

effective in moving these hearts when, as a pastor, he appeals to them in their pews.

Of necessity, the gospel minister is first estimated and appraised according to his efficiency as a preacher. Can he speak to edification? Is he mentally and spiritually qualified to proclaim his Master's message? The first essential to his success is that he be convinced that it is his Master's message and not his own. God must speak to us before we speak to men. When we are duly impressed with the thought that the Lord Almighty has laid his message on our hearts and on our lips, we shall speak out and cannot keep silent. Then we shall speak with a note of earnestness which cannot be mistaken and which cannot be counterfeited. Then we shall be like Jeremiah of old, who said that the word of God in his heart was as it were a burning fire shut up in his bones. It must find expression. The truth of God is the message; and the whole man of the speaker must be open to truth until the whole man is vocal with truth. Our earnestness then will be self-evidencing; and our hearers will feel it. But if we look on our work as irksome or professional, or as a perfunctory service, however well simulated, we will not long deceive our hearers. The sermon whose composition and delivery indicate deep, strong heart-cries, is usually the sermon that moves and uplifts, and that is instrumental in soul-awakening and character-building.

Week by week the recurring question with many a minister is, "What next shall I preach from?" It should first be, "What shall I preach for?" When the soul is alive to that question, it soon finds what to preach from. Then the message of God, uttered with the cry of man's heart, is apt to touch the heart of the hearer. Men will listen, almost in spite of themselves, to those convictions which they feel to have been generated, or at least clarified and confirmed, in the laboratory of the speaker's own soul. The hearer is influenced by the preacher as well as by the preaching; for the preacher's personality speaks to him as well as the preacher's voice.