

PREACHING DOUBTS.

A layman was invited to speak before a convention of ministers. His topic was, "The Pulpit as Viewed from the Pew." As might be expected from an intelligent and godly layman, he gave some excellent suggestions to ministers. Among other good things he said: "The minister should preach what he is sure of and not use his pulpit to propose conundrums he cannot solve."—*Advocate.*

WHY IS PREACHING NEEDED?

Our aim, in the preaching of the Gospel, is to bring man back to that Master whom he has left, and for whose service he has ever since been longing, even more than he knew. This is the reason that men gather round the pulpit still. Men need to be told of their want. They do not come to hear the highest arguments; masterpieces of argument they have at home upon their shelves. Nor do they come expecting from you the force of a Demosthenes or the pathos of a Massillon. They want you to tell them of the more excellent way. They want to catch again the spirit of some hymn that their mother taught them, and to have renewed the mood of an old penitence or of a scrupulous fear of some vice with whose face they have since become familiar. Look upon them with their hunger and their thirst, all the more touching if they are in a measure unconscious. Give them the hope they require. Tell them the meaning of the life of Jesus—that He suffered to atone for sin that we might be forgiven and cease from sin.—*Bishop Ellicott.*

SENSATIONALISM.

If there are amongst us any pulpit teachers who have the itch for popularity, of which sensationalism is born, let them carefully ponder the following analysis from the pen of Dr. David J. Burrell:

Sensational preaching is of three kinds: 1. Buffoonery; 2. Heresy; 3. Prophesying smooth things. Pulpit buffoonery is the use of unseemly modes of speech, vulgarisms, or current phrases not adapted to the sacredness of the house of God. It is an easy thing for a pastor to force himself into public notice if he has no compunctions against stooping. All things are popular which are malapropos. Low comedy in its own place may suffer for the want of an audience; but low comedy in the temple of the most high God will fill the pews, the aisles and vestibules. Men love the humor of inappropriateness. The clown in the playhouse may fail to amuse; but if you put his cap and bells where the mitre ought to be—on the priest's head—there will be no end of applause. When a street arab uses the dialect of low life, no one thinks it worthy of attention; but let a preacher lean over his sacred desk and utter it, and his hearers say with one accord: "We will hear thee again concerning this matter."—*Herald and Presbyterian.*

THE MINISTER'S WORKING THEOLOGY.*

BY REV. PROF. SCRIMGER, D.D.

WHILE the minister's studies and knowledge should cover a wide range, his teaching should, for the most part, centre around four great truths.

1. The unique character and personality of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the four Gospels. These are the artless records of the Apostles' preaching, and through the proclamation of their contents Christianity gained its earliest triumphs. The story of Christ as told in them contained some things that might repel, but there are far more that was fitted to attract and win. There was His manifest sincerity, His simple dignity, the exquisite balance and wholeness of His whole character, His directness of thought and speech that took Him into the heart of every subject and made it clear, His kindness and compassion, His appreciation of little children, His courage, His calm submission to persecution even unto death; in fine, an ideal man. All these things were attractive to noble and generous minds.

But behind all this there was a personality enveloped in mystery and constantly in the shadow of the supernatural. Reticent as to His claims, and almost concealing His miracles, He yet impressed all with His superhuman power. Those who would not believe He was the Son of God had to suppose Him an agent of the devil. This element could not be ignored. With many it created difficulty, but to many more it furnished the very guarantee which they needed, that if they trusted Him He would be able to save them. To all those who accepted Him the Gospel message became an inspiration in the life, to kindle love and enoble character. The preacher of today cannot follow a better example than that of the Apostles if he would secure like results.

This preaching of Christ is not quite the same thing as preaching certain doctrines about Christ, but rather the holding up of the living person in the details of his conduct and character. Doctrines are inevitable and necessary to keep one in a right attitude to the facts. Even the Apostles were forced to reflect upon the significance of these facts, and the Church was early compelled to formulate the true doctrine because of the number of erroneous views being promulgated. But it was never intended that these doctrines should form the staple of preaching. The earliest creeds still give far more space to the recital of facts than to the statement of the theory about Christ.

But there are some aspects of Christ's work that deserve special mention; hence,

2. A second element in our working theology is the atoning value of the death of Christ as the free ground of our justification. Jesus is