

Lord, but that most important fact could not make a Christian theology. The earliest man acquired in the first week of his existence the knowledge of several of the most important facts in the stellar universe; but it was centuries before the world had anything that could be called astronomy. The doctrines of the Christian system are imbedded in the New Testament as the doctrines of Geology are imbedded in the rocks.

Men may till the land and sail the waters sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of life without geological or astronomical knowledge in themselves personally; but no man can teach geology or astronomy without scientific knowledge. The preacher-teacher must have such knowledge of what is actually taught in the gospel as will enable him to set forth the grounds of his persuasion of the truth to his fellow-men. It is sufficient that they be religious, but he must be both religious and theological; and theology is a science.

Moreover, in order to be efficient and largely useful to his people, the preacher must have a conviction that the doctrines of the gospel which he has learned are superior to all other doctrines as a basis for religious experience and ethical conduct. To secure that, he must make some comparison of those doctrines with the doctrines set forth in other systems. That involves a study of comparative theology. Just in the measure in which a preacher has suspicion that the truth which he preaches is not the paramount and indispensable truth, in that proportion is his earnestness cooled and his power diminished. His influence over his fellow-men shrinks as his earnestness abates, because the most illiterate can appreciate earnestness where they cannot comprehend knowledge. They take it for granted that when a man undertakes to teach what is necessary for eternal salvation, he has himself examined the grounds and felt the power of the doctrines he teaches. But if earnestness be lacking, they jump to the conclusion that they were mistaken; that the man has not any profound conviction of the paramount value of what he teaches, and that the teaching, which is merely perfunctory and professional, cannot be of infinite importance.

Now, in an age in which every class of society—men, women and children—are infected with a desire to know more or less of science; at a time when even workmen actually know more of the science which has a real basis in knowledge, and also of the science which is falsely so called, than was known by professional men a hundred years ago—there will creep up into the study and into the heart of the preacher, who knows no science but theology, the suspicion that there may be in the attainments of other men some knowledge which militates against the doctrines he has been preaching. Such a suspicion will produce a weakness, and may make a blight. To prevent this, to keep his mind in the robust healthfulness of an unbroken con-