

lar channels of intelligence, and made so prominent, imposing, and fascinating as to shut out of view or obscure all the higher and exact thinking, and cause itself to be regarded as the sum of all truth and wisdom. We refer to the indefinite thinking, or no-thinking, that has come to the present generation, as a special infliction, from those looest of all modern so-called thinkers, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and their friends and disciples, and that has been embodied in so much of what has been furnished for popular reading.

Now, no man is in position to exert so powerful an influence, either for or against the continuance of such thinking, as the preacher of the Gospel. By a gospel of indefiniteness and inconsistency, he can help continue the muddle in which so many find themselves regarding the truths of Christianity; by a clear, distinct, and consistent presentation of the truth, he can help them out of this condition.

Owing to many and various influences besides this drift of the times—chief of which is perhaps the fact that the courses of study are too full of other things to permit of any adequate study of the nature of the human mind and of human thought—the average man gets, in his course of training, by his own confession, next to nothing on these important subjects. Said a young professor, who had been the honor-man in one of the great colleges: "I studied mental philosophy, moral philosophy, and logic, under that distinguished scholar, Professor So and So, but they made no impression whatever on my mind, and I have now no definite theories on those subjects." That is a typical case.

Before the preacher is ready to deal with any subject of discourse that is worth presenting to a people, he needs to lay the proper foundation for it by gaining the power of forming correct conceptions, on the basis of reality and fact; and to acquire the added power to bring out the essence of these conceptions in exact definitions and to distribute accurately their elements by means of logical division and partition. He needs to do his thinking in such a way that, when he reaches his conceptions and notions, they shall be *knowledge* to him, and something that he can set before the people as knowledge.

"What do you mean by that term?" was asked of a somewhat brilliant young professor. "Define the term." "I cannot define it," was the reply. "This thing of definition is a great hindrance to thought and to progress in attainments." "It is impossible to know," said another. "What do you mean by *know*?" was asked him. The reply was: "It cannot be defined. The limitations of knowledge are such that it cannot be known what it is to know." The natural response was: "How do you *know* that?"

To the preacher the power of distinct thinking is fundamental, even more clearly so than to the mere teacher. He needs to gain definite, clear, and distinct views of things, so that he shall be able to say, on this point or that, "I know;" "This is truth."