

a "fatal facility" for extempore address which tempts them to rely too much upon impromptu effort. Others are much occupied with public engagements of various kinds, and have often to fall back on "old sermons," which, however good they were when first preached, necessarily lack in the reproduction that freshness to the preacher's own heart which is essential to their awakening interest in the hearts of the hearers. While others, again, try to excuse their indolence by the very shallow pretence of relying upon the Holy Spirit to teach them "in that same hour," in the pulpit, what they ought to have "sought out and set in order" by a diligent and prayerful study of the Scriptures in their closet.

We should be sorry to convey the impression that neglect of the kind referred to was at all common among us, or that the pulpit of the Congregational body, as a whole, was a whit behind that of other denominations, for able and faithful preaching of the gospel. We think it is not. But who can tell how much more we might accomplish, were all our ministers to throw *their whole strength* into their preaching, and to make the winning of souls the great purpose of their lives! How many of us do that?

It is no doubt true that unpremeditated Lecture-room "talks" are often more enjoyed by the people than more elaborate discourses; but an intelligent audience will look for instruction as well as exhortation, and to expect, therefore, to build up a church by means of musty, worn-out sermons, and extempore efforts, is to court failure and disappointment. No preparation can be properly regarded as too elaborate, the aim of which is to present **THE GOSPEL**, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and no theme will ever sustain the popular interest, even,—certainly none will ever glorify God,—as the gospel presented in that manner.

One thing more we need, and must have, if we are to accomplish anything in the evangelization of this land,—spiritual life and godliness in the churches. John Angell James tells us that while writing his "Earnest Ministry," he was so much impressed with the comparative impotence of the most faithful preaching, unsustained by a living piety among the people, that he felt his work would be incomplete, and liable to misconstruction, without a second volume on "the Church in earnest." The undue reliance often placed upon the preacher, and the habit, so frequently seen, of devolving almost every christian duty upon him, as if he alone bore the responsibility of carrying forward the Lord's work, show that he was right. We must have *both*,—an earnest ministry sustained by the prayers and efforts of a church in earnest. Then, and then only, can we hope to be endued with that power from on high, our need of which has been so graphically portrayed by William Arthur, in his "Tongue of Fire:"—This Divine baptism, he says, "is the one and the only source of our power. Without this, our wealth, influence, facilities, are ships of war and ammunition without guns or men; our order, talent,