

be able to take these subjects up—when the repairs of the parsonage are completed, when the new church edifice is built, when there are fewer of those everlasting committees to be met, and less of the outward business of the Lord's house is allowed to rest upon his shoulders; when the people become sufficiently intelligent to know that the most important part of the pastor's work is not that which he performs in the pulpit, or in the homes of his flock, but that which is performed in the seclusion of his own study, upon which the efficiency of all the rest depends. But this time has not yet come; and the treatment of these interesting and important subjects must be farther, perhaps indefinitely, postponed.

But after the minister has modestly set aside all those subjects for the successful treatment of which he is unfitted by the original constitution of his mind or by the defectiveness of his training, and after he has reluctantly passed by those, the successful treatment of which would require an amount of thought and research which the exigences of the hour will not permit him to bestow upon them at present, he has, by no means, reached the bottom of the list of texts and topics which he will feel it to be his duty to reject. If the modest preacher, who has a proper sense of the limitation of his own faculties has to put by many subjects simply because he does not feel that he possesses the ability to grapple with them successfully, is it any wonder if the intelligent pastor, who has made the people whom it is his business to instruct the subject of his careful study, should have discovered that all subjects are not equally adapted to all hearers any more than they are to all preachers; and that some things which would be both intelligible and interesting to him would be utterly unintelligible and devoid of interest to a very large proportion of those who hear him. It is true, indeed, that in most congregations there are individual men who are intellectually equal if not superior to the minister; but in all congregations the number of these must necessarily be exceedingly small—so small, manifestly, as to form an exception to a general rule. And while the intellectual few must not be overlooked, or their special necessities left unprovided for, the interest and profit of the many must not be sacrificed for their peculiar gratification. The intellectual man can understand and even enjoy, when they are intelligently and interestingly discussed, subjects which are level to the comprehension of the commonest mind; while those matters which would have a special interest for the man of culture, would have no manner of interest or value for the mentally undisciplined masses who throng our churches. The aim of the preacher must be to do the most good possible to the largest possible number of his hearers. And in the attainment of this end it will be necessary for him to studiously avoid these abstruse and difficult questions which, however well suited to the lecture-room or Lyceum, where the audience may be supposed to be select and educated, are wholly unfit for the pulpit, which, though it is designed for the intellectual and spiritual profit of all classes, is specially intended for the instruction and edification of the uneducated masses. There is, it is true, a peculiar fascination about such themes to the thoughtful preacher, especially if there is a natural speculative tendency in his mind, and it often requires no small degree of self-denial upon