

was when he needed to know only the mysteries of scholastic theology and he might move among his parishioners as ignorant as a babe unborn of their callings, their trials, their hopes and fears. He was often a man of another world than theirs. The average hearer among them might have used the language of Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" concerning his experience in church:—

"I 'eerd 'um a bummin' awaay loike
a buzzard-clock ower my 'ead, &
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd, but
a thowt a 'ad summut to saay,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a
said an' I coom'd awaay."

But to-day the barriers of ministerial caste have been broken down by the rising tide of general culture, and the preacher must hold his audience more by the power of truth and less by the force of traditional respect. No mere professional knowledge is sufficient to qualify him for his arduous tasks. Although he must still be the man of One Book he will not do it, or his calling justice unless he is far more. He must grasp the conditions of life under which every one of his people lives and earns his bread; and he must know something of what is passing through the minds of all classes of men.

To be more specific, the philosophy of an age is too closely connected with its theology to allow the preacher to remain ignorant of its leading characteristics. Besides the fundamental arguments of Christian apology lie to-day in the transcendental realm.

In the region of science a new world has been unfolded to this generation.

I was glad to read the statement of a leading bookseller of the United States that most of the copies of the new books of science were sold to clergymen. These books contain a mine of illustrations of spiritual truth, they are usually models of style, and their matter is most stimulating to thought. Especially does the preacher need to have a clear idea of all the ramifications of that giant offspring of nineteenth century thinking, the mighty idea of development. It was a subject of much laughter twenty-five years ago, but to-day the merriment is rapidly dying away. Although in the realm in which it originated it is hardly more than a working hypothesis; it is now influencing philosophic, scientific and theological thought much more than almost any single mind can understand. Many of its far reaching conclusions are evidently destined to become part of the permanent mental possessions of mankind. The very men who argue most strongly against it think in its terms, use the speech it has framed, and have obtained a new conception of the universe by its means.

Its outcome in one direction appears in those critical theories of the origin of our Scriptures whose warp and woof every preacher of the Presbyterian Church ought to know, not that he may inflict them from the pulpit on a simple minded people, but that he may satisfy his own mind, and the minds of any intelligent inquirers, and especially lest at no distant day he may be constituted a judge of what is the true position in regard to them.