

It is the first of these qualifications that I would like to dwell upon for a few moments, inasmuch as the others should be deemed of minor importance. A minister of the Gospel should have a message to proclaim every time he appears before his congregation. If he has nothing to say it will matter very little how well he can get it off. Now there are not a few students who often wonder how in the world they are to preach two sermons a week for years after they have ended their college days and settled down to their life work. This feeling is intensified when those who have been engaged in the active work of their profession for a considerable time frankly confess the difficulty experienced by them in collecting new material for discourses Sunday after Sunday. Such a confession, I am told, was made about a year ago by an acquaintance of mine. He had been preaching ten years in the one pulpit and at last found it impossible to give the people anything more than what had been already delivered. He honestly declared that he had preached all that is in the Bible in that time, and sought to be removed to some other field of labor. One feels almost disposed to believe that the expression "All that I know about the Bible" should be substituted for "all that is in the Bible." Who can wonder, then, that many students do become prematurely alarmed? It is to encourage those who may be permitting such unpleasant thoughts to harass them that I turn aside for a moment from regular studies to write these lines, in the hope that some will be able to ease their minds about the matter.

To me it seems that the solution of the difficulty is not far to seek, and it is this: to have a thorough knowledge of the Word of God. Among all the books with which an Arts student is obliged to make himself acquainted, none will ever prove as valuable to him after college life has ceased as the Book of books. Is there a man, who has had years of experience in the active work of the Ministry, who will not support this assertion? We do not deny of course that text books on Natural Science, Philosophy, Literature and Classics are worth a good deal of study, for a knowledge of these will doubtless be a great assistance to those who desire to understand the Word more clearly. But when, by means of these, the truth has been more distinctly revealed, human knowledge can lead us no further. We must lay it aside and listen to the sacred voices that come to our ears from another world. Familiarity with the contents of the Bible is doubtless the secret of the pulpit success of the past, of the present, and must continue to be so to the end of time. And why? Because the Bible is primarily designed to reach and rescue men from the power and guilt of sin and its dire consequences, and to build them up in Christ Jesus. It is God's truth, and it alone, which is calculated to produce this effect. It is the Word of God that is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and