

apply alone to those who accept livings in the churches of the land, while they preach not the truth they profess; or were it intended to indicate a frequent shortcoming in the ministry, of the holy power which is required,—we might with profound sorrow confess its justice. But this is not the bearing of the charge. This is an age, say its supporters, of deep conflict in earnest minds to know the truth; an age of practical struggle in the battle of life. And it is met from the pulpit with discourses on barren dogmas, on antiquated creeds. What we want, is living, warm truth, and when we seek this bread, we receive a stone. The allegation is radically at fault in both its parts. It pays an undeserved compliment to the spirit of the age, and it passes an unwarranted censure on the pulpit of our times. Only look with honest eye on the present age, and you must I fear, confess it is a very commonplace period after all. Some earnest minds in it are searching for the pearl of truth, but with the vast majority there is an intense love of money; a fulsome adulation of wealth; an eager pursuit of pleasure; a neglect of the great salvation. Then analyse this censure of doctrine from the pulpit, and to a great extent you will find it resolve itself into a deep dislike of the truth of the cross as man's only hope with God, and into a desire to have the fancy tickled with dreams of human progress rather than to feel the conscience touched by the verities of human transgression. My Brother, give no place to this idle clamour, no "not for an hour." Remember the doctrine of Christ crucified is universally adapted to the deepest wants of mankind, and like the light of the sun, it never grows old; or unsuited to any age. Fail not, then, to make the great theme of your preaching—the wondrous love, the atoning death, the saving power of the Lamb that was slain. Do all you can to make clear the way of welcome for your hearers to the Saviour, and press on them the obligation as well as privilege, of immediately coming to Him for life. While you may employ freshness and variety of illustration, use great plainness of speech in publishing saving truth, as one who seeks not to be admired, but to be understood. Let your aim in all your preaching be direct and practical, so that even when you discourse on the doctrines of the word you may bring them home to the conscience in every day life. Let your endeavour be not merely to please the tastes of your people, but to seek the good of many for their edification, that they may be saved. Beware my brother, of ever placing the pulpit in subjection to the pew, or of listening to dictation what you shall preach or not preach. Make conscience for yourself of coming to receive the word you speak from the Lord, by prayer, and the earnest study of His book, and then stand in your place here, to deliver His message to His people. Thus take your position in that faithful band of preachers, who can testify, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. For we are not as many who corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, so speak we in Christ; by manifestation of the truth, commending