

ARTICLE III.

PLAIN PREACHING.

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"THERE is a word," says Carlyle, "which if spoken to men, to the actual generation of men, would thrill their inmost souls—but how to find that word, how to speak it when found!" By the minister of the gospel, that word for which Carlyle searched and waited has already been found, as given him of God to use and diffuse precisely as it has been given; but just how to declare it is a question of vital moment, if so be it may secure the beneficent and saving ends for which it has been entrusted to men.

It is our purpose, at present, to emphasize the necessity of plainness in the teaching and proclamation of the truth,—a matter of essential moment to all those to whom its dispensation has been committed. As it is a question, partly, educational and literary in its import, and, partly, ethical and spiritual, we shall reach the best results by discussing it under each of these aspects.

I. Plainness, in the educational sense, means "clearness of presentation," "intelligibility." It is what the old writers meant by making the truth "understandable;" what Mr. Arnold means by "lucidity," as a condition of all literary excellence.

The word "teaching," which, at this point, may be re-

takably seen to be the truth. The terms and forms in which it is embodied and expressed are to be so pronounced and open that as soon as they are seen they shall be understood.

It is interesting to note the emphasis which the Bible lays upon this matter of intelligibility as related to the teaching of the truth.

The evangelist Philip said to the eunuch, intently seeking the meaning of Scripture, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Christ said to his waiting disciples, after making known to them his parables and their interpretation, "Have ye understood all these things?" "He that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it." On his way to Emmaus with the two disciples, it is said that the Saviour "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." In the Old Testament, we find that Ezra's appointed helpers "read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." The apostle, in his letters to Timothy and Titus, insists that all teachers of the truth be "apt to teach;" that they be not "novices." He stoutly condemns those who desire "to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm;" while, in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul speaks in the strongest terms of verbal plainness as an essential condition of all utterance of the truth that is to edification. "Except ye utter by the tongue," he says, "words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." "In the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

So, in human relationships and quite apart from any biblical conception of the subject. The people addressed wish

endorsed, who insists, by his obscure, irrelevant, and confusing methods, upon violating the first principles of all expression. "Who is this," they ask, and rightly, "that dark-enth counsel by words without knowledge?"

It is thus that clearness of statement has always been placed at the front of the essential requisites of expression. "Let excellence of style," says Aristotle, "be defined to consist in its being clear." So Coleridge interprets the art of discourse as, "the art of conveying our meaning with perspicuity." "We may as well be dumb," says old Gerald de Barri, "as not to be understood." As love among the lesser graces, so, we are told, is clearness in expression among all lesser qualities: it is the fulfilling of the law of utterance. One of the supreme tests, on the secular side, of a call to the ministry, is found just here,—in the ability to write and speak intelligible English; so to express thought as to make it perfectly plain to the recipient mind, so that, as the Scriptures declare, "he who runs may read." If a man, by unfortunate mental heredity or by association or by lack of proper care and study, cannot be a real interpreter of truth to those who are ignorant, certainly his vocation is elsewhere than in a calling where the first essential consists in making one's self understood. By this it is not meant that all preachers are to be plain precisely in the same sense, nor plain to the same degree, to every separate mind whom they address; nor that they are to be, or can be, equally clear on all subjects with which they deal, but that they are to be substantially clear to the average mind and to make the meaning as clear as it can be made within the possible limits of clearness. There are some things in Scripture "hard to be understood," and, therefore, hard to make others understand. There are other things which it is impossible to explain, since they lie within the sovereign realm of God's unrevealed will, and are the "secret things" that belong unto him. It is in this sense that Vinet correctly states, "that to

be perfectly clear on some things is to be perfectly superficial." Such truths lie outside the limited area and vision of the finite, and it is presumption to attempt to elucidate them. Hence all purely speculative discussion in the pulpit—theological, philosophical, scientific, or literary—is out of place, and simply ministers to that pride of opinion and of learning of which each man has enough without developing it further, and which is as contrary to sound intellectual growth as it is to spiritual ends. Within the lines of possible interpretation, however, and under the accepted limitations of reason and human language, it is the function of the preacher to make himself intelligible; and to the degree in which he secures that result, does he give evidence of mental vigor. The view, far too current, that it is only the superficial and inferior mind that can make itself clear, and that full interpretation is, thereby, an indication of diminished intellectual power, is as unphilosophical as it is harmful. Simplicity is one of the highest proofs of mental strength, one of the last results of all true art. To make the truth palpable and simple is a mark of mental acumen, and is so just to the degree in which the truth made simple is complex and involved. Of all kinds of nonsense, that which Dr. Campbell calls "profound nonsense" is the worst,—the telling of a simple truth in an obscure manner, to give the impression of peculiar wisdom. John Locke, in his "Essay on Human Understanding," has done most valuable service in condemning all such misnomers and verbal abuses.

