

Such ministers seldom remain long in a place. The Presbytery is not, indeed, informed that Mr Slender has preached himself out; some reading elder, or surly Scotch pewholder is made the scapegoat; but the fact is, that the preacher goes away to fascinate some new people with his soft voice and animated manner.

*Ministerial study* is a *sine qua non* of success. It is absurdly useless to talk of methods of preaching, where there is no method of preparation. Ministerial study is twofold—special and general. By *special study*, I mean that preparation for a given sermon, which is analogous to the lawyer's preparation of his case. If faithful and thorough, this may lead to high accomplishment; but, as in the instance of *case-lawyers*, it may be carried too far, and if exclusively followed must become narrowing. The man who grows old with no studies but those which terminate upon the several demands of the pulpit, becomes a mannerist, falls into monotony of thought, and ends stiffly, drily, and wearisomely. At the same time, he wants that enlargement and enriching of mind derived from wide excursion, into collateral studies, of which all the world recognises the fruits in such preachers as Owen, Mason, Chalmers, and Hall. Yet even this inferior way of study into which busy and over-tasked men are prone to slide, is infinitely better than the way of idleness, oscitancy, and indecent haste. For thus the student who begins betimes, manages to pick up a great deal more than is necessary for his special task. In premeditating one sermon, he often finds hints for three more. By tunnelling into the rock of a single prophetic passage, he comes upon gems of illustration, nuggets of doctrine, and cool spring of experience, all which go into the general stock. Yet no wise student will restrict himself to the lucubration asked by next Sunday's sermon.

By *general study* I mean that preparation which a liberal mind is perpetually making, by reading, writing, and thinking over and above the sermonizing, and without any direct reference to preaching. Such studies do indeed pour in their contributions to every future discourse with a continually increasing tide; but this is not seen at once, nor is this the proximate aim. No

man can make full use of his talent, who does not all his life pursue a high track of generous reading and inquiry.

Your general studies will again subdivide themselves into those which are *professional* and those which are *non-professional*. Both are important and mutually advantageous. But the first claim is that of biblical and theological literature and science, upon which, at present, my remarks shall be brief, and respecting on the point in hand. Let *Theology* afford us an instance; though every word I write may be just as well applied to History and Interpretation. Besides all your sermon making, *Theology, as a system, must be your regular study*. Neglect this, and your pulpit theology will be one-sided; many topics will never have due consideration. I shall augur badly for your career, if you are found uninterested in great theological questions. Some established works should be daily in your hands; and of such works a few should be often re-perused. Find a clergyman who knows nothing of such pursuits, and you will observe his preaching to be unmethodical, and little fitted to awaken inquiry among deep thinkers in his flock. He will soon attain his acme, and will continue to dispense milk where he should give strong meat. The analogy of other professions will occur to you; the lawyer or physician who reads law or physics only for this or that case, can never take high rank.

*Non-professional studies* open a wide field, and every minister must be governed by the indications of Providence. Extremes are perilous, and I know too well how, under the pretext of cultivating general literature, and even art, a servant of Christ may almost alienate himself from what should be the darling studies of his life. Witherspoon has observed, that it is not to the credit of any gospel minister to be famous in any pursuit entirely unconnected with theology. Yet he who is a mere theologian, is a poor one. Bacon said, long ago, that no man can comprehend the canton of his own science, unless he surveys it from the heights of some contiguous science. Take *Law*, for instance, though this is only one example out of a hundred. An acquaintance with jurisprudence is of the greatest value to the minister. No man can understand the practice of our Church Courts who