

call heathen lands. The living messenger must go forth and proclaim the Message if they are to hear it. Under such circumstances preaching will always hold a foremost place in the ministry of the Church. But is it to be a permanent function of the ministry? It is more than hinted by some that it is not. With the profusion of religious knowledge now pouring forth from the press in ever-increasing volume; with the sermons of all eloquent preachers that are printed; with the commentaries on the various parts of Holy Scripture that are now available; it may seem that the office of the Preacher is not what it was, and that no very great regret may be felt if the power of the Pulpit does decline. Be that as it may, we are ready to let the question of the permanency of Preaching to be settled by existing needs. What are they?

It will be readily admitted that interest in religious subjects is characteristic of the present day. Men's minds are not interested only, but agitated over religious subjects. Ample proof of this—if proof were needed—is found in the flood of religious literature of every kind that is pouring from the press. Not only have we learned Commentaries on Holy Scripture,—the result of much critical study and learning,—but innumerable essays on every subject of religious thought. Even the secular press frequently fills its columns with sermons and the discussion of religious subjects. The result is that we are living in continual religious agitation and controversy. There is ever around us a Babel of tongues and much confusion of thought. Speculation is rife, because stimulated to the utmost extent, and much scepticism abounds. No sooner has any one difficulties himself than he rushes into print, and they become the difficulties of thousands. Every new theory is debated with eager interest. But with all this religious agitation we do not find that there is any clearer apprehension of the cardinal truths of the Gospel. Men are still largely in perplexity touching the Incarnation and Atonement; Sanctification and the Resurrection. They are still asking whether prayer is heard, whether there is life after death, and some are even asking whether there is or can be anything known of God. Is He a Force or a Person? To guide men through the mazes of doubt something more is needed than Books and Pamphlets and Newspaper Articles. What is needed is Sermons. Preaching alone can do the work. Speculative theories have to be dealt with, and positive truths have to be proclaimed. This is the work of the Preacher. And men are still willing to give heed to the living voice. Crowds will as readily assemble to-day to listen to what is worth hearing, as we are told they thronged around the great St. Chrysostom, or as they used to hang on the lips of the late Canon Liddon when he preached in St. Paul's Cathedral. There is no channel of approach to a man's heart and soul so powerful as the living voice. Men, I am convinced, are waiting to-day for the message of truth, love and peace. The world satisfies them no more now than it did in the days of Solomon. Sin is the same as it was; its poison as virulent and its power as destructive. To suppose that books would ever supersede the preached sermon is to suppose that books on medicine would do away with the profession of the physician. The press cannot do the work of the Pulpit, and the attractive power of the ministry still very largely lies in good preaching. The exhortation, "Preach the Word," given to Timothy, is still binding upon us, and formed, as we remember, a part of our great Commission when we were admitted to the office of the Priesthood: "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the Congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto."

Now, how may this be done? How may we all preach effectively? When we bring our-

selves close up to the work, how impossible it seems? How instantly do the words rise to our lips, "Ah! Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." But it is just realizing this weakness that may be said to constitute the first requisite of effective preaching. Bishop Dupanloup—that great master of the art of true preaching—thus writes in his striking essay on "The Ministry of Preaching": "Gentlemen, do you know what is the secret of oratory? It is a virtue within the reach of *all* the world, Humility. Yes, gentlemen, humility; holy, Christian and priestly humility is a good counsellor in preaching, as in all things. Humility gives good sense, as pride troubles the mind. The faults which are noticed in the pulpit, when they do not come from want of capacity or of labour, have almost always their root in pride.

. . . It is pride which prevents them from being simple, lively, true and natural. They fear to be vulgar or commonplace; it is that which makes them soar up, strain themselves, and go beyond themselves, and affect kinds of preaching for which they are not fitted." Let us take this wise counsel home to our hearts, and I am sure it will help us. An effectual preacher is not necessarily an eloquent preacher. We can only use the gifts we have. Though not possessing the intellectual gifts and persuasive powers of a Wilberforce, Magee, or a Liddon, yet we may preach effectively. Our sermons may be unadorned; they may contain no embellishments, but withal are full of burning words, of the Holy Ghost, and of power. A true and effective preacher is one who has a just estimate of himself and his work. He will not try to be somebody else in the pulpit, but will speak in God's Name, God's Message, as will be best suited to his hearers. We have at times heard it said that it would be well to have an order of preachers. I trust that will never be the case. "It is not an order of preachers," to quote the *Church Quarterly Review* (Jan., 1891), "that is wanted, but that parish priests should give more serious thought to the subject of preaching. To have a ceaseless series of Mission sermons, or passionate addresses, or revival appeals, however eloquently they might be set forth, would weary after a time. What is wanted is single-minded devotion to the duties of the pastoral office, simple teaching of the truths of the Gospel, combined with a real knowledge of the people, and careful study. Where these are joined to a holy life, the preacher's words will not be uttered in vain, however slender his natural talents may be, and however feeble his oratorical power. And where these are wanting; what account of his stewardship will the priest be able to give at the Last Day?"

