

that of the man who replied to the question how he liked the new preacher: "Oh, he is improving wonderfully; he preaches louder and louder." True earnestness thrills hearts even though it may not shake the windows. True earnestness is a thing not so much of perspiration as of inspiration. And inspiration is a thing that one can gain not by direct effort but by fulfilling the conditions. You cannot become earnest by trying to be earnest. You can become earnest only by coming into thorough sympathy with Jesus and with your people, and by trying to serve Him and save them. Follow the Lord through all His earthly life, let its scenes live in your memory and its lessons in your heart, stand at the cross where your Redeemer tasted death for every man, and beside the tomb from which He rose for your justification, make it your constant experience that in Christ you are dead to sin and alive to God, and that your life is hid with Christ in God, and then you cannot but be earnest in preaching that Saviour who is everything to you. Cranmer said of a certain minister: "He seeks nothing, he longs for nothing, he dreams about nothing but Jesus Christ." Be in sympathy with your people, know them, regard them not merely as so many heads in a congregation, but as so many lives, each with its own burdens and its own sorrows, which nothing but the love of Jesus can relieve, and then you will be earnest in seeking their salvation. It is love and only love that to the highest can attain, for love to God and man is the sure condition of inspiration in preaching.