

12<sup>th</sup> August 2026

## Preaching

**"I met a preacher there I knew, and said,  
'Ill and overworked, how fare you in this scene?'  
'Bravely!' said he; 'for I of late have been  
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the living bread.'"**

Matthew Arnold, *East London*

Arthur John Gossip – more commonly known as A J Gossip – was born in Glasgow in 1873 and educated at Edinburgh University. Licensed for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland in 1898, he ministered successively in St. Columba's, Liverpool, the West United Free Church in Forfar, St. Matthew's U.F. Church, Glasgow and Beechgrove, Aberdeen. In 1928 he was appointed Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Training in Trinity College, Glasgow, where he remained until he retired in 1945. He was a remarkable man, lauded as a remarkable preacher. (For more information you could look at <https://preaching.com/articles/past-masters/arthur-john-gossip-a-passion-for-preaching/>)

Because of the demands of his ministry, on one occasion he'd had little time to prepare his Sunday sermon and was deeply troubled that his preaching would fall short of what was expected. "I was consumed by my doubts," he reported, "and during the hymn before the sermon, I headed for the pulpit with a heavy heart. But I met my Lord at the bend of the pulpit steps, and He enquired of me, 'What Word do you have for me today, Gossip?' I handed Him my sermon in fear and trembling, and when my Lord had read it over, He said, 'Gossip, that will do for me.' And my Lord took that sermon and made it a trumpet for the Gospel."

Three weeks ago, after I'd conducted worship in my local church, I was asked for a copy of my sermon. "I've been sharing what you said with my husband," the lady told me. "And he'd like a copy to read over for himself." And my Lord took that sermon and made it ...

For those who are preachers, when you ask yourself, "How fare you in this scene?", never doubt that what you've offered with integrity and humility will fall on the fertile soil of someone's life. It will be what our Lord wished for them. And if you're a hearer, believe that what you consider isn't the best of sermons, may be The Living Bread for someone else.

### A prayer for today

*Take myself, and I shall be, ever, only, all for Thee. Amen*

*Frances Ridley Havergal (1874)*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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