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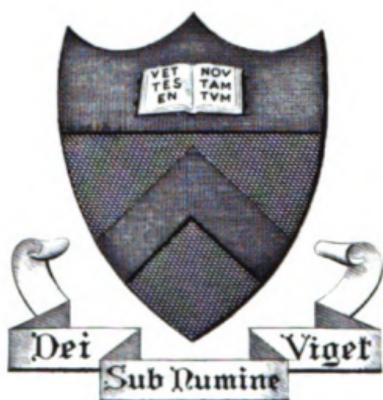


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THE
ANNUAL
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION

OF THE
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.**

EDITED BY
JOHN BRECKINRIDGE, A.M. CORR. SEC.

“Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.”—*1 Kings*, xx. 11.

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”—*Matth.* ix. 87, 38.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY RUSSELL AND MARTIEN.

.....
1832.

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PREFACE.

THE following work is designed by the Board of Education to be the first in a series of Annual Mementos, especially addressed to the candidates for the sacred office, under the care of the Presbyterian Church. The very interesting and responsible relation in which the Board stands, to a great number* (and that continually increasing,) of youth, looking to the most important of all possible pursuits, calls for frequent and faithful intercourse with them. In addition, therefore, to the private correspondence and pastoral supervision of the Corresponding Secretary and General Agent, it has been thought desirable to put into their hands, from year to year, a work prepared for their use, and adapted to their circumstances, which should be periodical, and yet not fugitive; and be, if possible, worthy to become the counsellor of their youth, and the companion of their devotional hours.

In performing this service, in the name and by the authority of the Board, the Editor has endeavoured to secure such matter, both as to subjects and quality, as was best fitted to the peculiar occupations and great objects of those who are in a course of preparation for the work of the Ministry. Most of the Essays are original; and he hopes the Christian public will be disposed to unite with him in felicitating the youth addressed, on the excel-

* Between 3 and 400.

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lence of the contributions. If our end shall in any just measure have been attained, then, the additional hope will be cherished, that the influence of this little manual will not be restricted to our own students, but extend to those engaged in preparing for the same office in other denominations of Christians, and under the care of kindred institutions, and not be without its use to young Ministers of the Gospel, and to private Christians.

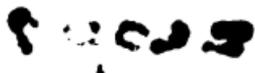
In what is called the *dress* of the work, our object has been to make it interesting, without being costly; and to *provoke* the possessors to preserve it. The embellishments consist of a frontispiece, whose motto and device are proper to a Christian minister; and of the miniature-portraits of those whose names are dear to the Church. The face of the Rev. John H. Rice, D.D., accompanied by a brief biography, was intended to have been inserted in this volume; but we failed to secure them in time for publication. The Rev. Sylvester Larned will not, we are persuaded, be an unacceptable substitute. Of the *likeness*, in each case, the public must judge. We will only say that we have done what we could to make them faithful.

We dedicate this work to the sons of the Church who are preparing for the sacred desk: we commend it to the providence of the Great Head of the Church.

By order of the Board,

JOHN BRECKINRIDGE, *Corr. Sec.*

Philadelphia, Office of Board of Education, {
November 1st, 1832. }



INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

MY DEAR YOUTH,

THE following work has been published through the kind care of the Board of Education, with special reference to yourselves, and is now affectionately sent forth to you, with the sincere desire that it may be made eminently useful in its influence on your understandings, hearts, and lives.

The character of the respected contributors to this volume, would alone guarantee to you valuable communications; the subjects discussed are highly appropriate to your present circumstances; and the contents, we cannot doubt, will be found worthy to be repeatedly perused, and deeply pondered.

It was our wish to do no more than compile this little volume, and put it into your hands with our unqualified recommendation. And in reference to the topics discussed in it, we feel that little more is necessary.

But there are several subjects of great importance and practical utility, which are not embraced in this work; and some also which cannot well be reduced to order in any single essay; and others still, whose notice properly

belongs to the official relation which we sustain to the candidates of the Board. To some of these your candid and serious attention is now invited.

In these remarks it is presupposed that you profess to know, and in the judgment of truth do experimentally know, the religion of Christ. Without that great and gracious change by which a man is constituted a Christian, a new creature in Christ, you will at best be blind leaders of the blind, and it will have been well for you, and perhaps for many others ruined by your influence, that you had never been born! And yet it is by no means to be taken for granted that every candidate for the ministry, or that every minister of Christ is a regenerated man. The history of the Church of God speaks, alas, far another language; and the awful results of the judgment-day will but too fully confirm the melancholy truth, that from the height of the most solemn and privileged of all human stations, many a graceless and unfaithful minister has been precipitated into eternal perdition.

It is proper that we should point you, 1. *To the temptations to which you are exposed, and against which we would affectionately guard you.*

There are some of these to which you are exposed, in common with other professors of the religion of Christ. We cannot here dwell on them. There are others, which are peculiar to your present circumstances, and to the office to which you aspire.

In enumerating a few of these temptations which we have called *peculiar*, we first mention, *The love of popu-*

lar applause. The most commanding form, perhaps, of man's influence on man, is found in popular eloquence. The power, and corresponding praise of such an endowment, make men greatly covetous of its possession, and ambitious to attain to the reputation it confers. These remarks are peculiarly applicable to our own country, which is, above all others, distinguished by an enthusiastic admiration of eloquent public speaking.

Now it has pleased an infinitely wise God, that *public speaking* should be the great channel of communication for his Gospel to the souls of men. "Faith comes by hearing." The divine method of extending Christianity through the world, is the preaching of the Gospel. We need not here delay to speak of the consummate wisdom and utility of this institution in its proper use. The point of our remark is, that this office, in the exercise of its most important and, indeed, essential functions, affords a very dangerous temptation to ambitious minds. For whatever may be said of eloquence at large, may by eminence be applied to the eloquence of the pulpit. The tenderness and majesty, the sacredness and solemnity of the subjects blended in the religion of Christ, present an unequalled theatre for the display of the most sublime and touching eloquence. While, therefore, the man of God will use the ministry of reconciliation for the salvation of souls and the glory of the Saviour, men of corrupt minds, covetous of human glory, may be expected (especially when the preaching of the Gospel is in so great demand) to seek the sacred office from unhallowed ambition, or other motives equally detestable. While no-

thing more entirely strips the work of the ministry of all its efficiency, nothing can be more offensive to a holy God. The history and fate of Herod, like a beacon on the brow of ruin, warns off unhallowed hands from this delightful yet awful work. He, on a set day, made an oration unto the people: and the people gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a God and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not the glory to God. Then let me guard you, in your first step towards the holy office, against this master-temptation, and peculiar sin of ministers of the Gospel. Seek to stain your glory, and humble your pride; to give the glory to the Lord; to show forth his praises, and not your own; and when you glory, glory in the cross!*

* I once knew a young man of unusual talents for public speaking, who entered the ministry under the following circumstances. He had selected the bar as the most appropriate place for the display of his powers. But just then having witnessed the popularity of a young clergyman, who was followed by great crowds on account of his commanding eloquence, he resolved, in a few days, without any change in his feelings or life, or any supposable reason but the discovery that the pulpit opened a way to popular applause and distinction, to become a *preacher*. In due time, though with some difficulty, he succeeded in entering the ministry. His course was such as might have been looked for. As to praise, he had his reward. He was for a season much admired. But his career was, as to himself, disastrous; as to others, ruinous, in proportion to his influence over them. He sunk rapidly into merited contempt; and finally lost even the crowded audience, and the public praises. The day of judgment will disclose the rest!

2. The next temptation against which I would guard you arises from the *present efforts to increase the number of candidates for the Gospel ministry.*

In former ages the demand for ministers of the Gospel did not outrun the supply, as it does now. It is one of the most affecting, and at the same time, auspicious signs of the times we live in, that the world is beginning to feel its wants; and the most important of all the enterprises which distinguish the age, is that which proposes to train a sufficient number of able and holy ministers to supply these wants. But along with these new efforts to augment the number of ministers, comes a train of difficulties and temptations. In the urgent demand for young men, it often happens that zealous, though indiscreet friends induce the most unsuitable persons to turn their attention to the sacred office. Youth of weak minds, who, though perhaps really pious, are utterly unfit for the office; or men of talents and education, but of shallow piety and of frothy, exciteable feelings; or men destitute of prudence, good judgment, and common sense, are thus often led on to a step full of disaster to the cause of Christ, and of misery to themselves.

The promptness with which candidates for the ministry are met by our benevolent societies, and the facilities which they afford for acquiring an education, augment the danger. A transition from obscure stations and painful pursuits to a course of study, and finally to the sacred desk, will be to many so great and attractive a change, as to involve in it a temptation peculiarly dangerous. And then, when the course of preparation has

been begun, there is a tendency in the best system of helps, to weaken the great principle of self-dependence, self-effort, self-support, and self-formation, which truly rests on God alone, and is so important an element in the character of a Gospel-minister.

We speak of this as a *tendency* and a *temptation*, not as a necessary evil inseparable from this noble feature of modern benevolence. The system is altogether indispensable, and we think it (though we would suggest it with diffidence) as well guarded by our own Board as the present light and circumstances of the Church allow.*

The course of study required to furnish a young man for the ministry is long; and the unaided attainment of the sacred office by an indigent youth *is a loss of time to a perishing world*. He could work his way through an education in twenty years, but we would aid him to do it in ten; if he could do it in ten years, we would aid him to do it in five. We propose to help him to help himself; to hasten his preparation without lowering his principles, and thus accelerate the conversion of the world, by putting able labourers into the field in half the time that would otherwise be necessary. Yet without care, the mind will learn to rest unduly on human aid; the eleemosynary spirit will be fostered, self-denial will be discouraged and diminished; and while numbers may increase, *men* will decay.

* And yet with much frankness we say,

—————“Si quid novisti rectius istis
“Candidus imperti: si non, his utere mecum.”

While, therefore, we greatly desire and labour to aid you in preparing for enlarged usefulness in your Master's kingdom, we would affectionately guard you against the dangers of the way.

We would, in the next place, guard you against superficial preparations for the work of the ministry.

There is so great a demand for "labourers in the harvest," in our day, that the first impulse of a youthful mind is to throw aside its books, and rush from the place of preparation and prayer, to the field where souls are won, and where the Captain of our salvation is making conquest of a revolted world. But on reflection, it will appear, that the call for labourers includes, nay, presupposes their fitness for the service; else, they will not so much help, as hinder the work of the Lord. There are said to be fifty thousand men in Spain alone, who officially minister in the amazing machinery of the Papacy! Yet, gross darkness covers the people. In such a case, the more, the worse!

If the desire to be useful overrules the duty to prepare for it, then, in the same degree is the spirit evil, vain, and self-deceived. It seeks the end without the means; it is seeking itself, and not God's service.

And while the spirit is wrong, its effects are deeply to be deplored. Its direct tendency is to make religious matters and empirics. But empiricism is immoral, especially in the great things of God, where, without due knowledge, one ventures to meddle with such momentous and eternal interests. It will probably be found, that the greatest number of those who have rent the

Church of God by their heresies, and inflamed her by their fanaticism, have been men, not only destitute of piety, but defective in mental discipline. The tendency of superficial acquirements, and imperfect discipline of the mind, is to puff up, not to humble, instruct, and purify.

In Paul's very comprehensive description of a bishop's character, (1 Timothy, iii. 6.) he emphatically forbids that he should be "*a novice*," one recently received, and partially taught; "*lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*"

Deep, patient, and long-continued culture is of indispensable use in forming the mind. One of the most unfortunate characteristics of modern education, is the disposition to *save labour to the student*. Labour-saving mechanism may do for the economics of the State, but instead of calling out, it cripples the resources of the mind.

But we would also guard you against superficial spiritual, as well as intellectual cultivation. As a great fact, no man can be prepared, even in the lowest sense, to preach the Gospel successfully to others, who has not been deeply and patiently disciplined himself. To this end he must have retirement and leisure, and daily seasons for meditation and prayer, and the *devout*, as well as critical reading of the word of God. He must try, and search, and know himself; he must have experience in the duties and trials, the joys and sorrows of religion; he must cultivate in due proportion, the passive and retiring, in order to make efficient the active and social

graces of the Spirit. He must pray much, before he can work wisely, and well. He must cultivate patience, if he would exercise zeal; he must acquire prudence, if he would attain to holy courage, and Christian enterprise. In fine, he ought to be not merely a real and decided, but an eminently practical and holy man.

Now this, besides the grace of God, which is always presupposed requires not only good opportunities, but much *time*; and he who precipitates himself without due training into the Ministry, will find, (or the world will find for him) when it is too late to repair the evil, that in his office, he is a driveller; in usefulness, a child; and it will be well for him if, in that day which shall judge the secrets of all hearts, he hear not the terrible rebuke of an angry God: "*What hadst thou to do to declare my statutes, seeing thou hast hated instruction! Who hath required this at thy hand?*"

Our next hint or caution refers to the temptations connected with the choice of a field of labour.

As you are only *candidates* for the Ministry, and most of you, perhaps, several years removed from the actual labours of that great office, it may at first view seem premature to address you now on this subject. When you reflect, however, that your future choice, though distant, will be very much controlled by the views and feelings formed during the preparatory course, an early survey of the whole field, and a timely weighing of the principles on which a selection is to be made, will appear to be of vital importance. Most young men decide upon the field of labour long before they begin to preach. For

example, they decide commonly, whether or not they will go abroad: whether, if at home, they will devote themselves to the work of an evangelist, or that of a pastor: and if to the latter, whether they will seek the self-denying fields where the domestic missionary penetrates the wilderness, and amidst many toils lays the foundation of future Churches, or prefer building on another man's foundation, made ready to their hand.

As their previous decision, so frequently forecloses a choice at the time of assuming the office of a minister, so it is most desirable to anticipate, and, if possible, rightly direct it now. It is highly proper also, that the relative claims of fields of labour should be early and distinctly before your minds, because there is, even at this late day, a very distorted and sometimes criminal method of comparing these claims. And the misguided affection of friends often conspires with a young man's love of honour or of ease, to seduce him from the way in which he should go. Look, for illustration, to the present state of the world. For every soul in our country, there are now in heathen lands fifty souls: while those at home have all heard the Gospel, or might have heard it—those abroad have no possible access to it: and now the door is open, or opening every where, even in China with her 300,000,000 of heathen, to the labours of the missionary, and from every part of the world the cry meets upon our country to send them help. And yet among the successive hundreds of young men who are from year to year entering the Ministry, how many are there who devote themselves to the foreign service? For one that

goes abroad, fifty stay at home; yet if for every one that stays at home, fifty went abroad, the proportion would not be in excess of the relative claims. After making every just allowance for the duty of sustaining and extending religion at home, is it not evidently then a glaring crime in the Church of God, and in her ministering sons especially, thus calmly to sit down at home, in despite of the last, the great command of Jesus Christ, and in full view of 600,000,000 of men crying for succour, and perishing in sin! Surely, there is amazing guilt somewhere! And where so certainly and so dreadful, as with the ministers of Christ! You are on the way to be ministers of Christ. The fault of your predecessors, may, yes, beloved youth, will soon be yours, if you pursue their course; and it will be greater guilt, as your light is greater. Beware, therefore, of every temptation to slight the consideration and undervalue the claims, of Foreign Missions.* These temptations are numerous and strong. Tread them under your feet, looking unto Jesus. Lift up your souls to the greatness of the subject. Bid the love of ease to die within you. Bid holy pity rise and reign in your dedicated hearts. Say to every allurements, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Let the entire world be your field. Be willing to go any where: be ready to do any work to which your Master calls you. Open your heart to him, and beseech him continually to baptize it in the Missionary Spirit. Then great numbers will go abroad at his

* The articles on the claims of Foreign Missions, in the following work, are of great value and peculiar fitness.

evident call. Then, whether you stay at home, or go abroad, the world will still be your field, and its redemption your great absorbing end!

The same train of remark may be pursued in reference to the relative claims of the domestic field, supposing it your duty to remain at home. Seek not distinction, but the glory of God; not honour, but good-doing; not ease, but duty, with the cross. As for the love of money, that vile idolatry, let it never be named by you, but to be hated and shunned. And let these principles take early hold and deep root in your souls, so that they shall become habitual, and reign in all your decisions, and all your actions.

We pass to mention, fifthly, the temptation to disesteem the peculiar institutions and standards of your own Church.

This would be a most unfit suggestion to be associated with that on which we have just been dwelling, if the intention were to hold up and recommend to you the spirit of sectarianism, as distinguished from that of (properly called) catholic love and peace; or the spirit of party as distinguished from the harmonious feeling and action of our own Church. Far be it from me to do this. We are Presbyterians, not in the spirit of exclusion, but of conscientious preference. We venerate and sustain our ecclesiastical standards, because they appear to us to be true and right, and therefore, *on us* binding. None but religious free-thinkers, or men who do not think at all, reject *wholly*, all formularies and symbols of faith. It is, however, at present a great evil in our Church, that

the standards of faith, by which we declare our opinions of the true import of the word of God, have been permitted to pass into so great desuetude in the instruction of youth. This has arisen simultaneously with a spirit (characteristic of the age) which, in its haste to improve all things, indiscriminately rejects the good with the evil, proscribes what is old, however perfect, and seeks to be free from the salutary restraints of order and of law. The spirit of a former age was to repress improvement, to repose upon mere authority, and to perpetuate the faults and errors of antiquity. The tendency now is, to licentious innovation, and boundless change, as if radical revolution were inseparable from reform, or as if the proper remedy of one vice were the unbridled indulgence of another and an opposite vice. Under this evil influence, all that constitutes the expression of our doctrines and polity as a Church, has been disesteemed, and its goodly power impaired. We would point you to this seducing evil, and warn you against it. You are yet young. We know that your views are immature, though we trust they are established, and have been adopted on principle. We ask you to inquire, to think, to search, and know. But how can you do this without a faithful and patient examination of the standards of the Church? Honest and prayerful inquiry, a *Christian student's familiarity with them*, is what true honour and conscience on your part, demand, and what, far from fearing, we earnestly invite. If, after due inquiry, you are confirmed in your principles and regards, then be an *honest Presbyterian*, which we believe to be the best form of a

Christian man and minister. If, however, your convictions lead you to the rejection of our faith or our polity, be honest still; with manly freedom make it known; and with Christian consistency, join yourselves with that people whose principles you hold. Unless you shall reject the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, which unite all God's people in one universal Church, we shall still love you, and pray for you, and respect you more than if you had chosen, for whatever reason, to sustain a relation which Christian honesty forbade.

We next suggest a caution on the delicate but important subject of your intercourse with society at large, especially your intercourse with females.

Much intercourse with society at large, is utterly inconsistent with the spirit and pursuits of a candidate for the Christian ministry. The Christian minister himself cannot bear it, either in his reputation or his heart, except as it is connected with his official duties; still less is it safe or becoming for a student of theology.

But there is a degree of intercourse which is amiable, necessary, and of mutual advantage to the student and his friends. A rude and ill-behaved minister or candidate, departs as much from the spirit of the Gospel, as he does from the decencies of a gentleman. He who has commanded us to be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness, has also required that we be gentle towards all men; that we be kindly affectioned, be pitiful, be courteous: in honour preferring, and in love serving one another; and ever wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Hence, every Christian ought to be not in the spirit of Chesterfield, but of Paul, a gentleman.

But while religion is often sorely wounded, and the influence of young men greatly impaired by an unsocial spirit, or a want of propriety and refinement of behaviour, the evils resulting from social habits and familiar intercourse, are so many and great, that we have been ready to suppose that secluded spots, from which students could only come forth for works of mercy, and return, were on the whole, safest, and therefore best. These evils we cannot here enumerate. There is one, however, of most delicate nature, on which we feel it very important to comment. It results from intercourse with young females. No reference is, of course, had to gay and giddy females, who can have no charms for a godly young man, and the effect of whose intercourse would be, to excite regret and pity alone. Nor do we at all embrace in our remarks that indiscreet dalliance, sometimes indulged in fashionable life, which originates in youthful imprudence, and continually exposes to the formation of unhappy alliances for life. These are far beneath the range of a *good man's* habits, and he who is caught in such a snare is out of place even as a *layman*. We mean the dangers resulting from the intimacy of candidates for the ministry with worthy and serious young females, and tending to the production of unsuitable attachments, and precipitate engagements. You have this advantage, (or rather shall we not call it in your situation, evil,) that your character precludes all suspicion of your motives; and to religious intercourse, a less sacred and more personal train of emotions, may readily succeed. Hence we find, that

what began in Christian kindness, with no design of mutual impression, or committal, ends apace in permanent and often most injurious entanglements. Now consider for a moment your circumstances. You are young, you are indigent, you have, perhaps, several years of study before you, your character is unformed, you are ignorant of the world; you know not where you are to live, nor how you are to be occupied; you know not whether it will be proper or possible for you to marry, or if it be both, what style of woman will suit your taste, and your habits, your defects, your field of labour, or your possible condition in future years. Your present affections may entirely change, and the consummation of your present fond hopes may, in your own best judgment, a few years hence, be the greatest calamity of life. It may be your duty to become a foreign missionary; a rash step now may render it impossible for you to do so! The destiny of a distant generation or of a whole people, may, in some measure, be suspended upon your wisdom and prudence now, in this respect; and there may be no end to the evil consequences of a single rash step. We have known one most affecting illustration of this, some of whose disastrous results are now passing before the eye of the Church. Again, the woman who will regard with favour your present advances, will hardly be your equal at the completion of your course of study, or be adapted to fill the station for which you may be preparing. We allude, in this remark, to the qualifications, and acquirements, which are known to be so important to a preacher's wife, and not to personal merit. And on her part too,

a reciprocal change of feeling may occur, or a corresponding disappointment in the formation of your future character. If, however, from any, or all these causes, on either her part or yours, a consummation of your engagement should prove undesirable, and yet be required by honour and good faith, how wretched will be your condition. God regards such a contract as a virtual marriage. See how Joseph viewed it in the case of Mary, (Mark i. 18—19). The minister who trifles with such sacred obligations, deserves to be deposed: the candidate, to be disgraced, and given up. And yet how miserable will it be to sacrifice your peace and usefulness in redeeming a pledge, over which riper years and established affections must mourn for life. The alternative is dishonour or misery. Then be warned to shun the necessity of such a dilemma, by a holy watchfulness and discretion now.

The last temptation (omitting others) against which we would guard you, is the tendency of studious habits to destroy health.

We do not mean that this tendency is necessary, for if so, it would be useless to warn you. But it is so common and so injurious a fault, that it deserves in this place a special notice.

Your body, as much as your soul, is the property and the servant of God. You have no more right to destroy the one than the other; and God will not hold him guiltless, who, by neglect or injurious use, shall contribute to that end, even in a remote result. It is true, you may thus injure your health, and yet save your soul. But though the salvation of your own soul be not suspended

on the proper preservation of your natural life, that of others, perhaps, in great numbers may be. No man of impaired health can be so useful in the Ministry, as he would be if he were in the possession of a sound and vigorous constitution. His mind is weakened; his piety is impaired, and his labours are not only lessened in amount, but in excellence also. Sometimes, indeed, we see a Baxter or an Owen, rising by the grace of God superior to every infirmity, and through agonies of pain accomplishing the most extraordinary labours. But it was in spite of frailty, and not in consequence of it; and while they did more, with all their infirmities, than most men have done without them, yet, comparing them with themselves, what might they not have accomplished, if their gigantic minds and noble piety had been sustained and prolonged below, by a corresponding frame-work of the natural man?

We said that bad health was not a necessary attendant on a life of study. On the contrary, there is no doubt that temperate and judicious habits of study are conducive to health. But most young men, especially those who have not been inured to confinement and severe thought in early life, are continually in danger of a sort of suicide. Without having space to prescribe rules for the preservation of your health, we wish to impress it on your minds and hearts, that it is a great sin to jeopard or lessen your future usefulness, by inattention to diet, exercise, and whatever is necessary to a Christian care of it.*

* We had intended to embrace in the present volume, an article especially devoted to this subject, but are reluctantly compelled to

The neglect of this great duty, always criminal, has become peculiarly so of late, from the frequency and force with which it has been exposed, from the light which has been struck out on the subject, and the corresponding helps furnished for the preservation of health.

This subject especially recommends itself to the regards and consciences of generous and independent youth, who are nobly struggling on in the strength of their divine Lord, and by the kind care of the Christian Church, into the work of the ministry. For there is this happy feature in the modern system of manual labour, connected with education, that while the daily exercise preserves the health of the student, it contributes also to the means of his support, and creates a *new capital* for the service of God. In the infancy of this system, defects are to be expected. But it has triumphantly illustrated its practicability and unbounded importance, and is destined, we cannot doubt, to do more for the world, especially for our own country, and above all for the ministry, than we could now express, without becoming liable to the charge of extravagance.

We only add, that the labours of the present and the coming age, call for *men*. This is the way to form them. It is time that the halls of science were divorced from the premature old age, and manifold imbecilities which

defer it until the appearance of the next. With some small qualifications, not affecting the merits of the work, we earnestly recommend to your attentive persual and practical adoption, the very timely and excellent work of Professor Hitchcock, entitled "*Dyspepsy Forestalled,*" &c.

have so long and so needlessly infested them. It is time that men of nerve and hardihood, with bodies fit to bear about the souls of missionaries and martyrs, should be poured forth from all the institutions of our country, to help in the conversion of a ruined world.

Such, then, are a few of the leading temptations to which you will be exposed in your course of preparation for the Gospel Ministry. May the God of heaven guard you against their seducing power, and give you a continued triumph over them!

We had intended to state at some length, in the second place, *The incentives and supports proper to your circumstances and pursuits*. But space is wanting; and we must delay the presenting of these considerations for a future volume.

In closing this address we only add, that the freedom and directness of the above remarks are justified on the grounds that they are true; that the warnings which they convey, are highly important; and that having no *secreta monita* to give, we deal with you in the candor and love of honest and deeply attached friends, addressing ingenuous youth, who have nothing to conceal, but what they have also at the same time to abandon. Therefore, seeing that both you and we must give account unto God, we use great plainness of speech.

Most truly, your Brother and Friend,

JOHN BRECKINRIDGE, Corr. Sec.

*Philadelphia, Office of Board of Education, }
November 1st, 1832. - }*

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF A

CALL TO THE WORK

OF

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

P R E F A C E .

SOME years ago, the writer was entrusted, by the Presbytery of which he was then a member, with the special care of that branch of their operations which relates to the education of pious, but indigent young men for the Ministry. In fulfilling this appointment, frequent demands were made for information on the subject of a call to that work. No satisfactory essay on the subject was known. Things being thus, private application was made to several fathers in the Church to write such an essay for publication, but without success. Being thus left, and by office being called to give information, the writer at length reduced his thoughts to something like system; and early in April, 1831, preached the following Sermon before the students of the Union Theological Seminary, (Va.) Soon after, an article appeared in the *Biblical Repertory* on the same subject. The author has also within a few days learned, that the excellent Thomas Boston published a sermon on this subject, and founded on the portion of Scripture which stands at the head of this Discourse. Although he has never seen Mr. Boston's discourse, it is believed

that he, like the valuable writer in the Repertory, treats the subject in a manner applicable to those who are in the Ministry, or about to enter it, rather than to those who *think of taking measures that may finally lead to that sacred office*. Respecting the sameness of texts, the language of another on a similar occasion is appropriate. "The coincidence was entirely accidental; and the text in each instance being employed very much in the manner of a motto, it is hoped the train of thought will be found sufficiently distinct." So much for the history of this Sermon. The serious attention of the reader is invited to a few remarks concerning

THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THIS SUBJECT OUGHT TO BE
STUDIED.

That any subject, involving moral truth, religious duty, and solemn responsibility, studied in an improper spirit, may be, and most probably will be determined sinfully, is in full accordance with scriptural principle and careful observation. Besides, a wrong spirit is itself highly criminal, even though it govern not final decisions. If, then, we would innocently inquire into this matter, we must approach it *seriously, solemnly, reverentially*. Thus we ought to approach all subjects of a kindred character—much more, then, this. He who jests,

he who trifles, he who feels no solemn awe, when considering this matter, may well doubt not only his fitness for the Ministry, but the reality of his piety. When God was about to call Moses, and make him a great prophet, He first appeared to him in the burning bush. And when Moses "turned aside to see," God said, "Draw not nigh hither," [remain at a reverential distance]: "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." "And Moses hid his face." So let all do, who think of becoming "Ambassadors for Christ," "Messengers of the LORD of Hosts." Too much solemnity and holy reverence can not be exercised on this momentous subject.

Another state of the heart, essential to the proper consideration of this matter, is *patient waiting* on God, producing *caution* and *deliberation*. This subject is often introduced in Scripture in reference to our doubts and difficulties and darkness, and is often of unlimited application. If any think otherwise, an examination of those passages of revealed truth, in which the words *wait* and *haste* with their variations occur, will satisfy him. Moreover, common observation abundantly proves, that purposes respecting duty, if hastily formed, are either foolish, or hastily abandoned. A man who acts

without due deliberation, is also guilty for so doing, even though his decision be materially right, and carried into effect. *Humility*, producing candor, and a willingness to estimate "according to truth," one's deficiencies and qualifications, is also indispensable. In this inquiry, "Pope Self," is one of the important items. He who is entirely ignorant of his faults and deficiencies, his attainments and abilities, cannot judge intelligently or satisfactorily. He who has real piety and much knowledge of himself, must have genuine and deep humility, when he contemplates such an undertaking as that of a Herald of the Cross. Neither will a disposition to deny one's gifts and graces be any less dangerous than an extravagant self-conceit. Humility "thinks soberly, as it ought to think," and "judges true judgment."

Finally. All that is included in the idea of *docility*, is necessary to a right investigation and decision. Of course, the inquirer must possess a deep sense of the folly of mere human wisdom; a spirit of hearty prayer to God for the teaching of the Holy Ghost; a strong desire to know the truth, and an entire willingness to act upon the truth when known. Most, if not all, of the foregoing specifications of spirit are beautifully illustrated in the conduct of Samuel, when God was about to

employ him as a publisher of divine truth, (1 *Samuel* iii. *passim*); and in the conduct of Saul of Tarsus, when his bloody purposes were rebuked, and himself about to be sent to preach Christ crucified. So soon as Saul was arrested, he, "trembling and astonished," [here was reverence,] "said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" [here were prayer for direction, solemn inquiry, and strong desire to know the truth.] His prayer was heard—his inquiry was answered—his patience and submission were tried. He was told to "go into the city," and there learn what he must do. He went, thus manifesting his willingness to obey, and, in obeying, to learn. Soon he did learn, and "preach Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." *Acts* ix. 1—20.

Dear youthful Reader! if you have not the spirit just described, read no further, until you look to God through Christ for the influences of the Holy Ghost, to make you solemn, reverential, humble, candid, deliberate, docile, wise, and holy, in your aims and purposes.

WM. S. PLUMER.

Petersburg, Va. Feb. 14th, 1832.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF A

CALL TO THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers. And he said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And straightway they left their nets and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with their father, mending their nets ; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. *Matt. iv. 18--22.*

In the verses just read, several things are worthy of notice ; but the leading idea, viz. : The calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John to the discipleship, as a *preparation for the Ministry*, will engage our attention at present. Let us view this subject, so that we may take occasion from it to speak of the nature of a call in general, marking the difference between such a call as may be expected now, and such as we know to have been given in the days of the Apostles. It may not be amiss to make a few general statements, before we enter into particulars.

The first is, that the subject, although plain in theory, is yet of exceedingly difficult application. Modest, hum-

ble, pious men are very apt to be deterred from all thoughts of entering the Ministry, by many considerations which naturally present themselves; while others of doubtful piety, having in their compositions a spice of self-conceit, and a dash of forwardness, frequently derive encouragement from such things as have in truth no application to their cases. Most men must have witnessed such occurrences. Notwithstanding this difficulty, it is our duty to state scriptural principles with all possible plainness, and endeavour in practice to guard carefully against the abuse of them. Some have taught and practised contrary to the opinion just expressed; but without sufficient reason. All duties ought to be explained and enforced, and all privileges fully and wisely declared. The inquiry, "Who ought to study the question—AM I CALLED?"—admits of several answers. The *first* is, *That no person who is without piety need give the matter his attention.* The first thing for him to do, is, to "think on his ways and turn his feet to God's testimonies;" "to repent and believe the Gospel." Again.—*No female is bound to study this subject for personal decision and action.* "I suffer not a woman to teach." 1 *Tim.* ii. 12. Lastly, *It may be a safe rule for every male member of the Church to inquire, "AM I CALLED?"* In a great majority of cases, even an hour's reflection may show clearly that a negative answer should be given. But that men in Christ, who are not far advanced in life, and possess sound minds, may not dismiss the subject without a moment's serious thought, is exceedingly evident.

