

ful messenger. I want you now to think with me of the priest in his capacity as a preacher.

These are strange days. In some quarters, the ministry of preaching is depreciated and underestimated. In other quarters, it is overvalued and exaggerated. But I go back again to the original commission and hear the command, "Preach the Gospel." It was no small value that Christ laid upon preaching. And S. Paul solemnly declared—"Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." There never was a time when the office of preaching needed greater care and emphasis than to-day. The hour is big with opportunity for the preacher. It is a solemn task for any man to be called to preach nowadays. But if preaching was never more needed than now, so never was it more difficult.

Men have been preaching the same truths for such a long time that originality is difficult, if not actually impossible. And the people seem to demand originality. The temptation is strong to swing away from the old Gospel and invent a new one. It may be said of people to-day as was said of the Athenians of old—they "spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing." The worship of novelty is a very popular form of worship just now. Let a man propound some new theory or preach a little gospel of his own, and people will flock to hear him, and sit with open mouths and attentive ears whilst he prates his new story! Has the old gospel, then, lost its grip upon the hearts of men? Are people really tired of the old truths? My friends, I am not an old man but I have lived long enough to have had my own temptations and to witness the futility and hopelessness of providing a substitute for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The determination of S. Paul must be the determination of every messenger: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus