

of the subject. He who has himself passed through the agony of doubt, will understand best how to adapt the truth to those still in the conflict. The wisdom of the serpent must be united with the harmlessness of the dove.

Without in the least depreciating the value of the dogmatic element, greater stress must be placed on the ethical than heretofore. Even where faith is weakened, the conscience may feel the force of the imperative "ought," and this may be a bridge to the spiritual.

Probably the most important study in the tendencies of the day is the effort of the masses to rise. They feel their power and are determined to exert it, and the Pulpit can only bid them God-speed, if their aspiration is properly directed. To give this direction is worthy of the noblest efforts and deepest sympathies of the Pulpit. That our churches and preachers must in many cases be changed, is evident; but the sooner the better. There are many illustrations of the power of the Gospel to become the guide of the lowest of the community, whether rich or poor; and this Gospel is the only hope against socialism. Bayonets are no antidote; they may one day be in the hands of communists. A godless socialism must be overcome by a Christian sociology. With so much villainy and infamy in what are styled the upper classes, and with so much nobility among the poorer, the time may yet come when the Pulpit, with the example of Christ before it, will be ashamed to call the poor, whom He exalted, the *lower* classes.

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## II.—COMMON SENSE IN PREACHING.

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THERE is a good deal of well-founded complaint of the pulpit. This criticism affirms of much of its work, that it is neither sensible, practical, nor inspiring. If we look for a common root for most pulpit faults, we shall probably find that root to be defective common sense, or the want of sound judgment. Of course this statement is meant to be no broader than the popular criticism; indeed, I prefer to narrow the field by admitting that a considerable part of the public does not know what sensible preaching is. At both extremes we shall find a section of hearers whose testimony need not be taken, inasmuch as it merely impeaches their own common sense. One section finds nothing good in a sermon which furnishes no excitement: at the other extreme are hearers whom anything more modern in thought or expression than Jonathan Edwards or John Wesley displeases. It must also be conceded that a very large number of preachers—not impossibly the majority—habitually employ good sense in their preaching. There remain the preachers who do not use good judgment, and the hearers who are on good grounds discontented. This class of