But let us proceed to consider the nature of a call.

A call, then, is either extraordinary or ordinary. An

extraordinary call to the Ministry is one given under such circumstances as, in a marvellous and clear manner, show the will of God. Thus the call of these four fishermen was extraordinary, not merely because it was given by Christ, the Head of the Church, (for all genuine calls proceed from him), but because it was given by him in person, and in terms so unequivocal and so plain as to remove all ground of doubt. So also the calling of Barnabas and Saul would seem to have been extraordinary. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." *Acts* xiii. 2. An extraordinary call, in its very nature, is confined to the days of miracles.

An ordinary call differs from an extraordinary in this, that in ascertaining its reality and genuineness, we pursue the usual course by which duty becomes known, without any supernatural or marvellous indications of the will of God. Such are all calls given since the days of miracles. An ordinary call may be as clear as an extraordinary; yet it must require more patience and longer time to ascertain it. Perhaps Flavel, and Baxter, and Bunyan, and Owen, and Edwards, and Brainerd, had, in the latter part of their lives, no more right to doubt their call, than Paul or Barnabas had. An ordinary call is distinguishable into a general and a special call.

A general call is addressed to the pious generally, and arises from the necessities of the world, and from the great principles of the Bible, which command all Christians to "hold forth the word of life;" to "say,

Come." This general call is a very loud one. Macedonia, by her necessities, cries for help as loudly as she ever did. Hundreds of millions of this world's mortal, yet immortal inhabitants are sinking to endless night "for lack of vision." Gospel precepts are addressed to all the friends of Christ in such manner as requires each one, constrained by amazing love, to stand at his post, and do to the extent of his ability. This general call, however, determines nothing as to the particular method, by the adoption of which, each one shall serve. It barely says to all, "Be strong." "Quit you like men." "Let your light shine." "Glorify him in your bodies and spirits, which are his," &c. &c.

A *special* call to the work of the Ministry is such a concurrence of qualities and events on an individual, as, if explained by the principles of the Bible and of common sense, will make it manifest that the will of God is that he, on whom the concurrence is, should enter the Ministry. This is the call which every man must have, if he would enter the Ministry in an acceptable manner. In determining whether we be thus specially called, we are to give good heed to the word and providences of God as they *separately* shed light on each other, and *unitedly*, on this subject; and we are not to give any heed to strange fancies, and unaccountable impulses, and supposed visions.

The first evidence of a call which we shall notice, is a desire for the work. That this desire is necessary, is very evident from Scripture: "This is a true saying, If a man *desire* the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 *Tim.* iii. 1. Common sense also revolts at the

thought of a man engaging in a work, in which his heart is not ; especially where, as in the Ministry, far more harm than good will be done to all concerned, if the heart be wanting. This desire must not be a transient emotion, but must possess essential permanency. Neither must it be a faint desire, easily overcome by counter-operations. These two ideas of permanency and strength, are certainly included in that word "desire," which first occurs in the passage just quoted. For in the original there are different words corresponding to the English word "desire." The first of these, *ἀρέγεται*, is a word of much more strength than the last, *ἐπιθυμει*. Doddridge translates the former "earnestly desire," the latter simply "desire." This desire must possess at least such permanence and vehemence as to enable one, with the help of God continually sought, to surmount obstacles as they present themselves ; to submit to all the delays and labours necessary to prepare for the work ; and to make him willing to take the office and work of a minister, and that only, and for life. This desire, too, must be, not for the learned leisure, the fame, the influence, the ease, or the emoluments of the office, but for the *office itself*, taken in connexion with the joys and sorrows, the pains and pleasures, the labours and comforts, the responsibilities and rewards, which God has inseparably connected with a conscientious and faithful discharge of its duties. He that has such a desire, has one quality significant of a call. The more vehement and continuous this desire is, the more weight ought it to have in our determinations.

Another thing of importance in a call, is a deep and abiding sense of personal weakness and unworthiness. In view of the amazing magnitude and tremendous responsibilities, and eternal effects of the work, Paul said: "Who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii. 16. If an inspired apostle, who had been rapt in visions of the third heavens, had such views, is it any wonder that all who have right conceptions of the matter, should "exceedingly fear and quake," when they meditate an entrance on this stupendous undertaking! Neither again need we be surprised, if many who are called, should, at least for a time, shrink from any course that would be construed as a pledge or preparation for induction into the Ministry. Such feel their weakness, lament their unworthiness, know their insufficiency, and draw back with fearfulness. Here is one of those dangerous places where it is possible for one to be led astray, and sin against God. This is the point on which Jeremiah did well nigh err. When God told him that He had "ordained him a prophet," he said, "Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am a child." Jer. i. 5, 6. Humility is commendable, and, if genuine, cannot be excessive. Let one, therefore, look at the promises, and ask help from on high, and then judge whether he be not warranted in expecting "out of weakness to be made strong."

This leads to the remark, that *one part of this call is some comfortable degree of confidence, that, notwithstanding our great unworthiness and insufficiency, God will sustain us.* Thus God assured Jeremiah that he should be supported: "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go

to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee shalt thou speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." *Jer. i. 7, 8.* Here was ground of confidence. On it Jeremiah relied. Can you, in view of all that is discouraging in yourself, and in view of all that is encouraging from God, still say, Though I am a worm of the dust, and less than the least of all God's mercies, and the most unworthy of all whom I know, yet God can, and I hope and believe He will bear me up, and bear me through? To this state of holy confidence the apostle refers in these words: "And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament." *2 Cor. iii. 4—6.* Judging from what you can learn of the will of God, honestly, humbly, and earnestly inquired into, can you "trust" that God will "make you an able minister of the New Testament?" If you can, "hold fast your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." If you have never sought the will of God in the right manner, an expectation of support can be but presumption; and the absence of it may only prove your guilt.

Another idea which it may be important distinctly to present, is, *that we put a high estimate on the office itself, and on its appropriate pleasures, and consolations, and work.* This subject has already been alluded to, but it deserves greater prominence in this discussion than it now possesses. He is not fit to be in the Ministry, who cannot find in the discharge of its peculiar duties a satis-

faction which he could not find in any other employment. Were you qualified, could it, would it be your meat and drink to do the work assigned you as a minister of the word of God? Paul says, "I magnify mine office;" as if he had said, "I commend and extol it. As it occupies a large space in my own eye, so I desire it may in the eyes of others." Does it present itself to your mind as "a good work," an excellent employment, in which you would, were it proper, engage rather than in any other service?

To what has been said must be added, *the wishes of judicious, impartial pious, people, (in that part of the Church in which our lot is cast,) and the consent of the proper authorities.* This rule is to be observed in all ordinary cases, as is evident from the example of the apostles and early Christians, in reference to deacons. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables; wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Simon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte

of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." *Acts vi. 1—6.* From this portion of Scripture it is exceedingly evident, that the concurrence of the people's election, and of the ordaining authority's approbation, is necessary to the validity of the commission of even a deacon, whose office extends only to the temporalities of the Church. Much more, then, have the people a right to choose the man who is to be their counsellor, and teacher, and guide. Neither can any sufficient reason be given, why the ordaining authority should not also exercise a control over the matter, at least so far as to decline ordaining persons supposed to be unworthy or unfit. Indeed Paul warns Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man;" from which warning, it is manifest that Timothy was bound to exercise his best judgment, and act accordingly.

The foregoing remarks are made in reference to ordinary times. Cases have occurred, and may again occur, in which one may not wait for a formal expression of the sentiments of either the Church or the Ministers of Christ; but when a pious and humble man contemplates such a step, he feels the responsibility to be truly tremendous, if not terrific. It is true, that the Church and Ministers sometimes seem slow in calling and sending one into the sacred office. But in this age and country, there cannot be thought to exist much error of this kind. The great error seems to be of a directly opposite nature. Besides, were the delay ever so great, it may be that God has important ends in view; especially this, that one may have time to become better qua-

lified for the work. Such delay is sometimes seen to have been most benevolently and mercifully ordered by God. For instance, John Newton would have been utterly overwhelmed by the burden and number of his ministerial duties, had it not been for a wholesome, but at the time unwelcome, and, in its instrument, perhaps unkind delay of many months. Whenever judicious, pious, impartial people, with such concord as might fairly be expected, present the subject to one's mind, or when, their judgments being invited, they recommend farther serious consideration, their voice ought to be heard, so far at least as to secure mature and religious inquiry into the will of God. Especially does this principle obtain, when those possessing the power of ordination give their consent, or cordial approval. In reference to those who only wish to know, whether they ought to pursue a course of study and discipline preparatory to the work of the Ministry, let it be said, that even they may arrive at some degree of probability, as to what the views and wishes of the electing and ordaining powers will be, when the proper time shall have come.

Besides these expressions of the wishes and consent of men (over which God, in his providence, exercises sovereign control,) *there are various events*, which show more or less distinctly, the will of the Head of the Church. These leadings of providence are as various and as remarkable, as the striking diversity of occasions requires. In general, however, they relate to the things following, viz.

The disentangling of one from such engagements or

pursuits, as would interfere with the duties of a minister, or with due preparation for the holy office:

The furnishing of the means of acquiring the necessary knowledge, and discipline, by raising up liberal, and perhaps unexpected friends; by giving success in lawful business; or by disposing some one to instruct us in the rudiments of a suitable education:

Or if we already possess the means, perhaps God's will is indicated by defeating our worldly plans; by sending afflictions upon us; or by making us acquainted with the history, written or oral, of some one who has felt and acted very much like ourselves. In many ways, may God indicate his will by his providence. Now, acts of providence rightly interpreted, are of vast importance in directing the humble in all the affairs of life; and why should not their guidance be especially looked for in this great matter?

A few words of caution and warning belong to this subject. Because you cannot *see* your way clear from your present station to that of a minister, you may not infer that it is not clear, or will not *be* clear, as you proceed. It is not given to every man to see clearly far before him, though many think they do. "The pillar of cloud and of fire," a striking emblem of God's providence, gave not, on one day, any pledge as to the course to be pursued the next day. The question to be decided is this, "Can I lawfully take a step towards the holy Ministry?" If you can, and if it be God's will, that you should succeed, the way will, in due time, be opened for you to proceed further and further, until you shall find yourself

in that office, at which you had been grasping with pious eagerness for so long a time.

Again, judge nothing before the time. The acts of Divine Providence, until finished, are holy enigmas; and some of them remain such through our whole lives. If, therefore, God seem for a while to frown on your purposes, be not hasty in inferring that he is about to defeat your plans; but wait, and learn the end of the matter. And if he shall so hedge up your way, as that for a time you cannot proceed, wait and learn whether he will not open it again. When the hosts of Israel had the Red Sea before them and the Egyptians behind them, the unbelieving wished that they had remained in bondage, saying, they had only come out to "die in the wilderness." You must learn to "stand still," if you would "see the salvation of God." The obstructions of your way may only be intended as trials of your faith and patience.

To the foregoing evidences of a call must be added the *necessary qualifications, or the capacity, means, and desires of acquiring them.* That no man is called of God to perform a work for which he is not qualified, or cannot be qualified, before the time of performance arrives, is so plain a truth as to render proof almost unnecessary. Even fanatics admit the principle, but elude its force, by pleading their extraordinary, and supernatural endowments. God would not allow a man even to "make the tabernacle, the ark of the testimony, the mercy-seat, and the furniture of the tabernacle," until He had "called him, and filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom,

and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." *Ex. xxxi. 2—7.* Certainly then God calls no man to labour in the very delicate, yet grand concerns of salvation, until, in some good degree, "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD." *Isa. xi. 2, 3.* It is true that these words have their fulfilment in Christ, but the spirit of them is applicable, in an important sense, to Christ's ministers. In other words, God requires no man to "divide his word," until he can do it "rightly;" although He may *call him to prepare to do it.* This was the call of the four fishermen, mentioned in the text: "Follow me, and I *will make you fishers of men,*" said Jesus to two of them. The history of the other two shows their call to have been similar. Accordingly, they did not commence preaching immediately, but first learned from him, "who spake as never man spake."

As to what the qualifications for the Ministry are, let it be remembered that among them, *an experimental acquaintance with the truths to be taught,* justly holds great prominence. This subject of piety has already been spoken of as a *condecency* to the consideration of this subject. It is here introduced as a requisite to the verity of a call. This piety must be real, not feigned. "Wo unto you hypocrites," did Jesus often say. It must be practical and consistent. "Thou, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man

should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" *Rom.* ii. 21, 22. The piety required must also be somewhat matured. A minister must be "not a novice (a young convert) lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." *1 Tim.* iii. 6. This piety must also be unimpeached by the world. "Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." *1 Tim.* iii. 7. Piety is indispensable to the saving of the soul of the preacher. Ministers must have that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," or terribly perish. It is essential to the honour of Christ and his ordinances. If the "sons of Eli be sons of Belial," men will "abhor the offering of the Lord." It must be at the foundation of any long continued and *cheap* usefulness in the Church. The phrase "cheap usefulness," is not employed without design. For it is not impossible for a man without piety, and under the influence of ambition, or false zeal, to be useful to some extent; but it will be at a tremendous expense. In compassing some good, he will create a world of mischief. At least his good, which perhaps first appears, will be followed by a train of evils, that may not cease their operation on earth in a century. Indeed, men of some real piety may do this in many ways; and how much more, men without it!

Hence the *inestimable value of prudence as a qualification for the Ministry*. Should any say that pru-

dence is included under the last head, inasmuch as it is always, if genuine, the offspring of piety, the answer is, grant it, and still the great importance of the subject requires special notice. Besides, although the kind of prudence required may be the offspring of piety, yet it is no less the offspring of common sense. And, therefore, piety may consist with such constitutional or habitual imprudence, as unfits the subject of it for any important station in the Church of God, or in society. It would be impracticable, without destroying the symmetry of this Discourse, to do justice to the matter in hand. Reference is therefore made to a valuable discussion of this quality in Smith's work on the sacred office. A few things, however, may not be forgotten or neglected.

In the first place, then, the common consent of serious men is, that, as in a female, so in a minister, imprudence is not merely a foible, a slight obliquity, but it is a positive and glaring vice. Again, the Scriptures insist much upon it, not only under its proper name, but under the names of *wisdom* and *discretion*. "He that winneth souls is wise." *Prov.* ii. 30. He, who would win many souls, without criminally repelling as many, must be wise. Only "the words of the *wise* are as goads, and as nails fastened." *Eccles.* xii. 11. Some, perhaps, may say, "Will not carnal policy and human cunning be sufficient?" "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" *1 Cor.* i. 20. Jesus also said, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore *wise* as serpents, and

harmless as doves." *Matt. x. 16.* It is proper to add, that if one doubt his call because of a defect in this point, let him by honest and fair trial learn whether his imprudence be incurable. If it can be cured and shall be cured, then his way will be as open before him as if he had not been indiscreet.

The subject next in order, is knowledge. This knowledge must be such as to shield one from the just charge of gross ignorance, or fatal error, or ludicrous mistake, and must respect the message to be communicated. Of course, no man can tell others what he does not know himself. How, or when, or where this knowledge is obtained, is not material. The possession of it is the important point. The knowledge required must be accurate, else it rather merits the name of conjecture. Neither does it consist merely in ideas and notions. These may become knowledge by frequent and deep reflection. This knowledge must also be scriptural. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." *Jer. xxiii. 28.* It must also be extensive. "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." *Matt. xiii. 52.*

To this must be added, the *power of communicating knowledge in such a way as is suited to promote the great objects of preaching.* These are, the conviction, conversion, and edification of souls. The truth, that it may be effective, must be spoken audibly, boldly, affec-

tionately, earnestly, solemnly, with dignity and animation. So many valuable treatises have been published on this subject, as to make many remarks unnecessary. One remark may be sufficient; it is this: that such a manner of speaking as may become the stage, the bar, the hustings, or even the senate, will not suit the pulpit. Solemnity of a peculiar kind ought ever to rest on the sacred desk.

These four essentials, piety, prudence, knowledge, and the power of communicating knowledge in an appropriate manner, seem to include all that is requisite in the way of qualification. In speaking of them, brevity has been studied, because more than a brief notice would have been ill-timed. Much, however, is comprehended under each specification. These qualifications must be possessed before any man's credentials to the sacred office can be complete. From none of them can a dispensation be had. To ascertain these, is the object of the probation pointed out in Scripture. One, however, may not as yet have the necessary knowledge, or the gift of utterance in a sufficient degree, and still may lack nothing else. Let such honestly, humbly, and diligently endeavour the removal of such unfitness; and if he succeed, his call will be clear.

As the last of the evidences of a call, may be noticed a conviction of duty, based on the due consideration of matters already discussed. This conviction may not, need not be so strong as that a man will be able to employ in their entire import the words of Paul, when he says, "necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is me, if I preach

not the Gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 16. Indeed, no man can use this language, as Paul used it, until he is *assured* of his call. Yet his conviction of duty may be as *real*, though not as *firm* as that of Paul. By a *real conviction of duty* in this matter, is meant something like this: that when a man does humbly, seriously, and candidly think of entering the Ministry, his mind does incline to the judgment, that in so doing, he would please God; and that in declining to do so, guilt would be contracted. This conviction, from its very nature and basis, grows or diminishes, according to the aspect of things as controlled by providence. Yet it must have permanency, though it may not be exceeding strong. If it be genuine, it will prove itself such by the fact, that it is strengthened by the desirableness, and weakened by the undesirableness, of our religious state and sentiments. It was this inward conviction that made the four men named in text, obey the call of Jesus. At the first, the strength of the conviction may be no greater than to justify one in saying: "So far as I now know my duty, I ought not to lose sight of the Ministry, as a work upon which I may enter at a future day." Indeed, this is, perhaps, as far as most can go, who are not yet prepared for ordination. A man may be in the ministry for many years, before he will be *fully convinced, beyond doubt*, that he is pleasing God. Yet no one may enter this holy office, whose convictions not only do not oppose, but also incline him to do so. Blessed is he, who, although possessed of a tender and enlightened conscience, doth not condemn himself for becoming a herald of salvation.

Rom. xiv. 22. Let us now seriously consider all that has been said, and say what could be left out without creating a flaw in the call. Might we omit an earnest desire for the work? What would one do in an office for which he had no ardent love? He would presently become a farmer, a merchant, a school-master, a physician, a politician, a lawyer, an owner of mills, a worldling. Could we dispense with a deep sense of personal unworthiness and insufficiency? "He that teaches humility must himself be humble." As to "trust in God," what is a minister without it? He is a reed shaken with the wind; a ship without an anchor; a world without a sun. Dare we leave out a high estimate of the dignity and incalculable importance of the office? "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." *Isa.* v. 20. Let all things, especially sacred things, be rightly esteemed. Shall one commence preacher contrary to the wishes of the Church? How can he edify a people who will not hear him, or, if they do, wish him to be silent? Or shall one enter on the work, when those, who are at least *supposed* to be impartial and enlightened judges, tell him that they dare not "lay hands" on him, lest they should become "partakers of other men's sins?" *1 Tim.* iii. 22. Or, shall a man, forgetful or heedless of the voice of Providence, and the duties thereby created or designated, break through every obstacle, and rush into the Ministry, "as the horse rusheth into the battle?" "Faith, judgment, mercy, and piety at home," may, on

no account be omitted. Can piety be dispensed with? "To the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" *Psa.* i. 16. We dare not omit prudence. As "the wicked shall do wickedly," so the foolish will act foolishly, the imprudent, rashly. Nothing but a sound mind ever produced sound speech, that could not be gainsayed, or sober conduct that was irrebukeable. Knowledge is indispensable. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge." *Mal.* ii. 7. And knowledge, inappropriately communicated, will be useless to all, and injurious to many.

He, who runs against the convictions of his best judgment, cannot be strong in the day of trial; and must incur great guilt. *Rom.* xiv. 23. Let no man, then, attempt actually to enter the Ministry without all these evidences of a call. If he shall, he will certainly err. If any one doubt whether he possess the whole of them, and in such a degree as is necessary to render it safe for him to proceed, let him wait, humbly and patiently asking the guidance of Jehovah.

It is due to truth also to state, that the foregoing discussion is thought to include a summary of all that the Bible teaches respecting the nature and evidences of a call to the Ministry, as a general work. A call of God to labour in a particular sphere, as on a foreign mission, or on a domestic mission, or on an agency, or in a system of evangelism, or in the modest, perhaps retired, but delightful and holy work of pastor, or in the disciplining and instruction of candidates for the ministry, must be

determined by the addition of several distinct principles. But, so far as the subject of a scriptural call to the general work of the Ministry is concerned, what has been said is believed to embrace all the particulars specified in God's word.

From what has been said, the following seem to be natural and legitimate conclusions :

First : Two men may both be called of God to enter the Ministry at the same time ; and while one may be well satisfied of his own call, the other may have very painful apprehensions and fears, whether he ought to proceed. So that a man cannot know that he is not called, because he is not as certain about the course of his duty as some of his brethren are respecting the propriety of their course. Again, the clearness or doubtfulness in a man's mind about his own call, may arise either from the high or the low character of his piety. Nothing, therefore, positively encouraging or discouraging respecting the amount of personal piety, can be learned from the fact that our minds are doubtful, or that they are decided. How important, then, frequently and impartially to inquire into the state of piety in the soul !

It also follows, from what has been said, that a call may be regarded as clear or doubtful by the subject of it, while other persons may arrive at conclusions very diverse. Through the operation of many undesirable influences, a man may think himself clearly called to a work, from which impartial, and even charitable men will feel bound to restrain him. On the other hand, one, of whose call others may be satisfied, may, by the undue in-

fluence of some principles, in themselves good, but in this case misapplied, not think himself called to this great work. To this latter class scriptural encouragement should be given. God has set us the example.

Another obvious remark is, that one, who is called to commence preparation for the Ministry, ordinarily has a less amount of evidence in favour of his course at that time, than he has afterwards. In other words, he, who is but acquiring the rudiments of a suitable education, has less of certainty than the approved candidate for licensure; the licentiate has less than the candidate for ordination; the young minister less than the father in the Church. But then the first steps are always if not less important, less decisive, accompanied with lighter responsibilities, and, if unsuccessful, followed with less disastrous consequences than the subsequent steps. A moderate degree of probability may be the highest result of all the evidence before one's mind, until he shall resolve to make the effort, and, in making it, learn whether he ought to desist or proceed. This remark is intended for such, as having yet before them a large part of the work of preparation, are, nevertheless, demanding a weight of evidence in favour of a call to *prepare*, equal to that which might be expected, if they were about to be *inducted into office*.

A few observations on two things, necessary to be solemnly considered, shall close this Discourse. The first will concern the *resistance of a call*. That such resistance may be offered, few will doubt. If a pious man may enter the Ministry uncalled, as certainly some have done

confessedly, no reason can be given why even a pious man may not resist when called. This may be done by matrimonial entanglements, which date their existence either before or after the receiving of the call:

Or money-hunting, the spirit of accumulation, the supposed obligation, or the wicked purpose, of maintaining or augmenting hereditaments and patrimonies, may occasion the sinful resistance:

Sinful timidity, creating a wish to lead a quiet and retired life, and indisposing to any public appearance, may produce the same result:

Slothfulness, which loves ease, and dislikes activity, may occasion a refusal to "bear the heat and burden" of a minister's life:

Ambition for political, scientific, literary, or military fame, may keep one from obeying "the heavenly calling:"

A wicked pride, which is unwilling to be in the Ministry without pre-eminence, united with comparative and "conscious poverty of soul," and weakness of mind, may hinder men from doing their duty:

A "voluntary humility," which makes its subject deny the graces, or the gifts which God has bestowed upon him, has, probably, led many astray:

Or, one who is called, may satisfy himself for not obeying, by pleading the want of good health, when his health is confessedly sufficient for other employments equally *sedentary*, or *laborious*, or *active*:

Men, who advise not in the fear of God, especially relatives, perhaps parents, often persuade to sin, in resisting a call:

Sometimes men err through an *unfounded* supposition that their services are necessary for the maintenance of one or more dependants, who might otherwise be provided for, if proper efforts were made:

A foolish, and sinful unwillingness to receive aid from the Church, while preparing for the ministry, sometimes misleads:

Concealment of personal views and wishes in reference to the Ministry from those who might be helpers, may betray into sin:

Or, finally, a man may resist a call through inattention to the providence of God. If every cause or occasion of resistance has not been named, yet, enough has been said, to enable each one to supply the deficiency, if personal. The criminality, of course, varies according to the endless diversity of cases; but every resistance is criminal and perilous. If you would know how God regards the matter, read that awful dialogue between God and Moses about leading Israel to Canaan. God told Moses that he should be leader. Moses states, and God sets aside difficulty after difficulty. Moses still continuing to object, at last it is said, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." *Ex. iv. 14.* If God were thus displeased with Moses, to whom "he spoke as a man to his friend," can He be otherwise than highly displeased with all, who excuse themselves from the work to which they are called? "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker!" *Isa. xlv. 9.* REMEMBER JONAH. Suppose that Jeremiah, after all the assurances of strength, and courage, and support which he received.

had persisted in crying: "Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am a child," God would have been angry with him. Or, suppose the four men mentioned in the text had resisted their call, they had, certainly, never been the instruments of such achievements as sacred story ascribes to them, nor filled the thrones in glory which they now occupy; nor had their names inscribed where John saw them. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." *Rev.* xxi. 14. If Christ call you even to *prepare* for the Ministry, do you, like the four fishermen, "straightway, immediately follow." Blessed is he who, being called, obeys, humbly, heartily, joyfully running at God's command and fulfilling the ministry, which he receives. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ." *2 Cor.* ii. 15. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." *Dan.* xii. 3.

The concluding thoughts respect entering the Ministry, when God does not call. A man may do this in obedience to dreams, supposed voices, and indefinable impulses, thought to be indicative of God's will:

Or the various kinds of false zeal may first destroy modesty and sobriety, and then drive their subject into the Ministry:

Some may run uncalled through the influence of an erroneous opinion that every pious man may, if he can, and can, if he will, become "a preacher of righteousness." The truth is, pious men are so much needed

in every station in life, that the bare necessity of one to fill a place is no evidence of a designation of the person who ought to fill it. Else, every pious man must consider himself called to fill every variety of station :

A man may enter the Ministry uncalled, through a desire to lead an easy life, most erroneously thinking a *faithful* minister's such, or, most sadly forgetting that the only epitaph suitable to an *unfaithful* minister is, "It had been good for this man, if he had never been born."

Or covetousness, "that vile idolatry," may induce him to seek the Ministry. It is not true, that the American churches have nothing to fear from the operation of this principle on the Ministry, and on candidates for the Ministry :

Again, weak, partial, vain friends, especially parents, may give foolish advice, and cause one to sin, by going unselected :

A man also may be determined for the Ministry, by a conscious incapacity for any other learned profession, and by a low opinion of the dignity, and difficulty of this, and thus "play the fool :"

It sometimes occurs, that men under conviction, and in great distress, vow that if God will forgive their sins, and cheer their hearts, they will become preachers. When they hope that they have passed from death unto life, they remember their engagement, and keep it, forgetting that, in many cases, both God and their vow "would be more honoured by the breach than by the observance."

One may easily be moved by his blind irreverence for the sacredness of the office:

Or an unholy ambition to possess that kind of popularity, and confidence, which faithful ministers generally have, may be the ruling passion in seeking the Ministry:

Lastly: A man may enter the Ministry, uncalled, by taking imperfect views of the subject of a call, or by denying, or forgetting the whole matter of a scriptural call, and examining the question, "Ought I to enter the Ministry?" on general grounds, from which no correct decision can be made. Thus do those err who simply inquire, "Can I be more useful in the Ministry, than elsewhere?" a question which no man on earth can answer, unless he can first tell whether he is called of God.

Perhaps the foregoing specifications may be sufficient for ordinary purposes. Illustrations of some of them have perhaps afflicted most of the present race of pious men. There are some very strange, and almost unaccountable phenomena in this part of the religious world. Some *very weak* men have seemed to think that they were raised up in these latter days, to "turn the world upside down." Obtuseness of feeling makes them defy ridicule; and want of becoming moral sentiment enables them to live without pain in the midst of moral ruin. By whatever influence one is unscripturally brought into the Ministry, guilt rests upon him. In some cases the guilt is less than in others; but, in no instance, is the criminality small. One, who is in danger of thus transgressing, ought carefully to read, and solemnly to reflect

upon the following brief, but alarming narrative: "And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. That a man, by entering the Ministry, uncalled, may render himself ridiculous, or odious, is not so overwhelming a matter, until we remember that the honour of Christ, the dignity of the Gospel institute, and the salvation of souls are involved in his office. Under the ministry of such a man, the lambs and the sheep are not fed. Believers "grow not up as calves of the stall." Perhaps the spirit of daring speculation, or wild fanaticism reigns in terror. Or the "spirit of slumber" works ruin, not the less certain or total, because wrought in the undisturbed stillness of spiritual death. If piety be lacking, such a man will be "sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind." As to God, he will be an "empty vine, and bring forth fruit only unto himself." If he handle the sword of the Spirit without the skill, which none but the *truly called* have, he will wound whom God has not wounded, and defend whom God has not defended; and thus contract the guilt of a murderer of souls. And "a man," says Brooks, "had better have all the blood of all men in all ages of the world to answer for, than the blood of one single soul." "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Heb. v. 4.



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THE IMPORTANCE
OF A
THOROUGH AND ADEQUATE COURSE
OF
PREPARATORY STUDY
FOR
THE HOLY MINISTRY.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

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THE IMPORTANCE

OF A THOROUGH AND ADEQUATE

PREPARATORY STUDY FOR THE HOLY MINISTRY.

MR. EDITOR,—

When I reflect on the importance of giving sound and judicious advice to *any* young man, just entering on the career of life, I can scarcely express my sense of the responsibility of one who undertakes the task. But, when I contemplate the greatly augmented importance of giving a correct impulse to the mind of a youth who is destined to be a leader and guide of others, on the most momentous of all subjects; who is training up to be a “watchman on the walls of Zion;” to be a ruler, teacher, and counsellor in the Church of God; my mind is really so impressed, as to be almost ready to sink under the weight of the undertaking. Surely, he who can venture upon it without much reflection and much prayer; without pondering well every counsel, and looking to the Source of all wisdom for continual guidance,—is not yet prepared for his work. He needs to take another survey of its magnitude, its difficulties, and its never-ending results. Such thoughts as these, Mr. Editor, crowd into my mind, when I think of complying with your request, to prepare a short article for your forthcoming

Annual. May He who giveth wisdom, and upbraideth not, enable me to write that which shall not be wholly useless!

You request me to say something *on the importance of a thorough and adequate course of preparatory study for the holy Ministry*. This is a subject on which I have had occasion, more than once, to lay some observations before the public. But, as these observations may have been seen by few; and as this is a subject on which frequent enlargement, and even repetition, are by no means objectionable; I dare not decline the service to which you have invited me. It will readily occur to you, however, that the limits of a few pages, to which I am necessarily confined, will preclude the possibility of doing more than glancing, in a very cursory manner, at a few topics, instead of attempting a course of regular discussion.

