

high with all needful qualifications for their work. Can we suppose Him to have been less earnest in prayer in regard to His own preaching,—first, that He might discern the right messages, and then that He might so handle them that they should become truly efficient? And may we not believe that it was in answer to such prayers that in every department of homilistical work our Lord was so remarkably felicitous? that He was enabled to go straight to the heart of every subject He touched, and present in a few simple words the very pith and marrow of the whole? Able, for example, in the Lord's Prayer, to put into six simple lines the sum and substance of the deepest needs of the human spirit, inasmuch that it has been found to suit every age, and clime, and condition; to suit alike the sage and the savage, the infant and the veteran; and is sure to retain this marvelous quality for all time to come? Must it not have been in answer to prayer that He got His remarkable tact and readiness in answering the objections and cavils of enemies, reducing them almost at the first word to silence? Was it not thus, too, that He obtained those wonderful parables like the Prodigal Son that have had such a power at once to arrest, to enlighten, and to convert? And His longer discourses, like the Sermon on the Mount, or the Farewell Discourse, every verse of which is packed with the very essence of spiritual wisdom, and has served to mold Christian thought and guide Christian life for nineteen centuries? And must it not have been in large measure from His own experience of the infinite blessedness and power of prayer that He so earnestly pressed it upon others? "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Doubtless it is by following our Lord's example in the main that we shall best be prepared for the business of preaching. Preparation is of two kinds—habitual and special: habitual, in the sense of training our whole nature, intellectual, spiritual, and physical, for the work; and special, in respect of every particular act of preaching. But the habitual will dominate the special; if the spirit be gendered and the habits acquired that fit for the work generally, little difficulty will be found with the particular acts.

1. In habitual preparation an important place must be assigned to the proper discipline of the intellectual powers. But had our Lord any training of this sort? Not, certainly, at schools or colleges. But as there are some men who, without the special training of the schools, attain remarkable control over all their mental powers, and are able to bend them with singular effect to explain and enforce their views; so we can not but believe that our Lord, born as He was without sin, and without that disorderly turn arising from sin, which, besides other effects, disturbs the action of the intellect, possessed naturally and intuitively a clearness of view, an orderly arrangement of thought, and a faculty of clear exposition which superseded the need of scholastic dis-