If we inquire as to the best methods by which, on the educational side, such clearness may be secured, two or three of leading value may be stated.

The first is clear thinking. It is beyond all question, that the larger amount, by far, of what is called vague, obscure preaching is due to mental causes, rather than to those that are linguistic. It is a matter more of intellect and intellectual habit than of mere vocabulary. There is a lamentable

lack, in the pulpit and out of it," of what Matthew Arnold calls "straight" thinking; thinking along well-defined lines, with the eyes of the mind wide open to see the way ahead and with an obstinate determination not to deflect to the right or left. As Dr. Barrow has told us, "In morals, as in mathematics, a straight line is the shortest distance between two points." So it is in the oral and written expression of thought, where the biblical injunction is in place, "Let thine eyes look right on, and thine eye-lids look straight before thee." Coleridge, himself a model of "straight" thinking, condemns writers for being "non-sequacious." Hence the circuitous and indirect method. Hence the excess of paraphrase and circumlocution at the expense of what is direct, pertinent, and explicit; the introduction into prose of that principle of license which should obtain in verse only. The very word "prose" (*prorsus*) means that which is straight forward, so that obscurity and deflection are foreign to the very idea of style. It is of these crooked thinkers that Addison speaks, as he compares them to the cuttle-fish who, unable to extricate himself, blackens all the water about him till he becomes invisible. It is the *oratio recta*, rather than *oratio obliqua*, that is needed; a speaking "right on" and to the point, because of a thinking right on and to the point. That terse and trenchant author, William Cobbett, packs a great deal of good sense into a small compass when he says, applicable to what we are now discussing, "Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what you shall write. Follow the order which your thoughts will point

vocabulary is vitally connected with his mental life and is, to a good degree, its natural product; while, on the other hand, he may present the most profound truths in plain and vivid form if, indeed, such truths have been so pondered and mastered as to stand out before the eye of the mind in full and clear effulgence.

One of the most dangerous features in the rapidly developing system of modern higher education, dangerous to the pulpit and to the pew, is the tendency to exalt knowledge above thought, acquisition above discipline, words above ideas, and so to jeopardize the highest interests of truth.

No man has been educated, in any true sense, until he has been taught to think, and to think "straight," and such a man, be he preacher or teacher or what not, will say what he says because he sees it clearly and knows it to be true. He will say just what he means,—nothing less, nothing more, nothing different,—and will do so because of a clear head and a fixed habit of lucid thinking. Much profitless preaching is such because it is not clear. The preacher in his study has not made his thought absolutely intelligible to himself and, therefore, cannot make it so to others. The pitiful result is, that he and his hearers alike are thus "ever learning, and never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

A further means of securing plainness is a more specifically literary one—that of making one's self conversant with such English authors as are notable for the possession and expression of this quality. Such authors as De Foe, Lamb, Bunyan, Walton, Steele, Addison, and our own Irving are of this simple and translucent type, as opposed to such names as Hooker, Bacon, Burton, Browne, Gibbon, Johnson, Carlyle, and Emerson. Although these latter names, in many respects, rank higher in the annals of English letters, they are by no means the equals of the former in the unadorned and natural expression of thought. If we turn to those who