It is truly lamentable, that, in a day of so much literary improvement, when the number of those who may be called *educated* men, in the community, is every year increasing; and when all the talents and knowledge, as well as piety which ministers of the Gospel can possibly bring to bear on the duties of their profession are put in the most solemn requisition; I say it is truly lamentable in such a day as this, that it should be found so difficult to impress candidates for the sacred office with a just sense of adequate training for their ministerial work. Yet such is, undeniably, the melancholy fact. It is impossible not to see, that a very large majority of the whole number, content themselves with an education *superficial* through-

out. Their academic and collegial courses are both, in a multitude of cases, hurried over with a haste which precludes the possibility of accurate and mature scholarship. When they come to their theological studies, they find, to their surprise and embarrassment, that they are by no means prepared to go forward; that the miserable scantiness of their literary and scientific acquisitions really interposes a most serious obstacle in the way of their advantageous progress; and that to some of the richest stores of professional knowledge, they are altogether denied access. In these circumstances, instead of feeling impelled by the defects of their *academic course*, to pursue more at leisure, and to a greater extent, their *theological studies*; their decision is, in many cases, *directly the reverse!* They seem to suppose that, as they have not information enough to enable them to enter with intelligence on several important departments of theological study, they had better omit them altogether, and go forth at once into the field of public labour. The consequence is, they are, in a great measure, unqualified to serve the Church as *writers*. They must, of necessity, make inferior *preachers*. If they attempt to sit down as stated *pastors*, they soon expend their scanty store of knowledge, and cease to interest the people; and even if they go forth as *missionaries*, whether in the foreign or domestic field, their capacity to benefit their fellow-men, and to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, will generally be found to be abridged in proportion to the scantiness of their acquirements.

I am far, indeed, from asserting that no one ought

ever to be set apart to the work of the Ministry who is not entitled to the character of a *learned man*; and far less, that a *cold and heartless erudition* will itself fit any man to be an acceptable or useful occupant of the sacred office. All experience proves that without decided, ardent piety, no one is qualified, either to his own comfort, or to the probable advantage of others, to minister in holy things. And if a man, in addition to *such* piety, possesses strong good sense, practical wisdom, aptness to teach, and exemplary zeal; even though he have not enjoyed the plenary advantage of what may be called a *liberal education*; such a man may, I have no doubt, in many cases, and with great advantage to the Church, be introduced to the Gospel Ministry. Men of this class have often been eminently useful; and it would certainly be carrying the doctrine of the necessity of regular study to an extreme, to shut out such persons from the sacred office. Still, in every such case, the want of adequate knowledge ought to be regarded by the individual himself, and by all his friends,—and *will* be regarded by both,—if they have good sense,—as a *serious disadvantage*, to which nothing short of *necessity* should induce him to submit; and which can scarcely fail to abridge, and, in all probability, very materially, the usefulness as well as the comfort of all his ministrations.

It is deeply to be deplored, that, in taking this course, and in incurring these disadvantages, candidates for the Ministry are often encouraged by the advice of those who ought to give them better counsel. If it were in all cases a mere puerile mistake, flowing from youthful

impetuosity, and want of experience, we might look upon it with more indulgence. But this is by no means the case. Venerable Presbyteries either give it their direct countenance, or cannot be prevailed upon to set their faces with sufficient firmness against it. And thus it happens every day, that short sighted or infatuated young men,—either for want of adequate warning, or setting the most solemn warning at naught;—urged on, sometimes by inconsiderate friends, and at other times by their own impatience, ascend the pulpit, and undertake to teach others, while they need to be taught themselves “the first principles of the oracles of God;”—that, amidst all the rich advantages in pursuing Theological studies with which the candidate for the Ministry is now surrounded;—amidst the multiplied facilities which Theological Seminaries, and other allied recent improvements, offer to the diligent student of sacred knowledge;—the humiliating fact will, I fear, be found to be, that the mass of Presbyterian Ministers, at the present day, are by no means better, *if so well* furnished for their work, as those who entered the sacred office prior to the existence of these facilities. If this be so, the fact, and the reasons of it, are worthy of our most serious consideration.

It will be my aim, in what remains of this paper, to endeavour to impress upon the mind of every reader *the exceeding great importance of having the preparatory studies of candidates for the holy Ministry mature and adequate.* And, although the argument will be made up of elements so self-evident that it seems difficult to

make them plainer to a thinking mind; yet, for the sake of those for whom demonstration itself must often be repeated before it can make an impression;—it may be useful to repeat thoughts which ought, long since, to have been adopted as *first principles*, by every one claiming the least portion of Christian intelligence.

I. The great importance of careful and mature preparatory study in candidates for the Ministry, appears *from the nature and importance of that public service which the sacred office demands*. Multitudes of secular men, and too many who are turning their eyes to the Gospel Ministry, seem, indeed, to think that the professional studies of a minister may be brought within a very narrow compass. In fact, they seem to imagine that a serious perusal of the English Bible; of some one systematic work on Theology; and of some respectable ecclesiastical history,—is quite enough to prepare any man for the pulpit. All that can be said of such persons is, that they betray an ignorance as wonderful as it is disreputable. As well might a man dream that he was qualified to be a physician, by the perusal of some single popular work on the healing art; or a lawyer, by reading a course of law lectures, on general principles. Surely such calculators never penetrated beyond the surface of any single question in Biblical or Theological inquiry. What is the work which a minister of the Gospel is called to perform? Is it not to *explain the Bible* to his fellow men? Is it not to unfold, illustrate, defend and apply the doctrines and duties, of

that Bible for the benefit of all whom he addresses? Is it not to solve the difficulties which occur in the Scriptures, to reconcile seeming contradictions, and to unfold the riches of the sacred Volume? Is it not to refute error, in all its mazes; to establish truth, in all its extent; to convince gainsayers; to instruct and relieve the perplexed and doubting; in a word, to be ready to meet all inquirers, and all opposers, and to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine?" But is it possible, it may be asked, to perform these duties with any intelligence and success, without a large amount of various and digested knowledge? Can any man discharge them thoroughly, or even in any reputable degree, without being familiar with the original languages of Scripture; with Biblical History; with Biblical Antiquities; with the general principles and details of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation;—without being well acquainted with Didactic and Polemic Theology, in all their diversified and interesting branches, including the Deistical controversy, the Unitarian Controversy, the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian Controversies, to say nothing of many other departments of this boundless subject? Nay, further;—is any man prepared to discharge these duties either acceptably to his Master, to the honour of his office, or to the acceptance of those to whom he ministers, without a familiar acquaintance with the History and Government of the Church, the structure and composition of Sermons, the Pastoral care, and a variety of other subjects which cannot be minutely specified?—

Now when we recollect that all these branches of study are indispensable; that they ought *all* to be made objects of attention by every candidate for the holy Ministry; that he is really not prepared even to *begin* his work, as an interpreter of Scripture, and as a professional counsellor and guide of immortal souls, without some good acquaintance with every one of them;—is it possible for any one who knows what study and knowledge mean, to think of gaining any valuable acquaintance with these various and extensive departments of knowledge, in less than three or four years of diligent application? It is impossible. They are subjects in respect to which no talents can supersede the necessity of patient and protracted labour. Nay, it is evident that a tolerably comprehensive acquaintance with *any one* of them, cannot be acquired, by the finest mind, without months of devoted study. Take, for example, the *Pelagian* or the *Arminian* controversy, and ask any thinking man who has the least idea of the nature, extent, and importance of these portions of Polemic Theology, how long it will take a student of the best powers so far to master them, as to be prepared to go forth to resist error in its various artful mazes, and establish truth;—and he will reply that, to gain and digest such knowledge, a number of months, diligently employed, will not be more than sufficient for each subject. He, then, who thinks so far to master them *all*, as to be prepared to be “a teacher in the house of God,” at little expense of time and toil, labours under a delusion which would be a proper subject of ridicule only, were it not so destruc-

tive in its consequences to the most precious interests of men.

If there be, then, in the bosom of the Church a melancholy spectacle, it is that of a rash, self-confident young man, who presses forward to the awful station of a spiritual teacher, when he has not been taught himself; who is not qualified, perhaps, to illustrate and guard a single point in Theology; who, of course, *must* be a superficial preacher; and who cannot fail of being liable to all the crude thinking, and the doctrinal inconsistencies and aberrations, which so frequently mark the character of those who thus prematurely intrude into the sacred office. How it is, that young men, apparently conscientious, can deliberately consent to go forth as public instructors in the Church of Christ; to open and apply the Scriptures; to meet and confute the learned sceptic; to silence the ingenious caviller, not by sanctimonious authority, but by sound argument; to solve delicate and momentous questions of casuistry; to counsel the anxious, the perplexed, the tempted, and the doubting; and adapt themselves to all the variety of characters and duties which a large congregation presents,—while they are, comparatively, children, both in *knowledge* and *experience*;—is indeed wonderful, and as humiliating as it is wonderful!

When the illustrious *Calvin* had published the first edition of his great work on the “Institutions of the Christian Religion,”—when *Joseph Scaliger* supposes him to have been the most learned man in *Europe*, and when he was importuned and finally constrained to set-

tle as a pastor in *Geneva*, he was actually on his way to *Strasburg*, for the purpose of further pursuing his theological studies, under the impression that he had not yet obtained mature Scriptural knowledge enough to warrant his undertaking the stated exercise of the pastoral office. What an impressive comment on the presumptuous readiness with which too many young men, in modern times, venture on the arduous and awful labours of the Gospel Ministry, with furniture so slender and inadequate, that they cannot be said to be safe and intelligent teachers on almost any subject!

II. A further and very important argument in favour of mature preparatory study is, that *very few who do not lay a good foundation in the beginning, ever supply the deficiency afterwards.*

Many candidates for the Ministry, no doubt, content themselves with what they acknowledge to be a *short* and very *superficial* course of study at the outset, because they imagine they will have an ample opportunity of supplying all deficiencies after entering on their official work. They flatter themselves that, after they have actually entered the field of public labour, they will have, at once, better facilities, and stronger excitements to study, than they now enjoy; and that, then, they will make up, and more than make up, whatever may now be wanting. But it is easy to show that this expectation generally proves, in fact, and in most cases *must* prove, altogether delusive. Candidates for the Ministry may rely upon it, that if they leave the Theo-

logical Seminary, or their preparatory studies wherever pursued, with a mere smattering of theological knowledge—with what they know and confess to be a scanty and inadequate foundation, there is every probability that they will go through life, and to their graves with very little more. The superstructure concerning which they fondly anticipate so much, will pretty certainly be always of the same miserable, scanty, insufficient character with the foundation.

For, in the first place, if a candidate for the Ministry have so little thirst after knowledge, so little love of study, so little energy and decision of character, as to content himself with small and superficial acquirements in his preparatory course, when he has so fair an opportunity, and such powerful stimulants to apply his mind to the acquisition of necessary furniture;—will he be likely to undergo an essential revolution in this respect, immediately on reaching the field of public labour? Will he be likely, at once, to gain a new spirit, more warmly and successfully devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, when both his means and his opportunities for attending to this object, will be far less favourable than before? Nothing can be more unreasonable than such an expectation. No; there is a moral certainty that he who, in the ardour of youthful pursuit, has not a sufficiently deep impression of the importance of knowledge, to make sacrifices for its attainment, and sufficient force of character to overcome the obstacles which lie in the way of the attainment;—will never be likely, in after life, to surmount these obstructions, and make the acquisition.

Besides, let it be recollected, that when a youthful minister of Christ, at the present day, goes forth to serve the Church,—if he have talents, and be popular—as each individual hopes will be the case concerning himself;—and especially if he have ardent piety, and a heart to perform his work with zeal; he will have so much to do; will be so incessantly called upon in every direction; in a word, will have his heart and hands so completely filled with public and private engagements—preaching—visiting from house to house—attending protracted, and other special meetings for promoting the Redeemer's kingdom—and all the multiplied, and almost countless details of duty to which the zealous minister of Christ is called in this day of Christian zeal and enterprise;—that, instead of having time to make up for former deficiencies in study he will scarcely be able, by every effort, to redeem time enough to keep pace, in ever so imperfect a manner, with the cursory literature of the day, and to prepare, even hastily and superficially, for the pulpit. And, what is worthy of the particular notice of such a young man—the more ardent his piety, and the more animated, interesting, and popular his preaching—the more numerous will be his calls to public and private service; and, of course, the more incessant will be his interruptions, and the more difficult he will find it to redeem even a few hours in each week for composed retirement and study. The consequence is, that nine out of ten, perhaps nineteen out of twenty, of those who engage in preaching with very slender furniture, go through the whole of their ministerial life with lean,

unfurnished minds. Their "profiting does not appear to all." Not having the *habit* of close study, it is not easy to begin. They hope for much, and promise much in the way of future improvement, but never find time for it. Hence, when they enter the pulpit, they are neither instructive nor interesting as preachers. The small and lean stock with which they begin is soon exhausted. Their popular acceptance soon declines or ceases. The people are not "fed by them" with knowledge and understanding. Congregations dwindle away, and sometimes perish, under their feeble and unedifying Ministry. Premature dotage creeps on; and the latter portion of their lives, perhaps, becomes rather a burden than a blessing to the Church. It is truly melancholy to think how often this has been the real history of ministers who entered the sacred office without proper furniture, and who, for want of time or inclination afterwards, never made up their early deficiency. Indeed, from the very nature of the case, this *must necessarily* be the result with regard to many. For, let it ever be remembered—and on the ear and heart of every candidate for the Ministry, the statement ought to fall with solemn weight—no minister ever yet kept together and edified a congregation, for any length of time, who did not, as a habit, preach *instructively*;—who did not "feed the people" with *Scriptural knowledge*. Even *Whitefield*, with all the fervour of his zeal, and all the wonderful impressiveness of his matchless eloquence—could not possibly have settled as a stated pastor, among an intelligent people, with any advantage. Of this, he was

himself aware, and often confessed it with sensibility and humiliation. His early studies had been hasty and superficial; and his ministerial life had been one of almost unequalled activity. He had little time for study from the day of his ordination to the day of his death. His sermons, though highly eloquent, bore the marks of this fact: and when the novelty of his eloquence had worn off in a particular place, his audiences became gradually less crowded, until he was admonished to take his leave of them for a time, and not to return until such an interval had elapsed as that he could again appear among them under the advantage of a degree of novelty.

But even supposing that he who enters on the holy Ministry with slender furniture, should afterwards be determined, whatever it may cost him, to make up his deficiency by unwearied and extra efforts. Still his task will be difficult, and his prospect gloomy. He can take only one of two courses, either of which will probably be fatal. He may attempt, amidst all his multiplied and arduous labours, by *night studies*, and by urging nature in every way, beyond her strength—to gain that which he ought to have acquired before he entered the pulpit. In taking *this* course, he will, pretty certainly, *destroy his health*, and either sink into a premature grave, or reduce himself, for the remainder of his days, to a state of languor and protracted disease, which will render existence a burden, and all comfortable and efficient discharge of duty impossible. Or, the delinquent in question may choose another alternative.

He may, after entering on the Ministry, confine himself to his study; neglecting family visitation; neglecting family instruction; neglecting the anxious inquirer; neglecting the sick and the dying; neglecting all the calls of Christian enterprize and benevolence; in short, neglecting, or slighting all pastoral duties, excepting those of the pulpit. The consequences of adopting this alternative, may be even still more deplorable than in the former case. While the other course would, probably, be fatal to his health, this would be *fatal to his usefulness*, fatal to his *official character*, fatal to the best interests of *the precious souls committed to his charge*.

But it will be asked—Have not individuals been frequently known, who entered the office of the holy Ministry with very small theological furniture; but who, afterwards, by very extraordinary efforts, became not only respectably, but some of them even richly furnished for their work? I answer, such instances have now and then occurred. But they have been, generally, men of peculiar intellectual vigour and perseverance; of great decision of character; and placed in circumstances which in a great measure exempted them from the daily and hourly calls of pastoral duty. They have almost always, too, been men who had not enjoyed the advantage of ample study in early life. Of one who *had* enjoyed this advantage, but neglected it, and entered the Ministry with small furniture, and subsequently became studious and learned—I never knew an example; and must entirely doubt whether such an example ever occurred.

III. The great importance of regular and mature training for the holy Ministry is manifest *from the peculiar state and wants of our country.*

It will readily be understood that those who are entrusted with immediate care of Theological Seminaries, have opportunities of perceiving and appreciating this consideration, which are in some measure peculiar to themselves. To *them* applications for candidates, both for pastoral and missionary service, are continually sent, from almost every part of the United States, accompanied with descriptions of the places and population for which the candidates are needed, and of the qualifications deemed requisite for filling to advantage the places specified. It is almost incredible to those who have not seen the contents of such communications as I have described, how frequently, not to say generally, they represent competent *learning*, as well as *talents* and *piety*, as being indispensable in the stations which it is designed to fill. They tell us, in so many cases, that it may be considered, without error, as the general strain of representation, even from the remotest country villages,—that the man who would suit, must be a well-informed and instructive preacher, as well as pious, zealous, and prudent. They tell us, that the specified settlement, though new and immature, contains a large number of acute, active, observing men, lawyers, physicians, merchants, whose taste and character demand intelligent, as well as sound instruction from the sacred desk. It would be painful to disclose in how many cases theological Professors have been obliged to reply

to such applications, that, although they were able to name a number of candidates who were disengaged, they could not select an individual of the whole list who could really be said to be adapted to the place and service described. Young men we had, and in some instances, in considerable numbers; but few or none, unengaged fit to be sent to such scenes of labour; and so we were obliged to inform our importunate applicants. The truth is, many of the principal people in these remote districts desire—and it is surely a reasonable wish—that the ministers sent to them should be qualified to take the lead in all the ecclesiastical organizations and proceedings, not merely of a single Church, but of several neighbouring churches, starting into life and activity; to be the counsellors and guides of townships, and sometimes, perhaps, of counties; to mould a heterogeneous population into a harmonious and comfortable mass; to give advice, go forward, and command respect in difficult and delicate cases; and to take an active part in promoting sound *literature* as well as *religion*, in the respective neighbourhoods in which they may be placed. Indeed to much of this work every minister,—even every itinerant missionary is called; and it is of the utmost importance that he be able to perform it with acceptance and usefulness. And *that* candidate for the sacred office who is either too lazy, or too narrow minded to take the requisite pains to qualify himself for these various and momentous duties, may think himself very conscientious, and may give himself great credit for being moderate, humble, and disinterested in

his views; but he is an infatuated man. He is not merely under a mistake;—he is unfaithful to himself, to the Church, and to the Master whom he professes to love.

Had I, therefore, an opportunity of addressing all the theological students in the United States, I would say to them—Look abroad, beloved youth, upon this nation, in all its settlements, in the length and breadth of them! Contemplate the number, the character, and the wants of our population. Behold the melancholy reign of ignorance and vice. Contemplate the learning, the boldness, and the industry of heresy on every side. Mark well the prevalence, the unwearied diligence, and the eloquence of infidelity. Think how much digested knowledge, as well as able and powerful preaching, is called for by the shrewd and hostile millions within our widely extended territory. Advert for a moment to the mighty influence which the press is destined to exert over this people, and how deadly that influence must be, if not guided and sanctified by the religion of Jesus Christ. Think of the interests of sound *literature* as well as of *piety*. Count the number of the youth who are to be trained up either for usefulness and heaven, or for profligacy and perdition. Ponder well the necessities of our *Seminaries of learning*, if they are to be made a blessing, and not a curse. Look at these things, beloved candidates for the holy Ministry, and consider seriously what must be the consequence, without a series of miracles, unless the young soldiers now coming forward to the service of the Church, take

care to be adequately instructed and girded for the mighty war before them ; and if your "spirit is not stirred within you" by the sight, to take high aims in preparing for your work ; to aspire to elevated attainments in knowledge and in piety, you are but ill fitted for this age, or for the office which you seek.

With these impressions, when I see young men, under the notion of serving the Church, and of supplying the urgent demand for ministers, prematurely, and without proper furniture, pressing into the pulpit, instead of rejoicing, I mourn. They may have pious intentions, and may sincerely think they are promoting the welfare of the Church ; but they are preparing, in all probability, to inflict upon it a real injury. They may think "the Lord hath need of them." But they are deceived. The Lord is a God of order, and not of confusion, in all his churches. He has never made mental imbecility, ignorance, rashness, and incompetence, proper qualifications for doing his work. If "the Lord had need of them," he would not only open the door for their entrance into his service, but would also prepare them for the service in which they engaged.

IV. The great importance of mature study, and thorough training for the holy Ministry, is manifest *from the predominant influence which the PRESS exerts, and seems destined in a still higher degree, to exert, in every part of our country.*

No intelligent observer of the passing age, can possibly fail of marking the power of the press, in reaching,

informing, and controlling the whole mass of our citizens. Never, since human society existed, were the productions of the human mind, in so many diversified forms, so widely diffused among men, as at the present time. He who is able to write in a popular and impressive manner, can now, through the medium of the press, speak, in a short time, to almost the whole civilized population of the globe; instructing the ignorant, impressing the careless, and uniting in sentiment and action countless thousands whose faces he can never see in the flesh, and thousands who may live long after he is dead. And as the facilities for extending this method of communication are every day increasing, so the power of the accomplished writer to benefit his fellow-men, is becoming every day more rich, precious, and durable. Happy is that man who is qualified to write in such a manner as to be able to send the means of promoting sound principles, and holy living through all ranks of society to the ends of the earth. If I wished to give such counsel to a beloved son, as I should think adapted to prepare him for the very *maximum* of usefulness in the Church of God, I would certainly exhort him, next to the cultivation of ardent piety, to labour to the utmost, and without ceasing, to become one of the most ready and able writers in the land.

But can any one be ignorant that the possession in any good degree of this accomplishment, must necessarily be the result of mature study, and of indefatigable labour? "*Reading*," said Lord Chancellor *Bacon*, "makes a full man; *conversation* a ready man; *writing* an exact

man." Nothing brings to a more severe test the soundness of a man's original literary training, the accuracy of his knowledge, the clearness of his conceptions, and the cultivation of his taste, than the manner in which he acquits himself as a *writer*. Here, if he be not a real scholar, if his knowledge be not sound and digested, his ideas distinct and clear, and his taste just, he cannot possibly manifest high excellence. Without these qualifications, he may really be said to labour under an entire disability to do much good to his fellow men in this way. And, of course, he who voluntarily incurs this disability, may be said voluntarily to curtail his own power to serve his generation, and to honour the best of Masters.

Accordingly, it is truly humiliating to observe how small is the number of Ministers in the United States, who manifest any thing like high excellence in the great and precious power of addressing their fellow-men through the medium of the press. Though this accomplishment is so evidently one of inestimable importance; though it bears a high price in the market; and though there is scarcely any way in which a man is so likely, on a great scale, to serve God and his generation; still, the mortifying fact is notorious, that there is a great scarcity of this kind of accomplishment; nay, that many important theological and ecclesiastical publications of the periodical class, are almost obliged to stand still for want of writers of sufficient excellence to sustain them with vigour and spirit. While a large portion of the periodical press is in the hands of infidels and errorists,

who can command sufficient literary aid almost at pleasure; the friends of evangelical religion find it almost impossible to carry on such journals as their cause demands, in a manner which at all becomes their cause. And in the midst of this lamentable deficiency, how few appear to be pursuing that course of study, and submitting to that patient and laborious culture of their faculties which become those who feel bound to exert their utmost strength in serving their Maker and their fellow-men! Never was there a country in which there were, at once, so many opportunities and inducements to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind by good writing as in the United States: and it may be safely said, that there is no department of Christian effort more likely to prove a permanent blessing to the human race; and in which he who is capable of excelling is presented with a greater range of usefulness than that which is now under consideration; and which, at the same time, so many, if they do not weakly undervalue, do most criminally neglect.

V. Ample and mature preparatory study is of exceeding great importance to a candidate for the holy ministry, as *a substitute for that experience which cannot be possessed in the outset of an ecclesiastical course; and for the general formation of the character.*

Many seem to imagine that the only use of a regular and complete course of preparatory study is *the mere attainment of knowledge.* And, therefore, when a candidate for the ministry, after completing his academic

career, is exhorted to spend three or more years in diligent theological study, it is thought, by many serious people, to be almost a criminal sacrifice to *mere learning*. But such persons forget that the discipline of the mind, and the formation of the general character, are among the most important parts of professional preparation. They forget that even if the requisite amount of facts and principles could be crowded into the mind of a young man in six months, or even in six weeks, still one essential object of theological education would be unattained; which is *casting the whole man*, if I may be allowed the expression, *into the proper mould for a minister of religion*. This includes the correction of bad habits; the formation of new and better ones; the gradual discipline and ripening of the intellectual powers; mellowing, softening, and at the same time invigorating the graces of the heart; bringing down high thoughts of himself; ascertaining his own defects and foibles; learning the value of gravity, self-command, prudence, and Christian dignity; studying human nature and the world; in short, unlearning many things which he had learned amiss, and correcting many erroneous views, and juvenile propensities, which nothing but time, and suitable associations, accompanied with much observation, watchfulness, prayer, and conflict can possibly, under God, enable him to accomplish. Suppose a young man to be about to engage in a course of study preparatory to the gospel Ministry. Suppose him to have lively, and vigorous talents, and unfeigned piety;—but at the same time to be rash, impetuous, indiscreet, ignorant of the

world, elated with ideas of his own powers and importance, and ready on all occasions, without conferring with age or experience, to dash forward for the attainment of his object. Now, if such a young man had read all the books in the world, and heard and transcribed all the learned lectures that ever were delivered, he would still be unfit to go forth as a Minister of the Gospel; to be a teacher, an example, and a guide in the Church of God. He needs the friendly hints, the fraternal counsel, the faithful admonitions of those who have lived longer than himself. He needs to be taught by experience, and sometimes by very painful experience; to be rebuked, and mortified, and humbled again and again, before he can be brought to "think soberly" of himself, to feel his own defects and foibles, to act with a habitual regard to the feelings of others, to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." In a word, he needs that kind of intellectual and moral discipline, which results from being frequently brought into contact with various forms of Christian society, while he is consulting at his leisure the best books. It is plain that all this is not, in ordinary cases, to be acquired in a year, or in two years. It is usually a slow process, and requires time and patience. Yet, with many, this discipline, is far more needed, and far more important, than mere learning. The want of it is their most radical and prominent defect; and will be likely, perhaps, if continued, more than any other, (next to a defect in piety) to interfere with their acceptance, their comfort, and their usefulness, to the end of life.

After all the provision which has been made by our Church for ample ministerial training, I feel constrained to say, that there is scarcely a more obvious and deplorable evil among her rising ministry, at the present day, than the slenderness of furniture with which many go forth, united, as such deficiency is too apt to be, with a spirit of self-confidence, rashness, contempt for age and experience, and headstrong obstinacy in the adoption and persevering use of new modes of preaching, in propagating plausible forms of error, and in denouncing a wise regard to ecclesiastical order as pharisaical formality. We have reason to be thankful that this self-sufficient and turbulent spirit, though found in too many instances, is by no means a *prevalent* one among the mass of our candidates. If it *were*, the prospect would be indeed gloomy; or rather, there would be no rational hope for the Church short of a *revolution*, which should at once convulse and purify it. Now against these aberrations, piety itself, even ardent piety, is not always a sufficient defence: for the stronger the conviction on the part of a deeply conscientious youth of the rectitude of a certain course, with the more decision and ardour will he, of course, pursue it.

If we would cure such an one of his errors, and reclaim him from his wanderings; we must *inform his mind*; we must *read to him the experience of former ages*; we must prevail upon him to pause, to inquire, and to avail himself of the knoweledge accumulated by the Church from her very mistakes, convulsions and disorders. In nineteen cases out of twenty, when pious young ministers

have given way to extravagance and fanaticism ; when they have spurned the counsels of age and experience ; and grieved the hearts of intelligent and sober Christians, by patronizing enthusiasm and disorder ; they will be found to be among the ignorant and superficial ; who have pressed forward prematurely into the field of public labour ; who know little of theology ; little of the structure and history of the Church of Christ ; still less of human nature, and the human heart ; and least of all of themselves. This is so generally the case, that when I hear of a young man who is peculiarly forward and arrogant in his ecclesiastical spirit ; who claims to be *peculiarly skilled in originating and conducting Revivals* ; who sneers at the counsels of wiser and better men than himself, and denounces as graceless, or at least as cold, all who are not willing at once to unite with him in his extravagance ; I take for granted, without further inquiry, that he is a young man of small information ; that he has been intoxicated by the flattery of those who were as superficial and injudicious as himself ; that he is a mass of inflated ignorance, and spiritual pride ; and that instead of being a guide, in spiritual things peculiarly *well skilled and safe*, as he and his partial friends suppose, he is peculiarly unfit to be trusted in any thing that requires the exercise of genuine sanctified wisdom. I have very seldom met with a case which formed an exception to this remark. All the patrons of enthusiasm, extravagance and disorder that I have ever personally known, were either sciolists in knowledge, or men of remarkably weak minds, and, more generally, both toge-

ther. The various practical inferences, which may legitimately be drawn from this statement, I leave to others; but the fact is, a self-sufficient, inflated, thorough-going advocate of fanatical measures of any kind, who was at the same time a man of mature study, and a well informed theologian, I never saw, or heard of. Hence I infer, that leisurly and careful study; setting out in ecclesiastical life with a solid mass of digested knowledge; is one of the best guards against these deplorable evils. This leads me to observe,

V. Finally; That the importance of mature study and thorough training for the sacred office, is *powerfully and uniformly attested by the history of the Church.*

To trace the leading facts on this subject, would require a volume instead of a few pages. They all, however, when carefully examined, will be found to establish the general principle, that at any and every period, the better informed the clergy were in Biblical and theological knowledge, the more exemplary was their sacred character,—the more pure and elevated their piety, and the more extensive their usefulness. The most learned of the Apostles, we know, was the most eminently useful of the whole number. And the same general principle has been strikingly exemplified in all ages. It cannot be said, indeed, that ministers of the Gospel have been always and invariably useful in direct proportion to their *learning*. Some remarkable instances of learned heretics, and of learned drones and formalists, have, no doubt disgraced the ministerial office; and instead of

proving blessings to the Church, have rather been perverters of the truth, and obstacles to the progress of the Gospel. But the *converse* of this statement, cannot, assuredly be maintained; that is, it cannot be said of any pastor, or missionary, who was remarkably *ignorant*, however *pious*, that he was extensively and permanently useful. Such an one may have been the means of doing some little good, for a short time, and in a narrow sphere; but extensively useful he never was. The annals of the Christian Church afford no such instance. The fact is from the days of Paul to this hour, those ministers who, to exemplary piety, and ardent zeal, added sound and mature learning, have been in all ages and countries the most eminently blessed and useful in their generation.

This principle was strikingly exemplified in the lives and character of the *Reformers*. In those holy men, who were most eminently instrumental in stripping off the mask from popery, in exposing the erroneous corruptions of the man of sin, and holding forth the "light of life" to a dark world, we see the value of learning to the Gospel Ministry displayed in the most impressive manner. It may be maintained, without hesitation, as a general fact, that the most learned of their number, were the most richly and extensively useful; and that, humanly speaking, had their knowledge been less, the blessings which, under God, they were instrumental in conferring on the Church, and on distant generations would have been far less rich, vital and permanent than they were. Nay, it is not saying too much to assert that, had not

the leading Reformers been men amply furnished with human and divine knowledge, they could not possibly have rendered those incalculable services to the cause of Christ, which altered the face of Christendom; which sent blessings to the ends of the earth; and in which we have yet reason to rejoice. The accomplishments of which we speak were those which enabled those great and good men to translate and expound the Scriptures; to explain and defend the precious doctrines of the Gospel; to meet the learning of the most corrupt Romanists with still sounder learning; to repel their plausible logic, with logic still more legitimate and powerful; to expose the emptiness of their "philosophy falsely so called," by sounder views of genuine philosophy; to exhibit the real character of the heresies and superstitions which they opposed, by tracing their history, as well as exposing their native tendency and effects; and thus to command the confidence, and guide the opinions of thousands who never saw their faces in the flesh.