Next, there must be due preparation for sermons. With some who have had the advantage of a liberal education, and have access to a library, preparation for sermons will be a very different thing from that of others who are not so favoured. Nevertheless, for every sermon due preparation must be made. "We cannot speak," writes Bishop Dupanloup, "out of the abundance of the heart, and with a lively eloquence, except the mind and heart be full of what is said." The most experienced and the most ready of speech cannot dispense with preparation. Otherwise, you will have poverty of thought, platitudes, and speech, all unworthy of the subject. Facility of speech is often a great snare, when it inspires any preacher with the presumption which makes him neglect study, so that he ripens nothing and produces in the end only green and immatured fruit, instead of wholesome nourishment.

Preparation for sermons must of course include the continuous, systematic and prayerful study of Holy Scripture. "The seed of the Kingdom," be it ever remembered, "is the Word of God." The Word became Incarnate, and had then audible expression. And before our Lord ascended into heaven, He provided

that the voice of God should not be silent. He commissioned men with His own mission on earth, and gave the charge, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." We are now the representatives and ambassadors of Christ. We bear the voice of God upon our lips, and it is God that speaks by our mouth. We do not speak our own words. We speak and transmit the Divine Voice. We are the ministers of it. We speak because we have a commission to speak; because it is our mission to carry everywhere, and to all men, the Divine Message. "It is then imperatively necessary," to quote Bishop Dupanloup once more, "for us to study, and to know as far as human infirmity may, how we can preserve to the Message, of which we are the bearers, its august character."

Next to Holy Scripture, we place the study of one or more of the Fathers. This may not always be possible, but it is not as difficult as some suppose. We may not possess any of the works of the Fathers ourselves,—not even "The City of God," by St. Augustine,—still surely copies of some of their works might easily form a part of every Denney library. It should, at any rate, be our ambition to know all we can of that mine of sacred thought which has done so much to instruct the Church in the Great Message. Dr. Pusey writes on this subject as follows: "If any would spend as much time in reading the Fathers as they do in daily or weekly papers, magazines, periodicals, and other ephemeral publications, they could in a few years enrich their life's blood by the marrow and fatness of the teaching of the Fathers." The parting counsel of the great Doctor to the Church was this: "If I might leave one bequest to the rising generation of Clergy, who will have (what I have had only incidentally) the office of Preachers, it would be, 'In addition to the study of Holy Scripture, which they studied night and day, study the Fathers especially St. Augustine.'"

Another source of preparation for sermons is the sermons of any of the great Preachers. They should be studied, not to be imitated, but to be assimilated mentally and morally. One good sermon should, if possible, be read every week; and, in our choice, we should not keep to one style or another, but take those who are Masters of Theology and exposition. The sermons of even Dr. Brooks may in this way be useful when sandwiched in by Liddon on both sides.

Much help in the preparation of sermons will also be found in reading of a miscellaneous character, such as Biographies, Missionary Records, History, Poetry and Travel. Indeed, this kind of reading is very important to impart freshness to our preaching, and furnish illustrations which will prove to be apt and striking.

As to subjects for sermons, I must say one word. The subject matter is settled for us, but there is a danger lest the desire of novelty should lead us from the Great Message to topics which may more easily attract and interest. I know some think that "The Word" is only a limited area. I can only say I know not how it could be wider. To tell men all the Word declares—the whole counsel of God—will certainly not be done within the allotted time of the ministerial life. To tell of God in His perfections, His Greatness, and His Love; of sin, its history, its power, its deceitfulness and manifold workings; of the Incarnate Saviour, His Love, His Life, His Example, and His Great Atonement; His present Intercession and His Coming again; of the Holy Ghost, His regenerating power, and His abiding presence; of the duties of the renewed life, the graces to be cultivated and the responsibilities to be discharged; of the visible kingdom with its privileges and blessings, will furnish topics of ample variety and importance for all our preaching. As winners of souls—as those sent to take men alive—