

to tell the truth, but only so much as may win acceptability for ourselves. You have a congregation that loves Gospel sermons as they are called. Is there not a temptation to preach such sermons and to neglect the Sermon on the Mount, with its searching scrutiny of the human heart, and its lofty ideal of the divine life in the soul. You have a congregation that rejoices in practical sermons. Is there no temptation to preach the duties of the Christian to the exclusion of those great evangelical truths which are calculated to touch the heart and the conscience of men who may divine your exposition of Christian virtue, but who do not intend and perhaps are conscientiously unable to practise that virtue? This then is the danger, the danger of presenting a wilfully (I have chosen that word deliberately because I am well aware that no man living can fail, in spite of himself, to be more or less fragmentary in his presentation of Christ) a wilfully incomplete witness to Christ. There is a law of Christ as well as a Gospel of Christ, and a Gospel of Christ as well as a law of Christ, and he is a traitor to his master and is found a false witness to his God who for selfish motives refuses to apply that law to the business, the politics, the social life of his day, or who for a similar reason fails to bring that Gospel to bear upon men who beneath all other questions feel the tremor of the enquiry, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?"

(3) *That of an unsympathetic heart.*—A man may preach Christ correctly as regards mere verbal forms, may describe him in the various offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, may even employ very chaste and finished rhetoric in portraying dramatic scenes in His life and yet so speak that Christ shall appear to men a merely mechanical Saviour instead of the warm, tender, yearning Friend and Helper. As a musician may finger the silent keys in perfect accord with the principles of his art, so a preacher may preach in exact conformity with the demands of the intellect and yet have no power. The wind must blow through the organ-pipes to give the music, and the breath of tender feeling must be in our preaching before it will have power over men's hearts. To preach Christ heartlessly is to preach Christ falsely. I should like to have heard the preaching of some of the Apostles. Their sermons seem dry in the reading. So do Whitefield's and Wesley's. And this is the strongest testimony to their power. Looking at the Apostolic sermons as they are there in the Book, we marvel at the effect produced, at the electric current that went tingling from heart to heart in the vast crowd. But I imagine we would have understood the matter better if we had been there. We may be sure that when Peter preached that third hour of the Pentecost morning, there was something that made his quotations from prophecy and statements of facts to burn and shine. The ideal of eloquence would be realized in him: "Speech would be all heart and heart would be all speech." For he was speaking of his glorious Master and Friend, of the One who had called him from the fishing-boat, who through the years of his novitiate had borne so patiently with his petulance and annoyance, who had in solitude prayed for him, who in the cool, fresh stillness of that morning in Galilee had forgiven his sin. It was the bursting forth of a torrent that had been pent-up. After forty days of compulsory silence God had said to him at last:

"Speak." And do you suppose it was dry, perfunctory speaking! *Could it be that?* Was Paul's dry preaching? "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you night and day with tears." What prolonged heart power was there. When pleading his Master's cause before Agrippa, the hard, Roman politician burst forth with the exclamation: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." What vehemence, what conviction must have been in the sentences that provoked this outcry. And it seems to me the best gift we as preachers can covet is this heart-power, and by that I mean no sentimental gush, no relating of death-bed scenes for a purpose, but the power that comes from a personal communion with Jesus Christ. He must make our hearts burn before we can make other hearts burn. We must study Christ with our heart if we would preach Him with our heart.

This, then, is to be the supreme aim of all our teaching—to bear true witness to Christ. We are to seek to reproduce Him before the mind and heart of the world. We are to make men feel that He is divine, that He has a right to their faith and obedience. So far as I have studied Christ's method of dealing with men it would appear that he seldom made any formal assertion of His divinity. He just went on *living* and let that make its impression. He lived in such a way that when the disciples were asked "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." He died in such a way that the centurion standing by the cross was forced to cry out "Surely this was the Son of God." He may be a clever logician who can correlate the arguments for the Divinity of Christ; but he is a great preacher, a true preacher, that can present Christ with such clearness and power that men shall see His glory, feel His divinity, and falling down before Him shall cry "My Lord and my God."

II. *The Importance of Right Living.*

There is a witness in the life as well as of the utterance and the importance of it will appear from two considerations. The first is that while the New Testament is opened but infrequently by the average man and woman, and while the preaching of the Gospel is an occasional influence, a force which is exerted intermittently and at great intervals, the living Christian is for the world a constant, emphatic exponent of the religion of Jesus Christ. We have the Gospels in the Book which men occasionally read and occasionally hear expounded. We have the Gospel in the life which people are leading every day of their lives. Ideal Christianity is but seldom studied. Actual Christianity is the open page upon which every eye is fixed. The second consideration is found in the emphasis of this kind of testimony. This is a utilitarian age, utilitarian not merely in the low material sense, but in that better sense according to which intellectual and moral results are taken into account. The question on the lips of this century, more perhaps than any other of the centuries, is *Cui bono?* The tree may be grand to look at, of swelling growth and towering height, may have twined about the trunk and interlaced among the branches many a fond association, may have a thousand rings of age within its shaggy bark, but if it bear no fruit, if it do no good, then the axe is laid to the root of the tree and the edict is issued "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"