Even in the case of *missionaries*, the principle for which we contend has been, with scarcely an exception, remarkably illustrated and confirmed. Whose labours, among this class, have been most remarkably blessed to the conversion of the heathen? Undoubtedly, those who, to fervent piety, united a competent store of literature and science, and especially an intimate acquaintance with the Bible, and with Gospel truth. If any doubt of this, let them think of the labours and usefulness of such men as *Eliot*, and *Brainerd*, and *Spangenberg*, and *Vanderkemp*, and *Swartz*, and *Buchanan*, and *Martyn*,

and *Carey*, and *Ward*—not to speak of a number more whose names will instantly occur to every well informed reader;—and then ask, whether it had been possible for those holy and devoted men to accomplish what they did, if they had been illiterate and ignorant, however ardent and devoted their Christian feelings? The very suggestion is absurd. We might as well expect men according to the unreasonable demand of the Egyptian task-masters, to “make brick without straw.” The most permanent and truly valuable part of the services which they rendered to the cause of the Redeemer, were precisely those which their *sanctified learning* enabled them to accomplish, and which, had they been illiterate men, might, of course, have entirely failed. When we read the deeply interesting memoirs of these men, and especially those of *Buchanan* and *Martyn*, we perceive at once that their indefatigable devotion to study in the University, was so far from having been lost upon them, even in their missionary labours, that it all turned to important account. It served to invigorate and enlarge their minds; to prepare them for the more easy and thorough acquisition of every subsequent attainment; and thus greatly to extend their usefulness. Neither of these men could possibly have shone so brightly in his oriental Ministry, had it not been for his diligent and successful labours in the University.

The foregoing statements are all confirmed by the history of the most useful divines and pastors of our own country. It may be confidently asserted, that ever since evangelical churches have had an existence

on this side the Atlantic, those ministers of the Gospel in whom fervent piety, and ample theological furniture were most remarkably united, have been, invariably, the most eminently useful. They have had a weight of influence which no others could acquire. They have diffused around them a degree of light, as well as warmth, which less accomplished men could never have imparted. And they have been enabled to give an impulse to the public mind, and to correct prevailing disorders and abuses, to an extent which rendered them great public benefactors; but which, without their learning, would have been impracticable, unless by the intervention of miracle.

Do any ask, in what manner the history of the Church represents the want of mature knowledge in ministers as having interfered with their usefulness? The answer is as ready as it is multiform and decisive. When ministers have had little knowledge themselves, it was impossible for them to impart much instruction to others. They were found unable to "feed the people with knowledge and with understanding." Those to whom they ministered soon discovered their ignorance; felt that they were not fed; became tired of their preaching; lost their respect for them; neglected their ministrations; and, perhaps, gradually, withdrew from the house of God altogether, and became totally regardless of religion. Thus, instead of being a rich blessing to the Church of God, such ministers, as was remarked under a former head, have frequently become a stumbling block, a burden, and a curse to it. Nor does the

history of the Church represent the evils of the want of suitable furniture in ministers as having been confined to the people to whom they ministered. This deficiency has proved, in innumerable instances, as injurious to *themselves* as to others. They have been made the dupes and tools of designing men, who had more knowledge, and who wished to render them subservient to their sinister designs. Or they have been, before they were aware of it, entangled in the deplorable toils of childish superstition, or wild enthusiasm; and thus, becoming "blind leaders of the blind," they have contracted more guilt, and done more injury to that hal- lowed cause which they professed to serve, than it was possible by human arithmetic to estimate. The truth is, a man who has but a smattering of indigested know- ledge, however pious, *must* be, as all experience has evinced, not only an *incompetent* guide, but also an *unsafe* one. In a day of commotion and trial, he knows not what to do. He is ready to adopt every novel pro- ject which ignorance, vanity, or a spirit of innovation may propose. The results of former experience and wisdom are, of course, lost upon him, for the best of all reasons, because he knows them not. The consequence is, that, in all his movements, he betrays total incom- petence to the work which he undertakes. He draws down upon himself the deep regrets, if not the un- mingled contempt of the wise and the good around him. And the Church, instead of having reason to bless him, as her leader, guide, and benefactor, has reason rather to weep over his character and labours, however well

intended, as really, taken in the aggregate, so much thrown into the scale of the adversary.

Such, beyond all doubt, is the testimony of unvarnished history on the subject before us. It teaches, on the one hand, that *unsanctified knowledge* has always been a curse to the Church—leading to pride, ambition, unhallowed speculation, heresy, strife, and every evil work. And it teaches, on the other hand, with no less distinctness, that *ignorance never was nor can be sanctified*, that an ignorant or superficially informed Ministry, never can be either a respectable or useful one; that it must either sink down into miserable, inert, un-instructive insignificance and unfaithfulness; or betray into vanity, empty rant, enthusiasm, and endless disorder. Nothing but the *union of fervent piety, and sound learning*, can possibly secure to any Christian Ministry, for any length of time together, the precious results of true respectability, and genuine evangelical usefulness.

Seeing that the voice of all history is so unequivocal, loud and solemn on this subject, it has often filled me with the deepest astonishment, that candidates for the ministry, who have any acquaintance with that history, should yet be so slow to learn its plain and conclusive lessons. Such, however, is the demented course of many! They are so infatuated as to pass hastily and slightly over all their academical and collegial studies, and yet hope to have well disciplined and cultivated minds. They are so much in haste to get into the field of active labour, that they will not take the time or the pains to make themselves acquainted, even tolerably,

with the original languages of Scripture; and yet are so unreasonable as to expect to be sound intelligent, and able expositors of the word of God. They spurn at the labours of studying didactic and polemic theology in a systematic manner, comparing system with system; and yet irrationally dream, that they shall be able, by and by, to "bring out of their treasure things new and old."

They imagine that their little stinted, indigested, miserable pittance of acquirement will be sufficient to draw upon while they live, without any addition. Surely such youth set at defiance all reason, and all experience. When our Theological Seminaries were first established, the friends of a well qualified ministry were sanguine in their expectations, that theological education would rapidly rise to a high standard. It never entered into their minds, that when such ample and favourable opportunities of mature study were provided, any would be insane enough not to avail themselves of the provision. But, alas! how grievously, not only in many instances, but in a great majority of instances, have such expectations been disappointed! How difficult is it, after all, to persuade the larger portion of our candidates for the ministry, of the importance and necessity of ample furniture in those who bear the sacred office! They read in every history of the Christian Church which they open, the deplorable consequences of ignorance and incompetence in the Gospel ministry. They cannot open their eyes on the ministers and Churches of the present day, without seeing the most humiliating effects arising from the

want of suitable training in those who have undertaken to be "watchmen on the walls of Zion." They cannot help seeing, if they look at all, that the minister who has but *small knowledge*, with few exceptions, must content himself with *small usefulness*. They ought to know, too, that the state of society in our country, as it advances in refinement and intelligence, is, every year, calling for more ample furniture in candidates for the sacred office. They ought, further, to remember, that Christian ministers of the present day are called upon more loudly than ever before, to serve the cause of Christ with their *pens*, as well as in the *pulpit*, in the *lecture-room*, and in the *pastoral visit*. And they ought to consider that they have opportunities of enlightening and influencing the public mind presented to them, such as no former generation of candidates for the Ministry ever enjoyed. They are, also, frequently and faithfully *warned* of the danger of immature study, and superficial knowledge; and entreated to avail themselves of the means placed within their reach, for preparing in the most advantageous manner, to serve the Church and their generation. But with respect to many,—alas! too many; all is in vain. Only a lamentably small portion can be prevailed upon, with all these considerations in view, to pursue the full course of study which the wisdom of the Church has prescribed. And even some who *do* consent, and profess, nominally, to go through that course, engage in study, for the most part, with so little zeal, and suffer themselves to be diverted from their

studies by so many distracting avocations, that but a small portion of the nominal time of study, is really, and in good earnest, devoted to its professed object.

I am not ignorant of the various pleas, by which those who act thus, in opposition to the clearest light of experience, attempt to justify their blind and infatuated conduct. They plead—the urgent need of ministers; the solicitations of their friends; their earnest desire to be in the field of labour; the inconvenience of obtaining the necessary means of support, in pursuing the usual course;—all these they plead with confidence and zeal. But such pleas are all delusive and vain. Those who offer them forget that it is no real blessing to the Church to multiply ignorant and incompetent ministers, but rather a curse; that, of course, if the call for more labourers were a hundred-fold more loud and importunate than it is, it would be worse than useless to the Church as well as to themselves, to go forth unfurnished “novices.” They forget that they have but one life to live: and that, if they allow themselves to launch forth unprepared, they may, and probably will, never be able to repair the mischief of this one premature step. O when will those beloved sons of the Church who have “a price put into their hands to get wisdom,” learn to value it correctly, and to improve it faithfully? I can only say, with respect to those who act otherwise, that, if they ever come to their senses, they will be ready, like *Peter*, to “go out and weep bitterly.”

I most earnestly wish, my dear Sir, that you could

adopt some means of infusing proper sentiments on this important subject into the minds of all the candidates taken up and patronized by your Board. It is of the utmost importance that something of this kind be done, if possible, at the *outset* of each young man's course. When candidates for the Ministry have completed their *college* career, and commence their theological studies, it is often too late to address them effectually in reference to this matter. Their whole elementary course, in the languages and sciences, has been so miserably superficial and inaccurate, that, unless they *go back and begin anew*, they never can proceed in their theological course, with any tolerable advantage. Young men, therefore, who have the Ministry in view, ought to *commence* their elementary studies under a deep conviction of the importance of every part of their *foundation* being laid in the most *careful* and *solid* manner. From the moment they take the Latin grammar in hand, they ought to be entreated not to *slight* any part of their work; and to make a point, whatever it may cost them, of being *exact* and *thorough* in every thing. This may give more trouble in the outset; but it will *save trouble* in the end. He who *begins* well, will proceed afterwards with more ease, more celerity, and more profit: whereas, he, whose studies in classic literature and in the sciences are lame and crude, may rely on it that he will be like a man with weights tied to his feet, which will, necessarily, impede his progress in every subsequent part of his journey. Let me entreat you, then, Mr. Editor, and through you,

all who have any thing to do with the Board of Education—to labour to impress the minds of your beneficiaries with a due sense of their obligations on this subject. I would respectfully propose, that you not only put into their hands sound and seasonable publications on the subject; but that you, as far as possible, personally address each individual, and endeavour to reach his conscience in reference to the duty which I am labouring to recommend. Try to convince them, that whenever they pass over any subject which it is made their duty to study, in a hasty and superficial manner; whenever they content themselves with stunted and imperfect knowledge, they *cheat themselves*; they *cheat the Church*, by whose maternal bounty they are sustained; they attempt to *cheat the great Head of the Church*, to whom they owe their best services. O that candidates for the Ministry could be persuaded to feel, that this is not a subject concerning which they are at liberty to “confer with flesh and blood;” but that they are as much bound to *prepare themselves in the best possible manner to serve their Master in heaven*, as they are to pray, to study his word, or to believe in his name. And if any young man, after having the subject properly set before him, cannot be prevailed upon, to go through a regular and full course of study, both classical and theological, I, for one, am prepared to say that, from the moment this disposition is discovered, your Board ought to decline sustaining him. The pious young man who has gotten it into his head that zeal, without solid knowledge will answer for a minister of

the Gospel, ought at once to be told, that he will be much more likely to promote the cause of true religion as an industrious mechanic, or in some other secular employment, than as "an ambassador of Christ."

With many prayers for the success of your important Institution,

I am, my dear Sir, .

Yours, &c.

SAMUEL MILLER.

Princeton, May 24th, 1832.

ADDRESS

TO

STUDENTS OF DIVINITY.

BY REV. JOHN BROWN,

Late Minister of the Gospel in Haddington, Scotland.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following "ADDRESS TO STUDENTS OF DIVINITY," is prefixed to "Brown's Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion." We have often regretted that this truly admirable Address was so little handled or known by Students of Divinity in this country. It is now offered to the youth of America who are looking to the sacred office, in manual form, with an earnest recommendation of it to their prayerful and repeated perusal.

The local and ecclesiastical allusions, though not strictly *appropriate*, are yet retained, as both highly interesting in themselves, and as necessary to preserve the connection and entireness of a production, of which not one word ought to be lost.

THE EDITOR.

ADDRESS.

MY DEAR PUPILS,

FOR my assistance in instructing you, this *Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion* was formed. To gratify a number of you, it is now published. Being formed, not to make you read, but to make you *think much*, it must now appear dry and meagre, as stripped of its additional remarks; and no doubt some of its expressions admit of a sense which I never intended. To render you mighty in the Scriptures, readily able to support the several articles of our holy religion by the self-evidencing and conscience-commanding testimony of the Holy Ghost, and accustomed to express the things of God in his own language, multitudes of texts are ordinarily quoted, which I have laboured to lodge in your memories. To manifest the extensive connexion of divine truths, some leading articles relative to the *perfections of God*, the *person of Christ*, &c. are traced through many others, in a manner which will perhaps be accounted a digression. Few insignificant, local, or dormant controversies have been brought on the field: Nor, that I know, have the enemies of the truth been unfairly represented or indiscreetly answered, in others. The deceit or wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

While I have been occupied in instructing you, your consciences must bear me witness, that my principal concern was to impress your minds with the great things of God. Now, when I am gradually stepping into the eternal state, to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, permit me to beseech you, as you wish to promote His honour, and the eternal salvation of your own and your hearers' souls,

1. See that ye be REAL CHRISTIANS yourselves. I now more and more see, that nothing less than REAL, REAL Christianity, is fit to die with, and make an appearance before God. Are ye then indeed *born again, born from above, born of the Spirit? created in Christ Jesus unto good works!*—*new creatures in Christ Jesus, having all old things passed away, and all things become new?* Are ye indeed the circumcision which *worship God in the Spirit*, habitually reading, meditating, praying, preaching, conversing with your hearts, under the influence of the Holy Ghost? Have you no *confidence in the flesh*, no confidence in your self-righteousness, your learning, your address, your care and diligence, your gifts, and graces;—but being emptied of self in every form, are *poor in spirit, less than the least of all saints*, and the least of all God's mercies; nay, the very *chief of sinners* in your own sight? Has it pleased God to *reveal his Son* in you? and to instruct you with a strong hand, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus as your Lord, and to count them but dung, that you may win him, and be found in him, not having your own righteousness, but the righteous-

ness which is of God by faith,—and to know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,—and to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, John iii. 3, 5, 6. Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. Phil. iii. 3. Matt. v. 3. xvi. 24. Eph. iii. 8. Gen. xxxii. 10. 1 Tim. i. 15. Gal. i. 15, 16. Phil. iii. 7—14. If you be, or become either *graceless* preachers or ministers of the Gospel, how terrible is your condition! If you open your Bible, the sentence of your redoubled damnation flashes into your conscience from every page. When you compose your sermon, you but draw up a tremendous indictment against yourselves. If you argue against, or reprove other men's sins, you but aggravate your own. When you publish the holy law of God, you but add to your rebellion against it, and make it an awful witness against your treacherous dissimulation. If you announce its threatenings, and mention *hell* with all its insupportable torments, you but enfeoff yourselves in it, and serve yourselves heirs to it as the inheritance appointed you by the Almighty. When you speak of Christ and his excellencies, fulness, love, and labours, it is but to trample him under your feet. If you take his covenant and Gospel into your mouth, it is but to profane them, and cast them forth to be trodden under foot of men. If you talk of spiritual experiences, you but do despite to the Spirit of grace. When you commend the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and invite sinners to new-covenant fellowship with them, you but treacherously stab them under the fifth rib, betray

them with a kiss, and from your heart cry, This is the heir, the God, come let us kill him. While you hold up the glass of God's law or Gospel to others, you turn its back to yourselves. The Gospel, which ye preach to others, is hid,—is a savour of death unto death to you, the vail remaining on your hearts, and the god of this world having blinded your minds. Without the saving, the heart-transforming knowledge of Christ and him crucified, all your knowledge is but an accursed *puffer up*, and the murderer of your own souls. And unless the grace of God make *an uncommon stretch* to save you, how desperate is your condition! Perhaps no person under heaven bids more unlikely to be saved, than a *graceless (Seceding) minister*;—his conscience is so overcharged with guilt, so seared as with an hot iron, and his heart so hardened by the abuse of the Gospel.—Alas! my dear pupils, must all my instructions, all the strivings of the Holy Ghost, all your reading, all your meditations, all your sermons, all your evangelical principles, all your professions, all your prayers, as traps and snares, take and bind any of you, hand and foot, that, as *unprofitable servants*, you may be cast into *utter darkness*, with all the contents of your Bible and other books,—all your gifts and apparent-like graces, as it were, inlaid in your conscience, that, like fuel, or oil, they may forever feed the flames of God's wrath upon your souls! After being set for a time at the gate of heaven, to point others into it,—after prophesying in Christ's name, and wasting yourselves to show others the way of salvation, and to light up the friends of our

Redeemer to their heavenly rest,—must your own lamp go out in everlasting darkness, and ye be bidden, *Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity?* —Must I,—must all the churches behold you at last brought forth and condemned as arch-traitors to our Redeemer? Must you, in the most tremendous manner, forever sink into the bottomless pit, under the weight of the blood of the great God our Saviour,—under the weight of murdered truths, murdered convictions, murdered gifts, murdered ministrations of the Gospel, and murdered souls of men!

2. Ponder much, as before God, what proper FURNITURE you have for the ministerial work, and labour to increase it. To him that hath shall be given. Has Jesus bestowed on you the Holy Ghost? What distinct knowledge have you of the mysteries of the kingdom? What aptness have you to teach, bringing out of the good treasure of your own heart *things new and old!* What ability to make the deep mysteries of the Gospel plain to persons of weak capacities, and to represent things delightful or terrible in a proper and affecting manner? What proper quickness in conceiving divine things; and what rooted inclination to study them, as persons devoted to matters of infinite importance? What peculiar fitness have you for the pulpit, qualifying you, in a plain, serious, orderly, and earnest manner, to screw the truths of God into the consciences of your hearers? With what stock of self-experienced truths and texts of inspiration did, or do you enter on the ministerial work? Of what truths, relative to the law of God,—or relative

to sin, Satan, or the desertions and terrors of God, has your soul not only seen the evidence, but felt the power? What declarations, promises, offers, and invitations of the glorious Gospel, have ye, with joy and rejoicing of heart, found and eaten, and therein tasted and seen that God is good? Of what inspired truths and texts can you say, *Even so we have believed, and therefore we speak*: what we have seen and heard with the Father, and tasted and handled of the word of life, that we declare unto you. Thrice happy preacher, whose deeply-experienced heart is, next to his Bible, his principal note-book! John xx. 22. Matt. xiii. 22. 12. 52. 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Isa. l. 4. xlix. 2. Jer. xv. 16. 2 Cor. iv. 13. 1 John i. 1—3. John viii. 34.

3. Take heed that your CALL from Christ and his Spirit to your ministerial work, be not only REAL but EVIDENT. Without this you can neither be duly excited or encouraged to your work; nor hope, nor pray for divine success in it; nor bear up aright under the difficulties you must encounter, if you attempt to be faithful. If you run unsent by Jesus Christ and his Spirit, notwithstanding the utmost external regularity in your license, call, and ordination, you, in the whole of your ministrations, must act the part of a sacriligious thief and robber, a pretended and treacherous ambassador for Christ and his Father, and a murderer of men's souls, not profiting them at all. What direction,—what support,—what assistance,—what encouragement,—what reward can you then expect? Ponder, therefore, as before God: Have you taken this honour to yourselves? or,

Were ye called of God as was Aaron? Has Jesus Christ sent you to preach the Gospel, and laid upon you a delightful and awful *necessity* to preach it? While he powerfully determined you to follow providence, and avoid every selfish and irregular step towards entrance into the office as a mean of *eating a piece of bread*, or enjoying carnal ease or honour, did he breathe on you, and cause you to receive the Holy Ghost,—filling you with deep compassion to the perishing souls of men, and a deep sense of your unfitness for such arduous work, and fervent desire, that if the Lord were willing to use you as instruments of winning souls, he would sanctify you, and make you meet for his work?—Perhaps, providentially shut out from other callings to which you or your parents inclined, did you, in your education, go up *bound in the Spirit* by the love of Christ burning in your hearts, and constraining you cheerfully to surrender yourselves to poverty, reproach, and hatred of men, for promoting his name and honour, and the salvation of men in the world?—What oracles of God, powerfully impressed on your soul, have directed and encouraged you to this work?—Know you in what form Jesus Christ gave you your commission? Whether to *open the eyes of the Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,—that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in him*:—Or to *go make the heart of this people fat, their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes*? Jer. xxiii. 21, 22. 32. Isa. xlix. 1, 2. Jer. i. Ezek. ii. iii. xxxiii. Mat. x. Luke vi. x. John x.

Acts i. Heb. v. 4. Rom. x. 15. 1 Cor. i. 17. ix. 16.
Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Isa. vi. 8, 9.

4. See that your END in entering into, or executing your office, be single and disinterested. Dare you appeal to him, whose eyes are *as a flame of fire*, and who *searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins*, to give to every man according to his works, that you never inclined to be put into the priest's office, that you might *eat a piece of bread, and look every one for his own gain from his quarter*; that ye *seek not great things for yourselves*; that ye *covet no man's silver, gold, or apparel*; that ye seek not men's property, but *themselves*, that you may win them to Christ for their eternal welfare; that ye seek not your own honour, ease, or temporal advantage, but the things of Christ and his people; that ye *seek not honour or glory of men*, but the honour of Christ or his Father, in the eternal salvation of souls; and have determined to prosecute this end through whatever distress or danger the Lord may be pleased to lay in your way? Jer. xlv. 5. 1 Sam. xii. 3. Acts xx. 33. Isa. lvi. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 10. 1 Cor. ix. 12, 16. 2 Cor. vii. 2. xi. 9. xii. 13, 14. vi. 4—19. Phil. ii. 21. 1 Thess. ii. 4—9. John vii. 18.

5. See that your minds be deeply impressed with the NATURE, EXTENT, and IMPORTANCE of your ministerial work—That therein it is required of you, as *ambassadors for Christ*, as *stewards* of the mysteries and manifold grace of God,—*to be faithful*;—to serve the Lord with your spirit, and with much humility, in the Gospel of his Son;—to testify repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, not keeping back

or shunning to declare every part of the counsel of God, or any profitable instruction, reproof, or encouragement; and not moved with any reproach, persecution, hunger, or nakedness;—to be ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus, in order to finish your course with joy. Bearing with the infirmities of the weak, and striving together in prayer, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, and your messages provided by God, and made acceptable to your hearers, you must labour with much fear and trembling, determined to know, to glory in, and make known, nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,—preaching the Gospel, *not with enticing words of man's wisdom*, as men-pleasers, but with great plainness of speech, in demonstration of the Spirit and with power,—speaking the things which are freely given you by God, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but in *words which the Holy Ghost teaches*, comparing spiritual things with spiritual,—as having the mind of Christ, always triumphing in HIM,—and making manifest the savour of the knowledge of him in every place, that you may be a sweet savour of Christ in them who are saved, and in them who perish;—as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speaking in Christ, and through the mercy of God, not fainting, but renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty;—not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, or corrupting the truth, but manifesting the truth to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God;—not preaching yourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and yourselves ser-

vants to the Church for his sake, always bearing about his dying, that his life may be manifested in you;—and knowing the terror of the Lord, and deeply impressed with the account which you and your hearers must give to him of your whole conduct in the day of judgment,—awed by his infinite authority, constrained and inflamed by His love, you must persuade men, beseeching them to be reconciled unto God, and making yourselves manifest to God and to their conscience,—and, as their edification requires, changing your voice, and turning yourselves every way, and becoming all things to all men, in order to gain them to Christ,—jealous over them with a godly jealousy; in order to espouse them to him as chaste virgins,—travailing in birth, till he be formed in their hearts. You must take heed to your ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfil it:—stir up the gifts which were given you,—give yourselves wholly to reading, exhortation, and doctrine;—and perseveringly take heed to yourselves and to the doctrine which you preach, that you may serve yourselves and them that hear you;—watching for their souls, as they who do, and must give an account for them to God,—rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving every man his portion in due season: faithfully warning every man with tears, night and day, teaching every man, particularly *young ones*, and labouring to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;—and warring, not after the flesh, nor with carnal weapons, but with such as are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds and cast-

ing down imaginations, and subduing every thought and affection to the obedience of Christ. Having Him for the end of your conversation, and holding fast the form of sound words, in faith in and love to him, —not entangling yourselves with the affairs of this life, nor ashamed of the Lord, or of his cause or prisoners, but ready to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and to endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain salvation with eternal glory; —ye must go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach, and, exposed as spectacles of sufferings to angels and men, must not faint under your tribulations, but feed the flock of God which he has purchased with his own blood, and over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers,—preaching the word in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine,—taking the oversight of your people, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre or worldly gain, or larger stipends, but of a ready mind,—neither as being lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock,—exercising yourselves to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man,—having a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly,—exercised to godliness,—kindly affectioned, disinterested, holy, just and unblameable,—prudent examples of the believers, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and purity,—fleeing youthful lusts, and following after righteousness, peace, faith, charity,—not striving, but being gentle unto all men,—in meekness, instructing them who oppose themselves, avoiding foolish

and unlearned questions, and old wives' fables,—fleeing from perverse disputings and worldly-mindedness, as most dangerous snares; and following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness;—fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life;—keeping your trust of Gospel truth and ministerial office, and, without partiality or precipitancy, committing the same to faithful men, who may be able to teach others;—and, in fine, faithfully labouring, in the Lord, to try, and confute, and censure false teachers, publicly rebuke or excommunicate open transgressors, restore such as have been overtaken in a fault in the spirit of meekness, —and having compassion on them, to pull them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, and never conniving at, or partaking with any in their sins. Who is sufficient for these things? May your sufficiency be of God; and as your days are, so may your strength be. Ezek. ii. 7. iii. 9. 17—21. xxxiii. 7—9. Isa. lviii. 1. Jer. i. 17, 18. xv. 19, 20. Mic. iii. 8. Mal. ii. 6, 7. Matth. x. 16—39. xix. 28, 29. xx. 25—28. xxiii. 3—12. xxiv. 42—51. xxviii. 18—20. Acts xviii. 24—28. xx. 18—35. xxiv. 16. xxvi. 16—23. 1 Cor. ii. 1—5, 9, 12, 13. i.—v. ix. xii.—xiv. 2 Cor. ii.—vi. x.—xiii. Rom. i. 9, 16. ix. 1, 2. x. 1. xii. xv. Gal. i. 8—16. iv. 19. Eph. iii. 7, 8, 9. iv. 11—15. vi. 19, 20. Col. iv. 7, 17. i. 23—29. ii. 1, 2. 1 Thess. ii. iii. v. 12. 1 Tim. iii.—vi. 2 Tim. i—iii. Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 18. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. v. 1—4. Jude 22, 23. Rev. ii. iii. xi. 3—7. xiv. 6—11.

6. See that ye take heed to your spirits that ye deal not TREACHEROUSLY with the Lord. In approaching to

or executing the ministerial office, keep your hearts with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of eternal life, or death, to yourselves and others. Building up yourselves in your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. If you do not *ardently* love Christ, how can you *faithfully* and *diligently* feed his lambs—his sheep? Alas! how many precious sermons, exhortations, and instructions are quite marred and poisoned by coming through the cold, carnal, and careless heart of the preacher, and being attended with his imprudent, untender, and lukewarm life? If you have not a deep-felt experience of the terrors of the Lord,—of the bitterness of sin, vanity of this world, and importance of eternity,—and of the conscience-quieting and heart-captivating virtue of Jesus' bleeding love, how can you be duly serious and hearty in preaching the gospel? If, all influenced by a predominate love to Christ, your heart be not fixed on everlasting things, and powerfully animated to an eager following of peace and holiness, how can you, without the most abominable treachery, declare to men their chief happiness, and the true method of obtaining it? If your graces be not kept lively, your loins girt, and your lamps burning, all enkindled by the heart-constraining love of Christ, how cold, how carnal, and blasted must your sacred ministrations be? If your work, as ambassadors of Christ, be to transact matters of everlasting importance between an infinite God, and immortal, but perishing, souls of men; if the honours

and privileges of it be so invaluable, what inexpressible need have you of habitual dependence on Christ by a lively faith? What self-denial, what ardent love to Christ and his Father, what disinterested regard to his honour, what compassion to souls, what prudence, what faithfulness and diligence, what humility and holy zeal, what spirituality of mind and conversation, what order, what plainness, what fervour, what just temperature of mildness and severity,—is necessary in every part of it!—If, while you minister in holy things, your lusts prevail and are indulged, you have less of real or lively Christianity than the most weak and uncircumspect saints under your charge;—if your evil heart of unbelief fearfully carry you off from the living God, and you can live unconcerned while the powerful and sanctifying presence of God is withheld from yourselves or your flocks,—how sad is your and their case!—If your indwelling pride be allowed to choose your company, your dress, your victuals, nay, your text, your subject, your order, your language;—if it be allowed to indite your thoughts, and, to the reproach and blasting of the gospel of Christ, to deck your sermon with tawdry ornaments and fancies, as if it were a stage-play, to blunt and muffle up his sharp arrows with silken smoothness and swollen bombast;—if it be allowed to kindle your fervour, and form your looks, your tone, your action;—or to render you enraptured or self-conceited, because of subsequent applause;—or sad and provoked, because your labours are contemned; how dreadful is your danger and that of your hearers! How can ministerial labours,

originating in pride, spurred on by the fame of learning, diligence, or holiness, hurt the interests of Satan, from whose influence they proceed? If pride be allowed to cause you to envy or wound the characters of such as differ from, or outshine you, or to make you reluctant to Christian reproof from your inferiors, how fearful is your guilt and danger! Pride indulged is no more consistent with a Christian character, than drunkenness and whoredom. If you take up or cleave to any principle or practice in religion, in the way of factious contention, how abominable to God is the "sower of discord among brethren?" If you undervalue the peace and prosperity of the Church of Christ, and are not afflicted with her in all her afflictions, how cruel, and unchrist-like your conduct! If, in justly proving your opponents deceivers and blasphemers, you, by your angry manner, plead the cause of the devil, will God accept it as an offering at your hands? If you are slothful in studying or declaring the truths of Christ, if, to save labour or expense, you are inactive or averse to help such as have no fixed ministrations, or to contrive or prosecute projects for advancing the kingdom of Christ, and promoting the salvation of men, how great is your baseness, how dreadful your hazard! Think, as before God, did Jesus Christ furnish you for, and put you into the ministry, that you might idle away, or prostitute your devoted time, tear his Church, conceal or mangle his truths, betray his interests, or starve and murder the souls of men? Are not your people the "flock of God, which, he purchased with his own blood?" Will you then dare to

destroy his peculiar property and portion, and attempt to frustrate the end of his death? Did Jesus die for men's souls? and will you grudge a small labour or expense to promote his honour in their eternal salvation? If the Son of God was crucified for men, crucified for you, will you refuse, through his Spirit, to crucify your selfishness, your pride, your sloth, your worldly and covetous disposition, in order to save yourselves, and them that hear you? While your own salvation, and the salvation of multitudes, are so deeply connected with your faithfulness and diligence, while the powers of hell and earth so set themselves in opposition to your work, that, in your falls, they may triumph over Christ, your Master, and his Church, while so many eyes, of God, angels, and men, are upon you, why do you ever think or speak of eternal things, of heaven and hell, of Jesus' person, offices, righteousness, love, and free salvation, without the most serious and deep impression of their importance? While perhaps you preach your last sermon, and have before you, and on every hand of you, hundreds or scores of perishing souls, suspended over hell by the frail thread of mortal life, not knowing what a day or an hour may bring forth, souls already in the hands of the devil, and, as it were, just departing to be with him in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, souls already slain by the gospel of our salvation blasted and cursed to them partly by your means, why do not tears of deep concern mingle themselves with every point you study, every sentence you publish in the name of Christ? When multitudes of your hearers, some of them never to

hear you more, and just leaping off into the depths of hell, are, in respect of their needs, crying with an exceeding bitter cry, "Minister, help, help, we perish, we utterly perish, pluck the brand out of the burning fiery furnace,—why spend your devoted time in idle visits, unedifying converse, useless reading, or unnecessary sleep? What, if, while you are so employed, some of your hearers drop into eternal flames, and begin their everlasting cursing of you for not doing more to promote their salvation? When Jesus arises to require their blood at your hand, how accursed will that knowledge appear, which was not improved for his honour who bestowed it! that ease, which issued in the damnation of multitudes! that conformity to the world, which permitted, or that unedifying converse which encouraged your hearers to sleep into hell in their sins! that pride or luxury which restrained your charity, or disgracefully plunged you into debt! Since, my dear pupils, all the truths of God, all the ordinances and privileges of his Church, the eternal salvation of multitudes, and the infinitely precious honour of Jesus Christ and his Father, as connected with *the present and future ages* of time, are intrusted to you, how necessary, that, like Jesus your Master, you should be faithful in all things to him who appointed you! If you do the work of our Lord deceitfully, in what tremendous manner shall your parents who devoted and educated you for it, your teachers who prepared you for it, the seminaries of learning in which you received your instruction, the years which you spent in your studies, all the gifts which were bestowed upon

you, all the thoughts, words, and works of God, in the redemption of men, all the oracles, commands, promises, and threatenings of God, which direct, inculcate, or enforce your duty, all the examples of Jesus Christ, and all his apostles, prophets, and faithful ministers, all the leaves of your Bible, all the books of your closet, all the engagements you have come under, all the sermons which you preach, all the instructions which you tender to others, all the discipline which you exercise, all the maintenance which you receive, all the honours which you enjoy or expect, all the testimonies which you give against the negligence of parents, masters, ministers, or magistrates, all the vows and resolutions which you have made to reform, and all the prayers which you have presented to God for assistance or success, rise up against you as witnesses, in the day of the Lord!