were officially connected with the Christian ministry and give us in their writings specific examples of plainness in preaching, we may cite the names of Fuller, Taylor, Tillotson, South, and Dean Swift, as contrasted with such as Bishop Donne, Bishop Butler, and Dr. Barrow; while, in more recent times, illustrious names are at hand in the persons of Canon Liddon, Cardinal Newman, Dean Stanley, Canon Mozley, Canon Farrar, and that inimitable model, Mr. Spurgeon. Such preachers as Addison Alexander and James W. Alexander, Spring, Sprague, Kirk, Summerfield, Larned, and Payson, in our own country, well sustain this high ideal, and show its feasibility. Personal contact with the pages of these writers, secular and sacred, will, by the very law of affinity, produce an order of word and method and general style characterized by simplicity. No man can freely give himself to the natural diction and the spontaneity of such authors and not to a large extent correct the tendencies in him to the obscure and indefinite. Among the authors of the Augustan era, no one rendered more efficient service in this direction than did the eccentric author and preacher, Dean Swift. In his "Letters to a Young Clergyman" of the Church of England, he writes of the use of obscure terms as an "inexcusable mistake among the clergy of all distinctions, especially among the younger practitioners," and he adds, "A divine has nothing to say to the wisest congregation of any parish which he may not express in a manner to be understood by the meanest among them." "As I take it," he says, "the two principal branches of preaching are, first to tell the people what is their duty, and then to convince them that it is so; and it seems to be in the power of a clergyman, if he will be at the pains, to make the most ignorant man comprehend what is his duty, and to convince him, by arguments drawn to the level of his understanding, that he ought to perform it."

Dean Swift had his errors of character and style, but no

writer of his time used an order of English more simple, idiomatic, and self-explaining. So, as to the diction of Bunyan, a writer whom every English-speaking clergyman might profitably read, once a year, for the sake of his simplicity. One of the two books which his wife brought him, as about all the dowry she had, was "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and, in gratitude for what it had done for him, he devoted his life to making the same path even plainer still to all who wished to find and follow it. Uneducated as he was, he had, by natural endowment and by a keen development of his faculties of observation, a way of putting things as plain as it was pertinent and sure to carry the truth straight home to the English heart and conscience. The justly celebrated Matthew Henry had much of this old-fashioned simplicity of word and method, both as a preacher and commentator; arising, in part, perhaps, from the fact that he was not a university man and was not, in any sense, familiar with the technical language of the schools. The same order of diction is exemplified in Mr. Spurgeon, possibly due, in fact, to the same reason. Here we reach the special difficulty with which the educated clergy have to deal. We refer to their use of technical terms, the difficulty arising from the fact that such terms, by reason of frequency of use, have become to them common and simple, while utterly unintelligible to the average and, especially, to the illiterate mind. "What do you mean by that word 'inevitable?'" said a plain farmer to his pastor after the sermon. "I mean," answered the pastor, in plainer phrase, "You can't get around it." "Now," said the farmer, "I understand."

of life and thought. It is of this very matter that Swift is speaking, and on behalf of the people, when he says, "I defy the divine to produce any law, either of God or man, which obliges me to comprehend the meaning of 'ubiquity,' 'omniscience,' 'beatific vision,' 'entity,' and 'idiosyncrasy';" and yet these terms are so well understood by the educated minister that he unconsciously uses them as the plainest and best. The difficulty here is a serious one; and this much is evident, that the minister of the gospel should make it a matter of conscience to reduce these technical terms to a minimum: to read, as suggested, those authors the percentage of whose English is the highest in the line of the untechnical, and to keep the eye and the mind fully open to the vocabulary of common life as it develops about him. No Protestant preacher can estimate, at this point, the degree of his indebtedness to the English Bible, with its ninety-six per cent of native English, while to the clergy of the Anglican church an additional manual of everyday English is offered in the pages of the Prayer-Book. One of the best results of cultivating, to some extent, as preachers, the important habit of extempore address, in the true meaning of that term, is, that it gives a fuller scope for the ordinary language of life than is possible within the more restricted limits of written discourse. Few men can write as naturally as they can talk, or use the pen so unrestrainedly as to make it the obedient servant of the spontaneous movements of the mind. It is his "tongue" that the Psalmist says "is the pen of a ready writer," and rarely does a sermonizer absolutely confine himself to manuscript sermons who does not develop to an extreme either the literary side of written expression or the philosophic and logical, each of which is somewhat unfriendly to simplicity. One of the valid arguments, moreover, for the more intimate connection of clerical life with the current of public events, as they are daily transpiring, lies at this point, if so be the student of divine

truth may see more clearly the methods by which that truth may be most effectively expressed and applied. We are living in a day prophesied, twenty years ago, by Mr. Beecher as sure to come—the day of The Life-School of the American Pulpit, when the preacher must thoroughly understand the hearer, in order that the hearer may thoroughly understand him. Here lies also the utility and necessity of some degree of illustrative preaching, such as that of Dr. Guthrie of Scotland, by which abstract truth may be delineated in concrete and conspicuous form, and the reception of it made all the easier by the symbols in which it is set forth.

