

clean? How shall he obtain inspiration and strength for his own conflict with sin, if it be not at the very fountains to which he leads his people? They drink of the same living stream, the ever blessed truth of God. The Bible must be to him inspiration and strength, just as it is to his people. It must be the bread of his life, of which he himself must first partake. The minister can no more live a Christian life without communion with God in prayer, and in the meditation of His truth, than can the weakest, the humblest, the most ignorant disciple in all his flock.

What then is the Bible to the minister? It is his life. Here he will find comfort in his sorrow, and companionship—divinest companionship—in the hours of his loneliness. Here he will gather weapons for his own spiritual warfare; sharp, keen, and victorious; here he will find holiest inspiration to service, when perhaps his hands are weary, and his heart grows faint. In a word, he will meet his Lord and Saviour here, and in His fellowship find light and life.

And as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, co-operating with his Master in the world's salvation, he will find the Bible to be

THE GREAT INSTRUMENT IN HIS LIFE-WORK.

If he would indeed be a successful follower of the Apostles of Christ, he must, like them, be emphatically a "minister of the word." He must sow in the field of humanity the true seed of the kingdom, which is the "Word of God." It is to this he is called; and the obligation is laid upon him, as it was upon Timothy, to "preach the word."

And it is by means of the preaching of this word, that he is to be successful in saving the world, "by the foolishness of preaching," as the Apostle Paul says, that it is by the preaching of that gospel which seemed so foolish, because of its apparent inadequacy to accomplish the mighty task imposed upon it. It is not to be wondered at that the supercilious Greek, and proud Roman, looked upon the attempt to convert the world to the faith of a crucified Jew, through the preaching of a handful of obscure and, for the most part, uneducated provincialists, as utterly foolish and vain. And yet such was the sublime faith, yea the Divine prescience of Jesus, that He sent His followers forth to conquer the prejudices and passions of a world, by simply preaching His gospel to every creature.

There are men to-day, even in Christian churches, I am sorry to say, who seem to have lost their faith in the power of the simple gospel to win the affections and conquer the pride of men. There is a clamor for some new thing, some new ritual, some startling sensationalism, some eccentricity of belief, or mannerism in the pulpit; any-

thing to give a little spice and flavor to a gospel otherwise too insipid for the palled and jaded taste of this fast and full-fed age.

Thank God, we are not one of these; we still believe that the gospel, and nothing but the gospel, is the power of God unto salvation. That if Jesus be only truly lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself. Depend upon it, he will be the most effective minister of Christ, who best brings Christ into living contact with men.

The preacher is not called of God to be a lecturer on social or political economy. Others, it may be, can do that better than he; or, at any rate, he may find some other platform than the pulpit from which to discourse on these themes. He is not called of God to ventilate his own peculiar theories and speculations in the realm of morals and religion. He is called to deliver a definite message, and that with the greatest urgency, because the time is short and men are dying fast.

I read, some time ago, an analysis, by an eminent leader of Christian thought, of the preaching of one of the greatest pulpit-orators of this age; a man whose mind was, perhaps, more fruitful in moral ideas than that of any other man on this side of the Atlantic. In that analysis, three steps in the development of the preacher's methods were emphasized—(I quote from memory, after the lapse of two or three years):

In his earlier years, it was said, the preacher proclaimed the general truths of Christian doctrine and experience, as they came up, one by one, before his mind. Then he proceeded to systematize these doctrines and experiences, and to formulate them in logical order. Lastly, laying aside all systems, he became an explorer in new and untrodden paths. The critic held that the last development of the preacher's mind and method was the most fruitful of all. And, perhaps, in some respects, the critic was right; but, in other respects, and these the most important, the last period was the least satisfactory.

Brethren, I do not conceive the office of the preacher to be that of an explorer. I mean, that he is not called of God to lead the way into untrodden realms of speculation, or to offer, for men's salvation, an untried remedy. If Christ had not come; if He had not spoken; if He had not given a clear and definite message to His disciples; then, indeed, we might have been compelled to grope in the darkness for ourselves. But, since God has spoken, it is for the preacher to hear the word at God's mouth, and declare it to the people. Since Christ has come, it is for the preacher to be simply His herald; to go forth into the world and preach His gospel, a gospel, which, thank God, has been fully tried by the centuries, and never found wanting yet. And if he does that, his preaching will never lose its sweetness and power, so long as sin