

being muddled, and meddled with, and interfered with to its detriment, just in the same way? Many people are coming as they think, to spread it, when they are really hindering it. They are coming to help it on a bit, when they are really taking off both its feet and its wings, and turning it into no Gospel at all. I know nothing more difficult (I speak from the depths of my heart) than it is to stand to-day four square to all the philosophical, scientific, intellectual, critical, social, political cross currents and winds that are blowing, and notwithstanding them all to speak the simple Gospel as you get it from the Lord Jesus Christ. Try it and prove its difficulty, and you will have more sympathy with those who are trying to do it than perhaps you have. It is not just so easy to speak as this little girl spoke as some of you are thinking. You cry for the whole Gospel, and the simple Gospel. Do not simply cry to us, but cry to the Lord Jesus Christ, for it will need all the baptism and anointing and indwelling of His own Spirit to keep us at the true, simple Gospel. There are a thousand things round about us that tend to spoil the simplicity of our testimony; and this old trouble is just here to day still—the king of Syria saying, “I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” Well, what did they make of it? He brought the letter to the King of Israel, saying, “Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the King of Israel had read the letter, he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.”

There are some things that kings and councillors and parliaments cannot do. This is one of them. They are utterly at their wits' end, and God will not give this glory but in one way, and this blessing but along a particular line. One thing does come out of it clearly, and that is the emphasizing of the point with which I began. Leprosy evidently was regarded as incurable. “Consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. Am I God, to kill and to make alive?” Oh, that we had the same notion to-day about sin! Oh, that men and women were revived to a simple and intense conviction of this: “Sin is incurable: there is no remedy except the heavenly, the supernatural!” Where is the wise man's wisdom? Where is all the power of kings and lords and princes and councillors to save a sinner? It is reduced to utter contempt.

“And it was so, when Elisha the man of

God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore has thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.” Does not that look a little like boasting at first? “Let him come to me.” Yes, it is boasting, but it is boasting of the right kind. When a man boasts in God, “the humble hear thereof, and are glad.” The meek hear of a testimony like this, and instead of being offended at it, and calling it vain glory, they glory in it; for Elisha is here lifting up, not himself, but the God who gave him all the power that he had. And here again is a great lesson for those of us who would really serve the deepest need of our generation. Let us not magnify ourselves, but let us magnify our office; let us magnify our message; let us magnify Him whom we preach to men. Let us challenge the world's need and the world's problem. Let us call upon men and women to come and look our way, and give us a trial. You can here and there, and ran the otherwhere to get rid of your leprosy. Now, have you got soul peace, and power, and strength? Then, if not, will you come at length to us? “I magnify my office.” In myself, I am poor and weak and vile and nothing; but I stand here to-night and dare to say that I preach a Gospel which could send every sinner within these walls outside of the walls as mightily changed as was Naaman before Elisha had done with him. That makes it worth while to come here. Oh, that God would revive preachers in a simple faith in the message which we have to deliver. “Let him come unto me,” said Elisha—and it was no boasting or vain glory. He dared not say less for God's sake and for Naaman's sake. He dared not say less than he said, neither dare we. Come to us. After all, things are at a very sad pass, I grant you. There is awful trouble in the land. There is an awful problem, and we cannot untie it; and the power of the State, and the power of the world's wisdom, and the power of the world's deepest sympathy, seems to make no more impression upon it than the king's advice and the king's sympathy made upon the sickness of his beloved general. But yet “there is balm in Gilead, and there is a physician there,” and the problem is not so insoluble as we think it is, and the distress is not so dire; for there is one voice rising sharp and clear above all the Babel voices of a thousand counsellors who are darkening counsel by words without knowledge; and this is the voice; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” It is a message straight from Jesus Christ, who died and