7. See that ye, as workmen who need not be ashamed, earnestly labour *rightly to divide* the word of truth, according to the capacities, necessities, and particular occasions of your hearers, giving every one of them their portion in due season. Never make your own ease, your inclination or honour, but the need of souls, and the glory of Christ, the regulator in your choice of subjects. Labour chiefly on the principal points of religion: To bring down the fundamental mysteries of the gospel to the capacities of your hearers, and inculcate on their consciences the great points of union to and fellowship with Christ, regeneration, justification, and sanctification; these will require all your grace, learning, and labour. Never aim at tickling the ears or pleasing the fancies of

your hearers, but at convincing their consciences, enlightening their minds, attracting their affections, and renewing their wills, that they may be persuaded and enabled to embrace and improve Jesus Christ as freely offered to them in the gospel, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Labour to preach the law as a broken covenant, the gospel of salvation, and the law as a rule of life, not only in their extensive matter, but also in their proper order and connexion. It is only when they are properly connected, that the precious truths of God appear in their true lustre and glory. It is at your infinite hazard, and the infinite hazard of them that hear you, if you, even by negligence, either blend or put asunder that law and gospel which Jesus Christ has so delightfully joined together. No where is it more necessary to take heed, than in preaching up the *duties of holiness*. Let all be founded in union to and communion with Christ; all enforced by the pattern, love, righteousness, and benefits of Christ. Eph. iv. v. vi. Col. iii. v. 1 Pet. iii. iv. [See DICTION. art. GOSPEL, and SABBATH JOURNAL.]

8. You have stated yourselves public witnesses for Jesus Christ, who profess to adhere to, and propagate his *injured truths*, and to commemorate with thankfulness the *remarkable mercies* which he has bestowed on our Church and nation, and to testify against, and mourn over our own and our father's *fearful backslidings* from that covenanted work of reformation once attained in our land: see that ye be judicious, upright, constant, and faithful in your profession. I now approach death, hear-

tilly satisfied wiith our excellent *Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Form of church-government*, and cordially adhering to those *Covenants*, by which our fathers solemnly bound themselves and their posterity, to profess the doctrines and practice the duties therein contained. I look upon the Secession as indeed the cause of God, but sadly mismanaged and dishonoured by myself and others. Alas! for that pride, passion, selfishness, and unconcern for the glory of Christ, and spiritual edification of souls, which has so often prevailed! Alas! for our want of due meekness, gentleness, holy zeal, self-denial, hearty grief for sin, compassion to souls in immediate connexion with us, or left in the established church, which became distinguished witnesses for Christ. Alas! that we did not chiefly strive to *pray better, preach better, and live better* than our neighbours. Study to see every thing with your own eyes, but never indulge an itch after novelties: most of those which are now esteemed such, are nothing but *old errors* which were long ago justly refuted, varnished over with some new expressions. Never, by your peevishness, contentions, eagerness about worldly things, or the like, make others think lightly of the cause of God among your hands. If I mistake not, the churches are entering into a fearful cloud of apostacy and trouble. But he that endures to the end shall be saved. Be ye faithful unto the death, and Christ shall give you a crown of life. But if any man draw back, God's soul shall have no pleasure in him.

9. Always improve and live on that blessed encouragement which is offered to you, as Christians and ministers,

in the gospel. Let all your wants be on Christ. "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Cast all your cares on him, for he careth for you. Cast all your burdens on him, and he will sustain you. If your holy services, through your mismanagement, occasion your uncommon guilt, his blood *cleanseth from all sin*. You have an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for your sins." If you be often diffculted how to act, he hath said, "The meek will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye set upon thee. I will lead the blind in a way which they know not." If you be much discouraged because of your rough way, and your want of strength, he has said, "when the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places. Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengten thee: Yea, I will help thee: I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Fear not, worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. I make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument, and thou shalt thrash the mountains. My grace shall be sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. As thy days are, so shall thy strength be." If your troubles be many, he hath said, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; the rivers shall not overflow

thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, nor shall the flame kindle upon thee." If your incomes be small and pinching, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." He shall see his seed, the "travail of his soul, and be satisfied:" and he has promised, "I will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread. I will satiate the soul of her priests with fatness." A salary of remarkable fellowship with Christ, and of success in winning souls, is the most delightful and enriching. If your labours appear to have little success, be more diligent and dependent on Christ. "Never mourn as they that have no hope." Let not the eunuch say, "I am a dry tree," Jesus hath said, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground, I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring. A seed shall serve him. The whole earth shall be filled with his glory. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." Believe it on the testimony of God himself: believe it on the testimony of all his faithful servants; and, if mine were of any avail, I should add it, That there is no master so kind as Christ; no service so pleasant and profitable as that of Christ; and no reward so full, satisfying, and permanent as that of Christ. Let us, therefore, "begin all things from Christ; carry on all things with and through Christ; and let all things aim at and end in Christ."

CONSIDERATIONS
ON
FOREIGN MISSIONS.
ADDRESSED TO
CANDIDATES
FOR
THE HOLY MINISTRY.

BY REV. JAMES W. ALEXANDER,
TRENTON, N. J.

CONSIDERATIONS
ON
FOREIGN MISSIONS.

No one can so forcibly present the claims of Missions as the man who is himself a missionary. Hence there is an urgency in the appeals of Hall, Ward, and Swan, which is almost irresistible. And this might seem to stamp with presumption, if not insincerity, the attempt of a domestic pastor to enlist men for the foreign service. *Physician heal thyself*, might seem a very natural rejoinder. This, however, is simply a prejudice; and the flaw of the objection is betrayed as soon as we hold it up to the light; for the true ground upon which the claims of Missions should be rested, is the broad foundation of the Christian ministry itself. And therefore every minister is culpable if he has not, even in his most private toils, the spirit of a missionary. He who becomes a pastor, rather than an evangelist, from fear, selfishness, lukewarmness, or pride, is as unfit to preach in the city as in the wilderness.

Candidates for the sacred office are too much accustomed to think thus: "I will prepare myself to serve God as a preacher in my native land, and if I should be

pecially moved, and loudly called, I will become a foreign missionary." Here there is altogether an error, and an error so great, that we need not be surprised to find him who harbours it, as really unfitted for the ministry at home, as he supposes himself to be for the ministry abroad.

Every candidate for this momentous work should consider himself as dedicated to Christ without reserve or exception; not merely devoted to this or that function, or set apart for the more easy employments of the city, or of refined society, but yielded up to the cause of the Lord Jesus, in the spirit of sacrifice, with no limitation or evasion of his bonds. There is something indescribably attractive in the character of such a youth. He is ready, if the Lord will, to go to the pestilent swamps of Burmah, or to work at the printing presses of Malta, or to endure the still greater self-denials of teaching the American Indians, no less than to display his moving oratory before a listening crowd in the metropolis, or through the press to rouse or melt the community of readers.

It would seem that there is an idea prevalent among our young men, that a call to the ministry, and a call to the missionary life, are generically different. This is untrue and dangerous. It is undoubtedly right to expect that the concurrence of circumstances and feelings which go to constitute a call to the foreign service, should differ from those which determine one to stay at home: Yet the service is the same, the cause is the same, the qualifications are the same, and the spirit should be the same. The spirit which led Whitefield to

the West, and Martyn to the East, is the same which urged on the labours of Fuller and Payson and Rice; nay, is the very same spirit which leads *you* into the house of your next neighbour, in order to invite him to Christ. It is the love of God joined with the love of souls. Without this, every minister or candidate is a hypocrite, whose place, unless he repent, must be eternally fixed in hell. And with this genuine characteristic spirit of the Gospel, the minister or the candidate is as ready, at the call of his Master, to go abroad, as to remain in his native land. Where there is zeal for the glory of God, and the love of mankind, there is a fitness, so far as mere disposition is regarded, for either work; and he who is without this should make all possible haste to clear himself from the horrible stain of blood, the blood of souls, which will adhere to unfaithful ministers.

Let the candidate for the Ministry ask himself this question: "Why do I desire to preach the Gospel?" His answer will no doubt be, "Because I desire to glorify God, by the conversion of souls; to obey the commands of Christ; to turn the talents which I possess to the greatest possible advantage in the service of the Lord." Now, if the heart be sincere, if this answer spring from conviction and feeling, there will be in him who utters it an entire, unreserved willingness to labour any where, without exception, without delay, without one pang of reluctance, where God may be honoured and souls saved. You desire to obey the commandment of Christ, and to be a co-worker with God in saving sinners. You desire it without respect to personal ease, emolument, or hon-

our. You seek the Ministry, not as a comfortable profession, or a favourable retreat from the noise of the world, in which you may cultivate literature without interruption, but as a painful, trying service, in which a draught will be made upon all your capabilities in order to convert sinners. Your object is to contribute towards the illumination of the whole world. And why is this your desire? What is your authority for so vast an enterprise, so unusual an expectation? The reply is easy; the Lord has said, in language which no repetition makes uninteresting.—“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” It is the very commission under which you hope to act. This will be your watchword, even if you labour all your days in some little village of America; and because it is so, because the field of motives urging you to the Ministry has this extent, and no more; because, if you are preacher at all, you must be a preacher under this commission; there is every reason why you should cast down the limitations which fence in your views, and regard the field as the WORLD. The same command which makes you a preacher to your own native town, should make you, if duly called, a preacher to the Aborigines or the Islanders.

The terms which are in common use, contribute to perpetuate an error in many minds. We speak of a *missionary* as something unique; and draw a broad demarcation between the respective companies of missionaries and *ministers*. This is not indeed intended, but such is the effect produced. Let it be observed by our youth, that a foreign missionary is a preacher to foreign

countries, and nothing else. He is one who would be under no necessity of changing his motives, his feelings, or his zeal in labour, if he were suddenly recalled to the domestic service. On the other hand, the country pastor is a preacher to immortal souls at home, and if he is a faithful man, and acts in pursuance of a divine call, will be entirely ready to leave his charge, and exchange his labours for those of the foreign missionary. In a word, the spirit of missions is the ministerial spirit; and where there is not love for souls sufficiently ardent to make one heartily willing to fly to the succour of the Cherokee or the Tartar, there is not enough of the main thing required in pastors to clear a man's conscience or vindicate his profession. Let it not be supposed, as is too common, that the young student or minister must needs have a certain quantum of holy zeal for Christ, in order to make it possible for him to enter the sacred office without sacrilege, and yet that the ardour and love which would make him a missionary, and would send him to the heathen, is something still beyond this, which, though excellent, is not required; a mere supererogation, an angelical quality to which only a favoured few can hope to attain. Let it not be supposed, to put the caution in a single clause, that you are at liberty to mark the line at which your love of souls shall reach its maximum. A graduating process of this kind may be allowed in trade, in literature, in pleasure, but not in serving Christ. "In this cause we can do nothing aright unless we do all we can. If any one come short of the limits of his ability in aiding this cause, he betrays a

criminal indifference which renders all that he does accomplish worthless in the sight of God; and however it may be overruled for good by Him who can make the *lukewarmness*, as well as the wrath of man to praise Him; yet such a spirit, considered in itself, must be regarded by infinite PURITY and LOVE with the loathing occasioned by that which is neither cold nor hot.”*

The Redeemer must have all; and (blessed be God) not only all that we are and have *now*, but all that with a still expanding capacity we can ever be, or do. And where is the youth, wounded by the ignominy and misery of sinners, bleeding in secret for the hurt of the daughter of Zion, who can sit down deliberately and make terms with Christ; or say ‘thus far will I follow thee, but no farther?’ Where is the beloved youth under the patronage of the Church, who can for an instant hesitate as to this entire devotion of himself to her great work—THE EVANGELIZING OF THE WORLD?

To prevent misapprehension, let it be remembered, that it is far from the scope of these remarks to insinuate that every preacher should go to the Heathen; or that they who stay at home must of necessity be less zealous and devoted than those who go abroad. Nay, it is the error which lies coiled in these expressions, that is now combated. It is attempted to press upon the minds of all candidates that the spirit of the good pastor is identical with the spirit of the good missionary; and that, so far as the spirit is concerned, he who is faithful and

* Swan's Letters.

efficient in America, would be equally so in the islands of the Pacific; that every candidate for the work of the Ministry should encourage the sentiment, that he is a servant not yet assigned to his field, a soldier awaiting orders; that he has no semblance of a right to determine whither he will go, or whether he will abide at home.

It is high time that the Church should take a more cheerful view of Christian Missions. It is meet that we should no longer speak and think and pray about the voluntary expatriation of a happy Christian groupe, bound for distant shores, as if it were a dreary exile; a doubtful enterprise; a jeopardy without promise. It is not so. We wrong our dear missionary brethren if we think it so viewed by them. There may be poignancy in the severance of happy ties, especially, as in Martyn's case, where the temperament of the departing Evangelist is delicate. And this is that which makes it a self-denial, a cross-bearing. Were there no pang, there would be no cross to take up. There are minds indeed so coarse and phlegmatic as to pass even such critical moments as these with apathy; but they are not the more likely, from such a complexion, to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. The generous heart will gush forth at such an hour; but I have never doubted, that even then, when the last farewell has been said and betokened, when the last headland of the native coast has sunk and vanished, when the freshening breeze has swelled the canvas, and all has conspired to pronounce the divorce from home—I have never doubted that in this hour of unwonted experience there has been a calm

after tumult, a sweet serenity of composed reliance, and a filial repose in that Lord whose power is such, "that even the winds and the sea obey him,"—which together indicate a happiness akin to that of heaven.

Yet it is by no means proper that the candidate for the Ministry, especially in the early stages of his course, should definitively choose his field of labour—even though his choice should be the foreign service. Like the cadet who is going through his preparations for military life, without knowing whither he shall be sent upon receiving his commission—the pious student should patiently await the indications of a higher authority. The errors against which he must guard are evidently two. He may precipitately resolve to be a foreign missionary—and this without having any decisive evidence of his fitness for the work. The consequence of such precipitation has, in a number of cases, been, that young men, under the influence of a false impression respecting the mental qualifications required in the missionary life, have neglected their studies, and after all, have retreated from the ground of their original determination. The second error, it must be owned, is far more common. Perhaps a majority of our young ministers have set the question at rest with regard to their own case, by determining that, whatever might be the duty of others, it is theirs to be pastors in their native country. Perhaps a large number have never gravely inquired, as a personal affair, whether the perishing souls of millions of idolaters did not call so loudly upon them, as to make it their duty to become missionaries. Alas! my brethren, how

long shall this spirit of slumber endure? How long will you take it for granted, as a matter admitting of no debate, that your duty is to labour at home,—and that while many who have gone out from us are bearing the heat and burden of the day, you may have a dispensation from all services of the kind? The harvest truly is great, the labourers are few; and when you bow your knees in prayer that God would send forth more labourers into his harvest, does it never flash upon your hearts that you are yourselves the very persons to be sent? Have you no sympathy with the awe and contrition and self-renunciation of the prophet, when he cried, ‘Here am I, Lord, send me?’

Consider this plain statement of the case. You expect to be preachers of the Gospel. You hold yourselves so entirely devoted to this work, that you are willing to go wherever the Lord may send you. You accordingly look around to ask which those regions are, where the Gospel is most needed, or where Christ can be most honoured. The question is, usually, between civilized America and the Heathen—and what are the comparative circumstances of the two? In these United States there is enough of Divine truth within the reach of every individual (speaking in general terms,) to render him inexcusable in the sight of God, if not to save his soul. Is it so in other lands? There are at least five hundred millions who are idolaters, and one hundred millions who are Mohammedans—not to speak of nominal Christians and infidels! And, as has been well remarked, “we are not to conceive of this vast multitude as

collected upon the stage of the world, and *standing still*, waiting till we are able or disposed to make known to them the way of salvation. They are not standing still; they are moving along the stage; and as thousands of them enter every hour on one side of it, as many disappear on the other side; so that the number perpetually fluctuating is still kept up: but twenty millions of them pass away every year—pass away, and are beyond our reach forever!" Now to him who expects to be invested with the ministerial office, these facts cry aloud with a voice of importunate supplication. And who can look over the brink of such an abyss of horror, and contemplate the agony of everlasting exile from God, as realized by so many sinful fellow men, without "great heaviness," yea even "continual sorrow" in heart? Other men are called to less direct measures and sacrifices—candidates for the Ministry are called to give *themselves*.

Let the proportion be considered, between the six hundred million souls who have never heard of a Saviour from sin, and the comparative handful in Christian America who are in similar ignorance,—and it will be seen at once, that this is not a question which should be in so summary a way set aside; that it is not self-evident that for one who goes to the Heathen, a thousand should remain at home: nay, it will be seen by him who devoutly weighs all the grave considerations which encircle the subject, that there is reason to reconsider all his previous determinations. The question is commonly put in the wrong order,

namely, thus,—*Why should I go on a Foreign Mission?* Most plainly it ought to be stated thus,—Why am I exempt from the duty of carrying the Gospel to perishing millions,—when their number is twenty times greater than that of all the real Christians upon earth? To you, then, dear young brethren, who feel that there is a claim upon your best services, founded on the death of Jesus—that there is a solace in Christian charity, which you desire to communicate to the desolate Gentile,—that there is a body of Christians whom your very heart pants to see increased by thousands, it may be said,—if there be “any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies,” fulfil ye the joy of the Church, the joy of Christ, by yielding yourselves to this work. And while we who have gone before you into the Ministry, are struggling with a depressing sense of inefficiency, and stung by conscience for our neglects, do you, in fear of like regrets and compunctions,—take that field which no pious missionary has ever yet repented of having sought.

It is high time to awake out of sleep. The Church is awakening. Contributions are more like the gifts of those who have “first given their own selves unto the Lord;” every year witnesses the increase of missionary candidates in our Seminaries; every Monthly Concert in Prayer is swelled by the accordant notes of new believers. It is time that every probationer, yea, and every settled minister, should hold himself ready to go abroad as an Evangelist; or rather, that the Church had

at her disposal, for this work, all the youth whom she may deem it desirable to send. Opposition is dying away. We are no longer repelled by objections to this Apostolic Enterprize; for all are beginning to perceive that no objection can be urged against modern missions which would not have been equally strong against the missions of Paul, Barnabas, and the early preachers. Some there are even now who "*please not God*, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved,"—but they are not the friends of Christ or his cause; and we "hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation."

A few brief counsels will conclude this essay. Though trite, they are momentous, and the profound consideration of them you will never have cause to regret. For the sake of conciseness they are expressed in the form of exhortation, and this must excuse any thing magisterial in their style. To candidates for the Ministry, then,—whether still abiding under the paternal roof, or pursuing studies in schools, colleges, &c., the friends of missions address themselves with these hints and admonitions:

1. Cultivate that desire for the glory of Christ, which is indispensable in the pastor, no less than in the missionary.

2. Cherish the sentiment that you are not your own, and that, consequently, you have no right to form any habit, or enter into any engagement, employment, or alliance which could give a bias to your determinations, or throw an obstacle in the way of your zeal. Hold

yourself disentangled, and in readiness to meet those calls which the Church is about to make in behalf of the Heathen.

3. As the spirit of missions is the spirit of love for souls, imbibe this now,—cultivate this temper from day to day, from this very moment, by doing all the good you can to the souls of your relatives, friends, neighbours, dependants, class-mates. If you are fearful, or ashamed of Christ, at the fireside, or in an academy or college,—what can you expect to be if called to “speak of his testimonies before kings?”

4. Consider yourselves as agents for foreign missions in every company, and rejoice in the opportunity afforded of contributing to the animation of others, and the simultaneous quickening of your own zeal.

Finally. With earnest prayer for direction, let your language be, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* This petition you may offer with peculiar interest in the expected reply, for “IN THE WHOLE COMPASS OF HUMAN BENEVOLENCE, THERE IS NOTHING SO GRAND, SO NOBLE, SO CHRISTIAN, SO TRULY GOD-LIKE, AS THE WORK OF EVANGELIZING THE HEATHEN.”*

* Rev. W. Orme.

ADDRESS

TO THE

ST. ANDREW'S UNIVERSITY MISSIONARY
SOCIETY,

ON THE DUTY OF

PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

IN THE WORK OF

MISSIONS.

BY JOHN URQUHART,
Late of the University of St. Andrew's.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Dissertation, by the lamented John Urquhart, will not be an inappropriate addition to the excellent and seasonable article which immediately precedes it. It is a subject of absorbing interest at all times, especially so at the present crisis; and we need line upon line, and precept upon precept, to make and to keep its proper impression on our hearts. The following extract from the Life of this extraordinary youth, will show in what estimation this essay was held by the Society before which it was delivered, as well as by the gifted biographer. We earnestly recommend the entire work to the serious perusal of every student of Divinity.

EDITOR.

Extract from Orme's Memoirs of J. Urquhart.

“Very far be it from me to write a single sentence that might diminish the force, or detract from the earnestness of this energetic and eloquent appeal.

“On the society to which it was read, it produced a most powerful effect; and on their minutes they have

made the following entry of that impression :—‘ Never, probably, in any association, had such an address, on such a subject, been before delivered. To say that it was most eloquent, most solemn, most affecting, the production of a mind of mighty grasp ; sedulously and continuously directed to one single object of mightiest import, may convey to those who heard it not, some idea of the impression produced by it.’

“ I trust it is destined to touch the hearts of many, whom the living voice of the author never could have reached. I envy not the understanding, or the feelings of that individual, who can read the address without experiencing a higher emotion than that of admiration. It is impossible not to be struck with the deep earnestness of the advocate, the cogency of his reasoning, and the affection and simplicity of his manner. Here are ‘ thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,’ on a subject the most momentous which can engage the mind of man.”

ADDRESS.

I AM tired of arguing with the opponents of the missionary cause. It is my intention this evening to address myself to those who profess to be its friends.

I can easily conceive a mind so biassed by prejudice, as to take a distorted view of every argument that can be adduced on this, or indeed on any other subject whatever;—or, a mind moving in such a sphere as never to have had these arguments fairly presented to it; and, therefore, I am by no means disposed to speak roundly of all who refuse to lend their aid to missionary societies, in a tone of unequivocal condemnation. But I do confess, I cannot imagine a mind which has deliberately weighed the arguments, and candidly considered the facts of this important subject, still refusing to embark its energies or its influence, in some way or other, in the work of evangelizing the nations of the earth. Indeed, the cause of Missions has already met with such able defence, and the arguments of its opponents have been so often refuted, that they themselves seem to be almost sick of the very sound of their oft repeated objections. And, more than this, as if to show that the subject is quite impregnable, even at those points which the adversaries have never assailed, the

advocates for the *promulgation* of Christianity, like the advocates for the *truth* of Christianity before them, have ever brought forward fictitious objections of their own invention, in order to demonstrate with what perfect ease such objections could have been met, had the adversaries of the cause adduced them. And truly after the champions of the Missionary cause have done their part so well, it seems altogether needless still to keep up the debate with those who seem determined to resist the appeals of the most cogent reasoning, and event o set at nought the authority of human testimony. For of those who persist in denying the efficacy of missionary exertion, it may in truth be said, that they "will not believe the great work which the Lord is working in these days, even though a man declare it unto them." Surely, then, we cannot justly be charged with a want of charity, when thus compelled to the belief that, after all, this pretended opposition of judgment on the part of our adversaries, is nothing but a screen for the coldness and indifference of their hearts.

I turn, therefore, altogether at present from those who oppose these exertions of Christian philanthropy, and address myself to the friends of Missions. I address myself to you, who, by being the members of a Missionary Society, profess yourselves the advocates and supporters of this benevolent scheme; and, more especially, to those of you who, by entering on a course of study preparatory to the duties of the Christian Ministry, have thereby professed to devote yourselves unreservedly to the service of God, in the Gospel of his Son.

And I do not address you, my friends, for the purpose of again repeating those unmeaning compliments that are wont to be presented to the subscribers and office-bearers of missionary societies, at such meetings as the present. I do fear that there is too much of the tone of this world's flattering adulation in the public language of our missionary assemblies. The doctrine of this essay may be unpalatable, but I believe it to be true, that the members of missionary associations have absolutely done nothing, when we consider the high demands of a cause whose object is the spiritual and moral renovation of a world. Neither do I address you for the purpose of picturing forth in the colouring of a romance, the high devotedness of the missionary character, and lofty achievements of the missionary life. This has often been done already; but like most other poetic descriptions, while it has excited the imagination, it has failed to influence the conduct. It may have caused him who listened to indulge in some fairy dream of exile and martyrdom for the sake of his religion and his Saviour; while all the while it is quite possible that not only he, but even the very person who drew the splendid picture, may have remained altogether unimpressed with the sober convictions of a duty his imagination had set forth in such glowing characters. In reality, this has been the case. One cannot help wondering, that of the many who have pleaded so earnestly for the cause of Missions, and have declaimed so eloquently concerning the high dignity of the missionary enterprise; so few have been found who were

willing to go forth to the combat. It seems to me, that while the enemies of Missions have altogether despised and vilified the missionary office, the advocates of Missions have erred in the other extreme, by regarding it with somewhat of a sentimental admiration, and by describing it rather as a work of supererogation than of duty.

We have been too much accustomed to regard the missionary life as an undertaking of most extraordinary magnitude, and as reserved for a few of the most daring and devoted spirits in the race of living Christians; and thus we easily succeed in pushing from ourselves the duty of personal engagement. But we would do well to view the matter apart from this borrowed splendour, which, by its glare, obscures rather than brightens the object of our contemplation. After all, the greater part of the work must be accomplished by ordinary men. And I am persuaded, if we but take a candid and sober view of the case, we shall begin to suspect that the matter *may* come home in the shape of duty, even to ourselves. Great as are the sacrifices the missionary makes, they are but small when we take into account those sublime truths which we believe as well as he. And it is of the very deepest importance that we should bear in mind that those very sacrifices are represented in the Bible, not as the fruits of an overreaching faith which may fall to the lot of, but here and there a mind of apostolic endowment; but as the test of simple discipleship itself. "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and

brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." If by these, and the remarks that follow, I can impress the mind of any one of you with the duty of engaging in this great undertaking, let me warn such an individual of the delusion of putting such convictions away from him on the ground that this is a work far too high for him to engage in; or under the deceitful impression that his shrinking from such an enterprise is a sign merely that his faith is weak, and has not yet acquired sufficient strength to warrant his engaging in a work of such difficulty and self-denial. If the words of Christ be true, which I have just repeated, to shrink from duty, even in the face of all the trials that present themselves in the contemplation of the missionary life, does not argue a weakness of faith merely, but a want of faith. The man who is not ready to part with country, and even life itself, at the bidding of his Saviour, is not worthy of the name of a disciple.

Now were it not that the minds of all of us, in regard to this subject, are under the influence of most overpowering and bewildering prejudices, I am sure I should only have to lay before you the present state of missionary operations, in order to convince you of the duty of taking the question into most serious consideration, "whether you may not be called to engage in this work of evangelizing the Heathen?" You give your assent to the duty of sending the Gospel to pagan countries, and by your subscriptions you profess yourselves willing to co-operate in the accomplishment of this grand object. And, so far, you have done well. You may

have thought you were doing all that was in your power for the furtherance of the great design, and you may have never once suspected that there was any call for greater services on your part. But if I can convince you, that there is such a call, then, on the simple score of consistency, you are bound to listen to it, and to obey it. For, if this matter demands our attention at all, it demands our deepest attention; if it has a right to our services at all, it has a right to our most devoted services. If you are not prepared to make greater sacrifices in this cause than you have ever yet done, when manifestly called to do so, then the little you have done will only serve most clearly to condemn you. Others, who deny the importance, or disbelieve the efficacy of the missionary project, may have some plausible excuse for standing aloof: they are at least consistent with their own profession. But, assuredly, it does convict us of singular hard-heartedness towards our fellow men, if our zeal for their conversion can carry us the length of giving up a few paltry shillings, which were not surrendered, it may be, at the expense of a single comfort,—and that our zeal can carry us no farther. We might pardon, though we could not defend, the incredulity of the individual who would not believe that some family near was in a state of starvation; but we should utterly detest the sordid avarice and unfeeling apathy of the man who, by giving something, should just show us that he gave credit to the tale of suffering, and who yet, by the worthlessness of the trifle which he gave, should let us see that the

wretchedness of his neighbour had made no suitable impression on his heart.

Now, I say, there is a call for much more devoted services on your part, than you have ever yet rendered in the work of evangelizing the nations. If we are disposed to estimate the prosperity of the missionary cause from the sums that are annually poured into its coffers, we should indeed augur well of its success. But you are aware, that after all, *money* is but a subordinate part of the apparatus. It may be the main spring of the machine, but it is not the machine itself. The agents, who go forth to the work, are the effective part of the mechanism. And what avails it, that we have obtained a good moving power, if there be no machine to set it in motion. A good will to the cause of Missions has been on the increase, but there is every reason to fear that the spirit of missionary zeal is on the decline. It has grown more fashionable of late to subscribe to missionary societies: in consequence of this, the revenues of the different societies have been so increased, as would enable them to extend their plans, could they but find a sufficient number of zealous and devoted agents. But such is the languishing state of missionary zeal,—so little is there of what Horne would call “a passion for missions,” that it is with considerable difficulty the present stations can be supplied; and, in such circumstances, it is altogether vain to talk of extending the plan of missionary operations.

When first the proposal was made to send the heralds of salvation to the ends of the earth, the Christian world

received the proposal with eagerness and joy. A splendid equipment was fitted out, and many were desirous of sharing the honours of the victory that was so confidently and so ardently anticipated. But the novelty of the missionary enterprise is gone; and it would seem that the spirit of undaunted chivalry which a scheme of such lofty sublimity, and such disinterested benevolence, at first excited, has languished, and well nigh expired, under the heavy pressure of those difficulties and discouragements which an actual experiment has brought to light.

The Scottish Missionary Society is in want of labourers;—the London Missionary Society is in want of labourers;—the Church Missionary Society (to the shame of the churchmen of England be it told) have for some time been compelled to gather the missionaries, whom they send forth, from the other countries of Europe. And, to sum up all, even among the Moravians themselves, so famed for the devotedness of their missionary zeal, that spirit of other days, which could brook slavery and death for the sake of Jesus, would seem to have died away. Of them, it once could be said, that, no sooner was a missionary station vacant, than there was an eager competition who should have the honour to supply it; for then it was counted an honour, for the love they bore to Christ, to succeed to a dreary station, amid eternal snows, or to fill the places of those who had fallen by the murderous hand of the savages for whose sakes they had left their country and home. But now there is a difficulty in finding persons

willing to go even to stations of ordinary comfort and ease. In this state of matters, what avails the increase of missionary funds? Do you not feel that there is a loud call for something more than mere subscriptions? And to whom can this appeal be made, but to the members of missionary associations? And on whom can it be urged home more forcibly than those who have professed to surrender the whole energies of their minds and their bodies to the promulgation of the religion of Christ?

