

ing the ignorance they manifest as to true religion. Let the papers speak on politics, it is a matter they understand, and their ability is astonishing; but, once let them touch religion and our Sabbath-school children could convict them of entire ignorance. The statements they put forth are so crude, so remote from the fact, that we are led to imagine that the presentation of a fourpenny testament to special correspondents, should be one of the first efforts of our societies for spreading the gospel among the heathen. As to theology, some of our great writers seem to be as little versed in it as a horse or a cow. Go among all ranks and classes of men, and since the day we gave up our catechism, and old Dr. Watts' and the Assemblies ceased to be used, people have not a clear idea of what is meant by the gospel of Christ. I have frequently heard it asserted, by those who have judged the modern pulpit without severity, that if a man attended a course of thirteen lectures on geology, he would get a pretty clear idea of the system, but that you might hear not merely thirteen sermons, but thirteen hundred sermons and you would not have a clear idea of the system of divinity that was meant to be taught. I believe that to a large extent that has been true. But the great change which has passed over the pulpit within the last two years, is a cause of the greatest thankfulness to God; and we believe will be a boon to the church and to the world at large. Ministers do preach more boldly than they did. There is more evangelical doctrine I believe preached in London now, in any one Sunday, than there was in a month before. But still there is in many quarters a profound ignorance as to the things of Christ. Our old Puritans—what masters they were in divinity! *They* knew the difference between the old covenant and the new; they did not mingle works and grace together. They penetrated into the recesses of gospel truth; they were always studying the Scriptures, and meditating on them both by day and night, and they shed a light upon the villages in which they preached, until they might have found in those days as profound theologians working upon stone heaps, as you can find in colleges and universities now a days. How few discern the spirituality of the law, the glory of the atonement, the perfection of justification,

the beauty of mortification, and the preciousness of real union to Christ. I do not marvel that we have a multitude of men who are mere professors and mere formalists, who are nevertheless quite as comfortable in their minds as though they were possessors of vital godliness, and really walked in the true fear of God.

There was not—I speak of things that were—there was not in the pulpit a little while ago, a discernment between things that differ; there was not a separating between the precious and the vile. The grand cardinal points of the Gospel, if not denied, were ignored. We began to think that the thinkers would overwhelm the believers, that intellectuality and philosophy would overthrow the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. It is not so now; I do therefore, hope, that as the gospel shall be more fully preached, that as the words of Jesus shall be better understood, that as the things of the kingdom of heaven shall be set in a clearer light, this stronghold of a false peace, namely, ignorance of Gospel doctrines, shall be battered to its foundations, and the foundation-stones themselves dug up and cast away for ever. If you have a peace that is grounded on ignorance, get rid of it; ignorance is a thing, remember, that you are accountable for. You are not accountable for the exercise of your judgment to man, but you are accountable for it to God. There is no such thing as toleration of your sentiments with Jehovah; I have no right to judge you; I am your fellow-creature. No State has any right to dictate what religion I shall believe; but nevertheless, there is a true gospel, and there are thousands of false ones. God has given you judgment, use it. Search the Scriptures, and remember that if you neglect this Word of God, and remain ignorant, your sins of ignorance will be sins of wilful ignorance, and therefore ignorance shall be no excuse. There is the Bible, you have it in your houses; you can read it. God the Holy Spirit will instruct you in its meaning; and if you remain ignorant charge it no more on the minister; charge it on no one but yourself, and make it no cloak for your sin.

6. I now pass to another and more dangerous form of this false peace. I may have missed some of you, probably; I shall come closer home to you now. Alas, alas,