whole lives.

THE REVIVAL BEGUN.

The revival has already begun. A year ago there were great searchings of heart among our Methodist friends of the United States on account of the small rate of increase reported in that Church. The Bishops rang out a bugle-call to consecration and prayer and holy effort. This was ably seconded by the religious press and pulpit. The Church girded itself for a great evangelistic campaign, and already the results are seen. One of the *Advocates* reports an increase of seventy-five thousand during the year, with most of the Conferences yet to hear from; and this is but an earnest of what may be expected in the year to come.