This is a statement of facts, and such a statement, I am sure, would be quite sufficient to call forth the willing offer of his services, from any one who believes in the efficacy of Missionary exertion, and who is not tied down by some peculiar circumstances to his native land, were it not that the mind is driven from its convictions of duty, by prejudices and affections, the strongest that can influence our nature—and I will even say, the purest that can oppose the will of God. Accordingly, I have found in my own experience, that even those who are most liberal in their donations to Missionary Societies, and most active in spreading among their friends, a spirit of good will to this work of Christian philanthropy, immediately abate their ardour, and turn upon another tack, so soon as the duty of personal engagement is pressed home upon themselves, or even upon any of their near relations. Those who are most strenuous in their arguments for the general cause of Missions, instantly start objections to the proposal of themselves becoming Missionaries. A thousand plausible arguments imme-

diately present themselves. Our own country has much higher claims upon us,—all are not yet converted here. Besides, the success of Missionaries has not been very great; and we think we can do more good by remaining at home. Such arguments, when in the mouth of an opponent to the general cause of Missions, none so forward to answer, or so eloquent in refuting as they; and yet to the very same refuges do they betake themselves, when we merely carry out a little farther, and make a new application of their own previous assertions.

Nor do I at all wonder at this, though I cannot apologize for it. The ties which binds us to our country and our home, cannot be so easily broken. The love which we bear to parents, and sisters, and brothers, and a whole circle of affectionate friends, is perhaps the strongest passion that has its seat in the human breast; and Christianity, far from impairing, refines and strengthens the attachment. The land which gave us birth, and where our fathers lived before us,—and the companions of our youth,—and the affectionate guardians of our tender infancy,—are objects which most, of earthly things, deserve our love. There is but one, and only *one Being* in the universe, whom we are commanded to love with a stronger affection. It is little wonder, then, that when feelings like these,—so strong, that no time or distance can ever efface their influence; and so pure, that piety itself imparts to them a tone of deeper tenderness, that when feelings like these exert an opposing influence, even the most devoted Christian should be startled at the first proposal of a duty which speaks destruction to them all.

It is on this account that I feel the statement of facts I have laid before you, may not be sufficient to call forth your services to the work, which loudly calls for them, and in which you profess to take an interest. It is only on this account that I feel that the statement I have made needs to be enforced by arguments. For I believe, that to a mind which could take an unprejudiced view of the matter, no reasoning would be required to convince him of the urgency of the appeal, and no argument, however strong, could add to the force of the simple statement.

I feel, however, that it is necessary to reason with you. And the main argument on which I would insist, is founded on the commandment of our Saviour: "Go ye and teach all nations." This has often been repeated by the advocates of Missionary exertion; and though it may thereby have lost something of its freshness, it has yet lost nothing of its force. I consider it still the strong hold of the Missionary cause. But I am inclined to take a more extended view of the precept. Not only do I look upon this little verse as the great foundation on which all arguments for Missions must be received,—but as the only scriptural authority which we can have for preaching the Gospel at all. I can conceive many other inducements, which lead men in our own land to profess, or pretend to be the ministers of God. But I believe, that every truly Christian minister in the land, must rest the whole authority of his commission on this and similar commandments. Now you must all perceive the bearing of this argument. It

places our own country exactly on the same footing with the other nations of the earth,—and it makes the work of the Missionary abroad, and the Minister at home, one and the same work. *The world is the field*; and the preaching of the Gospel is the work to be accomplished. And it is only as far as Great Britain is one of the “*all nations*,” specified in the terms of the commission, that we have any warrant from Scripture to preach the Gospel here. Grant me but this view of the subject, and the question comes home with irresistible force. How comes it that all the labourers should have contrived to cluster together in one little corner of the vineyard? What special order has been given by the Lord about this little island on which we dwell? Or, in what does the vast superiority of its claims consist? It is nothing to my argument, that in this country, an ecclesiastical establishment has poured forth its benefices over the land, and has connected with the profession of the Christian Ministry, the comforts of civilized life, and the enjoyments of a refined society,—or the opportunities of literary and scientific retirement. With the hirelings that have crept into the Church, at present, I have nothing to do. Neither is it any thing to me, that numerous sectaries with which some of us may be connected have spread themselves over the land, and are struggling for the superiority. I have no sympathy with the outcry that is made by each rival party, about the interests of *their cause*. I know of no cause that demands the homage of our hearts, and our services, but the cause of Christ. Now, strip our country of these,

and other accessory distinctions, which I think all of you will admit, should have no control in giving it a higher claim upon our Christian services, and then tell me wherein it differs from other lands, in as far as the scriptural argument for the preaching of the Gospel is concerned.

I am persuaded, that with all our knowledge of geography, we are accustomed, from irresistible prejudices, to rate the extent and importance of our own country much too high. Now, in order to dissipate this delusion, and give the subject a more manageable appearance, let us try if we can take a reduced sketch of the world, diminishing every thing proportionally, just as a land surveyor finds it convenient to draw upon paper a reduced representation of the estate which he has been measuring.

Let us imagine, that instead of the world, a single country had been pointed out by our Lord as the field of action. And, since we are most familiar with our own land, let us just suppose that the particular country specified, was the island of Great Britain: and that, instead of the command to go forth into all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature,—the order had been, to go throughout all the counties of this island, and preach the Gospel to every inhabitant. I find, that on a scale which would make the population of Great Britain represent that of the world, the population of such a county as Mid Lothian might be taken as a sufficiently accurate representation of the population of our own land.

In order, then, to have a just picture of the present state of the world, only conceive, that all who had received the above commission, some how or other, had contrived to gather themselves together within the limits of this single county. Imagine to yourselves, all the other divisions of Scotland and England immersed in heathen darkness; and that by these Christians, who had so unaccountably happened to settle down together in one little spot, no effort was made to evangelize the rest of the land, except by collecting a little money, and sending forth two or three itinerants, to walk single-handed through the length and breadth of the country.

I shall be told, however, that illustration is not argument; and so distorted have our views been on this subject, that you will be disposed to think this a perfect caricature of the matter. But I deny that this is an illustration at all. It is merely a representation, on a reduced scale; and I believe you will find it to be a correct representation of the state of the world. It is no argument against the conclusions of the practical mathematician, that his calculations have had to do not with the very objects or doctrine themselves, about which he determines, but with proportional representations of them which he has delineated. The very same thing holds here. And if you but grant the correctness of my representation, then the deductions made from it are every whit as conclusive, as if our minds could so expand, as to do away with the necessity of the representation, and could gather their conclusions with as much ease from

the consideration of the objects themselves about which we reason.

You will permit me, therefore, to argue from the representation a little farther.

Were I to ask you what, in the case we supposed, you would imagine to be the duty of the ministers who had clustered within the limits of a single county, when their commission embraced every county in the land? You would at once reply, that they ought at once to spread themselves over the face of the country, till every corner of the field shared equally in the benefit of their ministration. Now I am almost afraid to transfer this question from the representation to the actual case before us. Not, but that I believe I might most legitimately do so, but because I feel that I cannot carry along with me the sympathies of the Christian world. In fact, I am arguing at present for a much humbler effort, than the fair answer to such a question would land us in. To return to our ideal field of operation, let us suppose, that even the little band of itinerants began to fail, and a difficulty was found to recruit their numbers. Let us suppose, that the funds collected were sufficient to send forth more if any could but be found who were willing to go. Let us try if we can fancy any thing in the shape of an excuse, which our professed evangelists could allege, for still refusing to quit the little territory to which they had all along so pertinaciously adhered. Some might say they did not think it was the proper time to go forth. You might meet them with the unlimited command of their Master, and especially his

promise, to be *always* with them in the work to which the commandment called them. Others might say, they did not think those who had gone forth already, had taken the right plan, and might even urge, in support of this, that actually the two or three preachers who had been sent forth had not yet converted the country. The direct reply to such would be,—The error of another is no apology for your disobedience. It is only a louder call to you to fulfil the command of your Lord, by some plan which will be more agreeable to his will. Such excuses might be framed by those who had never co-operated in the little effort that had been made. But can you conceive, that those who had given their entire consent to the plan itself, and had been zealous in sending forth others, could have any imaginable excuse from shrinking back, when their personal services was called for? Let us try if we can invent any. They might tell us, there were yet many within the little sphere they had allotted to themselves who were yet unconverted. They might bear witness to their own negligence, by telling us, that actually there were still some within their own sphere of action, to whom the message they had received from the Lord, had never been fairly delivered. They might express their apprehension, that if they began to go forth over the face of the country, the little spot which they had hitherto cultivated with so much care, might hereafter be overlooked in the wide field which lay before them, and come to be altogether neglected. And some might even have the effrontery to tell us, that they quite felt the urgency of the call, to

go forth over the face of the country; but for their part, they had rather stay at home, and persuade others to go.

You feel that there is something very ludicrous in the very description. There is such an utter discrepancy between the command and the professed obedience of it;—between the work to be performed, and the scantiness of the means that are expected to accomplish it; between the obvious calls of duty, and the frivolous excuses by which they are evaded. Now, would this were but an imaginary picture; but it must recommend itself to all of you as too true a representation of the present state of the world, and of the kind of obedience which the disciples of Christ render to the last command of their Lord and Saviour.

I have thus tried to set before you, and illustrate my main argument, that the world is one field, and consequently that every minister of Christ should be ready to go to that part of the field wherever it be, which stands most in need of his services. You must perceive that we have taken it upon ourselves to circumscribe most unwarrantably the limits of our commission; and that in these days nothing adequate to the fulfilment of our Lord's command has so much as been attempted. I have pressed upon you the loud demand that there is at present for labourers, in order to maintain even the comparatively feeble effort which the Christian world has of late put forth; and you perceived that the objections to this appeal just hinted at, appeared sufficiently frivolous. I am aware, however, that on these, or similar objections, the whole force of your refusal to obey

this call, must rest ; and, therefore, I feel it necessary to take each of them singly into more serious consideration.

I shall say nothing concerning the argument that the Heathen are not in a fit state for receiving the Gospel, and other similar objections. These are adduced only by the opponents of missionary societies. I take it for granted at present that I am addressing those who give their full assent to the duty of sending the Gospel to the Heathen, and who give their decided approbation to the plans that are in operation for the accomplishment of this grand object. The arguments which I mean to consider at present, are those which are urged by the supporters of missionary operations, when a demand is made for their own personal services. Among the most prominent of these, is the assertion, that all are not yet converted in our own land, and therefore our own country has the first claim upon our regard. The terms of the argument are very true, but the conclusion drawn from it I believe to be false. It is a lamentable fact, that so many in our own land are not under the power of the Gospel. But why? In by far the greater number of instances, because they will not come unto Christ that they may have life. Have they not had the message of mercy proclaimed to them, and what more can the messenger do? Have they not been plied, sabbath after sabbath, with the call to repent and believe the Gospel, and if they still remain impenitent, what more can man accomplish? can we hope to do more than apostles, with all their miraculous powers, and their unwav-

ering faith could effect? When the Gospel was declared by those extraordinary men who had trod this earth in the company of their incarnate God; and who, after he left them, were visited with the supernatural endowments of his Spirit,—the account of their success is, that “some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.” And as long as the Scripture doctrine of election holds true, it will still be found wherever this Gospel is proclaimed, that some will receive the message, and some will most obstinately reject it. Far be it from me to adduce the doctrine of election as a reason why we should ever cease to ply with all our earnestness, and admonish with all our tenderness, the most hardened unbeliever, or the vilest scoffer at sacred things. But I am quite warranted in adducing it, in order to show the fallacy of the expectation, that we shall ever be able, by any concentration of our energies to any sphere, however narrow, to convert *all* who dwell within these limits, to the truths of the Gospel. We do well to consider whether by such expectations we be not opposing the purposes of God. He has given us no reason to indulge the hope that he will choose his people exclusively from our nation, although that nation has been favoured very highly. He has said that he will take one of a city and two of a family; and it is said of the redeemed in heaven, that they have been gathered “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

But it may be said, that I am not giving a fair view of the case, for that very many in our own land have

never had the message of mercy fairly proclaimed to them. This is too true, and a disgrace it is to the ministers, and even the private Christians of Britain. How easily might the numerous evangelical ministers of the land, or at least the evangelical ministers among the dissenters, who are hindered by no ecclesiastical authority from preaching the truths where they think it has not been fully declared:—how easily, I say, might they dispel the ignorance that yet darkens the spiritual atmosphere of this enlightened country? But, after all, I do not feel the force of this claim when weighed against the claim of those who are literally perishing for lack of knowledge. I do believe that every inhabitant of our land has heard so much, as makes him utterly inexcusable if he be ignorant of the way of acceptance before God. If he sit under a minister who perverts, or but imperfectly declares the Gospel, he has the standard of truth in his hand, and by the Bible he can, and he ought to try the doctrine, whether it be of God. If he have not a Bible himself, he has seen it in the possession of others, or at least he has heard that there is such a book, which many believe to be a revelation from Heaven. And, finally, even in the haunts of the most abandoned depravity, where ignorance and wickedness may have spread a gloom as dismal as the darkness of paganism itself:—even there the wretched inmates are still reminded of a God and a Saviour; if by nothing else, yet by the weekly return of a day of unusual stillness, and by the oft repeated and well known invitations of the sabbath bell. But when you urge as an excuse for remaining in

this land, that some within its borders are yet ignorant of the terms of mercy. Do you, indeed, mean to wander from parish to parish, and illumine every dark corner on which the light of truth has not yet shown? Or will you venture, where none have dared to venture before you, within the receptacles of vice and infamy, to proclaim the tale of a Saviour's sufferings to those who may never have heard of his name? If you will not, or cannot do these things, then this argument is no argument for you.

Closely connected with this objection, that all are not yet converted in our own land, there is the apprehension lest a spirit of missionary zeal should damp the spirit of exertion at home, and that our own country should suffer from our attention to foreign lands. The spirit which excites the apprehension for the eternal welfare of our countrymen, deserves the highest commendation. But depend upon it the fear is quite unfounded. I am quite willing to allow that our kinsmen according to the flesh, have the first claim upon our Christian sympathy. It is true, that as the messengers of Christ, and as far as the command of our Saviour is concerned, the world is all before us, and no country has any peculiar claim upon our regard. But as men who are linked to those around us by bonds so strong as those of relationship, and all the other connexions which form the cement of civil society, there is no doubt something very peculiar in the claims of our native land. To true patriotism I am willing to allow all the eulogiums, that poets and orators heaped upon it. The love of our country is a very

noble affection. But there is a thing which has been misnamed patriotism, which consists not so much in loving our own country, as in despising and disregarding every other. But surely it but ill accords with the liberal sentiment of the present age, to despise any brother of the human family, because he has not sworn allegiance to the same sovereign with ourselves ; or because, forsooth, he happens to be separated from us by some river and mountain, or imaginary political boundary. Time was when, in our own little country, every petty chief was a monarch ; and whatever may be the associations that romance has gathered around these olden times, every generous mind must look back with detestation and disgust on that narrow minded spirit of clanship, which could tie down the affections of an individual to the few families that happened to bear the same name, or to serve the same lord with himself, and which pronounced him the noblest of his clan, who hated with the deadliest malice the whole world besides. But what is this pretended patriotism but the dross of this same detestable spirit. We surely have not need to be told in this age of enlightened liberality, that God has made of one blood, all nations that are on the face of the earth. And if the spirit of the age cannot reclaim us, Christianity at least should reclaim us from such bigoted narrowness. A spirit of true patriotism is in perfect harmony with a spirit of the most extended liberality. Your benevolence must overflow the narrow channel, ere it can dilate itself over a wider surface. Just tell me of a man that he is a general philanthropist, and I can immediately con-

ceive of that man, that his family and social affections are stronger than those of other individuals. There may be exceptions to this rule, it is true; for it is quite possible to find monsters in the moral world, as well as in the natural. All I assert is, that it is the general tendency of an extended benevolence to unite us in closer affection than ever, to those objects which have a near relation to us. And, indeed, in the late extension of our Christian philanthropy to other lands; this principle has been most beautifully illustrated. Whence sprung our tract societies, our school societies, our itinerant societies, and the other institutions that are now in operation for instructing the ignorant in our own land. They have all originated in the impulse that was given to Christian philanthropy, by the formation of the Missionary Society. The stream of Christian benevolence, when it sought its way to the ends of the earth, first filled and overflowed the reservoir that had contained it. The very consideration of the case of those who were farther removed from them, made the Christians of our land take a deeper interest in the situation of those who were connected with them by stronger ties. It is on this account that I would have you to extend your views still farther, till not only would I have you think of our country as a little spot, when compared with the world;—that so you may feel the close relationship that exists between ourselves and our fellow-countrymen; but I would have you think of this globe itself, on which we dwell, as but one among the myriads that travel with it in their mighty journies, through boundless immensity.

And then will you begin to feel that the whole human race forms but one little family in the universe of God. We shall thus yet forget those little distinctions which the ambition and avarice of man has made upon the face of our globe. We shall feel ourselves to be denizens of this earth, and the inhabitants of the universe. We shall feel that we are united to our fellow-men by stronger ties than the indefinite relation which subsists among all the creatures of God. Are we not united by the ties of a common nature? Are we not involved in a common calamity, in that we have forfeited the favour of our God,—a calamity which, for aught we know, may have happened to our race alone, of all the families of the universe? And is not a common pardon offered, and has not a common Saviour died for us all?

I have thus tried to answer the objections that spring from an overweening partiality to our own country, and from the ignorance and unbelief that still exists there. But by far the most triumphant answer to all these arguments is founded on the authority of apostolic example. Paul the Apostle had a much stronger attachment to his country, than any modern patriot can boast. He wished himself even accursed from Christ, for his brethren's sake, and yet he gloried in being the apostle of the Gentiles. But there was feelings stronger than patriotism, that bound the early disciples to the land of their fathers;—feelings which none but an Israelite could experience. Their country was the favoured land of Heaven. Their countrymen were the chosen people of God. And if any man urge as an excuse for lingering in the

land of their nativity, that all their countrymen had not yet embraced the Gospel, assuredly the apostles and early evangelists might have used this plea. But far different was their conduct. They thought it enough to have fairly offered the terms of mercy to their countrymen, and when some rejected the message which they delivered, so far from thinking this a reason why they should still remain, they considered it as the very signal for their departure. They thought that those who had never had the offer of God's favour, had now a prior claim upon their regard; and they addressed their countrymen in such language as the following:—"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

There is still one other argument, perhaps the most plausible of all, against engaging in the work of missions, and to which I beg very briefly to advert. It is, that in the present state of matters, we can do more good at home than abroad. A minister in this country, it is said, may make as many, and sometimes more converts, than the missionary in a heathen country. And the question is triumphantly put;—Whether the soul that is converted at the distance of some thousand miles from our land be more precious than the soul which is converted in our own neighbourhood? And whether it be not a matter of as great thankfulness and joy, that a soul has been delivered, from a state of self-delusion, though living in a country called Christian, as that a heathen has been

turned from idols to serve the living God. The argument has a great semblance of fairness, but I think we shall find it to be unsound.

In the first place, it is not true, that in general the success of ministers at home is greater than that of those who labour in heathen lands. And, secondly, though it be allowed that the conversion of a soul is not more acceptable to God, because of the place where the conversion is wrought, yet there is much in the case of those who first turn to the Lord from a nation of idolaters, that may well fill our hearts with unusual joy and thankfulness, inasmuch as these are the *first fruits* of a hitherto uncultivated field, and may be regarded as the earnest of an abundant harvest. In the same maner, you can easily conceive, how a few grains of wheat, though comparatively little worth in a cultivated country, might acquire an immense value in a new colony, where no other seed could be obtained. Besides, there is much in preparing the way. We are not to suppose, that the conversion of a world is to be the work of one generation. The ground must be cleared, ere we can so much as sow the seed, and this must be a season of toil, and difficulty, and discouragement.

You would perceive the fallacy of the objection now under consideration, in almost any case but the one before us. Let us suppose an accommodation of our Saviour's parable of the vineyard, to the present circumstances of the world. Imagine to yourselves all the husbandmen to have settled down in one little fertile corner of the vineyard, and to have left all the rest with the

soil unbroken up, covered with briars and thorns, and trodden down by the beasts of the forest. When called to account for their negligence, you may conceive them to answer:—‘Our fathers have planted vines, and they have yielded fruit luxuriantly; and we truly thought, that we were acting best for your advantage, in choosing that spot for our labours, where the fruit was most abundant.’ Who would not see in such a case, that their own ease had been consulted, and not their master’s interest? And who could help the suspicion, that they wanted to press into their own cup of the overflowing vintage?

I have thus tried to set before you the present state of the missionary cause, and the loud call which there is for efficient labourers. I have stated to you the great argument, that the world is one field, and that our Saviour’s command is not fulfilled, so long as the distribution of his ministers over this field is so very unequal. And, finally, I have tried to answer some of the objections that are made to personal engagement in the work.

The matter, some time ago, presented itself very forcibly to my own mind, and I felt that it at least demanded my serious consideration. As I have proceeded with my inquiries on the subject, the difficulties seemed to have gathered thicker on the prospect, but the convictions of duty have grown stronger too. The arguments for personal engagement, seem to me to have acquired the strength of a demonstration. I have, therefore, resolved, with the help of God, to devote my life to

the cause; and I have only solemnly to charge every one of you, who are looking forward to the ministry of Christ, to take this matter into most serious consideration.

Some of you may think that I have not satisfactorily answered the objections which may be urged against personally engaging in the work,—and other objections may possibly present themselves to some of you. But I ask you, seriously, to examine whether there do not lurk under these objections, a want of devotedness to God, and a secret love of the world. Why is it that there is an eager competition for the ministerial office in our own land, where a comfortable salary is annexed to the preaching of the Gospel? And why is it that the love of country can be overcome, whenever any worldly advantage is to be gained? But when the Gospel is to be preached where there is no reward, but the reward of winning souls to Christ: and no honour but the honour that cometh from God;—there alone the ranks of the labourers are thin, and there deficiencies can with difficulty be supplied. I mean no uncharitable insinuations respecting your motives, but I ask you, if too much reason has not been given for the outcry that has been made against priestcraft, by the worlding or the infidel!

Do not think I wish to press you into this service. It is a maxim, which much experience has taught the Moravians, never to persuade any man to become a missionary. I have laid the matter before you, and I leave it with your own conscience, as you soon must answer before God.

I have the happiness to mention to you, that your respected secretary, of last year, has given himself to the work; and I know that there are some present who have felt the urgency of the call.

I am not without the hope, that even from this unnoticed association, a little band of devoted labourers may be raised up, who shall carry the name of their Saviour to the ends of the earth, and shall meet in another world, to receive that high reward, which is reserved for those who have left father, and mother, and sister, and brother, and houses, and lands, for Christ's sake, and the Gospel's.



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1802

AN ADDRESS

TO

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY,

ON THE

IMPORTANCE OF AIMING AT

EMINENT PIETY

IN MAKING THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE

SACRED OFFICE.

BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D.
Prof. of Theology in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J.

ADDRESS.

WHETHER an unconverted Minister may be the instrument of the conversion of others, is a question which has sometimes been agitated; but although the answer should be in the affirmative, yet it can afford very slender ground of consolation to one who has assumed the office of the Gospel Ministry, without possessing genuine piety. To be the instrument of bringing others to heaven, and yet to be cast down to hell ourselves, is, surely, one of the most appalling considerations which can possibly be presented to the human mind. A sovereign God may, indeed, employ any instrument he pleases for the conversion of sinners; but it would be unreasonable to expect, that, commonly, he would make use of unsanctified men in this holy work. A greater calamity to the Church could not easily be conceived, than the introduction of a multitude of unregenerate men into the sacred Ministry; for, such as is the Ministry, such will be the people. Such men will ever be disposed to corrupt the simplicity and purity

of the Gospel, which the carnal mind cannot love; and even if they should preach the true doctrines of the Bible, their own hearts can never be in accordance with them; and although their words may be the truth of God, yet its good tendency will be counteracted by their proud and earthly spirit. Besides, it cannot be expected that the Holy Spirit will usually accompany with his sanctifying influences the labours of men, who, even when they preach the word of God, are not actuated by a desire to promote the glory of God, or to rescue men from the ruins of sin, but are all the time seeking their own glory, or aiming at their own emolument.

That genuine piety is an essential characteristic of a preacher of the Gospel, all men seem now to admit; for all are shocked when they observe a wicked life in one who ministers in holy things. Piety is expected as a matter of course in all those who have it as their official duty to inculcate piety; and even the profane despise the wretch who dishonours his sacred calling by a course of conduct at variance with the holy precepts of the Gospel. However men of the world may be gratified to find Ministers coming down to their own level, and however they may enjoy the company and lively wit of an ambassador of Christ; yet, in their sober judgment they cannot but perceive the glaring incongruity between his character and profession; and none, except the most hardened in iniquity, would be contented to have such a man for their spiritual guide. In extreme distress and mortal sickness, none would send for such a one to comfort them; but then they wish—if they

desire any religious conversation—that the most godly Minister be brought them. In our Church, the possession of true religion has been considered a matter of so much importance in the ministry, that she permits no candidate to be taken on trial by any Presbytery, until, by a free and full conversation on experimental religion, he satisfies them that he has more than the name or form of godliness; and that he has, as far as human judgment can determine, experienced in his own soul, that blessed change, which is called the new birth. And it is a matter of vital interest to the prosperity of the Church, that this salutary provision of our fathers be not suffered to degenerate into a mere formality. If the time should come—which may God avert!—when vital piety shall not be deemed an essential pre-requisite to an entrance on the sacred office, *Ichabod* may be written on our Church, for the glory will have departed from her. Whether, *now*, this duty is performed by Presbyteries, with as much fidelity as its importance demands, I shall not take it upon me to determine; but it cannot be amiss to submit it to their consideration, in the form of an inquiry. In some Presbyteries, the salutary practice of conversing freely and frequently with candidates during the period of their continuance on trial, has been introduced, and is calculated to produce the happiest effects. It cannot for a moment be supposed, that such a continued scrutiny would be ungrateful to the feelings of pious young men. They are often involved in perplexing difficulties in relation to their call to the Ministry; and most commonly their difficulties arise from doubts re-

specting the genuineness of their religious experience. To such it would often be of incalculable importance to be permitted freely to expose their exercises to the view of experienced Ministers of the Gospel, that they might enjoy the benefit of their counsels.

But my object in addressing you at present, my young friends, is not to insist on the necessity and importance of genuine piety in the sacred office, but to offer some considerations to show the advantages of EMINENT PIETY to the right and successful discharge of the duties of the ministry.

I. The first remark which I would make on this subject is, that without some degree of eminence in our piety, it is scarcely possible, that we should possess satisfactory evidence of its reality. And this results from the very nature of the evidence which we must possess, in order to be satisfied, on solid grounds, respecting the goodness of our spiritual state. A man can in no other way know that he is renewed, and in the favour of God, but by the exercise of faith, repentance, love to God and his people, humility, meekness, submission, &c. but the certainty, that we do repent, believe, and love God and the children of God, must depend on the strength and constancy of these exercises; therefore, they alone who have attained to some eminence in piety will possess that assurance, which is so desirable to every Christian, but especially important to the Minister of the Gospel. When the principle of piety is feeble, the remaining corruption of nature will be proportionally strong, and, consequently,

it will be exceedingly difficult to ascertain whether this weak faith, encompassed by so many infirmities, is indeed a saving faith. This difficulty is increased by the consideration, that there are counterfeits of piety so imposing, that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Some, indeed, will be disposed to allege, that the witness of the Spirit is sufficient to furnish undoubted evidence of our being the children of God, even if our exercises of faith and love be very feeble. I have no doubt that the Spirit does often give his decisive testimony to the fact that a person is passed from death unto life; but it may well be doubted whether the witness of the Spirit is ever given independently of the actual exercises of piety. It seems to me much safer, and more reasonable, to believe, that this testimony is afforded by calling into lively exercise the graces of the Holy Spirit; and, although it is true, that the Holy Spirit does shine upon his own work in the heart, and enable the pious soul to see clearly that its past views and exercises were of a truly spiritual and evangelical kind; yet, it is reasonable to think, that when these satisfactory views of past experience are enjoyed, the present state and exercises of the mind are more than usually elevated. When we are in darkness, and our faith is feeble, we are unable to recognise the character even of those holy affections, which, at the time, appeared most clearly to be the fruit of the Spirit; but it is a matter of common experience with the exercised Christian, that when he has a renewal of these pious emotions, he can look back and clearly discern the nature of similar exercises which were

formerly enjoyed. But conceding that the Holy Spirit may produce in us immediately, a joyful persuasion that we are the children of God—and I do not deny that this may be the fact—to whom is it most probable that this favour will be granted? To him whose pious affections are lively and vigorous, or to him who is weak in the faith, and dull and irregular in all the exercises of religion? Undoubtedly to the former. It is not God's method of dealing with his children, to encourage sloth and unfaithfulness, by connecting assurance with a low state of piety; but this is the gracious reward of the watchful, diligent, persevering believer. When the exercise of piety is low, anxious fear is made to operate on the sluggish mind. And if there are cases which seem to be repugnant to the statement here given, they may, nevertheless, be reconciled with it; especially, when it is considered, how incapable we are of ascertaining the real spiritual state of others. In order to this, it would be necessary that we should see the person in his private devotions; yea, that we should be able to examine the daily feelings of his heart. Some persons who are truly and ardently pious, and who hold much communion with God and their own hearts in private, do not exhibit to others as much appearance of lively piety as many others, who, in fact, are greatly inferior to them. This is sometimes owing to a constitutional reserve and diffidence, or to a natural buoyancy of spirit, which, when the person is in company, has the appearance of levity. And again, it ought to be considered, that as none are more confident of their good estate than deluded souls,

many of those who seem to maintain assurance without much appearance of elevated piety, may belong to this class. In general it will be found, that a rational scriptural assurance is the result of much self-examination, reading the Scriptures, and prayer, and that those who enjoy this delightful persuasion habitually, are persons in whom genuine piety has been assiduously cultivated, and has acquired deep root, and is in a healthy, vigorous state. If, then, you would gain a comfortable assurance of being the children of God, you must aim at a high standard of piety.

