

to speak softly. At the same time, sent from such an immovable centre and seat, with what projectile, what omnipotent force, do his stern words, if he uses stern words, fly to their mark! It was thus, one must conceive the Savior to have uttered those dreadful denunciations of his—those living thunderbolts, leaping out from amidst the kindled wrath of the Lamb! There was no loudness, no crash, no explosion of noise. It was almost silence, that speech of Christ's—but silence how deadly! He spake with authority; and authority is never vociferous.

But we have as yet pointed out only what the positive in preaching is not. Let us now attempt a statement of what the positive in preaching is.

The positive in preaching, then, consists of two elements; matter and manner. The one element may be called objective, the other, subjective. The objective element is *what* you preach. The subjective element is *how* you preach it. What you preach must be definite, ascertained, essential, religious truth. How you preach it, must be with confidence and with authority.

There is crying need of the positive in preaching. I do not say more need to-day than existed yesterday. Let comparisons rest. There is need to-day, and the need is crying. Need, I say; I do not say demand. In the present case, the less the demand, the need the greater. For the case is one in which the supply naturally precedes the demand. The appetite here is starved by inanition. It would grow by being fed.

Let us invert the order of our analysis, and take up first for consideration the subjective element entering into the positive in preaching.

To preach positively, you must believe positively. You cannot believe positively except on evidence. You cannot inherit a positive belief. You cannot take a positive belief from tradition. You cannot let authority impose a positive belief upon you. I do not say you must not, I say you cannot, let these things happen. The things are impossible. There is one invariable, inexorable condition for coming by a positive belief; you must reach it through evidence, evidence sifted, weighed, appraised, by *yourself*. In order to your securing the positive tone in preaching, it is desirable in the highest degree for you to have the *habit* of believing profoundly upon evidence.

I mention a few practical methods of cultivating this habit of positive conviction.

The first method is one *not* very practical—though very important. You must be born right; you must have the right sort of parentage. You will, then, not indeed inherit the conviction, but you may inherit the character to make the convictions possible. For, as the positive in preaching springs from the positive in conviction, so the positive in conviction springs from the positive in character.