

congregation. It is as absurd to speak of a minister not being able to preach as to speak of a knife that will not cut. It should be the consuming thought of the minister's life how he may preach efficiently. As the business man broods over his ventures, as the literary man becomes filled with his subject, as the doctor is anxious about his patients, so it should be a study to the preacher to adapt the truth to his hearers, to consider what is best suited to the minds, tastes, habits and foibles of his people, in order that where these are wrong they may be corrected, or right may be confirmed. But he is bound to preach the Word. His preaching is to be within certain limits. He is a man set apart for religion. The church where he preaches is dedicated for religious purposes. The day on which he usually preaches is a religious day. The text book—the Bible—with which he deals is a religious book; and the Bible is a wide enough field for the preacher. Not that his sermons should be simply a string of texts; not that he should concatenate theological commonplaces and call that a sermon; not that he should suppose the goodness of his motive will compensate for the dullness of the sermon. No, his sermon should be a living, organic whole, evolved from his mind, interpenetrated by the subject taken from God's Word. May we adopt the motto of one of the cities of the mother land as ours: "Let Manitoba flourish by the preaching of the Word."

BE A CHURCH FOR THE TIMES.

We seem, as a Church, well adapted for our rising Canadian nationality. We are not a foreign Church—an exotic. We are a Church of the soil. I find our 54 ordained ministers in the Northwest received their theological training as follows: Knox College, Toronto, 18; Queen's, Kingston, 6; Montreal College, 6; Halifax College, 3; Manitoba College, 4; elsewhere in Canada, 6—i. e., 80 per cent. Canadian. Whatever the times need, adapt your teaching to them. If it is a time when unsound doctrine is prevalent and both texts refer to that, capture if you can, like Constantine the Pantheon—where were arrayed the world's false gods, and make it a Christian temple; bring in the ark of the living God and Dagon will fall on the grunsel edge with head and hands lopped off; preach the perfect Christ, and the cold ghosts of infidel opinion will flit away; teach positive Christian truth and the negations of Agnosticism are heard of no more. This

will require great watchfulness, a clear eye and lofty Christian penetration that will, like Ithuriel's spear, disclose the error at first approach. And, too, brethren, this will require great patience, shrewdness and common sense. We all fail in these. It may be necessary to practise at different times such widely different maxims as Solomon gives, Answer a fool according to his folly, and, on the other hand, Answer not a fool according to his folly. We are not to go with the times, in the same way as an earless boat floats down stream—making a truce with error by surrendering the truth. When a man finds the worldly, the dissolute, the people who do not go to church, and the ribald portion of the press commending his preaching and his theology, he may be sure it is time to cry a halt. What is called the popular sentiment on religious questions is half the time wrong, simply because it is not the sentiment of religious people. The skilful preacher will select from his text-book what suits the time, the place, the season, the people. Our Saviour did so. In the spring time He spoke of the sower; going through the yellow fields He spoke of the world's great harvest; to the merchants He spoke of talents; to the woman at the Sychar well of the water of life; where the distant hillsides were covered with vines he preached the Gospel by picturing the husbandmen. Brethren, we should not preach over the people's heads, nor preach of things having no interest in them. We should feel bound to make every sermon interesting and useful. There is no subject so universally interesting, so belonging to every age, and that men of every station in life so generally wish to hear of as "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day and forever." Not that the freshness and beauty of Christ should be blurred by what is sometimes known as theological preaching, which is often Christless. I would desire Christ to be made a living, real person before the hearer; the human, sympathizing friend; the great miracle-worker; the meek and gentle, and sinless one; the model missionary and model for industry in every walk of life; the great social regenerator and benefactor; the saviour; the shepherd giving his life for the sheep; the sacrificial victim offered up for the sins of men; the majestic sufferer; the atoning Lamb of God; the chosen and accepted substitute for man. I would follow him to Gethsemane, to the