

ance much lower—as low as one-fourth, and one as low as one-tenth. Various reasons are assigned for this comparatively small attendance—distance from Church—bad roads—poverty—want of proper clothing—weariness in consequence of hard work during the preceding week—infidelity—apathy in regard to spiritual things. A great many in the country sections lay out, it seems, to make the Sabbath a sort of holiday—a day on which they mean to go and visit their friends, and on which they expect to receive their friends; this too operates seriously against attendance upon Church. In short the one great cause at work here is spiritual apathy—the love of the present world; and to meet this great evil the Committee know of but one prescription—a more faithful and true presentation of the Gospel, and perhaps a more simple and direct address to the hearts and consciences of men.

There is a disposition in these days to deal in what is called “modern thought, a mingle mangle of philosophical scepticism and metaphysics;” but he that is wise to win souls will eschew such a gospel and hold by those grand old truths which are spirit and life to the souls of men—faith in a personal God—in a free salvation—in the love of the everlasting Father—in the work of God’s Holy Spirit, and the fact that Christ has forever put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Let a man take up with this “modern thought,” as it is called, or hurry to the pulpit with a rehash of utterances which he has presented for the hundredth time, or worse still with some pompous harangue which he will not even take the trouble to write, and which breaks through all the rules of logic and grammar and even common sense, begun too and ended with prayers equally absurd and irreverent; and what wonder that souls thirsting for light—minds troubled with many questions and many cares, and there are many such minds—who would welcome a true man to speak to them from the fountains of truth as a messenger of God—what wonder that such should turn away and say: *There is nothing for me yonder.*

The Committee would not be understood as hinting that where there is an indifferent attendance upon the service there must also necessarily be indifferent preaching. On the contrary, the very excellency of the preaching and the faithfulness with which the truth is proclaimed may repel rather than draw, as in the case of certain disciples of old, who having heard a discourse on the higher life, took offence and *walked no more with Jesus.* Moreover, it is known to some of the Committee that certain brethren who complain in these sheets of poor attendance upon their ministry are among the most devoted labourers in the Church. Still, making allowance for such cases, it will be found as a general thing that an earnest Minister is a successful Minister—that one that never enters his study without a prayer for light, and his pulpit but with a conscious *message from God*, a message drawn from his own heart and the very fountains of truth—one who “takes heed not only to his ministry but to himself”—and whose whole life is a commentary on the truths which he teaches, and everyone that comes within his reach will be touched by a power which is not of this world, and those “that dwell under his shadow will return,” and many will rise up to call him blessed. Coming to them, from time to time, with no hasty, crude, cold utterance, but with loving truth drawn from his own rich experience—*oil beaten for the sanctuary*—they will feel his power and acknowledge that God is there of a truth, and being near to Him, and fetching his supplies from Him, he will not be like one crying in the wilderness, mourning over empty pews and barren results, but, on the contrary, a source of attraction wherever he goes. *He may go forth weeping, but he goes*