

speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, who at first created and who now sustains the universe by His power, and the attributes of whose nature require that no sinner should have cause to rejoice in his iniquity, and whose glory is concerned in rewarding the righteous. All this the preacher may do in the exercise of this high and holy function of his office, in endeavouring to awaken men to a sense of their danger and to induce them to flee for refuge to the Rock of Ages, in order that they may become parts of the spiritual building which is being laid in Zion.

We repeat, then, that preaching is the Word adapted to all the felt wants and appetencies of our nature as they spring-up in the progress of time, and that in such a way and so effectually as that, under the influences of the Spirit, it is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to those who are called. Hence "to preach aright," as it has been truly said, "is not to discuss coldly a topic, is not to indulge in metaphysical statements, is not to court human applause, is not to move the passions by earthly eloquence. It is a much higher thing. It is to give a tongue to prophets and apostles, it is to speak as the Blessed Saviour and Paul speak, it is to make Truth intelligible, forcible, triumphant. It is to clothe the Bible with all the attributes of a living instructor."

We would take leave to say to you then, Fathers and Brethren, by way of remembrance that, if such is preaching in its fair and legitimate sense, it is no easy matter to perform this duty in such a way as that you may deserve the appellation of skilful instruments in the hands of the Master-Builder of the temple of the Lord. It is no easy matter to give to the written Word the tenderness and pathos, the authority and force with which it was first clothed by its inspired authors,—to declare the whole counsel of God in its precise proportion, place and connection, to declare it wholly—keeping back nothing that is profitable,—to declare the peculiar truths and doctrines of the Gospel in such a way as that the most illiterate may understand them, the most insensible may feel them, the most intelligent may be impressed by them, so intelligibly as that the well informed may be instructed by them, and, in a word, with such a due regard to good taste as that the most refined and the best educated may be won by them, may be wooed through their instrumentality into the way of life.

Some of you, especially of my younger Brethren, may imagine that the Gospel, being in itself reasonable and beneficial, needs only to be proclaimed in order to secure for it a cordial reception. But they need not be discouraged although they should find, in the course of their experience, many boldly opposing the Truth, not a few desirous to explain it away when they cannot deny the conclusiveness of the evidence on which it rests, and some

with the utmost eagerness devising excuses for not immediately receiving it and acquiescing in its requirements, although they may admit the indispensable duty of their doing so, if they would have their character elevated and purified and refined, and if they would become a part of that noble structure of which we have all along been speaking. All this proceeds from the radical depravity of human nature; and those who are ministers of the Word, we would take the liberty of saying, ought to keep this depravity steadily in view in estimating the probable success of their ministrations. As well might we speculate on the effect of a physical power in raising a mass of inert matter without taking into account the law by which nature gravitates to the earth as speculate on the effects of a spiritual power in opening the eyes of man to the Truth and elevating his affections from the things of time to those of eternity without taking into account the carnality of these affections. In short we would say on this point that it is our imperative duty to take all possible pains to bring forth things new and old according to the case from the exhaustless treasury of God's Word, even that treasury which is so rich in appropriate advice, in example, in warning, in motive, in consolation, in materials for the use of conviction to the careless, conversion to the unbeliever, reproof to the presumptuous, direction to the doubtful, strength to the weak, comfort to the sorrowful, edification to all. And, if we do so in an humble dependence on the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Spirit being vouchsafed on the Word preached, then we may expect to preach savingly and to profit, to shed light upon the darkest paths, to bring rivers of living water from what otherwise would seem like the hard and flinty rock, to turn the bleak and arid wilderness into the garden of the Lord, and thus to be the honoured instruments of building the temple of the Lord, that temple whose foundations never can be shaken, whose pillars never shall be removed.

But it is not through the medium of the preaching of the Word alone that the spiritual temple of the Lord is to be built. It is obvious that, if we would be successful ministers of the everlasting Gospel, we must not only preach the Word in purity, but there must also be on our part the due administration of Christian ordinances and pastoral superintendence. Paul taught not only publicly but from house to house, and made it his endeavour in this way "to warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." And it becomes you, we would take leave in one sentence to say, to follow his example by seeking to extend appropriate care to all the various classes of your people according to their spiritual character and circumstances, using every legitimate mean to obtain correct information in regard to

these, and then to endeavour to adapt yourselves to each particular case. And acting thus, and that in an humble dependence on the efficacy of persevering prayer on your part, you may expect that your endeavours will be accompanied with power from On High for the conversion of sinners and the edification of souls; and giving yourselves in right earnest to the duties of your high and holy office whatever may be the immediate result of your exertions, though the seed which you may have sown with much anxiety should seem at least to outward appearance to be productive of no fruit, yet you may rest assured that you will be the honoured instruments of building up the temple of the Lord. "As scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven," and "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," you will be able to add to the number of Christ's true and faithful followers, you will be the means of increasing the number of those who shall have an everlasting habitation in the sanctuary Above, and who shall have a new name written upon them which shall never be blotted out, and who in the presence of the highest intelligences of Heaven shall give glory to Him whose name is the BRANCH, even to Him who, after He has built the temple of the Lord, "shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne."

Whilst we have taken the liberty of thus addressing our Fathers and Brethren, in conclusion, we would take leave to ask all present, Do you think that you are the temples of the Living God? Doubtless every heart is either a temple of God or a temple of idols, and, if your heart is the temple of God, there ought to be inscribed as it were on your foreheads "holiness unto the Lord." Be assured that those men are the temple of the Lord who, loving Him with all their hearts, devote themselves unreservedly to His service. Be ye steadfast, therefore, and unmovable, bearing in mind that, though ye are only a fraction, so to speak, of the noble and stupendous fabric inhabited by the Holy Spirit, yet in one sense each individual amongst you constitutes an entire temple which ought to be regarded by you as sacred to God's use. Reflect on this, and then conceive, if you can, a more important truth than that of keeping this temple inviolate; conceive, if you can, anything more appalling than that of defiling the temple of the Holy Ghost which is the temple of God. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." We trust that such will not be the case with one of you; but that, on the contrary, bearing steadily in mind that the influences of the Holy Spirit are given to you as a principle of new and heavenly obedience, it is your bounden duty to keep for Him the temple of your soul. We trust, also, that with lively interest you will henceforth look forward to