

know you to be living a life of selfish indulgence. You may be able to make a very eloquent appeal on behalf of missions : but unless your own subscription bears something like a fair proportion to your means, your eloquence is not likely to affect the pockets of your hearers to any great extent. You may lament the extravagance of the modern fashions and the showy nature of the dresses of the present day : but in order to impress upon the minds of your neighbours the idea that you look upon it as being contrary to christian simplicity, it will be necessary for you to relinquish it your self and dare to be singular. And you may denounce the luxuriousness and selfishness of the age for a long time, and with a good deal of vigour too, without producing much effect, unless you set *an example* of simplicity and self-denial. For example : it would take a good deal of argument on your part to convince a man that a glass of rum would do him harm, if he knew that you took ale with your dinner, and whiskey punch before you went to bed. The fact is, as already stated we are judged not so much by our words—by our professions, as by our works. And I am bold enough to affirm that a great deal of the irreligion of to-day is largely owing to the self-indulgence of professing christians. I know the pulpit gets a good deal of the blame, and I, as a minister of the gospel, have no desire to deny that it has its share of the blame to bear. I admit the general weakness of the pulpit of the present day ; but with two, and often three sermons to prepare and preach each week ; with the endless rounds of visiting the sick—and as far as time will permit—the well also ; not to mention the “ thousand and one ” other demands made upon a clergyman’s time ; I confess myself unable to see how it can be otherwise. A clergyman has, as a rule, to prepare his sermons during the intervals between his other engagements, often when the majority of his congregation is in bed ; and in a large number of cases he has but little help in the shape of good commentaries and other books, and it is not to be wondered at that they should be tame and common place. Then again, he has very much to discourage him, for it not uncommonly happens that when he has taken special pains with the preparation of a subject, spending great care and much time, and even prayer upon it, he sees by the listlessness of his hearers that it is not appreciated, while perhaps some “ off-hand ” address which, for want of real matter he makes a little lively in manner, is spoken about as a good sermon. The fact is, the majority of people come to church expecting to hear a religious discourse ; they hear it,