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## THE PREACHING THAT WE NEED.

NOT long since, the writer visited a Presbyterian prayer meeting in one of the world's big, busy, commercial centres. The congregation was well represented. When God blesses men in temporal things, they sometimes allow their business and social engagements to absorb their time, and prayer meeting work to be carried on by others. Not so here.

After a short time spent in devotional exercises; singing, prayer, and the reading of appropriate passages of Scripture; the pastor said that, "as previously announced, the subject for the evening was 'The Preaching that we Need'"; that he was looking forward to the work of the winter with the longing and prayer that his preaching might be helpful to them, and that, while neither captious criticism nor fulsome flattery would be pleasant or helpful, a frank, free expression, in the spirit of charity, of what they felt they wanted and needed, what kind of preaching helped them most, what themes or texts they would like to have considered, or what changes, if any, they felt desirable, any such would be gladly welcomed. He hoped to profit by what they might say on the matter.

The meeting was open, and the next half-hour or more was well filled with a series of "Lectures on Preaching" that one could not but wish were heard by all preachers and intending preachers, while the ability, standing and character of the speakers gave to the words the weight that such qualities always do. The warm, glowing, living, meeting cannot be reproduced in cold type, and a reproduction from memory of the bare words must necessarily be brief and fragmentary; but a few of the remembered thoughts may be of use to some one.

After the meeting was thrown open and there was the usual slight pause, a man arose—the proprietor of the leading jewellery establishment in a city of a quarter of a million—and said, in substance, "I feel for myself that the kind of preaching we need is that which will help us through the work and temptations of the week. We business men are liable to get worldly, and

we need help to resist that tendency. We are like an eight-day clock that needs to be wound up once a week. We need to get an uplift on the Sabbath to help us to live better in the days of temptation and work that follow." The lecture was less than a minute in length, but it was a good hour in breadth, depth, and weight.

Another, a notary, spoke in the same strain, and, in simple, choice, words and way, referred appreciatively for about half a minute to the preaching they receive from Sabbath to Sabbath.

In a five-minute address of earnest, weighty tenderness followed the head of one of the first dry goods establishments in the city. He thought that the preaching we need was something that comes home to the heart and satisfies its wants and longings.

Often in London had he been helped by the simple, heartfelt, spiritual, preaching of such men as Monroe Gibson, Meyer, and Spurgeon. He mentioned especially Spurgeon's morning prayers, those wonderful outpourings of the soul to God, communion with a Heavenly Father. He thought that the preaching we need is that which will guide and stimulate, and help us to two things, viz., a better discharge of our duty to God and our duty to man. He then made special reference to utterances of the pastor on two recent occasions, quotations of Scripture, which he had found very helpful.

Next, for nine well filled minutes, came the head of a large shipping firm. He thought that one needful thing in preaching was helpfulness. This nervous age, with its feverish rush and haste, requires to be calmed down with the "Peace be still" of Christ.

Another thing needed in preaching is to make people listen to the message when it is brought. The tendency is to sit and not hear.

A man in youthful prime lay dying. His pastor was at his bedside. He wanted light. The pastor said, "I suppose you are familiar with the great truths that I have so often preached here?" "Doctor," said the young man, "I never heard you!" "What!" said the pastor. "You were always present ever since you were a boy,