

It is the freshness of Nature in the springtime that makes us long to get away from the city to the green fields and woods. It is the freshness of youth that makes their company so genuinely attractive. The most of us would gladly exchange the conventionalities of ordinary society at any time for the natural unconventional ways of free-hearted children. The freshness of Nature is always attractive—much more attractive than the elaboration of art. A drink from the old well or spring that sends forth its living stream as fresh to-day as in the days of our childhood, is much more enjoyable than a drink from a tap in the house—even though it be a silver tap.

What we want in the pulpit is the freshness of life. Life is always fresh. It may be younger or older, more or less vigorous, but where there is genuine life there will be a measure of freshness. We hear a good deal to-day about the dead line in the ministry, and, truth to tell, there are some stubborn facts that seem to indicate that it is not wholly an imaginary line either. But since freshness depends upon life, and since the life required by the ministry is not exclusively or even mainly physical, but largely intellectual and spiritual, the dead line ought not to be reached so soon as it sometimes appears to be. Freshness is an attribute of the mind, not a characteristic of years. In German universities and pulpits, says Dr. Stuckenberg, we often find a freshness peculiarly rich because it has the developed maturity of age. "It is one of the most peculiar characteristics of our own age that it regards the seventieth year as a period of most vigorous activity—as witness such men as Humbolt, Ranke, Bismarck, Thiers, Gladstone, Palmerstone, and many others."

Some of the freshest preachers we know are no longer young men. Their locks are not as abundant or as glossy as they once were, but their thoughts are more living, and their hearts more hopeful. Their sermons are better now than ever before. Despite the desire that is apparent to-day for young men in the pulpit, give us the freshness that comes from living thought and living experience, as that is improved rather than deteriorated with the advance of years. But, as I have intimated already, this quality of freshness is not dependent upon age. It may be lacking in young preachers, while it may characterize older ones, and *vice versa*. It is hardly a question of age at all (of course