

agency, however, can usurp the domain of the sermon. Still as much as ever "faith cometh by hearing." The prophet, as imperatively as in the old days of Israel's need, is bidden "Go, cry." "I wish he could find the point again," said Carlyle, "and stick to it with tenacity—with deadly energy—for there is need of him yet!" "The speaking man, if only he be a man, carries the keys of the ages at his girdle. Moses was a lawgiver much more than a ceremonialist. Mohammed spoke and wrote. One of Edison's phonographic machines can do the work of a priest, but for the prophet the first need is 'say,' the second need is 'say,' and still and for evermore 'say.'"^{*} John Stuart Mill paid his tribute of admiration to that "inestimably precious unorganized institution, the Order (if it may be so called) of Prophets" which in that little corner of the earth, Palestine, "kept up the antagonism of influences which is the only security for continued progress," and Mr. Mill claims that it is to this that we ought to ascribe the fact that the Jews instead of being stationary like other Asiatics, were, next to the Greeks, the most progressive people of antiquity, and jointly with them have been the starting point and main propelling agency of modern civilization. It would ill become the American people who owe their liberty, perhaps, to the preachers who prepared the way for the Revolution more than to any one other cause, to challenge this noble testimony to human speech fired to true eloquence by the passion of intense conviction. If from these earthly voices we rise to listen to Him that speaketh from heaven, we do so only to be established immovably in our position. Preaching is the chief means ordained by Christ for the conversion of the world. Our churches may fill themselves with so many organizations that they shall recall in their agencies the word of Ezekiel "their work was as it were a wheel within a wheel," only multiplied fifty fold. The service may magnify its office with harpers harping upon their harps until one almost sympathizes with Saul when he flung his javelin at his musician. But on its solitary height of divine appointment stands the sermon. While time shall endure its voice must be heard. In the vision of the last day the preacher finds his place in the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. What was said by an eloquent Congregationalist a few years since is still true of the majority of our churches: "Hitherto our places of worship have not been characterized by any special architectural excellence, and we derive little or no aid from the fine arts to impress the mind of the worshipper. Our songs of praise are not musical entertainments. The ministers of our churches put forth no priestly pretensions. We depend upon the power of the Divine word and the work of the Holy Spirit to convert

^{*} Dr. John Clifford, Matt. vii:28-29. Comp. Stanley's "Jewish Church," 1, 415.