

HEAVY TIDINGS.

I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.—
Kings xiv: 6.

Whatever afflicts and burdens the heart, whether personal, family or national—whether it affects the physical only or the spiritual.

1. The "heavy tidings" may be a message from God of terrible import, as in the case of Jeroboam's wife.

2. It may be the announcement, by newspaper, letter or telegram, of the death of a very dear friend, or the sickness of an absent child, or the loss of property, etc., by some dire calamity.

3. It may be the words of your physician than he cannot save your life, or the life of child, wife, husband, friend sick unto death.

4. It may be the "still small voice" of the Spirit speaking in alarming tones to a guilty conscience, warning you to flee the wrath to come.

O, how frequent are such messages to us in this vale of tears! How many prophets of evil are sent to us with "heavy tidings" that make our hearts to ache, that afflict our souls almost unto death, and make us long for the rest of the grave and the joy and glory of heaven!

LIVING ISSUES FOR PULPIT TREATMENT.

Anything that makes for the weal or woe of mankind should concern the preacher.

Federal Aid in Education.*

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.—Hosea iv: 6.

By a man of understanding and knowledge the state [the land] shall be prolonged.—Prov. xxviii: 2.

A BILL now before Congress, and which has passed one House, appropriating a large sum of money from the national treasury for this purpose, has called the attention of the country to the matter in a special manner. The educational condition of many of the States renders such aid very desirable, and if a wise constitutional mode of rendering it can be devised, by all means let the generous appropriation named in "Blair's Bill" be given.

The Census of 1880 disclosed a degree of illiteracy that was truly startling in its proportions.

"Of the 36,761,607 persons over ten years of age in the United States, 4,923,451 were reported as unable to read, and 6,239,958 as unable to write. That is to say, in a general way, thirteen out of every one hundred voters in the country confessed that they were unable to read their ballots. Now, when we consider that few persons who reach the age of ten years without knowing how to read rarely acquire that facility at all, and that every one who could make out to spell a-b ab, b-i bi, b-o bo, was classed as able to read, we can get some idea of the vast number of our fellow-citizens who are shut off from any intercourse with the intelligence of

the modern world. It would hardly be too much to say that twenty-five per cent. of the adult population of the country to-day should be classed as illiterate. The Census showed also that a large part of the illiterate population is massed in a few centres. The following States returned over thirty-three and one-third per cent. of the population over ten years of age as unable to read: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia (the average of the eight States being nearly forty-two per cent.); while the following did not exceed four per cent.: Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin (the average being less than three and one-third per cent.)."

The case would not be so bad if this illiteracy were somewhat equally distributed among the States. But this is far from being true. The great mass of this ignorance is in the Southern States—the average in eight of them being 42 per cent., while in many of the Northern and Western States it was less than four.

The reports of the Educational Bureau show further that none of our large centres of population provide adequate school room and skilled teachers, even for those children who desire to attend school, while it is notorious that thousands of children are growing up in our cities in idleness and crime, who might be reclaimed if school facilities of the right kind were provided. The failure of the "apprenticeship" system, which aimed to educate children for some useful calling, has thrown thousands of

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