

### A MINISTER'S TEMPTATIONS.

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Perhaps a word of explanation is necessary to justify the choice of such a theme. Some may think it one to be handled only by the best and ablest of our fathers, and before an audience of ministers alone. But the success of Christian ministers depends more on their character and practical wisdom than on their attitude to those doctrinal and speculative questions whose discussions here might be more congenial and inspiring to many of us. And I cannot forget that we are here, not merely as students about to begin another winter of intellectual discipline, but as ministers who have come from their pastoral labors to join in a spiritual retreat. To my brethren in the ministry, therefore, I primarily address myself as their fellow-servant, as one who has never been able to divest himself of the character of a preacher, and whose theme, therefore, is not always entirely a matter of personal choice.

There are many people otherwise wise who think that a minister has a remarkably pleasant lot, not only in being exempt from the more difficult and arduous labors by which other men must earn their bread, but also because it must be so much easier for him to be good. "They think of a pretty, peaceful country manse, and picture to themselves the minister spending his days there between learned leisure and quiet visits to old women who curtsy at his approach."

There is a measure of truth in this. A minister is relieved from the sharp trials of business and from the anxiety for daily bread which hangs over many a hard-worked man. But if temptations of a certain gross and materialistic kind do not torment him, he must face others just as insidious, and, if yielded to, just as fatal to integrity of character. The possibility of temptation marks man's place in the moral scale, and as he rises from the savage state to comparative civilization, the range of his temptations constantly widens. The lower inducements to evil may now have less hold on him,