II. Eminent piety is not only necessary to the peace and personal comfort of the Minister of the Gospel, but it is requisite to prepare him for the faithful, diligent, and successful discharge of the duties of his office. Pastoral duties are often exceedingly difficult to be performed. They require so much self-denial, so much benevolence and compassion, and so much spiritual wisdom, that it may be calculated on as a matter of certainty, that they will be neglected, or carelessly performed, unless the Minister be actuated by deep and strong feelings of piety. It requires an habitual impression of divine things, and a continual sense of the responsibility of our office, to keep up our minds to that lively tone of feeling which is necessary to lead us forward in our work with alacrity, energy, and perseverance. The temptations to indolence and self-indulgence, are so powerful from without and from within, that you will undoubtedly grow remiss, unless you are sustained by more than common

piety. Some will, for want of this, be led away by the spirit of the world around them, and will be satisfied with such attainments as the low state of piety in their people demands. They sink down to the level of the Church, which they serve, instead of endeavouring to raise the standard of piety among those committed to their charge. Others become discouraged at the apparent want of success from their labours, and nothing more effectually cuts the nerves of effort than despondency. Such Ministers may be thought very pious, because they are low-spirited, and indulge gloomy anticipations; but there are few things more inimical to lively piety and to ministerial fidelity, than this moping, desponding temper. Few things have a greater tendency to harden the heart, and to render the man reckless of consequences, than this discouraged state of mind. The talents of such Ministers are permitted to rust for want of exercise, and all their efforts are slow and feeble. Others again will engage with ardour in literary pursuits, and while they are gratifying a mere natural thirst for knowledge, or a vicious ambition of pre-eminence, persuade themselves that they are occupied with the labours of their high vocation. Many pastors neglect the spiritual welfare of their people upon pretence of study, when, if their literary pursuits were impartially examined, they would be found to have little or no connexion with their great work; yet these are more respectable and more useful, than the class of indolent loungers, who are seldom in their studies, and who have the temerity to serve God in his sanctuary with crude,

undigested discourses, which cost them no labour in the preparation. Now, the remedy for all these evils, and scores of others, is the possession of higher degrees of religion. This will make the indolent man, industrious; the careless man, serious; the ambitious, humble. This will induce the servant of the Lord to watch for souls as one that must give an account. Who, except the man who has his heart touched with a tender compassion for perishing souls, will sufficiently exert himself to rescue them from ruin? The Minister of Christ should be ever on the watch for favourable opportunities of winning souls. He is a fisher of men, and must study the arts of drawing them into the Gospel net; accommodating himself to the tempers, conditions, and circumstances of all, that he may win some. Many of the duties of the pastor are of such a nature, that nothing but the warm feelings of piety will lead him to the regular performance of them; and, indeed, if they should be performed from other motives, it would be in such a manner as would be productive of no good. Love to God and to the souls of men, is the very principle which gives activity to the faithful Minister. This leads him to patient perseverance in sowing the seed of the Word; this makes him apt to teach, and willing to condescend to men of low estate, to give them the needed instruction. Under this influence the spiritual physician will be found in the hovels of the poor, at the beds of the sick, and in the house of mourning; but there is no other principle strong enough or pure enough, to lead to the faithful discharge of such duties; and that it be efficient, it must be kept

in a lively, growing state. But eminent piety is not only important for the discharge of the more private duties of the pastoral office, but also for the composition and delivery of sermons. Preaching is the noblest and most useful institution among men. It is God's great means of saving sinners, and edifying his own people: but in order to answer the end for which it was designed, the preaching of the Gospel must be rightly performed. Many things, it is true, are requisite to make a truly good preacher; but after all other qualifications have been mentioned, and duly appreciated, it will be found, that, unless eminent piety is superadded to them all, there will be a great, and indeed, an essential defect. The true spirit of preaching cannot be described in words, but it can be perceived and felt; and this spirit is nothing else but the manifestation of those emotions and desires of the heart in which genuine piety consists. The pious man speaks from the heart; and there is a mysterious sympathy between the soul of the speaker and those of his hearers. Men need no instruction to enable them to understand the language of genuine feeling, and where that feeling is the exercise of the pure love of God, and humble penitence, it reaches the heart of the attentive hearer, and communicates by sympathy something of its nature, so far as there exists any susceptibility of a kindred emotion. If sermons were always composed under the influence of pious sentiments, they would never be those cold, formal, lifeless things which we often find them to be. And it is one of the strongest arguments in favour of extempore preaching,

that the speaker is more likely to feel the truth which he utters, than when he sits down to write in his study. But this is not always the fact, for the extempore preacher may fall, and often does fall, into a round of commonplace ideas, or mere generalities, by which he is in no degree affected himself; and which, however he may exert his voice, and assume the appearance of earnestness, never can affect the intelligent hearer. The true remedy, and the only remedy, against cold, formal, and uninteresting written sermons, and against unmeaning and unimpressive extempore harangues, is the possession of lively feelings of piety when the Minister sits down to compose, or when he stands up to speak. O how precious would the word of God be to the pious hearer, if it was always delivered with the proper spirit! How much more would preaching attract the attention of the careless, and how much deeper would be the impression on their minds, if the dispenser of the word not only delivered the truth, but poured forth with it a flood of pious affection. The low state of piety in Ministers is the chief reason of the want of success in preaching. It is true, God must give the increase; but when he gives it, he prepares suitable means before hand. It is not analogous to his method of dispensing divine influences, that the cold and formal preacher should be made the instrument of much good. It is found, in experience, that God blesses most the labours of those whose hearts are most sincerely and deeply engaged in their work. Men of eminent abilities without lively piety, make poor and dry preachers. They may compose rhetorical discourses,

and deliver them eloquently, but the spirit is wanting; and while the taste of the refined may be gratified, and many may admire the ingenuity of the preacher, the pious are not fed, and the blessing of God does not commonly accompany such preaching. That man who does not seriously aim at the conversion of sinners, is not likely to be the instrument of this great change. This leads me to observe,

III. In the third place, that eminent piety will make you mighty in prayer, and this will give success to all your other labours. The most accomplished Minister is entirely dependent on God for every degree of success in his ministry. Even the apostles could not convert a single soul by all their miraculous gifts, and by all their inspiration; by all their fervent zeal and indefatigable labours. This heavenly birth is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase; so then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Since, then, you are entirely dependent on the grace of God for your success in your work, is it not exceedingly important, that you should have skill and energy in using the instrument by which divine influences may be brought down upon your ministrations? And you need not be informed, that the prayer of faith is the instrument by which the kingdom of heaven may be, as it were, invaded, and taken by violence. God cannot resist (I speak it with reverence,) the force of a

holy, believing, untiring importunity, which resolves to give him no rest, until he grants the blessing. Why are the labours of Ministers so frequently barren of fruit? Why are they still destined to cry, "Who hath believed our report?" The fault is not principally in the preaching: this is sound, and evangelical; but probably the great deficiency lies in the feebleness of our prayers. God is waiting to be gracious; but he will be inquired of by the house of Israel for these things, that he may do it for them. If the good seed of the word were soaked in prayer before it is dispensed, and then watered with prayer after it is sown, it would oftener be seen to spring up and bring forth abundant fruit. The man of God must be a man of prayer—he must be instant, unceasing, and fervent in prayer; and then he will be able to open heaven, and call down showers of divine influences upon his other labours. But how otherwise can this grace and gift of prayer be obtained but by attaining to eminence in piety? On this subject Christ himself, who is the fountain of life, and himself the giver of all spiritual blessings, has set us a perfect example that we should follow his steps. At this day, especially, we need men, not only mighty in the Scriptures, but mighty in prayer. In conducting the public prayers of the congregation, how much the comfort and edification of the pious depends on the spirit of him who is their mouth to speak unto God, must be obvious to all. Our mode of offering up our prayers without a pre-conceived form, can commend itself to enlightened and spiritual men, only when our Ministers shall possess the

true spirit of prayer, and shall pray with the spirit and with the understanding. Cultivate piety, then, in all its parts, for prayer is nothing else but the natural language of the pious heart; it is the breathing of the new man; or rather the inexpressible groaning and sighing of a soul sick of sin, and panting for deliverance. O that young men who seek to be useful in the ministry, would spend more time in communion with God in prayer, than they commonly do! To be eminent in piety and mighty in prayer, are identical.

IV. The example and daily walk of a pastor is of the utmost importance to his usefulness among his people. The sentiments of a large majority of the people, respecting the nature of piety and the correct standard of life, will be taken rather from the example than the discourses of their pastor. A holy life preaches to the consciences of men as nothing else does; and it gives weight and influence to every word which he speaks; whereas, if a Minister's conduct be not exemplary, he may speak with the eloquence of men and angels, and it will be disregarded. The wickedest men in society feel the force of a consistent and holy life. They may hate the man because he reproveth their sins; but in their inmost souls they fear and respect him; and are more persuaded of the reality of true religion by one such example, than by a thousand arguments. The pious are continually edified and comforted by seeing the godly walk of their spiritual guide. As he appears to follow Christ, so they will endeavour to follow him. They see

by his conduct what manner of persons Christians ought to be; for duty is much more evident when it is distinctly drawn out and exhibited in the life, than when inculcated in words. Now it may be laid down as a maxim, that a man's life will be as is his inward piety. No man ever did lead a holy life who had no experience of the power of true godliness. And that pastor who possesses eminent piety, is the only one whose example will produce much effect on the minds of men. Others may make an external show of zeal, and may abound in religious duties, but the sweet savour of piety will be wanting, and the uniform consistency of the mature Christian will not be found, when their whole conduct is scrutinized. It ought also to be kept in mind, that no man can have any security that he will not fall into disgraceful sins, but by aiming at a high standard of piety. The power of temptation is too great to be resisted by a weak and irregular faith; and no men are exposed to more dangerous temptations than are some Ministers of the Gospel. And, alas! many stand as beacons to warn those who come after them of the dangerous rocks and quicksands which beset the course of the Minister of the Gospel. Some who went out of port with swelling sails and fearless confidence, are seen, after being tossed and driven with a succession of fierce tempests, reduced almost to the condition of a wreck. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." But when gross misconduct is avoided, there may be so much appearance of vanity, of levity.

of indolence, of peevishness, of worldly mindedness, or of unsteadiness in principle and practice, that no one is edified by the example and conversation of their pastor. While the devoutly pious weep in secret over his foibles and deficiencies, the wicked secretly triumph and take confidence, because they see so little in the man of God which distinguishes him from themselves. The example of the pastor, instead of elevating the standard of piety among the people, is continually pleaded by professors and others as sanctioning their self-indulgent and careless manner of living. Be persuaded, my young friends, to "let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorify your father who is in heaven." "Be an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Nothing upon earth is so lovely as the mild but steady light of a holy life. And to exhibit such a life, you must become eminent in piety.

V. Another consideration, which will confirm what has been said respecting the importance of eminent piety to Ministers is, that without this no man can be qualified to solve cases of conscience, and to direct the perplexed and troubled spirit in the way of peace. One great end of the ministry is to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort mourners in Zion; but how can that shepherd heal the diseased of the flock, and guide the weak and ignorant, who is but little experienced in the divine life? 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' The

man who knows not the conflicts of the Christian life, the buffetings of temptation, and the succours of grace, cannot be a skilful spiritual guide. Many young preachers, who may attract much admiration by their pulpit performances, are, nevertheless, poorly qualified to deal with diseased consciences, or to guide those Christians who have made great advances in the divine life. And no human learning can fit a preacher for this part of his work; he must be taught of God; and should seek to know the hidden life of communion with God, by a rich and growing experience.

VI. Finally. Uniform and exalted piety is the only thing which can render your work delightful. To such as do not live habitually under a sense of divine truth, the duties of the ministry must be exceedingly irksome, and almost intolerable. To a heart unreconciled to God, and destitute of all relish for divine things, what enjoyment can there be in prayer, in preaching, and catechising, and attending on the beds of the sick and the houses of poverty and mourning. It is, indeed, strange, that such men should ever think of the ministry of the Gospel, as a profession for life. But ambition and vain glory may find gratification in the opportunity which the pulpit affords for the display of learning, ingenuity, and eloquence, and in the respect and sanctity which, in the view of many, is attached to the sacred office; but without lively piety, there can be no delight in the more private and self-denying duties of the pastoral care. It is love which makes every burden light, and every yoke

easy. To one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ supremely, no work can be more pleasant than the feeding of his sheep and lambs. The good pastor loves the sheep for the sake of their Owner, the great and good Shepherd, who laid down his life for them. For his sake, labour, and toil, and sorrow, and persecution are not only borne with patience, but welcomed and rejoiced in.

Animated by this living principle of love to the Lord Jesus Christ, the pious Missionary shuts his eyes on all that the world esteems good and great, and embraces a life of poverty, toil, and suffering, in far distant lands. The endearments of home, and relatives, and country, he relinquishes, and becomes, for life, a voluntary exile. To the men of the world, his conduct appears wrapt in mystery. They cannot understand the nature of his feelings, and call them by the opprobrious name of enthusiasm. To them it seems to be an unnatural sacrifice of happiness; for they cannot imagine, that he has any compensation for his losses. But the truth is, no men on earth enjoy more pure happiness than devoted Missionaries. They do actually receive a hundred fold for all the sacrifices which they have made. I speak of such as are actuated by deep and ardent feelings of piety; for, strange as it may seem, it is possible for men to become not only Missionaries, but martyrs, and yet be utterly destitute of true religion. But such instances, it may be presumed, are rare. That which moves, supports, animates, and consoles the laborious preacher among the Heathen, is the warm and steady glow of love to the Redeemer, and to the souls of men. The more a Christian

is cast upon religion alone for his happiness, the more does he enjoy its pleasures. For this reason, the pious Missionary, although surrounded with dangers and difficulties, and often almost overwhelmed with sorrow and discouragement, upon the whole, is among the happiest of mortals; and he would be unwilling to exchange his condition for one of the greatest affluence and ease.

It was nothing but the constant exercise of eminent piety which animated the apostles and primitive Christians with such an inextinguishable ardour; and which caused them to rejoice even in reproaches and persecutions. There was no miracle necessary to enable the martyrs to rejoice at the stake, and even in the flames; the shedding abroad of the love of God in their hearts was sufficient to produce all the effects which were witnessed; and the same would now result from the same cause.

Be assured, my dear young friends, that without genuine piety, the office of the holy Ministry will not be tolerable, unless the conscience be seared as with a hot iron; and without eminent piety, your work will not be pleasant; but if your hearts are deeply affected with the truths which you profess to love, and which you expect to preach, nothing will be able to prevent or materially to disturb your peace of mind. This is a joy which is full, and which no man taketh away from you. If, therefore, you wish for a happy life and a peaceful end, cultivate piety and daily study to become eminent in every branch of the Christian character. Remember, too, that you must soon ap-

pear before the judgment seat of Christ to render an account of your stewardship. When that solemn hour shall have come, the advantages of eminent piety will be most conspicuous. The difference between the faithful and diligent, and the wicked and slothful servant will be manifest to all; the one will be for ever comforted, and the other tormented. To the one, the Lord will say, "Well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of thy Lord;" to the other, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Through eternity shall the pious and devoted Minister rejoice in the presence of God, with those redeemed spirits, whom he has been the instrument of rescuing from hell and conducting to heaven. But who can describe the anguish and the wailings of unfaithful Ministers, when, with Judas, they lift up their eyes in the deepest regions of despair. "Hell," said one of the fathers, "is paved with the skulls of ungodly Ministers." O, then, be in earnest about your work. Let divine love glow in your own bosom. Regard not the world nor the things in the world. Be instant in season and out of season. Live near to God, and keep up a lively sense of divine things on your minds. Exert every faculty, and employ every talent and opportunity in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of men. Be faithful unto death, and ye shall receive the crown of life.

ON THE

NECESSITY OF A KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

OF THE

SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. CHARLES HODGE,
Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature in the Theological
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ON
THE NECESSITY, &c.

THE clergy have ever been one of the most influential classes in society. They address themselves to the most powerful and universally operative feelings of the human heart. As the great dispensers of moral and religious truth, their power over the opinions and principles of their fellow-men, is such as to involve the most solemn responsibility. In the dark ages and portions of the Church, this influence was, and still is, mainly official. The fact that a man is a minister of religion, with the ignorant and superstitious, secures for him respect, and often reverence and submission. This is not the case where the people are enlightened; and especially, where they have been taught to revolt at all kinds of authoritative dictation. Under such circumstances, the influence of the clergy depends much more upon their personal qualifications, than mere respect for their office. An ignorant or immoral man can pretend to no right, and has no prospect of being able, to guide the opinions, and form the character of men, superior to himself, merely because he may be invested with the sacred

office. It is only by being superior in intellectual and moral culture, that he can secure any salutary influence over his fellow-men. The usefulness of the clergy, the progress of religion, and the best interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, depend, therefore, under God, in a great measure on the intellectual and moral character of the Ministers of the Gospel. That this is really the case, experience abundantly proves. Wherever Ministers of the Gospel have been ignorant, religion has degenerated into superstition or fanaticism. The uneducated have been the victims of one or other of these forms of error; and the cultivated portions of society have fallen a prey to infidelity. On the other hand, wherever the teachers of religion have taken the lead in intellectual and moral excellence, there piety has flourished. How solemn, then, is the responsibility which rests on every candidate for the sacred office, to attend to the cultivation of his mind. It is not for his personal advancement, for his own happiness or honour, that he is bound to labour in this vocation, but it is because by becoming a Minister he identifies himself with the cause of religion, and he has no right to degrade that cause by allying it, in his own person, with imbecility and ignorance.

There are many who endeavour to free themselves from this responsibility, as to mental improvement, by saying they expect to spend their days among the poor, where much learning will not be requisite. But who has revealed to these men where they are to spend their days? The providence of God may cast their lot among

the most educated and refined classes of society. A friend of the writer, who made this the excuse for neglecting a regular and faithful course of theological study, has had a succession of charges in which intellectual culture was peculiarly desirable. His usefulness and respectability have suffered materially, and for life, from the false step of his youth. Besides, in our country, the rich and poor, the educated and ignorant, are so intermingled, that a congregation or community formed exclusively of either class is not to be met with. Wherever you may go, you will find your usefulness depending, next to piety and zeal, mainly on your knowledge. The candidate for the Ministry, therefore, cannot but be regarded as criminally negligent of his duty to his Master, who neglects any opportunity of intellectual improvement.

As to the kinds of knowledge which a minister should cultivate, they ought undoubtedly to be principally professional; and in this class are included subjects of sufficient compass and importance, to occupy the most devoted attention and comprehensive talents. But among professional subjects, there is ground of preference. Some are intrinsically more important than others; and some become especially important on account of the peculiar character of the age, or state of the church. On the ground of intrinsic value, and peculiar adaptation to the circumstances of the candidates for the Ministry of the present day, there is no department of knowledge which more imperiously demands their attention, than

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

To evince the justice of this assertion, let the following considerations be duly weighed.

I. No translation can make a full and fair exhibition of its original. This inadequacy results from the necessary difference which exists between different languages, which renders it impossible that words can be put for words, so that the meaning, force, and beauty should be unchanged. This difference includes a variety of particulars. In the first place, there is a general disparity, which it may be difficult to define, yet is sensibly felt. Any person acquainted with more than one language, needs no other proof of this than his own experience. He is constantly sensible that there is something in the original which his translation does not reach. And it is evident this must be the case, because, much of the excellence of every writer depends on his style—all this is lost in the version. You have, necessarily, the style of the translator, not that of his author. If the former be on a par in the talent for writing with the latter, and if the two languages be in all respects equal, the translation may, as a composition, be equal to the original. But even if the advantage in each respect was on the side of the translator, it does not affect our position. The version is not, and cannot be an exact representation of the original. It may be better, or worse, but it is not the same. It is with the mind of the translator we have to do, in every translation. Who knows any thing of Homer from Pope, or Cowper, or Voss, or Sotheby? It is not the

Grecian poet we learn by reading these versions. They are indeed all excellent, all, to a sufficient extent, faithful; yet each and all fail of bringing us acquainted with the father of profane poetry. We learn what Pope, and Cowper, and Sotheby were as poets, but we are ignorant of Homer. The facts, indeed, of his story are retained, but he is not the narrator. We have, as it were, the body without the soul. This is a point at once so obvious, and so important, that it has ever been acknowledged and regarded in respect to classic authors. No one pretends to an acquaintance with these writers, who is indebted for his knowledge to translators. It seems to be on all hands conceded, that a knowledge of what the author has himself written, is necessary to qualify any man, in that department, to speak of the merits of an author, and much more to authorize any one to expound his meaning. But why should this be conceded in reference to the writers of Greece, and not to those of Palestine? Why should the lecturer on the classics, who could not read a word of them, be an object of ridicule, and the equally ignorant lecturer on the Bible, an object of respect?

There is therefore such an acknowledged difference between languages, that all translations must differ materially from their originals. The vital characteristic spirit of the one, cannot be infused into the other. The mind of the translator is interposed between the reader and the original author. The thoughts and sentiments are transmuted by the process of translation; divested of their characteristic impress, they fall chilled and enfeebled

on the heart of the reader. If this were the only evil of a translation, and if the only advantage of a knowledge of the original was, that it secured us immediate access to the minds of the sacred writers, it would be enough to compensate for all the time and labour which the acquisition requires. To have their language a direct medium of thought, and to be admitted to immediate communion with minds "moved by the Holy Ghost," is a pleasure and a benefit sufficient to recompense the severest toil.

But this, which may be considered as merely a matter of enjoyment, is not all. There are more solid benefits to be derived from reading the Scriptures in their original languages, than the vividness of impression, and the freshness of the truth as it comes from the lips of the servants of God. The difference between languages extends beyond the attributes of style. It pertains to their general character and structure, to the precision and compass of the meaning of terms; and is so serious as to render every translation defective as to its meaning as well as its manner. Some languages are rude, others polished; some are highly figurative, and others the reverse; some remarkably precise in the use of words, in the force of particles, in the use of the tenses and other grammatical forms; others the reverse in all these particulars. It is obvious, therefore, that the translator must often express, literally, what is conveyed by figure; must render definite, what is ambiguous; must use a form which may express various modifications of the meaning of a word, for one which admits of no such latitude. He may be right or wrong

as to the sense which he expresses, but whether right or wrong, he is different from his author; for he renders definite what was left undeterminate, or makes ambiguous what admits of but one interpretation. Again, all the characteristic peculiarities of a language must be passed over, or very inadequately expressed. The particles, which add so much, not only to the grace, but also to the precision and force of the Greek writers, must, in Latin and English, be almost entirely neglected. Phrases properly idiomatic, must be new modified, or remain uncouth deformities in the version, and often lead the reader into error. Again, very few words belonging to different languages are precisely synonymous. Some classes of terms, of course, more nearly correspond than others. In a few, the correspondence may be considered as complete; as in those which express simple ideas, or natural objects, or the necessary relations of life. But beyond these, and a few other classes, it will be almost impossible to find any two words belonging to different languages which exactly agree. The one either expresses more or less than the other, or admits of applications which the other does not allow. Hence we see foreigners constantly making the mistake of using our terms in all the extent of meaning, and variety of application, which the nearest corresponding word of their own language admits. This too is a source of endless error to the readers of mere translations of the Scriptures. Because the word "hell," for example, in a certain connexion, may mean the abode of lost spirits, how natural the in-

ference that the Hebrew or Greek word which it represents, may, in the same connexion, have the same meaning; and yet this, to any reader of the original, may be seen to be impossible. And how often are arguments and doctrines built upon the assumption, that the original will bear every interpretation which the version admits. This therefore is a point of vital importance. Translations must, to a greater or less extent, make a false representation. We might submit to a loss of beauty or force, but it appears we cannot have in all cases the precise sense. There can be no doubt that languages do so differ in their general structure, in their peculiar expressions and idioms, in the extent of meaning and variety of application of their nearest corresponding terms, that no version can be a faithful exhibition of its original. It will either say more or less, it will make what is figurative, literal, or literal figurative; what is definite, ambiguous, or ambiguous, definite. If this be so, need the question be asked, Whether preachers and expounders of the Word of God, are not bound to go to what He has himself said, and not trust in the inadequate and faulty reports of others?

II. A second consideration, which should impress on the mind of every candidate for the Ministry a sense of the importance of studying the original languages of Scripture, is but an inference from the preceding, *He cannot otherwise be qualified to explain the Word of God.* The grand official duty of the minister of the Gospel is, "rightly to divide the word of God," and by the presentation of

the truth to instruct, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and meekness. How is this to be done, unless he himself knows the truth; and how is this knowledge to be obtained? He finds it revealed through the medium of a written language, which he is to understand, not by inspiration or miracle, but by applying to its interpretation those simple rules of exegesis which govern the exposition of all language. He must examine accurately the meaning of the words and phrases used by the sacred writers, by ascertaining how these writers themselves employ them in other passages, and in what way they were used by the persons to whom they were addressed; and by investigating the etymology as well as usage of every important term. The application of these, and other equally obvious rules of interpretation, of course, suppose a knowledge of the language used by the sacred penman. It may indeed be said, that this process has all been gone through by the translator, who furnishes us with the result. But we are bound to verify his report for ourselves. It has already been remarked, that the best translation cannot be an exact exhibition of the original. Even when most correct, it may be the source of error to the ignorant. The words of the version may answer to the original in one of the various senses which those words will bear, but not in others. The translator may be right, and yet we, by concluding that the original admits of every interpretation which his version allows, may be seriously wrong. We cannot be sure, with any enlightened confidence, when expounding a translation, that we are not wandering far

from the text which it proposes to represent. But versions are very often positively incorrect. Among the thousand translations by churches and individuals, no two precisely agree. Some are so loose and inaccurate, that important doctrines are obscured, and important errors inculcated. Which version shall we choose? Who shall insure us from error in this choice? It is however self-evident, that no man can be qualified to explain an ancient document of which he knows nothing but a translation. He is unavoidably exposed to ludicrous or fatal mistakes, by the faultiness or insufficiency of his guide. This, as we before remarked, is a matter universally admitted with regard to every other document, than the Word of God. That is, it is universally admitted in every case, except precisely the one in which it is most evident and most important. We do not of course deny that the most faulty of the translations of the sacred Scriptures, contain much of their genuine sense, and consequently may convey this saving knowledge to those who peruse them. But the question now is, whether the man, who must expound the Scriptures to the people, is not bound to do all that he can to understand them fully and accurately; and whether the knowledge of something better than a faulty and inadequate translation, is not, of all qualifications, one of the most obvious and important for the discharge of this duty. If this be admitted, (and who will deny it?)—then is it admitted that few obligations are more solemn and imperious, than that which binds the

ministers of the Gospel to study the Scriptures in their original languages.

III. Another of the most important duties of the minister of the Gospel, is to defend the faith, to resist and put to silence gainsayers—for the proper discharge of this duty, a knowledge of the original Scriptures is essential. This is evident, not only from the consideration that this knowledge is necessary to any accurate and well grounded acquaintance with the contents of the sacred volume, but it alone can enable us to meet and answer that large class of objections founded on the misapprehensions or mistakes of translators. Many arguments in which the opponents of the truth most confidently rely, have no better foundation than such mistakes. How then are these to be detected or answered, if we know nothing of the original? Besides, no version is acknowledged by all parties as the standard of divine truth. If we are brought into collision with Roman Catholics, we shall find that they not only deny the authority of our version of the Word of God, but charge its authors with wilfully perverting and misrepresenting the sacred text. Are our lips to be closed by such an assertion? Are those whose duty it is to defend and uphold the truth, to be thus easily vanquished? And yet what can we say. The accomplished Catholic appeals to the original; he affirms that it teaches all the peculiarities of his own faith, and overturns the doctrines of Protestants; and must we sit silent, with the seal of ignorance upon our lips? Is this the

way we are to clear our conscience of the solemn duty of defending the truth on which the salvation of men depends? The common Catholic will show us in his Douay Bible, the frequently reiterated command "to do penance." The Saviour is made to say to men, "Unless ye do penance ye shall all perish." How are we to answer his argument in favour of penances, founded on such passages? Not by appealing to our translation, for to him, it is of no authority. The only possible method is to turn to the original, and satisfy every one, capable of understanding it, that no such doctrine is contained in the Word of God. But this, if ignorant of the sacred languages, we, of course, shall not be able to do. If it is our lot to encounter Socinians, all our arguments are met and answered by the easy assertion, that they rest on false translations. However unfounded the assertion, it is sufficient to silence the ignorant advocate of orthodoxy. Let any candidate for the sacred Ministry put it to his conscience, whether this is the kind of defence which the truth merits at his hands; whether he can justify himself either in the sight of God or man, in assuming the responsibility of a defender of the faith delivered to the saints, and yet be no better prepared for his work.

It is not, however, only in controversy with those who differ thus seriously from us in matters of belief, that the knowledge in question is essential. The English version is not the standard to which appeal is made in any doctrinal discussion. On every subject, the original alone is regarded as authoritative. Any dis-

putant, therefore, can at once carry the controversy beyond our depth, and inflict on us and our cause the disgrace and injury of defeat, at pleasure. Will it not then be admitted that a knowledge of the original languages is essential to qualify us for the discharge of one of the most obvious and important duties of the Ministry ; that without this knowledge, no man can defend the truth, satisfy the doubting, stop the mouths of gainsayers, or even in an enlightened manner, satisfy his own mind. How poor an excuse, then, is disinclination or sloth, for the neglect of a duty so obvious and so important.

IV. Ignorance of the sacred languages will prevent our access to the best sources of theological knowledge.

It is so much taken for granted that ministers are acquainted with what are considered the rudiments of their science, that all works of consequence which refer to the Bible at all, refer to the Scriptures in the original. It is the original which they criticise and explain ; it is this on which they rest their arguments and found their remarks, if therefore we are ignorant of the sacred languages, such works must be to us uninteresting and unintelligible. The magnitude of this difficulty will be felt by all those who mean to extend the range of their studies beyond the most contracted limits. The standard works in all departments, the best commentaries, the best systems of divinity, the best polemical, and even the best practical writers, must, to all such, remain hermetically sealed. The department of Biblical Literature must be in a great measure neglected.

Every thing which belongs to the first step in theology, ascertaining the true text of the Scriptures, must be passed over, and we be left at the mercy of every one who chooses to assert that this or that passage is a false reading or interpolation. All that pertains to the science of interpretation presupposes a knowledge of the sacred languages; the literary history of the sacred volume, the discussion of the canonical authority and authenticity of every book, requires the same acquisition. In short, without this knowledge, two-thirds of theological literature must remain to us an unknown land. How any one who does not determine to be an ignorant minister, can neglect this subject, it is hard to conceive. And how any man can determine to be an ignorant minister, who admits that the interests of religion depend in a great measure on the character and standing of the clergy, it becomes those who make the determination to explain.

V. In this connexion it may be remarked, that the acquisition of which we are speaking, is becoming so common, that we cannot be expected to maintain without it a respectable standing among our fellow clergymen.

It has already been remarked, that in different ages of the Church, certain subjects have received an importance independent of their intrinsic worth. There was a time when a man's standing depended on his metaphysical acumen; and useless as were the subjects on which that acumen was exercised, yet to obtain the

influence necessary to usefulness, even a good man would be justified in its cultivation. But when the subject which demands our attention, because it is a matter of general interest, is in itself of great value, the motive to exertion is proportionably increased. A knowledge, then, of the sacred languages should be obtained, because public sentiment requires it in the rising Ministry. The inconvenience of ignorance will become every day more seriously felt, as the acquisition becomes more common. Let it be remembered, too, that the enemies of the truth are often the most accomplished in knowledge of this kind, and that it therefore becomes its friends and advocates to maintain a standing which shall place them on equal terms. The appeal we make on this subject is to feelings of piety, to zeal for the truth and honour of religion. It is not for the pleasure or the pride of knowledge, it is for higher objects, and from purer motives we would urge the study of the sacred languages in all candidates for the Ministry.

VI. A knowledge of these languages has been made a requisite for admission into the office of the Ministry by almost every denomination of Christians.

If this should, in any case, become a dead letter, it will be a matter of reproach, and proof of degeneracy, in whatever section of the Church it occurs. These requisitions were enjoined in the purest and most enlightened period of our ecclesiastical existence, and they form an abiding testimony of the estimate which our fathers made of the importance of this subject.

This testimony is sustained by the opinion of the great body of the eminently pious and useful men, who have adorned the Church of Christ. The Reformers were all learned men, men familiar with the Scriptures in the languages in which they were revealed. This was the case with Luther and Calvin, with Melancthon and Beza. It was the case with Knox, though born in a land comparatively ignorant, and although he had to make the acquisition in a great measure, when he was of full age and an exile. It was the case with the English Reformers, and the English Puritans, with Owen and Baxter and How, and in short with almost every man whose memory has come down embalmed in the blessings of his generation. It was an attainment, which these men not only made, but which they highly prized, which they, in many cases, made great sacrifices to secure, and which, as Luther says, they would not exchange for all the treasures of the world. An impression of the importance of this subject, so general, so strong, and so lasting, is not likely to prove unfounded. Shall we, then, be dead to all the considerations which have thus impressed the purest churches and the most favoured of God's servants? Shall we regard an attainment which they so highly prized, as unworthy a serious effort?

VII. This acquisition requires no great labour, and will prove a source of constant pleasure.

It might doubtless be easily made, by every minister in half the number of hours which he has already wasted.

In most cases, the difficulty is in a great measure overcome, with regard to the Greek, before professional studies are commenced. As it respects Hebrew, the difficulty is greatly overrated. It is far more simple in its structure and syntax than either of the classic languages; and the repulsive features of the vowel system become familiar after a few months attention. There is therefore no excuse to be found in the irksomeness of the task, for its neglect. The language of the Old Testament has its own peculiar claims. It was, peradventure, the primitive language of our race. It is confessedly the repository of the oldest literature, of the most sublime productions, of the purest ideas of God and religion of the ancient world. The language in which Moses wrote, in which Isaiah breathed the eloquence of heaven, and through which the soul of David poured forth itself to God. No one can be insensible to the interest which belongs to the language of the patriarchs and prophets, and which has formed the medium of so large a portion of God's communications to men. It is, however, not merely for its own sake, or for the sake of a proper understanding and appreciation of the Old Testament Scriptures, that the Hebrew is important. The New Testament is Hebraic. It is so completely impressed with this character, that no rule in its interpretation is of more frequent application than that which requires us to explain its terms, in accordance with the meaning of the corresponding Hebrew word. It is no extravagant assertion, that an indivi-

dual ignorant of the language of the Old Testament, is incapable of properly explaining the New.

