

THE MINISTER'S WORKING THEOLOGY.

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I PROPOSE to discuss in this lecture the minister's working theology, by which I mean the theology that is of chief practical service to the preacher in accomplishing the work which he is sent to do.

The Presbyterian Church in all periods of its history and in all lands where it has found a footing has been conspicuous for insisting on a high standard of learning on the part of its ministers as well as natural gifts and personal piety. It has ever demanded that they should be men of the highest culture and attainments, both in general literature and in theological knowledge. Only with the greatest reluctance and under the strongest pressure from untoward circumstances has it ever consented to ordain men to the sacred office who were not possessed of these qualifications, whatever else they might be able to claim. Wherever it has made its home one of its first cares has been the foundation of institutions of learning, where the requisite scholarship might be imparted to candidates for the ministry, and schools of the prophets in which all departments of theology might be taught as systematically as possible. In the more fully equipped

institutions of the latter class the list of subjects taught is often a very formidable one. In the annual Calendar, of one which reached me recently, there are no fewer than thirteen separate departments, with a corresponding number of professors, and every student is expected to take the whole course. Nor does any one suppose for a moment that when he has covered all these subjects he knows one whit too much for the right discharge of his duties. In fact the newly made graduate is usually driven to acknowledge before very long that there are still a good many other things which it would be well for him to know if he could. No minister can know too much either of theology or of anything else.

But it is never contemplated in giving him this thorough education that his aim should be to communicate all the knowledge which he has secured in the theological seminary to the people generally, or even to hint very frequently at his own possession of it. He is expected to become reasonably familiar with the original languages of the Scriptures, but it would be pure pedantry to quote these in the pulpit or even to