

of the Christian Ministry is preaching. Its great work, as we believe, is to "herald" the Gospel, that is, in a public and representative capacity to proclaim and apply the great truths of revealed religion to the hearts and consciences of men, in order that they may both believe and obey them, accept them as a matter of faith and a rule of life.

This was the special function of the prophetic office in Old Testament times. The distinctive work of the prophet was to speak for or in the name of God—to communicate to men for their belief and guidance what was revealed to him by God. That is, the prophet occupied the position and discharged the functions of a herald; he was in fact a preacher. Accordingly we find such words as these addressed to one occupying the prophetic office, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Prophets, indeed, foretold future events, and occasionally, with the apostles who followed them, wrought miracles, but this part of their work was quite secondary and subordinate. Their highest and most important function was to exhibit and apply the truths which God communicated to them.

In New Testament times even greater prominence was given to preaching in connection with the work of the ministry. When John the Baptist appeared, he "came preaching." This was his great work in preparing the way for the Messiah. And when Christ Himself began his public ministry He at once assumed as his specific character, that of a preacher. At the beginning of his work he significantly applied to Himself the prophetic words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath appointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Thus did Christ at the beginning announce Himself as a preacher, and from that moment onwards He never laid that character aside, for "from that time Jesus began to preach."

This also was the work for which the apostles were chosen and solemnly set apart by Christ. "He ordained twelve . . . that He might send them forth to preach." The Seventy were sent out to preach the Kingdom, and the last command received by the apostles was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel." And in apostolic times, as we gather from the Acts and the Epistles, preaching was still regarded as the highest and most essential function of the ministerial office. When disciples were scattered abroad, they "went everywhere preaching." And Paul, speaking as an inspired man, ranks preaching above any other ministerial duty, not even excepting the dispensing of the sacraments, and declares it to be his special work, saying, "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel."

It seems clear then that the preaching of the Word is the highest and most important of the ministerial functions. The Christian minister is to be a preacher first and foremost, a herald, and if he fails here he but poorly discharges the duties of his office. He may do everything else—dispense the sacraments, visit the sick, care for the poor, but if he is not a preacher he comes very far short of the scriptural idea of the Christian minister.

It is said time and again that one of the pressing wants of the Church and of the world is ministers. We would add, herald-ministers—ministers specially qualified as preachers. It is by faithful preaching that the great work of the Church is to be done and the world brought into subjection to truth and to God. It is by this means that the Church's own life is to be de-