

*Attention!*

If you need another direction for winning attention, I should say, *BE INTERESTED YOURSELF*, and you will interest others. There is more in those words than there seems to be, and so I will follow a custom which I just now condemned, and repeat the sentence: Be interested yourself, and you will interest other people. Your subject must weigh so much upon your own mind that you dedicate all your faculties at their best to the deliverance of your soul concerning it; and then when your hearers see that the topic has engrossed you, it will by degrees engross them.

Do you wonder that people do not attend to a man who does not feel that he has anything important to say? Do you wonder that they do not listen with all their ears when a man does not speak with all his heart? Do you marvel that their thoughts ramble to subjects which are real to them when they find that the preacher is wasting time over matters which he treats as if they were fictions? Romaine used to say it was well to understand the *art* of preaching, but infinitely better to know the *heart* of preaching; and in that saying there is no little weight. The *heart* of preaching, the throwing of the soul into it, the earnestness which pleads as for life itself, is half the battle as to gaining attention. At the same time, you cannot hold men's minds in rapt attention by mere earnestness if you have nothing to say. People will not stand at their doors for ever to hear a fellow beat a drum; they will come out to see what he is at, but when they find that it is much ado about nothing, they will slam the door and go in again, as much as to say, 'You have taken us in and we do not like it.' Have something to say, and say it earnestly, and the congregation will be at your feet.

It may be superfluous to remark that for the mass of our people it is well that *THERE SHOULD BE A GOODLY NUMBER OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN OUR DISCOURSES*. We have the example of our Lord for that: and most of the greatest preachers have abounded in similes, metaphors, allegories, and anecdotes. But beware of overdoing this business. I read the other day the diary of a German lady who has been converted from Lutheranism to our faith, and she speaks of a certain village where she lives: 'There is a mission station here, and young men come down to preach to us. I do not wish to find fault with these young gentlemen, but they tell us a great many very pretty little stories, and I do not think there