

preaching required by the times is useful, and ought to be acquired by those who desire to be skilful as well as faithful workmen, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to saint and sinner their portion in due season.

The sense in which it is contemptible, is, when the object of the preacher is merely to please and gain the applause of his hearers, and to this end panders to their prejudices and winks at things condemned in the bible. On this point many illustrations might be given. In the Southern States where the principles of slavery are predominant, the professed teachers of Christianity with a few noble exceptions have veered round with the public opinion, until they have arrived at the point of defending slavery as a divine institution sustained by the bible. Again, in places where temperance principles are unpopular, there are preachers who, although intemperance may be making fearful ravages, will scarcely ever raise their warning voice against the giant evil. So also in too many instances with regard to the doctrine of conversion, although it may never be positively denied, yet it is seldom or never brought plainly and prominently before the people. This kind of preaching finds no countenance in the word of God. Under the Old Testament dispensation the prophets were commanded to declare unto Israel the whole counsel of God faithfully, without reserve, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear. Under the New Testament dispensation we find Jesus Christ, who may be safely imitated as a model preacher, and who never needlessly hurt the feelings of any, faithfully reproving the sins of his hearers and proclaiming doctrines which were very unwelcome to their carnal minds. There is indeed a class mentioned who spoke smooth things and cried peace, peace, when there was no peace; but they are spoken of with disapprobation and the wrath of God is denounced against them. Those who have not the moral courage faithfully to declare the whole counsel of God ought speedily to acquire it, or else retire from the ministry and give place to worthier men.

The sense in which a knowledge of the preaching required by the times is useful and ought to be acquired is, when the object of preaching is to awaken the unconverted and lead them to exercise repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, also, to advance believers in the divine life. When this is the object of the preacher it is important that he should know how to adapt his discourse in order to accomplish it, so far as human