

At the day of Pentecost the thousands could not have been converted if the thousands had not heard the word. We should not be satisfied to preach to a few, if more can be obtained. A large congregation presents a wider field for doing good, and usually has an inspiring effect upon the speaker.

No man of susceptibility and enthusiasm can declaim to a small audience as he can to a larger one. The fire that has nothing to work on will go out. It is then a good sign for a man to desire a large audience, when he has an important message to communicate.

A large congregation cannot ordinarily be secured in small populations, where people have to come together from long distances. The population must influence the size of the gathering, other things being equal. Popular men usually select populous districts, in which to speak. In rural districts the most popular talents cannot gather a crowd, or secure but a limited popularity, if confined to such a sphere.

It is a fact undeniable that some men have the faculty of drawing a crowd, such as cannot be brought together by others, speak they ever so wisely and well. This is a great gift; we shall not take space to discuss it now. Very few are gifted with popularity. A large majority of speakers—ministers and others, are ordinary men of mediocre ability. There are doubtless several circumstances which may be sought, and if combined may favorably influence congregations.

The first of these is the ability of a minister to give good instructive sermons. Every man cannot be popular, but every minister should be instructive. Every man should understand the subject on which he descants; he should prepare his sermons and speak intelligently on what he professes to teach. People soon tire of an elaborate verbosity that leaves them nothing that they can think upon afterward.

A congregation may not know much of the rules of rhetoric, but a congregation likes to gather where they can hear natural eloquence. A precise diction, a distinct utterance, sufficiently loud to be heard without effort, an earnest delivery by one who honestly aims to persuade them to that which he believes is for their good. Such speaking will gather some, and usually hold a congregation

when it is gathered. The character of the church building will influence the attendance. This should be in keeping with the surroundings of the congregation and the people it is expected to gather in. Not too fine for the neighborhood, and certainly it should not be too plain and homely. A church building should command respect, and the order of the service should be such as induces reverence. It is useless for an ordinary minister to expect to build up a congregation in an unsightly house, uncomfortable, badly ventilated and heated. There are so many excuses found for keeping away. Again, in almost all small towns, and some cities, the location of a church will very much influence the attendance. Some churches are set too far away from the people it is desired to gather. People will often go long distances in large cities, where the approaches are good in winter and summer, to a popular speaker; but in smaller places people will not go into back streets over snowy sidewalks to listen to an ordinary man. *Worship*, which should be the chief object, is unfortunately a secondary consideration. It is, "What are we going to hear?" A man, however, that is a pleasant speaker, though of ordinary ability, may get a good congregation if he has his church in a good locality; on a long street or thoroughfare, or very near to one, or on a prominent corner, with the advantage of two streets. People like to go in the direction of the crowd and without strong attachments or attractions they will not care to go into a little back street, lane or alley, or out of the region of population in a town or village. A congregation may be increased by pleasant exercises. Good music and singing of a popular kind will be sure to influence some. It is however a mistake to depend too much on choral services to the neglect of other things.

A lively, earnest working church will commonly do much to increase a congregation, especially if they are not ashamed to say "come with us" to those who are careless as to *where* they go, or whether they go anywhere or not. Announcing or advertising the subject of discourse may sometimes help to get a congregation; but will soon fail to attract if after such advertisement nothing special be forthcoming. When a subject has a special announcement there should be something of special interest given. It is not, however, in the