

applications, all working into each other's hands and towards a common end, there might be ground for expecting that the value of the outcome would bear some proportion to the amount of the labour. But when we find each labourer working for his own hand, and deriving no assistance from the exertions of his neighbour, the question at once arises—Whether a better effect might not be produced by a different arrangement?

Let us look for a moment at the work expected from each of our Presbyterian clergy, and, to make the matter more plain, let us select the case of the incumbent of a city charge among ourselves. A person in this position has, in addition to the work of his own cure, various duties of a public and general character to perform. We find, for instance, the prominent and active city clergyman, who has to attend to the business of twelve committees of the General Assembly and eight committees of local, religious, and benevolent associations. In addition to this, being a Governor of George Heriot's Hospital, he will probably have four or five regular committees and other meetings in connection with that institution to attend; and his duties as a member of the Presbytery of the bounds will certainly involve other seven—giving a total of thirty-two distinct public enterprises to be engaged in, most of which must require his presence at frequent meetings of from two to three hours' duration. Then comes the private and proper work of the parochial charge; the annual catechising of a parish containing at least from four to five thousand souls, the pastoral superintendence (unshared probably except in theory by the eldership) of a congregation gathered from all quarters of the city, and in all likelihood the discharge of a hundred petty offices of which outsiders cannot dream. This serving of tables over, our clergyman must give next something of his strength and time to general reading and meditation; and to do this rightly in these days of active speculation and swiftly-thickening controversy, can be no holiday employment. He is now in a position to look at his Sunday's work, consisting of two new and original sets of devotional exercises, and two new original, elaborate, and lengthy oratorical compositions, known as lectures or sermons. In the first part of this great intellectual undertaking, he has no assistance from a Liturgy, as in many other Churches, nor is he at liberty to take refuge in the slipshod facility of extemporaneous utterance. For,

although in the recent Prayer-book debate it was taken for granted on both sides that extemporary prayer is at least allowable, the Westminster Directory of Public Worship would seem to forbid it. That standard not only prescribes a certain selection and order of topics for prayer, but it also expressly directs the minister to "furnish his heart and tongue with materials of prayer:" and this, taken in conjunction with a direction in preaching to "shun all such expressions as may occasion the corruptions of men to despise him"—which applies *a fortiori* to prayer—would seem to imply that prayer, whether read or not, must be composed, as it certainly must be original. If this be so—and even though it should not be so—in what fashion is the preacher likely to perform the task of framing and delivering the two elaborate philippics which law and customs exact from him every week? It is notoriously impossible that he should perform this, and all other parts of his duty, well; and the consequence is that, among those of our clergy who do their work with anything like vigour, we have three classes: those who try to be at once active, studious, and eloquent, and of course fail in all departments; those who are thorough in pastoral activity, but fall short in pulpit power; those who sacrifice pastoral activity to become strong in teaching. None of these represents a satisfactory state of things.

Yet the remedy seems not far to seek: either let us be content with less preaching or seek a better organisation of the preaching-power in the country. Is the amount of pulpit instruction pressed upon this generation absolutely called for? If it be thought impossible to diminish it with safety, then is it necessary that these forty thousand clergymen should not only be always preaching, but also making every sermon they preach? Might not a hundred of the most highly gifted among them make sermons for the whole nation, and be set apart for this very object? Were it but an understood thing that the local preachers were at liberty to use the efforts of such national preachers when their own productiveness ran short, we should have a better execution of pastoral duties, a fuller learning and wider culture in our local clergy, and a higher standard attained, because a longer time employed, in the original compositions by which they seek to promote the popular enlightenment. Nothing but a prejudice, which has neither excuse nor defence stands in the way of so great a public benefit.