

who now preaches in the original sense of that word simply wastes his time and wearies his hearers. The people to whom his message would be good news are not present and will not come to hear. In vain does he resort to artifice to arrest attention, seeking to stimulate dulled appetites by excessive condiments, and only corrupting the tastes of the vulgar, while repelling with disgust the intelligent. The great aim of preaching now is, or should be, not so much to plant as to water the truth already in the minds of hearers; not so much to convert individuals to Christ as to convert the whole church into an army of evangelizers, every one of whom shall preach the Gospel to the unconverted every hour, and in every word and act of his life. Pastors, who now constitute the great body of Christian ministers, are not so much designed to be evangelists as teachers and leaders of the Sacramental Host, every one of which should be a tongue to proclaim life to the perishing.

Doubtless it is true that the minister who cannot preach, in any sense of the word, the earliest or latest, is afflicted with a fatal deficiency, and the sooner he lays aside both his title and his function, the better for all concerned. But neither one of my fellow-symposiasts, I am sure, believe that a minister's usefulness is to be measured by the numbers attracted by his pulpit ministrations; or that his claim to be accounted "effective" can be established by his ability to "draw an audience." It is needless to recount the pulpiteers whose steps have been thronged by crowds of eager listeners, but traces of whose labors in human society have been almost as evanescent as "the borealis race." Great churches have been gathered and made famous by great preachers, and then vanished with the preachers that gathered them. Humbler churches, too, have been brought together, one person at a time, by men of slender gifts as preachers, but of heroic toil and self-denial as Christians; and they were foundations on which others could build. The churches of the great preachers were known by the names of those who gathered them; the others were simply known as churches, but they had foundations and remained.

And as against an undue estimate of the value of any kind of preaching stands the stubborn but lamentable fact that many of the ministers, or rather clergymen, of our day, who are producing the most noticeable effects, and so in one sense are the most effective, are men whose main reliance is not on preaching but on ritual; who, all alive with earnestness, seek to move the hearts of men not so much through the ear as through symbols that may be seen and handled and tasted; and it must be admitted that few if any are more devout, more self-denying, or more active in Christian benevolence, than these same ritualists and the congregations and churches which they are molding.

But granting, as we must, that preaching in the existing sense of