

pulpit. These great men of the pulpit are not pulpiteers without a long course of labor and study at the foundation, after they have the consciousness of being called to the work. No more are they, than are doctors, and lawyers, and mechanics, made in that way. Possibly, without much study or training, a man calling himself a doctor, might administer soothing syrup, or perhaps paragonic, and without great danger, and a man, without any preparatory study for the ministry, might dose the people with the *Opii Tinct Camp* of the gospel, and not do them further harm than rendering them unduly sleepy; but let him undertake to make up a prescription from any of the complex ingredients of theology, and the patient will be ready for the coroner.

Perhaps the weakest reply attempted by our opponents, is that it would not do to have a smart, talented, cultured man in every pulpit. That sort of argument was used not long since by a Rev. D. D. in Oregon. As this gentleman is called upon in his church capacity, to preach to congregations throughout the country, small and large, in the city, in town and out in the backwoods, I wonder how, as a "smart," "educated," "talented" man, a D. D., he manages to escape the full force of his logic and protect the people of these different congregations. Make an application of that sort of argument in our schools, our newspaper offices, or our business houses, and the silliness of it is made very apparent. One of the most gifted and scholarly men in this country was Mr. Bryant, editor of the *New York Post*, and he did more to educate and train the minds of the great under-masses of men in his city, than anyone else, or any other element of education. Rev. Jas. Brooks, of St. Louis, and Rev. Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans, two of the eminent pulpiteers of the Presbyterian church of

this country, are noted for their ability to teach and train and educate in spiritual things, those who have no educational attainments. They have no trouble about preaching down to the level of the common mind. It is hardly worth while to give this feature any further attention. The idea that we must have a set of ordinary-minded ministers for ordinary-minded congregations, is silly.

When we think of the vast apparatus of the pulpit in this country, of the thousands of sermons preached every Sunday, of the immense resources in weekly operation for bringing the most important truths home to the minds and hearts of the people, and then note the apparent feebleness and indefiniteness, the moral and practical results, and how slowly the popular feeling is moved and elevated and christianized, we cannot escape the conviction that the pulpit and pulpiteer must be at fault. It is not a matter of surprise that this is attracting attention, or that it is a common picture, which represents scores of weary listeners in our churches, decorously submitting to the sermon, as becomes conventionality, and expressing a sigh of relief when it is ended. It is not a caricature; it is a real picture, and mournful enough when we think of the great subjects and ends which have brought preacher and congregation face to face. We find, and with sadness, that what, in its own nature, is so vitally interesting, what ought to be intensely and practically exciting, is listless, flat and unprofitable. There can be but one conclusion; defectiveness in the mode of preaching, leaving the speaker without power and the audience without benefit, a prosaic and platitudinal discussion of subjects, which, if treated in a sincere, inspiring way, would make the hearts of the hearers glow again.

It will not do to say that the value and importance of divine truth are independ-