In fine, preaching must be, in some way or another, made plain, so graduated to the level of the popular mind, as that it may see its meaning at once and be without excuse for rejecting it. Especially in such an age as this,—the age, pre-eminently, of evangelistic Christian work,—the pulpit must be clear and simple and natural, or fail to meet the moral needs of the time. Not only are we living, in the educational sense of the term, in an age of University Extension, when scholastic professors must leave their scholasticism in their class-rooms and come before the assembled masses in a kind of an out-door, colloquial manner, in deference to public demand, but we are living in an age of Christian Church Extension, apostolic and evangelistic, as never before, and the ministry of to-day, if true to its place and function, must, to some extent, forget the dialect of the schools and the books; must forego, in part, their natural desire, as scholars, to pursue the study of truth on the theological and dogmatic side; must present the divinities in the light of the humanities, and make their message so plain that plain people will see it at once, and see it to be a message for them, and suited to their deepest spiritual needs. Hence, says the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, "Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." Seeing that we live in the new and brighter and broader dis-

pensation, our view of God's word should be all the clearer and our presentation of it all the plainer. We are living, he would say, in the days of open vision and of revelation, not reading the truth, as the Jews read it, and still read it, with a veil upon the face and heart, but reading it with unveiled face under the enlightening influences of the new economy.

It is especially inexcusable, the apostle teaches us, that there should be any obscurity, either in the perception or proclamation of the truth, in such a dispensation of light and liberty. The veil is taken away. Christ has come. Prophecies have been fulfilled and types interpreted, and, whatever may or may not have been true of former days, in our day the light has dawned, and, by our very vocation as ministers of the gospel of the New Testament, we are the dispensers of light to all who seek it.

II. There is another important sense in which the word "plainness" is used by Paul in common speech, and one more distinctively ethical and spiritual: it is the utterance of the truth with candor and courage. As the original Greek indicates, it is preaching the word with (*παρρησία*) outspokenness and pronounced frankness. This is precisely what the apostle means when he says to the Philippians that, as the result of his imprisonment, "many of the brethren, waxing confident by his bonds, were much more bold to speak the word without fear." So he writes to the Ephesians, praying, that utterance may be given him to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, that therein he may speak boldly as he ought to speak. "Great is my boldness of speech towards you," says the

sion, and the house of Jacob their sins." "Son of man," says Jehovah to the fiery Ezekiel, "set thy face toward Jerusalem, and prophesy against the land of Israel;" "set thy face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them," and they, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." Such is what might be called the note or ring of the gospel in the line of its outspoken denunciation of sin and its declarations of judgment against the sinner—no reserve or evasion, no faltering in the face of kings and princes, but an unswerving fidelity to the truth for the truth's sake, if so be it may have its legitimate influence on the hearts and consciences of men.

Precisely so, outside of Scripture and within the area of human relationship, the people, as such, like frankness and fearlessness, and will soonest give that one a hearing who comes to them with a positive and pertinent message, expressed in pointed, pungent, and unqualified terms. No greater mistake can be made than that which is too often made, even by appointed dispensers of the word, that the trimming of the truth is the best method of reaching the popular heart; plying conciliatory agencies, at every point, simply for the sake of conciliation; levelling the stern and serious utterances of the Scriptures so as to accord with the dominant convictions of the most easy-going and fastidious hearer; making it appear that, after all, the demands of the Christian life need not materially interfere with the current of human thought and conduct in its most worldly developments and tendencies; mediating the gospel to the social status and aesthetic preferences of the so-called "upper classes," when, in the light of Scripture, there are no upper classes, and all alike stand before God in urgent need of saving grace.

This method is as unnatural as it is unscriptural, and simply exposes him who essays it to the just contempt of those

who, though not professing to be Christians themselves, are pleased to see a normal type of Christianity in others, and are especially pleased to see in every minister of the gospel one who "never fears the face of man," and says what he says as God has given it to him, without the slightest regard to the applause or displeasure of men.

