

they had kept themselves totally uninformed on the Irish question of Home Rule or the papal policy in the modern Vatican.

There is a field of observation in nature which it is a matter of wonder more of our country ministers do not keep up. Many of them had in college decided scientific tastes, might indeed have been excellent scientific students if they had given their lives to this. They might become careful observers of the botany of their parishes, or the birds, or the insects, just as White did at Selborne. And this not to play at being scientific men, but for the enrichment of their minds, for diversion, for knowledge of God in nature. How many of our country clergy could tell us the names of the birds which make their nests in the branches of their parish trees? If they would only read the delightful books of John Burroughs, I am sure they would see how rich a field of observation is open to them here, and would thank me for calling their attention to it.

The facilities for such scientific study are at hand. Every science has its hand-books, its popular treatises. Some of us can recall the lively and profitable interest with which we listened to the lectures of Professors Tyndall and Proctor. One could do worse than go through the modern text-books in use among our colleges. Every minister should have access to the *Popular Science Monthly*. It will keep him posted on many scientific topics which ministers should at least know something about. "A little learning is a dangerous thing" only when it makes its possessor think he has more than a little. "Better half a loaf than no bread" is a true maxim here. And if he can obtain a microscope and learn how to use it, there will be open to him a source of wonder and delight from its use on objects he could gather in every parish walk, which will be a permanent spring of enjoyment and profit. The universe of God is made up of little things. No man ever realizes this who has not known something of microscopic revelations. No men need to know this more than ministers. Yes, the helps to general scientific knowledge are at hand. As I write, my eye falls on a series of *history primers*, and *literature primers*, and *scientific primers*, costing perhaps twenty-five cents apiece. Among the latter I find one on "Chemistry" by Roscoe, and another on "Physics" by Balfour Stewart, some on "Physical Geography" and "Geology" by A. Geikie, one on "Astronomy" by J. N. Lockyer. These *primers* will show any one how to pursue the study further, if he be so minded. I venture the assertion that few ministers could read them without astonishment at the problems they suggest. Some of our scientific men, I believe, discredit these attempts at popularizing science as tending to degrade or belittle scientific study. But we think their fear is groundless. Science cannot afford to be a monopoly for the few. Give us outsiders and scientific laymen a chance at the crumbs which fall from the loaded tables of modern discovery.

Are there, however, no dangers attending such acquaintance with