

A thorough conviction of the importance of preaching, as a grand means of doing good, ought to lead you to great fidelity in the discharge of this part of your office. You will be careful to select such topics for the pulpit as are the most likely to be useful to your people. It is well when a Minister's taste and the dictates of conscience fully accord in this. For there is some ground to fear that the *subject* is occasionally chosen, not because it is apparently most to the edification of the people, but rather as it is supposed to afford a peculiarly fine field for a display of salent, or may be got up with little expense of time or labour. I trust that neither sloth nor a love of display shall ever be allowed to interfere with the wants of immortal souls, and the sacred claims of your own conscience in this matter. While I cherish the hope that you will—let me nevertheless urge upon you the duty of choosing such topics for the pulpit, as you think shall, through the Divine blessing, tell most powerfully on the understanding and conscience of your hearers. Your chief object is to bring men back to God. The truth of the Gospel, applied to the soul by the Holy Spirit, is the instrument you are to employ. But this instrument is only employed aright when Gospel Truth is preached as the Bible unfolds it. We must never forget that, while we are to teach and enforce many things which natural religion indicates, our grand theme is *the way of salvation*. If we overlook this, whatever we are, certainly we are not preachers of the Gospel. Hence all subjects ought to be selected with a view of either directly or indirectly bearing on this. Let me therefore earnestly beseech you, my brother, to give, in all your public ministrations, that prominency and relative position to the essential doctrines of the Gospel, so necessary for the spiritual and eternal well-being of your hearers. And I need hardly add, that no doctrine can have its right position, and no duty can be properly illustrated and enforced, unless the doctrine of the substitution of the Son of God in the room of sinners shall clearly occupy the first place. Any serious inaccuracy in this matter does not so much derange, as destroy the whole structure of Christianity.

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