

Let us con the lesson. When the master of a household entertains his friends, he brings forth from his treasure things new and old. He sets forth the old family plate. Perhaps he wears for the occasion some ancient jewelry, inherited from his great-great-grandfather, Mousa ben Ibrahim. But all his treasures are not old. He robes his guests with fresh over-garments of fine linen, white and clean. And his table is spread with a similar mixture of the old fashioned and the novel. There are standard dishes, for his friends to cut and come again; and there are dishes of recent invention, to tempt the curious appetite. So shall it be with the well-trained Christian preacher. He shall bring forth things new and old.

In laying down this rule for the pulpit, our Lord differs from two classes of his professed followers. There are some who have no patience with anything new. Invention is the bugbear of their existence. They must have things old and old—nothing but what is old. There are others who have no tolerance for what savors of antiquity. This is the age of railways, telegraphs, telephones, electric lights and elevators; and the pulpit must not be behind the age. They are all agog, like the Athenians, to tell or to hear some new thing. They must have things new and new. In opposition to both classes our Lord says, new and old.

We need not argue the question. No demonstration of ours can add to the authority of the Master. The people who say old and old are wrong. The people who say new and new are wrong. The Christian scribe should bring forth out of his treasure thing new and old. All we can aim at is to illustrate the maxim a little, by giving a few examples. For convenience we shall divide them into three heads, things old, things new, and things that are both old and new.

I. *Old*.—Suffice it to say underneath this head that the preacher must tell the old old story of Jesus and His love. The story was not old when the words of the text were spoken—was not even fully framed, for Calvary was yet future. But it was old in promise, even then. It is an old world story now. It has come down to us through the mists of centuries—has been told from father to son through sixty successive generations. The preacher must set forth law and gospel—must speak

of sin and judgment and redeeming grace. God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification. In the tenderness of His compassion, as in the beauty of His holiness, He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Other foundation can no man lay. It is the Rock of Ages.

II. *Things new*.—As 1. New methods of presenting the truth. Teaching by parable was an innovation. Not that the use of parable was unknown to the ancient Hebrews. But the parabolic method of Jesus was a conspicuous departure from the custom of the scribes. Metaphor, simile, parable and allegory afford a boundless field for the exercise of sanctified ingenuity in searching out acceptable words; and giving an air of novelty to old truths. The familiar facts of nature shadow forth the laws of the kingdom of grace; and although we may hesitate to affirm that the laws of the two realms are identical, we need not hesitate to recognize a fundamental ground of unity between them, inasmuch as the same supreme Mind is author of them both.

2. New methods of presenting the relation of different truths to one another. Take, for example, the relation between creed and life, or between faith and holiness. The ordinary strain of evangelical preaching half a century ago was to this effect:—"Salvation is wholly of grace. The sinner, by believing in Jesus, obtains forgiveness of sin, escapes hell, and, when he dies, goes to Heaven. For these blessings—peace with God here and the hope of Heaven hereafter—he ought to be grateful; and gratitude to Christ, who suffered and died for his salvation, should urge him to do the will of Christ, and walk in his steps. A godly life is thus a fitting corollary to the exercises of faith and hope." Now all that is good and true, so far as it goes. But it is not the whole truth. Consecration of life is not a mere pendicle to faith in Christ, but enters into its very essence. He is named Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins—not merely from their punishment. To take hold of him as Jesus, is to take hold of him as our deliverer from sin—its fascination, its debasement, its defilement, its tyranny, as well as its doom. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us