

when you may, if the pastor is at home, the house is crowded, and thus it has been for these eleven years, Sabbath after Sabbath without fail! Every pew in the church is let—some members of the church, even, cannot obtain sittings—and almost every stranger who spends a Sabbath in New York tries to “hear Beecher” before he goes home again. And what class of people are these? you ask, as you look around. How *young* they look—how thoroughly American! There are no “old fogies” here—it is a “live” congregation, made up of men and women who certainly are not out of the world. There do not seem to be many rich among them—if there are, they do not appear as such,—certainly this is not one of your “select,” “aristocratic,” “first-class,” “upper-ten” churches, but one of the people—a perpendicular, not a horizontal section of American society.

But hark! that cheerful voluntary on the organ announces the beginning of the service, and here is Mr. Beecher! Young America all over, is your first impression. He is over 45 years of age, but he will never look more than 30. Nothing can be further removed than his *physique* from the popular ideal of a clergyman—“sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,” wan and unearthly. A short but thick-set figure, that a prize-fighter or a butcher might envy, large neck displayed to full perfection by a turn-down collar, broad cheek closely shorn, abundant brown hair, full lip, and almost florid complexion, are the most prominent features of his outer man. All speak of immense physical power and superabounding life. Every joy of health and strength is his. No wonder that he is so happy, that there is such *spring* in all his being, that he can do and bear so much and so well, that he hopes so unflinchingly, and that he lays hold of living men and bears them onward with such easy power. Had that same spirit been in another body—it would not have made Henry Ward Beecher. This “talent” of the body too, we are told, he “puts out to usury.” By much out door exercise, and by a six or eight weeks’ rest every summer, he so uses what he “hath,” that “it is given to him,” and “he hath abundantly.” He does well.

But the organ ceases, and Mr. Beecher rises to pray. A full, rich voice breaks on your ear, in earnest but natural accents; and in the ideas and language of the prayer, there is a freshness, a cheerful joy, and a heart-fulness, that are as refreshing as they are rare. The invocation over—it is not long—a hymn is announced. It is taken from the “Plymouth Collection,” compiled by Mr. Beecher himself, containing some 1300 hymns, with tunes adapted to them printed on every page; the true idea, without question. A marvellous collection of hymns it is, gathered from every quarter, and containing such a mass of jewels that we may well forgive the baser substance mingled with them. The congregation sing, and not only sing, but stand up to do it, two rare things in that latitude, but all the more welcome, and such joyous singing you do not often hear. After the other devotional services comes, in due time, the sermon. It may be all written and read—or thus only in part, extemporaneous additions being made in different places, or it may be all unwritten; but in either case, it will be such a sermon as one will not soon forget. You will have very little technical theology, very few nice logical distinctions, but broad masses of truth are brought before you, rather, are poured into you like a lava-flood. This is not professional preaching—there is nothing of that in the matter or the manner; but the man, Beecher, has brought his whole self into the pulpit, and whatever is in him there comes out. Intellectually, he is a genius,—seeing, at a glance, what others work their way to