

delivered in a Christian pulpit. Wants like these the preacher must by no means consider, except to regard them as temptations of the devil to be resisted. Confronted by such demands, he must fall back on the motto of St. Paul: "Not as pleasing man, but God." This is what the layman has a right to expect of the preacher to begin with—that he shall not pander to a depraved taste; that, whilst he loves his fellowmen, and considers them, and serves them, and sacrifices himself for them, as Christ did for the Church he shall yet always remember that he comes with a Divine message, that he is the ambassador of Christ and the steward of the mysteries of God, that whatever else may be absent from his sermons, this deep all-pervading conviction must be there, and must make itself felt. In a certain sense, this may be said to be the whole matter: to remember the words of the Lord: "He that heareth you, heareth me"; and to take heed that our words may be the words and truth of Christ—to adopt the watchword of St. Paul: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." But, perhaps, we may go a little into detail. 1. And first among the needs of our hearers, and the demands of the reasonable and the wise, is the need of and demand for reality; that the preacher shall speak what he believes, what he has realized, and that he shall speak it in plain, strong, burning words, springing up from his heart and out of his deepest convictions. This is not always quite easy. There is a constant tendency to drop into well-worn words and phrases, to repeat familiar platitudes, to indulge in phrases which are agreeable and pleasant in the ear of particular classes of persons. There are a good many of that kind, and they are too frequent in our discourses, and they don't ring quite true. As it has been said, we have this treasure in earthen vessels; but we like to hear the chink of the gold—of the sterling metal, not of the counterfeit. Reality, then, in thought and word, is the first thing, and it must be in deed also, or it cannot and will not be in thought and word. On the whole, preachers are treated with much indulgence—not always, but for the most part. Our hearers expect to find imperfections in us, and they bear with them, sometimes beyond belief. But they demand two things of their teachers—that they shall believe what they preach, and that their belief shall be of a practical character, that they shall be striving with all their might to live the Gospel which they preach. They must not be intemperate or self-seeking, worldly or ambitious, and they must not be proud, or conceited, or insolent. Perhaps enough has been said on this point. 2. A second thing needed in the preacher, and lawfully demanded of him, is a certain human, humble brotherliness of address. St. Peter warns us of a danger connected with this subject. He who is himself an elder tells the elders: "Tend the flock of God which is among you" . . . not "for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making your-

selves ensamples to the flock"; or to use phraseology more familiar to us, "neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (I. St. Peter v. 3) Here it is not for one moment intended to call in question the greatness or authority of the Christian ministry. The preacher who speaks with the power of the Divine Spirit will remember, and his hearers will not forget, that he is the representative and mouth-piece of the Eternal Word. But there is sometimes a tendency—for human nature is weak—to assume a tone of personal importance which is as hurtful to the success of the Gospel as it is offensive to the hearer. There is found occasionally an assumption of immeasurable superiority, a sense of delivering the message from a lofty height far above the level of the hearer, for which there is, in fact, no justification, and which repels many of those even who are little prone to

persuasive manner. It cannot be doubted that a large proportion of the ministers of the Divine Word do, to a large extent, meet this requirement. They give what time they can—and they have many other duties to perform—to the composition and preparation of their sermons. But there are also, it is to be feared, a considerable number of clergymen who, for various reasons, take this part of their work too lightly. Some extempore preachers there are who are ready to confess—or even, alas, sometimes to boast—that they go into the pulpit with no preparation whatever. Some have even declared that they chose their texts as they entered the pulpit. But, as the late eloquent Bishop Magee remarked, there is extempore writing as well as extempore speaking; and a sermon which is written down without previous reflection, meditation and prayer, is no more likely to be instructive and edifying than the mere extempore effu-

sion of a ready speaker. No excuse will avail for such neglect in regard to what, perhaps, is the greatest work that a man can perform, the preaching of the kingdom of God. Pastoral visitation, ministering to the sick, supervision of schools, taking part in the administration of the affairs of the Church—these are duties which must be discharged; and rightly used they will help and not hinder the work of the preacher; for no one can long minister lovingly to his people from the pulpit, unless he is in personal, affectionate contact with them day by day. These things ought to be done, and the other not left undone. The preacher must not plead that he could not visit the sick of his flock because he had so much time to spend in his study over his sermons. But neither must the parish priest neglect the work of the pulpit because he has been diligent in his parish. We have promised to do these things in the most solemn hour of our life, and we may not neglect them. And, in particular, it is the solemn duty of those who proclaim the message of salvation to give diligent heed to all means whereby they may more perfectly fulfil this great and glorious work. "Till I come," says St. Paul to Timothy (I., iv. 18 ff) "give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee



REV. PROF. CLARK, LL.D., D.C.L.

take offence. The preacher should place himself in the midst of his brethren, showing himself thoroughly able to appreciate their temptations, their efforts, their joys, and their sorrows, sympathizing with them, as the disciple of Him who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." 3. Another lawful demand which may be made upon the preacher, is that he shall take his work seriously, that there shall be no careless, slipshod work in the preparation of his sermons. I say, the hearers of sermons have a right to make this demand. A preacher has the privilege of engaging the time and attention of a large number of men and women every Sunday, and they have a right to demand that he shall speak to them well-considered words upon which he has bestowed no inconsiderable portion of time and thought and labour, so as to bring out the meaning of his message in the clearest, most cogent, and most

by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." St. Paul took this work seriously, and he wanted Timothy to do the same; and all who might hereafter discharge that office. It is impossible to insist too strenuously on this point. Think of reading and study alone. It is not enough merely to read our Bibles. Every clergyman, as a matter of course, reads daily the four lessons appointed by the Church at morning and evening prayer. But mere reading is not enough. We have to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." And what shall we think of the Biblical studies of those who seldom or never open their Greek Testament, and yet profess to be teachers and guides of the flock of Christ?