

at and about, like a boat in an eddy, which moves but makes no progress. "Skeltons," as they are ludicrously called, however good, do not prevent this evil, unless they be afterwards thought out to their remotest articulations. The idle but voluble speaker, will flutter about his first head, and flutter about his second but will mark no ratiocinative connection, and effect no fruitful deduction. Evidently he who is continually pouring out, and but scantily pouring in, must soon be at the empty bottom.

Ministerial study is a *sine qua non* of success. It is absurdly useless to talk of methods of preaching, where there is no method of preparation. Ministerial study is twofold—special and general. By *special study*, I mean that preparation for a given sermon, which is analogous to the lawyer's preparation of the case. If faithful and thorough, this may lead to high accomplishment; but, as in the instance of *case lawyers*, it may be carried too far, and if exclusively followed must become narrowing. The man who grows old with no studies but those which terminate upon the several demands of the pulpit, becomes a mannerist, falls into monotony of thought, and ends stiffly, drily, and wearisomely. At the same time, he wants that enlargement and enriching of mind derived from wide excursions into collateral studies, of which all the world recognizes the fruits in such preachers as Owen, Mason, Chalmers, and Hall. Yet even this inferior way of study into which busy and overtasked men are prone to slide, is infinitely better than the way of idleness, oscillancy, and indecent haste. For thus the student who begins betimes, manages to pick up a great deal more than is necessary for his special task. In premeditating one sermon, he often finds hints for three more. By tunnelling into the rock of a single prophetic passage, he comes upon gems of illustration, nuggets of doctrine, and cool springs of experience, all which go into the general stock. Yet no wise student will restrict himself to the lucubration asked by next Sunday's sermon.

By *general study* I mean that preparation which a liberal mind is perpetually making, by reading, writing, and thinking, over and above the sermonizing, and without any direct reference to preaching. Such studies do indeed pour in their contributions to every future discourse with a continually increasing tide; but this is not seen at once, nor is this the proximate aim. No man can make full use of his talent, who does not all his life pursue a high track of generous reading and inquiry.

ATTENDANCE ON CHURCH COURTS.

The following extract from the *American Presbyterian*, in relation to public attendance upon Church Courts,—more particularly on meetings of Presbyteries, may be perused with profit by many of our readers.

The duty of attending the sessions of Presbytery, on the part of every minister and of every elder delegated by his session, is, and should be felt to be of high moral obligation.

Upon the Presbytery are devolved the highest responsibilities, in examining, licensing, and ordaining candidates: in receiving or dismissing ministers: in forming or dissolving pastoral relations: in judging ministers: and generally in directing, counselling and overseeing the churches, strengthening the feeble, and extending the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom.

No member of the Presbytery has a right by absenting himself voluntarily to throw upon his brethren responsibilities which, by his ordination obligations, rest equally upon himself: nor is it justice to his fellow presbyters to deprive them of his aid and counsel. The minister or delegated elder, who neglects to attend the ecclesiastical bodies of which he is a member, is guilty of the neglect of one of his most solemn duties, and is justly liable to censure.

What has been said of the duty of attending the meetings of Presbytery, applies equally to "a prompt attention so all the hours and services of such meetings," for devotional as well as business purposes. It argues ill for the spirit of devotion, when default in attending the opening or the morning hours of Presbytery, is excused on the ground that there is "no business" to be done. Devotional meetings are part of the business of Presbytery, and not the least important. Non-