Here, indeed, we note another biblical test of what is termed "a call to the ministry," namely, the willingness to use that Pauline candor of speech which the necessities of the case demand. The time-serving and timorous spirit is, thereby, out of place in the Christian pulpit, where a teacher of truth is in conscience bound to deliver the message that has been given him, and to say to the people, as the prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord." To every incumbent of the sacred office, Jehovah says, as he said of old, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet," and utter the "burden of the word of the Lord." "Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee." "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." When Martin Luther tells us that he never went into the pulpit without trembling, the trembling, as we are well assured, was not the result of any fear of man, but only the result of an intensely profound anxiety lest he might not do the truth full justice, and honor God in its faithful utterance. No man, in such an age as this, has any call to proclaim the truth, in any sense or any sphere, who is not prepared to proclaim it as Christ and the apostles proclaimed it, with absolute frankness and fearlessness. Least of all has such a one any call to the solemn functions of the ministry. The most superficial study of the utterances of Christ to the time-serving Pharisees, or of John the Baptist to the hearers of his day, or of prophets and apostles to their re-

If we inquire, as before, as to the best methods, on the secular side, of cultivating such a type of teaching, special stress must be laid upon making ourselves conversant with those authors, and especially preachers, who have written and spoken with apostolic boldness.

Such a study must begin back in the old English days, in the age of John Wiclif and Tyndale and Latimer—heralds of righteousness, who were as brave as they were devout, and gave all men to understand that they had a message not their own, and that no power in earth or hell could withhold them from the expression of it in its totality and purity. When Wiclif wrote his "Fifty Heresies and Errors of Friars," against the assumptions of the Papacy, and Tyndale wrote his "Practices of Prelates," and old Hugh Latimer wrote his "Zeal in a Bad Cause," no one of all their respective hearers had any doubt as to just what they meant to say, and did say, and that such a thing as moral cowardice was absolutely unknown to them. The same spirit marked the teaching and preaching of Knox and Fox and Jewell and the British Reformers. Later in our history, the word "Puritan" was a synonym for moral courage, as exemplified in Baxter and Owen and Fuller and Howe and Flavel, while Whitefield and the Wesleys and their contemporaries carried on the same great work with similar zeal and boldness. Such men as Dr. John Mason and Nicholas Murray and David Junkin and Jonathan Edwards and Ichabod Spencer and Lyman Beecher fitly illustrate, in the American pulpit, this fearless spirit,—men, who, like the Tribe of Issachar of old, "had understanding of their time," and addressed themselves to its needs with apostolic boldness. No more surely can a man read John Milton's prose and that of Edmund Burke and not secure, thereby, a more vigorous and intrepid foren-

ness of address. These men thought independently, and wrote independently, and personal contact with them will quicken all within us that tends to outspokenness and candor. One of the noblest examples in all history of this plain speaking, either on the side of verbal clearness or moral boldness, is given us in the character and ministry of Dr. Chalmers of Scotland—making the truth plain to the learned and the ignorant alike, and presenting it in unqualified terms to all who heard it, independent of their status as high or low.

We may add, as another means by which courageous utterance may be secured, the cultivation of cogent convictions of the truth—its supreme reality and its supreme importance. Of all men, the Christian minister must know what he believes and why he believes it; must be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him and which he offers to others. Both on intellectual and spiritual grounds, he must be absolutely assured of the truth of his message; must be able to present the external and internal evidence of Christianity to the people from the standpoint of personal corroboration and experience. That spirit of discontent and restlessness of which Professor Bryce has recently spoken as noticeable in America, has not only invaded the Christian church, but the Christian pulpit, and not a few of those to whom the people are taught to look as to those who deal with certitudes and permanently settled beliefs are opening discussions understood long since to have been closed, and are gradually changing the method of their teaching from positive assertion to agitation and apology. The attitude of the apostles when they said to their accusers, "We speak that we do know," gives place to the questioning attitude

first of all in the pulpit; such a belief in the validity of that fundamental truth that God has given us, that it may be said to have the cogency of axiomatic evidence. Agnosticism is not confined to schools of philosophy and literature, but in some of its modified forms is sapping the foundations of preaching itself. Great plainness of speech, in the sense of outspoken fearlessness and fulness, is the natural result of great tenacity and cogency of conviction. This kind of utterance can come forth by nothing but by implicit and unquestioning faith, making it evident to all who hear us that we "cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," and that, if this message is false, all is false, and reality itself unreal. We speak, and speak rightly, of the "courage of our convictions," and, in the Christian pulpit, the necessity of such courage as the product of such conviction is supremely apparent. It was because Paul believed as he believed that he spoke as he spoke, and when the people heard him, they knew that the truth he uttered was as real to him as his own being, and must, at all hazards, be announced without equivocation or reservation. So must every truth-bearer apprehend and realize the truth he proclaims, that when he speaks he speaks from his innermost convictions, and therefore speaks courageously.

