

firm. You will butt against immovable dead walls, like an oppugnant ram staring with glass eyes. You must be not only brave, but circumspect, if you would maintain a positive strain in preaching.

Still, your circumspection must not keep you silent when the hour strikes for you to speak. Strike, you, with the striking hour. Scarcely anything contributes more to confirm one's faith than to give one's faith voice. I can imagine that Peter's faith grew, as he uttered his faith in those memorable words of confession: "We believe, and are sure." Belief instantly became assurance. At the fit time, then, in the fit place, under the fit circumstances, in the fit way, give your heart vent. Speak. Speak out. There is something in full heartiness of tone. Solid voice has both its direct and its reflex effect. No vociferation, but, also, no bated breath. "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes," said some captain to his men, who impatiently waited for the attacking foes. Be similarly cool, and take aim steadily with eyes fixed before you like fixed bayonets in a charge. Deliberate aim is a great force for the positive in preaching.

Again. Be right. If you are wrong, your positiveness is an evil and not a good. Besides, if you are wrong, you will sometimes have your error exposed. This will shake you inwardly in your position, as well as outwardly in your influence. You will experience misgivings. You cannot now go on being positive, without violating fundamental truth of character. Your positiveness, if you keep up the show of being positive, will have, and will increasingly have, the ring of hollow in it. Or, if honesty prevail with you, and you begin to waver in speech—as you ought to waver in speech, after you have been forced to waver in faith—where late you bristled with brave assertion, then you have lost ground, not only with your hearers, but, worse still, with yourself. The positive in preaching is good only—as, happily, it can continue to be of force only—when it coincides with the right in preaching.

Finally, therefore, the positive in preaching demands that the preacher preach, not guesses, speculations, deductions, of his own reason, or of any human reason, but the authoritative revelation of God. I said you could not accept positive convictions at the dictation of authority. But that statement, in order to be justly positive, needs qualification. There is an exception. The exception is when God speaks. When God speaks, there is an end of the matter. You then have nothing to do but to believe. Exercise your judgment freely, but in the spirit of docility and obedience, to determine beforehand whether God does indeed speak. But that point once settled, doubt, hesitate, qualify, no more. Preach as Paul preached, and you will be heard as Paul was heard. You, with him, will have occasion to say to men: "We also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye