

tion. The interest in his subject, and in that *special subject*, ordinarily exists before he has put pen to paper. It is totally different in the case of the minister. Whatever depth of interest he may for the time excite in connection with a certain doctrine or duty, he must at the commencement introduce his subject under the disadvantage of its being about the same interest to his audience as any other in the whole round of Revelation. Thus ordinarily, instead of public interest in any one subject calling forth the sermon, the work of the sermon is to call forth public interest. Popular expectation awaits the arrival of the latest news by the daily and weekly paper, but no such watching or waiting precedes the ministrations of the Sabbath. No new arrivals of revelations from heaven are either looked for, or needed—revelation is complete and perfect, and the work of the preacher is to awaken interest in the minds of one large class of hearers, in connexion with things with which they have been long familiar. The intrinsic difficulties of his work are greater than those in any other branch of professional life. With one half the gifts requisite to good success in the ministry, a man may in several other learned callings take a very fair position; a man who is a good thinker, and can express clearly his thoughts in writing, has ability sufficient for the editor's chair, or the lawyer's office; but an additional and rare gift is requisite for the pulpit. If no man in the legal profession could succeed in any sense without doing the work of a pleader, how much more difficult would the work of the profession be to hundreds, thousands I may say, than it now is? And there is another point to which I may here refer. Most ungracious and absurd contrasts are occasionally drawn in our public prints between the style of the stage and that of the pulpit; the highest praise is lavished on the former, and as liberal disparagement dealt out to the latter. An example of this came before the eye of the writer in a prominent Scotch paper the other day. Far be it from me to apologize for dullness and monotony in the pulpit, but I would like to see the case as between the pulpit and the stage fairly put. Let those paragons of eloquence on the stage have to *originate, prepare, and deliver* two pieces or addresses every week for a series of years in the same town or city, and then the cases will be so nearly parallel as to furnish legitimate ground for comparison. Besides this, it is only one man out of hundreds of thousands that can reach even the point of toleration on the stage, and we must have a far larger proportion than that out of the mass of society for the office of Christian ministers, consequently all these cannot be brilliant stars, for the simple reason that the human race cannot produce them. I have followed this point further than I intended, my main object being to point out the wearing influences of a minister's ordinary work on his mental and physical energies. No doubt it is quite possible for a man in the ministry to make very easy work for himself, but in due time the Church will make his work still easier by giving him to understand that extemporizing triflers are a class of labourers for whom she has no work at all. The man who sets himself to a hearty and earnest discharge of the duties of the ministry, must work and work hard with both head and heart. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that a good number of our ministers are from time to time compelled to seek rest and recruiting influences. At the same time may it not be urged that there is a culpable neglecting of health on the part of many of our ministers, in their habits of study on the one hand, and in their unduly denying themselves open-air relaxation and entertainment on the other; To many a laborious and devoted pastor in our Church might the wish be appropriately addressed, contained in the second verse of the Third Epistle of John, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Both kinds of health in the ministry are important in a very high degree, in order to health and prosperity in the Church. You may hear further from me on this subject at a future time. Yours &c.