

you so much enjoyment in hearing a sermon on any of the grand doctrines of the cross; inasmuch as you can hear it with intelligence. The ideas, the associations and sympathies of your own mind cast upon it a light, impart to it an interest, and render it subservient to your up-building in holiness. Again, your mind acquires, from the frequent and reflective perusal of God's word, a power of perceiving of grasping, and of digesting whatever is placed before it by the preacher in the economy of grace. Besides, there ensues from the same cause an affinity between the mind of the hearer, and that of the preacher, which enables the one to profit much by the other. But, diametrically opposite is the case, where there is little or no acquaintance with the Scriptures. In that case there is little or no ground for the preacher to work upon for the spiritual good of the hearer; and there are fewer facilities to aid the preacher in his efforts to impart a knowledge of God's word to the hearer. Can the man who is so much engrossed with the things on earth that he seldom or ever reads the word of God from the one week to the other, and seldomer reflects upon it, derive much spiritual good from the ministrations of the pulpit? This is very unlikely, whether we view it from the callousness of his mind, that makes him so indifferent about divine things, or from the ignorance that shrouds his mind in darkness in regard to them. Without previous education in divine things, preaching has, comparatively, little power.

Let us first view this in regard to the hearer. The intelligent hearer can, proportionate to his intelligence, appropriate to himself the truth in its various aspects and all its fullness. Knowledge is receptive of truth upon truth in a constantly increasing ratio. A snowball increases from a very small size to a very large one by rolling it

along the snow. Every revolution it makes increases its bulk and surface; and, therefore, every successive revolution takes up new matter proportionate to its bulk and surface. In like manner, knowledge already in the mind is attractive to itself of knowledge without the mind. Sentiment is accretive of sentiment, thought of thought, and so on to a vast store in the mind of knowledge upon knowledge in divine things. But, in the case of ignorance the result is of a very different kind. Ignorance is intrinsically incapable of understanding the truth in its various phases and in all its fulness. The earth stretches out in varied scenes of interest and beauty; the heavens form an expanse of vastness and grandeur; but a man down in a deep narrow pit can see nothing at all on the surface of the earth, and nothing but a speck of the heavens; in like manner the glorious gospel of our blessed God stands out to view clear as written with sunbeams, and rich in its grand provisions for the redemption of man; but the eye of ignorance is blind to it, or sees but little of it. Walled up in ignorance, no man can derive much instruction or pleasure from the pulpit, whatever may be the talents and attainments of the occupant.

Let us next view it in regard to the preacher. It has been said that a praying people make a preaching minister—a maxim which admits of no doubt, but it is a new and quite as true a maxim that an educated people make a strong and progressive ministry. The pew and the pulpit act and react upon each other with great mental force—mind in the pew is sure to bring out mind in the pulpit. The eye of the hearer, beaming with intelligence, enkindles the soul of the preacher with pathos of sentiment; the eagerness of the hearer to catch the words as they fall from the lips of the speaker makes the preacher, speak the truth with glowing earnestness, or