

common discernment. I am not pleading for what is known as systematic theology. I am only humbly protesting against the indiscriminate denunciation of systems that have benefitted the world, made tens of thousands of lives purer and happier, and have their influence for good in the world to-day.

It is charged against us that we do not preach the doctrines our fathers preached, or rather that doctrinal preaching as such is, if not discarded by us, is at least neglected. How far this is true I am not in a position to say. I believe there is an element of truth in it. But I wish to ask, is the responsibility all with the ministry? Is it an indication of the decline of pulpit power? or may it not in large measure be traced to the pew? Mark, I do not deplore it as an *unmixed* evil of our day, so far as it may obtain. I am not fully convinced that the lectures on systematic theology called sermons, to which we listened, or rather under which we slept, in our boyhood, were calculated to rouse to earnest endeavor, or imbue with a noble ambition—the effectual calling—and the general calling, and intellectual faith, and the saving faith, sometimes to the neglecting of the precious truth that out of the depth of a wondrous love of God is calling—ever calling—and is as honest and true in the one as the other, “no respecter of persons.”

If some features of doctrinal preaching have passed away with the last generation, I am not disposed mourn to its departure. But if doctrinal teaching, such as is needed to produce sturdy christian thought be on the decline, it is to be deplored. It is to be confessed that while the pulpit influences the pew, the pew none the less influences the pulpit. If it be accepted as a truism that “like priest like people,” it is quite as true that “like people like priest,” especially in these our days a large share of the responsibility rests with the people. As far as possible, without departing from the central truth of the message, the preacher is obliged to conform to the capacity and predilection of the hearer. If without hearers, after the week of toil, with the influence of business transactions still in their minds, a week of hard struggle in which God and heavenly things have had only a secondary place, consecutive bible study is a thing unknown in their homes, only a portion snatched here or there, doing duty for what is called “family prayers,” what capacity for, or interest can they possibly have in the harmony or completeness of eternal truth? If minds are so saturated with pleasure, or enervated with sensational literature, whether in the form of the divine edition or the more trashy serials of our daily and weekly newspapers, what mental or moral receptivity is there for solid thought or careful exposition? It is *this* state of things that has brought about the departure of doctrinal preaching from our midst.

Even the true theologian will give his hearers what they will listen to, though it be in a diluted state, rather than the strong meat from which they will turn away in weariness, if not disgust. This is called a *practical* age, and even preaching has to be measured by this practical standard. “Results,” results is the demand of the day. Very well, only let us be sure that our results are correctly estimated. Our work is to make the most of men—make the best of them. Instead of wishing they were what they are not, take them as they are, and, under God, make of them according to their, and our, highest possibility.

In looking over the work of our pastors and churches, a more intelligent estimate of which will be given us by our secretaries, may I be permitted to say a word in regard to the training of men for the fields of this Dominion? Whatever our opinions may be in regard to political secession, they have no place in our work. The time has come when our young men can have no reasonable hope of entering the ranks of the ministry without a regular college training. There are those who have not been so fortunate in the work to-day. And good men and true they are, doing faithful work for God and man. But they are the men who will the most heartily endorse what I say. And there will always be notable exceptions. No rule there is without its exceptions, but these will be fewer as the years roll on. I think I am warranted in saying that no young man unencumbered, who will shrink from the years of plodding toil between him and a literary education, is fit for the work, I care not how devout his spirit or earnest his exhortations. In our colleges all due consideration is given to the diversities of ability, both intellectual and financial. No young man presenting himself to our churches should be for one moment encouraged to any other course than a literary and theological training. For there is no such excuse as lack of means, which could be urged 25 years ago. This is as it should be. Every facility to every young man with the right talent and motive.—We have had come to us—the Master has sent them, and we have welcomed them with a right hearty welcome—men from Great Britain and the United States, and our estimate of them is expressed in the petition “Lord send us more like them.” We have plenty of room for them—plenty of work and a prospect of plentiful success. But it is no longer a matter of discussion that the men brought up, educated and trained in the country where they are to work are, on the whole, the most successful workers. This is the settled policy of our missionary committees in their management of foreign work. It is as true of our home work.—With very few exceptions, it is English for England, Scotchmen for Scotland, and at least at present it is