In fine, plain preaching is, first and last, conscientious; from the conscience to the conscience, "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The word of God is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is a trumpet, sounding out its warning voice so loudly that, in the highest din of worldliness, it must be heard. It is a searching light, entering every nook and corner of the spiritual nature. In these days, when the time-serving spirit is in the very house of God, and the "Bondage

of the Pulpit" is no misnomer, nothing less will do than a Pauline plainness, that will make it utterly inexcusable for sinful men to live on good terms with their awakened convictions, and will compel them to seek peace in Christ, as it will, also, brand with a merited rebuke those flagrant public and political wrongs of our time which stir the righteous wrath of all good men. When bad men are at ease in sin, and good men are inclined to carnal indulgence, there is something more demanded than a soothing type of preaching. "We mistake men's diseases," says Baxter, "when we think there needeth nothing to cure them but the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed before they receive that evidence." If the preaching of the time is to meet the requirements of the time, it must be terse and trenchant; its method, direct and personal; its language, clear and telling; its injunctions, final; and its only end, the saving of souls. Such is the desperate depravity of the heart, and such the lowering of moral standards as the world goes and as the church goes, that if men are to be saved by the ordinance of preaching, it must be awakening and spiritual rather than appeasing and aesthetic. It is of conscience that the old English dramatist is speaking as he says, "that the priests of God, if effective in their service, must make their pulpits ring, and the aisles of their churches ring, with that round word."

The unofficial and unordained clergy of the day, as evangelists and lay-preachers and Bible-readers and self-appointed missionaries, are doing a work in this direction that may well command the intelligent interest of the regular ministry. By a simplicity of phrase, and directness of appeal, they are graduating the gospel to the people and, despite all just exceptions that may be taken to some of their methods, often elicit a popular response to its gracious utterances quite too seldom seen as resulting from the more official and formal presentation of the truth. An educated ministry, there must

be. But is there not a radical error somewhere in any training of the clergy, liberal or professional, that does not simplify all the truth that it discovers, and offer to men the fruits of study in terms that they can understand? If this desirable end cannot be reached, is it not an open question, in the present emergencies of the church as related to the masses whom it is not affecting, whether learning should not be more fully subordinated to usefulness, and scholastic ambition be somewhat surrendered, if so be the common people may hear the word gladly?

One of the healthiest and most promising movements in the Protestant pulpit of to-day, in Europe and America, and most especially in the rapidly growing populations of the cities, is precisely in this direction, in the modification of the more formal methods that have hitherto obtained, in the line of a more untechnical and flexible presentation of the truth. The commissioned and the non-commissioned heralds of salvation are together consulting as to means and ends; are inquiring with Christian interest what each may have of wise suggestion for the other, and pressing the question, as it has never before been pressed, in what way, and how the most speedily, they can effectively co-operate for the evangelization of the people yet unsaved. Toward the accomplishment of such an end, next to the truth itself, will be an evermore plainer exposition and enforcement of it so as to substantiate its claims to the acceptance and obedience of every soul that hears it.

Plain preaching is, first of all, intelligible and, then, incisive and intrepid. The Christian minister is, first, to interpret and, then, to impress, enforce, and apply; to pound the truth in upon the conscience, as well as to expound it to the rational understanding; to make every one who hears him feel that he understands thoroughly the truth he is presenting, and means just what he says, and all that he says, let the truth strike what and where it may. "If thou hast anything to

say," says Falstaff to Pistol, "prithee! deliver it like a man of the world." "If thou hast anything to say," says the modern hearer to the modern preacher, "prithee, deliver it like a man of the world," in honest and homely phrase, and deliver it, also, like a man of God, with apostolic conviction and courage.