

there is a field for observation. Besides all this, the literature of the subject has grown immensely. The English and American associations, in their annual transactions, have a cyclopedia of information. Besides all this, there are special treatises, many of them of great value, which belong in the clergyman's library as truly as commentaries or histories of doctrines. A leading religious newspaper recently published the following comment on the present status of the criminal community in the State of New York :

"There are at the present time over two thousand convicts in the State-prisons of this State, living in the condition of absolute idleness, and locked up in their cells, simply because the officers of these prisons can, under existing laws, give them nothing to do. This is demoralizing to the prisoners, injurious to their bodily health, and, at the same time, burdensome to the people in the way of taxation for their support. These prisons, under the contract system, abolished by the Legislature a few years since, gave full employment to the convicts, were self-supporting by the products of their industry, and had begun to yield a surplus revenue to the State. That was an evil hour when the contract system was abolished to please the so-called labor-reformers; and ever since things have been going from bad to worse up to the present time. The Legislature has simply played the dodge game with the question solely for partisan reasons, and doing nothing effective in the way of a remedy. Both political parties in this State are grossly at fault on this subject. Each has shamefully tried to steal the march on the other with the ignorant labor vote, and neither has been governed by any enlightened principle of good public policy. The Republicans have a large majority in both Houses of the next Legislature, and upon them will devolve the responsibility of dealing with this question in sober earnest. The time has come for something more than mere makeshifts to answer a temporary political purpose. There is no good reason why our State prisons should not furnish adequate employment to the convicts and be self-supporting. Let this foolery with the labor vote come to an end."

I trust my ministerial brethren will acquit me of all affectation of superior insight into ministerial responsibility when I utter the conviction that the pulpits of the land ought, after study of this subject, to preach on it so as to rouse the slumbering conscience of the public. And if our clergy can do no more, then let them read such books as Herbert Spencer's "*Sociology*" or his "*Social States*," so as to know what positivists think and plan on the very sober questions discussed by modern social science. This, at least, the Christian ministry can do. The opportunity cannot be wanting.

The advantages of such a study to the ministry are certainly great. Every clergyman should have, outside his regular professional studies, some one to which he may give considerable attention. Ruts are bad things. Moral, mental, professional ruts are common enough. It is easy to get into them and hard to get out. Is there not good reason to think that the intellectual life of not a few ministers is spent in a mere round of sermon-making? It begins on Tuesday, and from then till Saturday night there is little mental exercise but the thought