

gregation. Alternate the perusal of these two volumes, page after page, and find how beautifully the one fits the other. In the one, sorrows, in the other, soothing; doubts here, the dissolving of doubts there; penitence on this dark page, pardon on that bright one; fears and tremblings met by gracious promises and timely assurances. Brethren you will gladly lay these leaves of healing to those torn and bleeding hearts.

And do not be afraid to apply God's Word faithfully in other directions also. The conscientious minister has many painful duties. Few know how hard it is to decry popular sins, the sins perhaps of those he sincerely loves. Well might the prophets of old call such messages the burden of the Lord. My brothers, "declare the whole counsel of God, whether men hear or whether they forbear." What though it wound the feelings, if in the end it save the soul. Better a broken spirit than a stifled conscience. Here and there a faithless one may indolently pass the duty by, "speaking smooth things, prophesying deceits" because the people will have it so. Do you envy such? Have you ever seen, in a field where wheat once ripened and was reaped, an old, worn out scare-crow still standing, its obsolete arms and weather-beaten rags swinging in the wind, the sport of goose and gobbler that find a living among the stubble. Such a ridiculous anachronism is the minister who amuses his people with bold denunciations of the sins of the antediluvians, and conveniently blinks the moral obliquities and society sins that are insidiously destroying the souls of his own people. Brethren, speak the truth in love, but speak it. In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, but instruct them. Remember that Nathan never preached a better sermon than when he told his parable of the one ewe lamb to the royal delinquent; nor Peter a more successful one than when he charged home to the crucifiers of our Lord, their unnatural crime.

Secondly, the personal element has a place in the subject matter of the preacher. Preach Christ and Him crucified. The human being is a person, and yearns intuitively for the knowledge of a personal God. To meet this yearning the Infinite was manifested in the flesh. In every sermon, therefore, set clearly before the soul Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. "If we spent less time," says the Manchester Baptist, "in propping up the Cross, and more time in pointing men to it, then more souls would be saved by it." When the heart is breaking, can it sob itself to rest in the bosom of immensity? Then preach the Friend of the Sister of Bethany. When the spirit is being wrung with the bitterness of sin, will inexorable law extract the poison? Then preach the Gracious Redeemer, whose feet were washed with penitential tears, and who said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." When the tides of doubt and despair are rising around a man, can he grasp the hand of the unknowable? Then preach the Lord of Peter, who walked the waters of Galilee. When weary with the burden of some great yearning, can I confide in an

impersonal idea? Then preach the Beloved of John, on whose breast he leaned, whose secrets he learned. And when the shadows of death are gathering thick, can the thought of annihilation cheer the soul? Then preach the crucified King who said, "to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Thirdly, there is a place in preaching for the personality of the preacher. In the God-made preacher there are hidden resources that no text-book or course of lectures can furnish—the preacher's own experience of God's dealings with himself. One great secret of the Apostles' strength was that they could fall back upon their own history for corroboration of their doctrines. There was irresistible force in such appeals as these:—"That which our eyes have seen, which we have heard with our ears, which our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you." "We believe, therefore we speak." "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty," "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse mother cherisheth her children, being affectionately desirous of you." In speaking thus John and Peter and Paul spoke with all modesty and simplicity and naturalness, without a tinge of self-righteous superiority. And the preacher who cannot do as they did, lacks one great element of power. "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine." The Apostolic order is not always observed—thyself, the doctrine. Yet it is an obvious necessity. "I want you to guide me straight," said General Wolseley to a young Scotchman, familiar with the plains of the Nile, "guide me by the star." During the battle, that followed, the young man was mortally wounded, and Wolseley visited him in his tent. The dying soldier raised his eyes and said, "Didn't I guide you straight, General, didn't I guide you straight?" My dear brothers, if we would be faithful guides, we must ourselves be familiar with the way. We can no longer stand and say, Go, but pressing to the front, cry, Come. We must be like Bunyan's Great heart, at the head of our pilgrim band, guiding them safely out of the Sloughs of Despond, and over the Hills Difficulty, and through the Enchanted Grounds, and across the Valleys of Humiliation, on to the verge of the river. We must beware of substituting professional religion for personal. If Elijah needed the solitudes of Cherith to freshen, embolden, and mature his faith, and Paul, eager for the fray as a great war horse, must retire to the deserts of Arabia, how much more do you and I need, in these days of excessive publicity, in order to recover our balance and renew our strength, to be baptized afresh with the spirit of God in the dewy stillness of prayer and meditation.

There is in Mexico a tree called the rain-tree, which has this singular quality, that it imbibes moisture from the atmosphere to such a degree that it is always dripping wet. In summer, when the brooks are dry, and the ground parched, this strange tree sparkles all over with