

jects of sermons, can hardly be approved by any one who believes that the church has a Gospel of salvation to preach to the world. It would be a deplorable thing if preachers, who stand as ambassadors for Christ, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, should take their ideas of preaching from men who have drifted away from the faith of the Gospel.

We have schools and colleges in which art, literature, physical science, astronomy, agriculture, metaphysics, biology, chemistry, and other branches of useful knowledge are taught. Will any one maintain that it is the business of the pulpit to undertake to teach such subjects, however important they may be, and to compete with the agencies now employed in the dissemination of general secular knowledge? For the preacher to drift away in any such line would be to disregard the direct command of Christ, and the teaching and practise of the apostles, and practically to confess either that the people did not need the Gospel message, or that it had no special adaptation to the wants and woes of a sinful world.

Doubtless, there is room for improvement in preaching, but I am not prepared to admit that in the preaching of to-day there is any general neglect to apply the principles of Christ's religion to the duties of common life. Even in the last century John Wesley, whose evangelistic work might be supposed to limit the range of his teaching, preached and published a series of discourses expounding and enforcing the practical duties enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount. The sermons that are published in volumes, as well as those printed in the newspapers, do not at all justify the charge that the preachers of to-day deal in discussions of abstract dogmas, and neglect to condemn the social and moral evils of the times. Ministers are not perfect, but they can not be fairly charged with failing to apply Christ's teaching to the moral problems of

modern life. All departments of knowledge may be used by the preacher to illustrate and enforce religious truth. At the same time, it is certain that the discussion of political and economic questions in the pulpit, even when moral principles are involved, requires special wisdom and discretion.

*The Chicago Advance* not long ago had some judicious remarks on this subject, from which I select a few pertinent sentences:

"The fact can not be concealed that the pulpit that undertakes to discuss questions of political economy puts itself into an extremely difficult and unsatisfactory position. . . It is a science, therefore, to be discussed either by specialists or by men of practical experience. The minister is neither, and when he undertakes to set forth his theories of the science, he is walking on thin ice. . . When he is preaching the Word of God, he is wielding a sword that is invincible."

#### HELPFUL HINTS FROM HARD TIMES.

BY REV. JAMES G. DITMARS.

ALL American industries and trades are emerging slowly from one of the severest crises that ever tested them. We are now powerless to remove the cause or causes of the present hard times; if, indeed, we can discover them clearly. But he is a wise man—or soon will be—who learns from all his experiences. Even temporal calamities may be made to minister to spiritual excellence. They direct men's hearts and hands from worldly investments by demonstrating their uncertainty, while they also present the chance to turn men's minds to the certainty and permanence of the heavenly inheritance. The former exist only "for a season;" the latter is "eternal." Jesus therefore exhorted people to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven and not upon earth.

#### *Earthly Treasures.*

Worldly wealth first claims our attention, while we seek to learn its