

sustaining itself through two weekly sermons, year after year. Or, a mind by nature strong and clear, may have been so contracted and stiffened by defective education and physical labours, as to have lost its flexibility, and to have fastened upon it such incurable vices of thought and expression, as will always cast its thoughts into a repulsive mould. Or, with no slight powers of popular address, and much ardour of temperament, there may be wanting that stability of character which alone will bear the strain of the crisis that are sure to come in every ministerial life. Or, we may miss that decided judgment and firm will, which must be found in a leader of the people, since many a one who is well fitted to follow, breaks down when required to lead: a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Or, infirmities of temper, not utterly incompatible, however inconsistent, with true piety, may neutralize its power for good, and make enemies everywhere. Or—but we need particularize no more. If, from any such cause, a good man has been mistakenly thrust into the work, alas for him and his unhappy family, alas for the churches: It is difficult for him to get a call, and he has to undergo all the protracted misery of “candidating” here and there, until his self-respect is most seriously impaired. After a while, difficulty occurs, and the same process is gone through again, unless he drags on a connection without pleasure or profit, either to the people or to himself. There may be nothing against him, but he is inefficient. His present charge does not desire to keep him; no other tempts him away. He is generally in some out-of-the-way place. He wants missionary aid all his life. His ministerial brethren love and pity him, as a “good man,” but a “poor fellow.” The ills and the temptations of poverty try him sorely, perhaps prevail over his integrity. It is well, if, ere the end, he subsides into private life. But how much better, had he never left it! It is a miserable use to make of a Christian man—to “spoil a good church-member in making a poor minister.”

We would urge on those who are thinking of this great work, a most rigid self-examination as to their *motives*. Not only may there be mistake, as to the work, but also concerning ourselves. “The heart is deceitful above all things,” and the “father of lies” is glad to aid its self-deceiving tendencies, so as to put the wrong man into the pulpit. The ministry is not a good trade, commercially speaking, but this does not prevent the indulgence of unhallowed feelings in connection with it. Disappointments in other pursuits, have led some to seek refuge in the ministry, but if no better reason can be given, it is profane to say, “Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest’s offices, for a morsel of bread.” Our system of educating men for the ministry, suggests a temptation to some minds, to those who are somewhat indolent and shiftless, and prone to lean on others. For four years, they are provided with a considerable part of their maintenance; and even after that, there are missionary funds to rely upon. The social position of a minister, is an object of ambition to many. Those who love power and praise, to be always before the public, to have the standing of a gentleman, and to see their names in the newspapers, can have these desires gratified by entering the ranks of the clergy. Men of an intellectual turn, who disdain the drudgery of secular avocations, who love books and have a gift for public speaking, are drawn by their tastes, in the same direction. The poverty of ministers is not a sufficient safeguard against these evils, for it may be no greater than the same parties have been accustomed to, and the attractions mentioned are stronger—to