

Assuming that the entire building seats five thousand, there was, ere the sermon began, about two thousand people there. Not many men amidst the din of traffic, theatres, and sin, could summon mid-week two thousand people together, to hear a simple Gospel preached on old-fashioned lines. Let us observe a little. As the two thousand were at least forty minutes gathering, and the door fully opened, so that the stream was steady, we could notice. There were certainly a few, like myself, strangers; but as this service had not been widely advertised, two hundred would be a liberal estimate for such. A large number were plainly members of the regular congregation, if not of the church; as large a number appeared to be—not strangers—but people of the neighborhood, who irregularly came, or as opportunity offered. They were scarcely of the middle class, nor of the thriftless; they appeared to be of the working and shop-keeping order. Remember this is not meant as an invidious distinction. Had Christ depended on the better class of the society of His day, it is to be feared that Paul would not have written Col. i: 23, "preached to every creature under heaven." Every one of that eighteen hundred has a soul; and here is a man that is drawing them at the close of a busy day—where many voices are heard alluring to mere pleasure—to listen to Christ, the despised and rejected of men. More than three-fourths were women. I sat in a row the one male among fourteen; two men in the row of twelve behind; all women in the row before me. I have certainly not underestimated the proportion of men. The proportion of young people was very small. Young men scarcely any. The great preacher has not solved the problem of keeping the young. The great majority were of middle life and past; many had seen their threescore years. There are some not over-bright suggestions here—the facts were plainly to be seen. Where is the next generation to be found? Certainly Mr. Spurgeon is the great representative of a preaching, to all seeming, out of date. When his great personality is gone, who will, can, without accessories of music, or "keeping up with the times," keep the Metropolitan Tabernacle a power? Let the morrow alone—here are two thousand souls waiting upon a simple service; waiting to hear.

The clock struck seven; the small door in the rear of the first gallery opened; and Mr. Spurgeon, accompanied by a deacon, halted down to the platform pulpit. A brief, silent prayer, and the preacher rose, imploring the divine blessing. A hymn announced: "My heart is resting, O my God," and a part of the thirty-seventh psalm was read, interspersed with brief comments, urging trust, and inspiring confidence. Oh, the melody of that wonderful voice, clear, full, conversational, filling that large building, but *talking to you*. You feel at once in it an element of power, sympathetic too; devotional, but far removed as east from west, from the professional pulpit whine. A great talent used in the service of the Giver. The comments on the psalm were just natural, such as seemingly would occur to any thoughtful reader: twenty-five verses were read. "This psalm is full of comfort and truth, we have not time now to read more. Let us sing part of that beautiful hymn, 'When languor and disease invade.'"

A full ten minutes prayer followed. Earnest, unpretentious, occasionally pointed; specially this, the only personal reference: "O Lord, aid thy servant to preach to-night; he does not feel like it, but thou can'st use the weakest thing. Use us this night!" Another hymn, and then the sermon. The text was Luke iv: 38, 39. The sermon had its introduction and four heads. The introduction stated that while spiritual lessons had been drawn from other miracles, the healing of the leper, giving sight to the blind, etc., the whole range of homiletics had ignored this of the fever. Then a few general remarks. Peter had evidently made Capernaum one of his homes, to be near to his great teacher. Homes were now chosen without any reference to church privileges, a practice much to be deprecated. The relationship indicated goodness in the home. Peter took care of his mother-in-law; and she, unlike most invalids, whose first act on recovery would be to ask for some service, came and ministered unto them. "Happy mother-in-law to have such a son-in-law as Peter! Happy Peter with such a mother-in-law!" The division was:

1. There are spiritual fevers.
2. Many things cause these fevers.
3. Their evil results.