

things produces no great surprise to the mind of the writer, when he notices the tastes, the habits, and the engrossing pursuits of our people, and examines their most frequent reading.

We see in nearly every family we visit one or more political newspapers, some magazine of light literature; we find of religious reading in addition of course to the Bible, a few Sabbath-school books designed for children, mostly petty novellettes, a work or two on *religious sensation* of modern production, with a *sensation* magazine, and perhaps the *Christian Guardian*. Now where is the intelligent christian that does not know that the most of such aids to mental development, and invigoration, and progress, can be nothing more than food for the sickly, and induce a weak and halting state of soul, when our own standard works on Theology, such as Wesley's, Fletcher's, and Watson's, are discarded or unknown; nor can such reasoning induce any peculiar love for the study of the word of God, but on the contrary creates a distaste for its solemn and deep teaching, and becomes the greatest hindrance to the acquisition of biblical knowledge.

We turn to the *Pulpit*, perhaps the main dependence of our people for religious instruction, and we presume that it will not be supposed that one who serves in it will be disposed to depreciate its worth and importance. Well let us see how it is with the pulpit. The preacher can hardly be thought to be above the common infirmity of his brethren,—an engrossing desire to please his hearers, for woe to him who is not thus successful, his character and position being hopelessly affected by failure, and strange, his brethren in the ministry are ready to cast the first stone at him. The question then with him in view of such consequences will be, what is best calculated to please the people—the mass we mean—not a few exceptional cases. But what is most likely to please a people, who, through the week have, if they have read at all, been engaged in reading sensational articles in political papers, sensational articles in the ordinary magazine, the religious novelette in the Sunday School book, and the sensational experiences of the sanctified in the *Guide to Holiness*. Will souls thus fed, and minds thus cultivated, and taught, and strengthened, listen patiently and receive sober, practical and doctrinal truths, conveyed in calm or even earnest and impressive language? No, the food is too strong, the truths are unpalatable—they cannot relish it. The preacher is soon denounced as being dry, and they feel insulted that such has been sent to minister to them; he has no talent, and their circuit will be ruined unless some change can be effected,—what they want, they exclaim, is a revivalist and a revival. The preaching therefore generally required, is not what will instruct, but what will please, not that which requires effort