

insight and for the sincerity and sobriety of our judgments. For the truth derived from the Scripture, the processes of reasoning, the lessons applied, the entire intellectual product must be rational and moral, commending us to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The pettifogging spirit, the vice of the special pleader has no business in the pulpit. Once convinced of the spiritual authority of the Word, our chief question, our sole question is, What is the mind of the Spirit? A text is not a gem for the casket, but a window for the soul. That is preaching, and that alone is preaching that uncovers the heavens and makes God real, and uncovers the heart and makes the man real. It is not the mere marshalling of proof-texts, the curious comparison of passage with passage, but the tracing of God's thought from age to age, and the unfolding of the message of men who had the mind of Christ. Every minister who honors the Word and who respects his calling has a work to do in saving the pulpit from the odium of lawless fancy. "Oh, you can make anything of Scripture," should not lie against the plainness of the Word and the sincerity of its teachers. We must help to relegate to the past the idea that for any error

"some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text."

Then men shall respect the pulpit for its fairness and thoroughness and the divineness of its doctrine. The unfoldings of the Word shall be more trustworthy than the unfoldings of nature, and the God of the Bible shall be the living God who speaks by His servants to the heart of man as really as by Isaiah or Jeremiah to the heart of Israel.

To the biblical element must be added the personal element, the coloring of the individual mind, to make it real. God must speak to us before we can speak to men, and the word will be ours and not another's. The largeness of truth demands this, and so does the nature of man. Men will not see truth exactly alike unless they cease to think. The truth is too large for any man or set of men to say, "This is the sole view-point of the spiritual and eternal." The message cannot be impersonal unless it is mechanical and so unreal. Shall we not seek the largest liberty of reverent interpretation and encourage it, rejoicing in the manifold riches of truth thus brought out and the generous manhood developed?

But is there no danger in such individual interpretation? The personal vision of truth, may it not be the mirage of a distempered fancy? Away from the beaten path of men, may it not be to follow wandering fires? Liberty is always dangerous; but nothing is the danger compared with the manly impulse, the generous ardor as we trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into the truth. How shall we save our preaching from the wearisomeness of an anxious and formal repetition of a few points of doctrine? The only cure is for each man for himself to keep in closest contact with the facts of the Bible, and to be absolutely truthful to the impressions made. Why should not every man speak out with the utmost frankness the very