

those now annually brought into Christian fellowship. The Sunday-school and the periodic excitements known as revivals, in which sympathetic emotions play so large a part, now furnish to the Church the largest portion of its recruits. And even in the strengthening of convictions and the maturing of character, the Pulpit must now divide its claims with other religious forces, and specially with the Press.

And yet there are multitudes of people who think of ministers only as preachers. Indeed, there are whole sects that designate their ministers simply as "preachers." And I must beg pardon for saying that the gentlemen who have preceded in this Symposium seem to me to have laid undue stress on an increase of power in preaching as the one great essential to an increase of effectiveness and usefulness in the ministry. Too little attention seems to me to have been given to those elements that constitute true manhood, and thus endow with the influence that always attaches to high character.

And, least of all, can I agree with Dr. Wheeler in his idea that more interesting sermons is the special need of our time. Of all the qualities that a minister should seek to impart to his sermon, that of being interesting is, to my mind, the most insignificant; the quality, in fact, most likely to interfere with all wholesome effect. We have heard sermons that were intended to be specially interesting, and the only interest awakened by them among intelligent hearers has been that of wonderment how any mind could so misconceive the object of preaching as to suppose that object to be attained by attracting attention to the sermon itself—for, say what we will, it is to the form of the sermon, rather than to the soul of it, that in interesting preaching the attention is sure to be attracted. John Foster said the sermons of Blair "got chilled through in standing so long to be dressed"; the thought of the sermon that is bedecked to make it interesting is sure to be overlooked in the admiration of its ornaments and drapery. The sermon that gets the strongest hold on an audience is one in which the preacher forgets self, the form and style of his sermon, and all else in the intensity of his conviction of the truth of what he is uttering. But even with preaching at its best, it is possible at this age of the world greatly to overestimate the value of it.

Indeed, in the reiteration of the statement that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," we are in constant danger of forgetting how different a thing the preaching of to-day is, and must be, from that which it originally was. At the beginning, preaching was simply an announcement, a proclamation, of glad tidings, of the good news that the Son of God had come into the world for the salvation of men. And it was the same, whether the preaching was to Jews or Gentiles. But in our day and land the Gospel is no news to ordinary church-goers. They are already more than familiar with it. Reiteration has made them insensible to it. The pastor