

had long coveted, of hearing for the first time the most successful preacher to the unevangelized masses that I know. Going to the nearest railway station, hiring a horse and riding thirty miles across two mountain ranges, I came at sunset to the little county-seat in whose court-house the services were being held, there being no church edifice of any denomination in the place. It was in the latter part of May, when the people were all in the midst of the busiest season with their crops, and when it was most difficult to secure a congregation. As we entered the court-house at the hour of service I was astonished to find it packed to its utmost capacity, with many outside who could not get in. The dingy and uncomfortable court-room was only dimly lighted by one or two flickering coal-oil lamps. There were no musical attractions beyond the presence of a brother with a good voice who, accompanied by a small organ, led very simply in the singing of the most familiar Gospel hymns. It was evident that the preaching was what had gathered this great crowd of people, most of whom rarely if ever heard the Gospel preached. I had, therefore, full opportunity to study the preacher and the sermon—a sermon which, admirable from beginning to end, produced so profound an impression upon the people that I was not surprised when one of the rude mountaineers told me, after the service, that if that man preached a few days longer the court-house yard would not hold the people that would gather to hear.

Taking this sermon as a model of the kind of preaching needed, the following conclusions, I think, may be safely reached:

First, as to subject-matter, it is not necessary that we should select any out-of-the-way themes, or sensational topics, or subjects different from those that we would preach to one of our ordinary congregations of unconverted people. The text selected was John xii. 21, "We would see Jesus;" the theme, the threefold one, Jesus as a Friend; Jesus as a Savior; Jesus as a Brother. The sermon was as evangelical as possible—a simple setting forth of Christ in His varied relations to men. It is a common mistake to suppose that people who are not accustomed to attend church will not be interested in the simple story of the cross. On the other hand, if we will reflect a moment, we will see that there are reasons why they should be more interested in a simple Gospel sermon than those who are constant attendants upon the sanctuary, and yet who have not yielded their hearts to Christ. Because men never hear preaching it is not to be supposed for a moment that they do not think, and think profoundly, on the subject of religion. Many of them are the children of pious parents. They have drifted away from their early moorings, but have retained to a greater or less degree the influence of early religious impressions. All of them are, in the light of conscience, self-convicted sinners, however they may strive to close their ears to the verdict of the inward and spiritual monitor whose voice they can not altogether hush. Hence the story of the cross, of One who died for sin, of One whose blood