Let candidates for the Ministry lay this subject to heart. Let them feel the responsibility which rests upon them to prepare, not in the easiest, but the best, manner their circumstances permit, to understand, explain, and defend the truth of God. Let them resolve to be Bible men—men mighty in the Scriptures; let them determine to read a portion of the Word of God in the original every day; what they commence as a task, they will soon continue as a delight. If the remarks which we have made are well founded, it must be admitted, that a knowledge of the sacred languages is one of the most essential qualifications for the Ministry; and if this be admitted, then may we confidently hope, that no conscientious candidate for the sacred office, will neglect to make this important attainment.

Hæc eo dicta sunt, ut intelligamus nos evangelium nunquam retenturos esse, nisi fiat linguarum notitia.



REV. ASHBEL GREEN, D.D., LL.D.

Late Pres^r of the Coll^g of N.J.

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COMMENCEMENT IN 1820.

BY ASHBEL GREEN, D.D. LL.D.

Late President of Princeton College, New Jersey.

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My Dear Brother Breckinridge,

You solicit me for an essay or a sermon, for your forthcoming periodical. I have neither time nor strength to write any thing, *de novo*. But I send you my Baccalaureate Discourse to the candidates for degrees in the College of New Jersey, on the Sabbath immediately preceding the annual commencement, in 1820. This Discourse has never yet been published: and, although not exactly appropriate to Theological Students, yet I think it contains a good deal, which, if duly regarded, may be profitable to them, as well as to all other studious youth.

Yours affectionately,

ASHBEL GREEN.

Philadelphia, August 15th, 1832.

LITERARY DILIGENCE, &c.

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.”—Prov. xxii. 29.

“IN the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” was a part of the malediction pronounced on man, at his first apostacy from God. From that time to the present, almost every human attainment or possession, of much value, has been the fruit of industry and vigorous exertion. The law of our present condition, however, which usually renders laborious diligence essential to the acquisition of whatever is valuable, though originally a penal enactment, furnishes a striking example of that divine benignity, which is seen in very numerous instances, mingled with the divine chastisements. Take man as he is in his fallen state, with all his disordered propensities, appetites and passions, and he is always unhappy when found without employment; without something that gives excitement to his mind, activity to his body, and occupation to his time. A man of much leisure is commonly dissatisfied; an idle man is always wretched. On the other hand, he who is constantly and laboriously employed in lawful business, has usually the best enjoyment of life; the best health

of body, and the greatest serenity of mind. He is animated by hope and expectation, conscious that he is pursuing the course which leads directly to all those attainments and distinctions, which are the objects of human desire; which aspiring minds covet for the gratification of their ambition; which virtuous minds seek and value, that their ability to do good may be increased. These remarks are plainly sanctioned by our text—delivered, let it be remembered, under the guidance of inspiration, by the wisest of men; by a prosperous prince, most deeply skilled in the knowledge of human nature, and most thoroughly acquainted with the course and tendency of human affairs. “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.”

I have chosen this sacred maxim as the foundation of the present address, because, though I am aware that it is applicable to business of every kind, yet I think it peculiarly applicable to the occupation and pursuits of a Scholar. In discoursing upon it, my object will be to recommend literary diligence, by showing its *nature, necessity, and happy consequences*. The subject, in all its extent, is too copious to be treated with the requisite fulness, in a single discourse; and as the first of the points I have mentioned, namely, the nature of literary diligence, may be considered as a whole by itself, I shall confine myself to this on the present occasion.*

In entering on this discussion, I earnestly intreat you

* The *necessity, and happy consequences* of literary diligence, were considered in a subsequent discourse.

to keep in mind that it is to be considered throughout, both by the speaker and hearers, as the discussion of an interesting part of *religious* truth and duty. This is important, not only that we may mutually regard what is incumbent on us, on this sacred day, but in order to do justice to the subject itself; for I am persuaded that it can neither be fully understood nor felt, with its proper force, unless it be examined and contemplated in the light of religion. I do not, indeed, deny that men may sometimes be found who, upon mere worldly considerations, are regular in their lives and industrious in their habits. But I do affirm, that as nothing but a regard to the authority of God will ensure his approbation, either in this life or in that which is to come, so there is nothing as effectual as this, to lead us to a clear and extensive view of what is really incumbent on us; nothing that will make us feel the obligations of duty so sensibly; and nothing, consequently, that will furnish so powerful an excitement to a life of persevering and laborious activity in our proper callings. Beyond all question, he who regards exertion and industry as a part of the duty and service which he owes to his Maker, is influenced by a consideration which must operate with the greatest force and steadiness; which will be most likely to preserve him from all improper means or endeavours to promote his own interest; and which must also powerfully invigorate and support his mind, and even fill it with pleasure and satisfaction, from the hope of receiving the approbation of the greatest and best of Be-

ings, whose commands he obeys and whose service he performs.

It is to be understood, however, that although, in illustrating and enforcing the text, I shall make it my care to exhibit and inculcate the truth which it contains, as a doctrine of religion, and as deriving its weightiest sanction from the divine authority; yet this will not prevent my showing that it is a doctrine which may be sustained, illustrated, and enforced, like many other religious truths, by reason, experience, and the principles of human nature.

In considering the nature of literary diligence, that I may render the subject as practical as possible, I will begin with stating some things which are adverse or hostile to it—some difficulties with which every industrious student will have to contend, and some errors which he must endeavour to avoid.

Indolence, you know, is the exact opposite of industry or diligence. Whoever, therefore, intends to be industrious, must guard against the indulgence of indolent feelings and habits, with all the resolution and vigilance of which he is capable. He should think much of the *sin* of being idle, and of losing any part of that precious time, for the whole of which he must render a strict account to God. Man was not permitted to be unoccupied even in Paradise; and we have had occasion to remark, that since his fall, it is, in a peculiar manner, the law of his nature and state, that he must labour. No affluence of fortune, no distinction of rank or birth, can justify any one in leading an idle life. The indispensable law of the Gospel is, that “no man liveth to

himself." He is bound to serve God and his generation unceasingly—with his best exertions, and with all his influence, talents and property.

The man who would cherish the spirit and habits of industry, should think often on the loss which every idle hour will occasion; a loss absolutely irreparable, since every subsequent hour will demand its full share of duty. He should consider, that although it may require an effort, sometimes a painful one, to throw off lazy feelings, yet that a man always feels better when this is done, than when he gives way to indolence and inaction; and that he provides not only for present, but for future enjoyment; because he does that which will, *on reflection*, afford him pleasure, instead of pain. Sluggishness and sloth are so truly degrading, that it is scarcely possible to fear them, hate them, and despise them too much. To guard against them effectually, it may be useful for young men, at least till habits of industry are well established, to prescribe to themselves a daily task, and to resolve, in ordinary circumstances, not to sleep till it be accomplished.

Again: he who would be diligent in business, must carefully *avoid spending too much time in company*. Retirement, you know, is essential to study and literary improvement. Nothing, indeed, can be farther from my views, than to recommend an unsocial disposition, or reclusive habits. Advantages of the most important kind, and obtainable by no other means, are to be derived from social intercourse, and mixing suitably and discreetly with the world. It is, moreover, by such intercourse,

that the man of true benevolence finds many opportunities and occasions, which he would otherwise miss, of doing good to others. But an excess in this particular, is certainly one of the greatest dangers, against which a studious youth, especially if he be fond of society, will find need to guard. Of the company of idlers and loungers he must resolve to rid himself effectually—without offending them, if it be practicable; but by offending them, if he cannot otherwise accomplish his purpose. But we must go farther. In order to be industrious, especially in literary pursuits, we must be careful of spending too much time, even in the best company. From not duly considering this, young men of great promise have sometimes marred their prospects, and disappointed the expectations they had raised. By an inordinate love of company, from which they suspected no injury, because it was reputable and honourable, it has come to pass that they have remained superficial, when, otherwise, they might have been profound; they have become gentlemen, but not scholars; in a word, though they have adorned society, they have never been capable of managing its most serious and weighty concerns. It is, therefore, of much importance to learn and practice the self-denial requisite to forego the pleasures of society, whenever they would interfere with regular study, or professional engagements. Nay, an industrious student must endeavour, as far as the obligations of religion, benevolence and courtesy will permit, to prevent unseasonable and useless visits to himself: and with suitable address, this may usually be done, without giving lasting or serious

offence. To a diligent man, time is invaluablely precious. It will always grieve him when any portion of it passes unprofitably; and in every lawful way he will be careful to save it, or to turn it to some good account.

Farther. One who intends to be really and effectively diligent in studious business, *must not indulge a desultory, fluctuating, or unsteady state of mind.* Scarcely any thing is more hostile than this, to the necessary acquisition of science, nor, indeed, to a thorough knowledge of any subject. Such knowledge can rarely be acquired but by gradual, and sometimes by slow advances; and he who is impatient of such advances, he who will not steadily and perseveringly pursue a subject till he understands it clearly, and comprehends it fully, will seldom be more than a smatterer. Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have said, that he thought he possessed no uncommon talent, beyond an aptitude for patient thinking and laborious investigation. We sometimes see men, not otherwise incapable of improvement, nor, so far as we can judge, disqualified for rising to eminence, who seem as if they could keep to no one study or pursuit long enough to bring it to a successful termination. They often enter on an enterprize with eagerness, but before it is half accomplished they are out of conceit with it, and must try something else. In active life, this unhappy temperament manifests itself by driving its subject from one profession to another, or from one place or project to another, without end, and with certain loss both of property and character. To counteract this unpropitious disposition of mind, a portion of which is no un-

common misfortune, studious youth should make a point of resisting it resolutely, from the very first. Let them deliberate well before they enter on any undertaking; but when entered on, let them resolve never to give it up through weariness or disgust, till it be accomplished. Let them fix it as a maxim, to complete whatever they begin. Have they selected a subject for composition? Let them never change it for another, whatever inclination may suggest, but pursue it closely, till they have discussed it in the best manner which their talents will permit. Have they set out to make a literary attainment? Let them not alter their purpose, nor flag, nor waver in it, till the acquisition be achieved. Have they chosen a profession? Let them think only of eminence and usefulness in that profession, and never suffer their minds to be discouraged, enfeebled or depressed, by dwelling on the advantages, the pleasures, or the honours of another. Have they commenced business in a particular place? There let them pursue it, with a determination not to remove, but on the most weighty considerations. All general maxims admit of some exceptions, but to those now suggested the exceptions ought certainly to be few.

Another enemy to effective literary industry, nearly allied to that which has last been characterized, is *the love of miscellaneous reading*, or of the pleasanter parts of general literature, or of *attempting light compositions*, indulged to the neglect of those severer studies in which eminence, both in science and in professional business, must always rest, as on its proper basis. This

is a mischief which often begins early, and continues through life. It frequently commences in a grammar school, or during a college course, where the youth disregards or neglects the regular studies of his class, or contents himself with a very superficial knowledge of them, and consumes his time in reading entertaining books, of every description and variety. Such a youth is no very promising candidate for distinction in after life, as a scholar, a divine, a lawyer, or a physician. He is in danger of retaining his early habits, so that though he read much, his reading shall profit him but little. He may accumulate a heterogeneous mass of information; but still without possessing a thorough acquaintance with any one branch of useful knowledge. Of his professional business, if he is ever found in a profession, it is likely he will know less, than of many other subjects. Such a man may become the author of a tale, or an ode; but will, probably, produce nothing valuable on any important concern of life.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I would be so far from condemning all light, or general reading, that I would remind you distinctly, that no scholar ought wholly to neglect it. There is, as Cicero has long since remarked, a kind of common bond of union among all the liberal arts; so that they are mutually auxiliary to each other. General knowledge always enriches and liberalizes the mind; and it will ever be advantageous, in various ways, to a professional man, to possess a considerable portion of such knowledge.

I frequently refer to professional qualifications, because

in this country, at present, there are not many men of education who are not professional men. It may be regretted that such should be the fact, and we have been reproached on account of it; but, from the state of society, it could not be otherwise. Few among us have, hitherto, possessed the means of obtaining a liberal education as a matter of ornament, or as a source of refined pleasure, or with the expectation of writing for the public on subjects of taste or science. It will readily be granted, that those who entertain any of these views may properly indulge their inclination for general reading, more freely than others. But even these will err egregiously, if they do not pursue improvement on some definite plan or system; and if they do not also devote a principal part of their earlier studies to the attainment of that substantial literature, on which alone they can, advantageously, superinduce the more elegant and ornamental parts.

“Not even in trifles, triflers can excel,
‘Tis solid bodies only polish well.”

But to those who have professional employments distinctly in view, general reading ought, through the earlier part of life, to be an amusement rather than a business. At most, it should be no more than a by-business. Both duty and interest dictate, that the strength of their minds be laid out on genuine science, and professional studies.

Form your habits, therefore, on this plan, and retain them unbroken, till you are satisfied that you may

change them without injury. In a word, be of the character which the text contemplates—let your diligence be *in your business*. Let other things be your recreation, or the subjects only of occasional attention. It should indeed be a part of the plan of every busy Scholar, to render even his relaxation improving to himself, and if possible, useful to others.

Once more—Diligence in business, if we would secure its full benefit, must be so conducted as *not to injure health*. This is a most important consideration, which few studious youth estimate as they ought, till they are taught by experience—by an experience, alas! which often comes too late to be useful. Let it by no means be supposed, that it has been my intention, in any thing you have heard in this address, to recommend that your application to study should be unceasing—Far from it. Such an application, I well know, is not even calculated to effect the greatest progress in study itself. An incessant poring on a subject renders the faculties obtuse, and stupefies and bewilders the mind. To study advantageously, the mind must be clear and vigorous. In that state, more will be done in a few minutes than in hours, or days, of lassitude and exhaustion. It should never be forgotten that the mind, as well as the body, may act feebly ; and that, in regard to both, it is by vigorous efforts only that obstacles are removed, and difficulties overcome. Now, in order to act with energy and perspicacity, the mind must have suitable rest ; and he who does not rest enough to qualify the mind to put forth all its energies, will certainly not study to the

most advantage. To loiter and doze over a subject or a book, is one of the worst practices in which a student can indulge. Better it is by far, to apply vigorously, while vigour can be sustained, and then to relax altogether. Different individuals can, no doubt, bear different degrees of close study; but there are few who can, with safety or benefit, employ in this way, more than six, or, at the utmost, eight hours, in the day; and these ought generally to be divided into two or three portions, with an interval of complete relaxation between them. It is also to be recollected, that not only must the mind have rest, but that the body must have exercise. For the want of this, we have seen numerous and melancholy instances of youth, of the best hopes, whose literary career has been interrupted almost as soon as begun; and themselves, indeed, frequently consigned to an early grave. Whether there be any thing in the American climate, constitution, or habits, which is peculiarly unfriendly to a sedentary and studious life, I am not prepared to say; but it seems to me, that it is far more common in this country than in Europe, for studious men to ruin their constitutions, so as either to die young, or to render life a long disease. To prevent this as far as possible, I am of the opinion that a student ought to make it, not merely a point of prudence, but a part of his religion, to take daily and sufficient exercise. Besides what he owes to himself, is he not bound to render to God and to his fellow men, the greatest amount of service of which he is capable? And do we not know that this service is greatly diminished, nay, often

entirely prevented, by the want of that health which due exercise is essentially necessary to preserve? Let no one say that he is too young, and firm, and athletic, to be always guarding against disease. I am not recommending an effeminate anxiety about health and life. This often defeats its own purpose; and is, in fact a disease in itself. No truly—But I do earnestly inculcate the importance of constantly recollecting, that health is more easily kept, when it is possessed, than regained when it is lost; that as both our comfort and usefulness depend on it, it is a sacred duty, which we owe both to ourselves and to others, to endeavour to preserve it; that, under the divine blessing, it is chiefly to be preserved by a proper regimen; by forming and maintaining good habits, of which the taking of daily exercise is one of the very first importance. As, therefore, every thing we shall do, is best done by system, let every student prescribe to himself what he deliberately judges necessary, in regard to the point before us, and then religiously adhere to the rule which he adopts.

Having thus noticed, at some length, what is most adverse to literary industry; the errors in regard to it which must be avoided, and the difficulties which must be surmounted; a very short and summary statement will now suffice, to show in what it directly and distinctly consists. It consists, then, in a steady, laborious, unwearied, but discreet attention, to the most important subjects of study, while one is in training for active life; and in the same attention to professional studies and duties, after he has entered on such a life.

232 LITERARY DILIGENCE RECOMMENDED.

In his preparatory course, the youth who is diligent in business, in the spirit of our text, will bend his mind most assiduously to the acquisition of language and science, as the essential prerequisites and preparatives for every liberal profession or pursuit. He will not slight any study in a system of academical education, under a vain conceit that it would, if pursued, be useless to him, or do him little good. He will, in this, yield himself entirely to the opinion and direction of his teachers; having already learned that the utility of elementary knowledge cannot be judged of by him who is acquiring it. He will, therefore, apply himself to the acquisition of classical learning, of mathematical and physical science, of the knowledge of composition and eloquence, of logic, and the philosophy of the human mind, of historical information, and of the principles of morals and religion. On these he will diligently employ his time and his best efforts. When he has selected his profession, his great aim will be to understand it thoroughly. No general and superficial knowledge of it will content him. He will endeavour to go deep into every part of it—to become acquainted with its radical principles, with all its details, connexions, bearings, results and applications—in a word, to be a master of it. With this view, he will make a considerable part of his general reading auxiliary to his professional pursuits.

When he enters on the practical duties of his profession, he will consider himself as devoted to those duties. All his arrangements will be made to favour and forward their full and perpetual performance. To this

the order of his family will be made subservient. For this he will give up every interfering pleasure and enjoyment. For this he will refuse no necessary sacrifice, nor grudge any requisite labour or exertion. Those who seek him in the business of his profession, will easily find him always ready to attend to their concerns, and find that it is always safe and advantageous to confide them to him. In fine, he will consider the duties of his profession as constituting the great business of his life, and as forming a sacred trust, for which he holds a high responsibility both to God and man.

I must pointedly notice, that every thing must be reduced, as far as possible, to method or order, by him who would be diligent in business to the most advantage. He must make an orderly distribution of his time, fixing, as far as he can, his hours of study and business, and those of rest, amusement, relaxation, and exercise. He must also make a methodical disposition of the different parts of his business; so that he may take up every thing that he does, in an orderly manner. His papers and his books—the implements of his occupation—must have a careful and orderly arrangement; so that every thing may immediately be found when it is wanted, without confusion and the loss of time. It is thus by putting method into all his business and concerns, and inflexibly adhering to it, that a man is able easily to accomplish what, to one who is unacquainted with the effects of order and industry united, appears utterly impracticable. Let me add, that as neatness

and order are certainly favourable to each other, a scholar should, from the first, be careful never to separate them. I must also particularly remark, that strict and scrupulous punctuality, in regard to appointments, and to engagements of every kind, must characterize him who thinks to save time, to do much business, and to possess the greatest weight of character. But before concluding this part of the subject, I should feel myself chargeable with a most criminal neglect of official duty, if I did not tenderly counsel and entreat the youth whom I address, and indeed all who hear me, to appropriate, in the orderly distribution of their time, a certain part of every day as sacred to the exercises of devotion. Without prayer there can be no true religion. To speak of a prayerless Christian, would be to utter a perfect solecism. It is by prayer that all intercourse with heaven is carried on, and all its blessings secured. And without the blessing of God, diligence itself will render no man truly prosperous, even in this world. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." (*Prov. x. 22.*) The frowns of providence may blast the wisest and the best conducted plans and efforts. Of this the author of our text elsewhere reminds us. "I returned, (says he,) and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." Be sensible, then, of your entire dependence on the God of providence and grace, to succeed and bless your literary

diligence; cultivate an habitual sense of that dependence; and by daily prayer, implore a favourable issue to all that you undertake. Numerous instances, I admit there are, of men who rise to wealth, station, and influence, and yet live and die without piety. But in every such instance, remember that prosperity is granted not with the smiles, but in the displeasure of Heaven. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." They are neither to be envied nor imitated. Consider, I beseech you, how dreadful it will be, if all your distinctions and influence among men, shall only serve to increase an awful account with God, and to aggravate your final condemnation: And this they will assuredly do, if you remain unreconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and live in the neglect of prayer, and the other duties of genuine piety. Be assured that nothing will have so happy an influence, to direct and animate you in all duty, as daily and fervent prayer, both in the closet and in the family. It will bring you comfort and support under all disappointments, trials, and afflictions. It will be your best recourse in all difficulties, straits, and embarrassments. It will also make you regard as matters of duty, what the prayerless regard as matters merely of choice or prudence. It will render you conscientious and careful in avoiding all the errors, and in overcoming all the difficulties, relative to a life of industry, which have been pointed out in this address: And best of all, it will often fill your minds with those sweet and divine consolations, which at once lighten the bur-

dens of life, sanctify the soul, and anticipate the bliss and the rest of heaven. Whether, therefore, you consult your present, or your future destiny, your temporal or your eternal interests, the exercises of devotion are all important. Insure their performance, by setting apart the specific hour and place, at which, in ordinary circumstances, they shall receive your daily and undivided attention. With devout exercises in private, connect a reverential regard to all the other demands and institutions of religion. Never let the engagements of secular business violate the sacred rest of the Sabbath. Make no plea of necessity on this account, beyond what is fairly warranted by the allowance of the great Lord of the Sabbath. Be regular and exemplary in your attendance on public worship; and never, if you love religion, be ashamed to make an open profession of it before the world; remembering the solemn and impressive declaration of the Saviour himself, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

And now, if in the minds of any of you there still lurk a suspicion, that so high and exact a regard to the demands of religion as I recommend, must necessarily interfere with that diligence in business, which it is the main object of my discourse to explain and inculcate, I would, in conclusion, beg of such to lay aside all speculation, and to attend, for a moment, to the facts of the case. Facts, numerous and unequivocal, demonstrate, that strict

piety may be united, because it often has been united, with exemplary and successful industry. There have been, taken collectively, a host of such men as Selden, and Boyle, and Boorhaave, and Pascal, and Hale, and Gardiner, and Thornton—scholars, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, and merchants—who have been distinguished, in the highest degree, for profound erudition, or for professional activity and eminence, or for both, and at the same time for devoutness of spirit and sanctity of life. Let nothing, therefore, induce you to yield to an unhal- lowed suspicion and prejudice which such examples as these should counteract. Never attempt to separate the duties which a divine precept has joined together! But be “diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

Candidates for the honours of the College, in the en- suing week!

This subject, chosen and treated with reference to the circumstances in which you now stand, has, throughout, been particularly addressed to you. No- thing materially occurs to me, to add to what you have already heard, except a few words, in anticipation of the remaining part of my subject, on the necessity and happy consequences of diligence in business, and then to bid you all farewell.

Unhappily a notion has gained currency among us, that diligence is not necessary to youth of genius and talents; that regular and laborious study is rather the indication of a dull and plodding mind; and that it is

of course the prerogative and the tendency of powerful intellect, to neglect, and even to disdain, all close and systematic application. A more senseless and pernicious notion than this, could not easily be conceived. It is so unqualifiedly false, that I confidently affirm, with my venerable predecessor Dr. Witherspoon, whose words I quote—"that there is not an instance to be found, of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application." Grotius, and Newton, and Milton, and Locke, were they without genius? Yet they were among the most laborious students and thinkers that ever lived. Besides, there is a very arrogant assumption here. A young man first takes it for granted that he has superior powers, and then, from this self-flattering postulate, concludes that he may neglect study. Does he who reasons and acts in this manner, give evidence of mental energy or of mental weakness? I leave the answer with yourselves.

Receive it, my young friends, as incontrovertible truth, that diligence in business, all the diligence of which you have heard, is necessary, indispensably necessary, to you all. No matter what are your talents—without diligence, you can neither be useful, nor truly respectable. We allow to talents all their just claims. Doubtless he who is richly gifted with them, may go forward in knowledge and improvement, with an ease, a rapidity, and to an extent, not to be equalled by those of more moderate endowments. Still, no endowments from nature can ever supercede the necessity of exertion, order and industry. And often, very often, it is seen,

that a man of ordinary powers, by application and attention to business, comes, in the language of the text, to "stand before kings;" and not unfrequently leaves him who vaunted of his genius, and indulged in idleness and eccentricity, to "stand before mean men," or to sink into utter insignificance.

In looking forward into life, therefore, make your calculations that all your success is to depend, under the divine blessing, on your own efforts and industry; and to be in a great measure proportioned to them. Friends may put you in the way of business and reputation, but nothing can keep you there, but your own merit and exertions. Adopt and adhere, then, to the whole system which has been delineated to you in this address. Doing this, you will have reason to hope that, in a few years, if your lives shall be prolonged, you will occupy some of the first stations of usefulness, influence, and honour, in our country. But I must renewedly counsel you, that in contemplating all your prospects and in forming all your purposes, you do it in an humble reliance on God to preserve, succeed, and bless you. I would wish to avoid saying any thing needlessly to damp your youthful ardour. But in this parting address, I must remind you distinctly, that all you have heard, relative to a life of diligence and its happy consequences, has been predicated of a contingency, which as I have passingly hinted, may never take place. Your life is uncertain—You may not live to be diligent and successful in business. You know that the stroke of death has brought to the dust, and hurried to his final

destiny, one of your friends, who only a year ago was standing, as you do now, to hear my last monitory words. Any one of you may follow him, in the year that is to come: and instead of each individual flattering himself that he will certainly escape, it will be more wisely done, if each individual shall resolve to act as insensible, that he may be marked as another victim.

Yes, my young friends, the first and indispensable concern of you all, is to see that your peace be made with God through Jesus Christ. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and trust the assurance, that other "things shall be added unto you." It is my parting earnest request, that you make no delay in this great concern. It will neither prevent nor interfere with any other duty. You will never be so well prepared to live as when you are prepared to die. My fervent prayer for you all is, that you may be prepared for both. While you live, may you live to the glory of God and to the good of mankind; and living thus, may you—if such be the divine will—live long and happily! May you be the joy of your parents, the delight of your friends, a treasure to your country, and a blessing to the world! May you at last die in peace, and may we meet in Heaven! These, dear pupils, are not formal wishes—they are cordial, earnest, paternal desires and petitions, which, in parting from you, I offer up in your behalf to our common God and Father. Nor shall I, while I live, cease to follow you with my prayers. The God of our fathers bless you! Farewell.

ESSAY

ON THE

WANTS OF THE WORLD,

AND

THE WAY TO RELIEVE THEM.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM NEVINS, A. M.

Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore.

THE
WANTS OF THE WORLD, &c.

It was in view of the multitudes on every side, who had none to feed them with spiritual food, and to direct them in the way in which they should go, and were famished and wandering as sheep without a shepherd, that our Saviour, moved with compassion, said to his disciples, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"

The moral aspect of the world generally, and of every large section of the inhabited world in particular, makes now as strong an appeal to the compassions of Christ, as did once the exhibition which he saw around him, as he travelled through the land, that was the scene of his personal ministry. Which ever way the eye of the observer is directed, and at whatever distance it rests; whether he look northward or southward, to the east or to the west; whether he contract his field of vision to the neighbourhood in which he lives, or enlarge it to embrace the entire earth, he sees the same painful and pitiable sight, which every district of Palestine pre-

sented to the eye of the Redeemer. He sees vast multitudes of human beings, in the impressively figurative language of the Saviour "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." He beholds the empire of truth and righteousness occupying only here and there a spot of the peopled globe, while all the immense remainder appertains to the dominions of error and ignorance, with which impiety and immorality, vice and crime, reign together as their inseparable co-partners. He perceives by far the more numerous part of the great family of man, making the brief pilgrimage of life, under every possible disadvantage; without any cultivation of their minds; without any restraint on their passions; without any exercise of the best affections of the heart; without civilization and a knowledge of the practical sciences, and useful arts of life; without domestic happiness; and in short, an almost utter destitution of whatsoever gives value to existence, and makes this mortal career either honourable or happy.

The statement might be illustrated and confirmed by apposite facts, but it is to be presumed that you are familiar with them, and indeed this is one of those few propositions to which, it is believed, the discordant minds of men of necessity yield their unanimous assent.

My object now is not to cover so large a field as this. It is true, there is a dearth of every kind of knowledge, a famine of every kind of intellectual food, a deplorable lack of the means of every species of improvement, very extensive in the world; but it is to one particular

kind of destitution that I would at this time direct your attention. I say, then, that there is an incalculable number of intelligent and immortal beings, on their way by death to the judgment seat and the eternal world, who are destitute of the most important knowledge, and of the only effectual means of moral improvement. They have no correct notions of the character of God. They are ignorant of themselves. They are unacquainted with any way of salvation. They know not—whether from an unwillingness to know, or an impossibility of knowing it, matters not—the details of their duty to their Creator and their fellow-creatures. They have no knowledge of the only balm of life, and the only alleviation of death. They do but *conjecture* the immortality of the soul. They are ignorant or unmindful of their accountability to God. They are unacquainted with or uninfluenced by the most effectual motives to right and virtuous action. They know not the fact that there exists a revelation from God, or, if aware of the fact, are not informed of its contents. They receive no representation of them, or they receive a misrepresentation of them. The name of Christ they have never heard, or they have only heard it. They know not that there is a Holy Ghost, or they are ignorant of his offices, and of the way of obtaining his gracious influence. They have never had the Gospel preached to them, or they have ceased to have it, or they have it at such distant intervals, and in such a manner, that it is of little or no benefit to them. Such is, in brief, their condition. I have purposely made the statement so as not merely to

embrace the Pagan world, but to comprehend multitudes within the limits of Christendom, and many in our own land. Will it not be acknowledged, that those who answer to this description are destitute of the most important information, and of the most valuable moral advantages; and can it be denied that a very large majority of the millions that are going to the grave, and to the retributions that are beyond it, do, in the main, answer to this description? How few of the eight hundred millions that are now crossing the desert, belong to the caravan, which the column of cloud and fire goes before, and the spiritual rock follows!

But much more is implied in the assertion, "the harvest truly is plenteous," than that there are extensive moral wants existing, and many ungathered millions that are wandering as sheep without a shepherd. It is implied that there is a capacity in these necessitous individuals to receive the necessary information and advantages; that there is an ability and an opportunity to impart them; that there, is to some extent, a disposition and an expressed desire to receive them; and, in fine, that much has been done, in removing obstacles, and in preparing the way for what now remains to be done. It is only on this ground that the use of the term "harvest," in reference to the moral condition of mankind, can be justified, as that word imports the maturity of something that has long been in progress. *There is then, I affirm, a capacity of receiving.* The Pagan mind is susceptible of all the illumination which the Christian enjoys. The heathen heart is as convertible as any

other. Why else was the order issued to preach the Gospel to every creature, and the obligation imposed on the Church to disciple all the nations? There is no soul in the body so far gone in error, so besotted by ignorance, so degraded by vice, so abandoned, as to be incapable of being enlightened by the truth and of being influenced by the principles and motives of the Gospel, in the hand and under the ministrations of the Spirit. The Hindoo of the lowest caste, and even the Hottentot, lower than he, and last upon the human scale, has been raised up from his degradation, and been made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

There is also an ability and opportunity to impart. There is money, and there are men, and there are means of communicating with every country, and almost with every creature on the face of the earth. The world was never so wealthy, mankind were never so enterprising, and the facilities of intercourse between man and man have been increased beyond what it was once thought they could be. The Church has never had it in her power to discharge her responsibilities to the world, with anything like the ease and cheapness with which she can do it now. The practicability of the conversion of the world need no longer be a problem with the most sceptical. Conceive the difficulties that must have stood in the way of conveying the Gospel from Palestine to Britain in the days of the apostles, the time that must have been occupied, the dangers encountered, the self-denial endured; and yet it was done, and, peradventure, before the death of Paul. What want we but the same

constraining love in our hearts to convey it to every land? If, with all the disadvantages of that age, its sound went forth in all the earth, and its words to the end of the world, is there any insurmountable difficulty in making it extend as far now? What section of the world is not more accessible to us now, than Britain was then? There is scarcely a human soul that can now be said to be absolutely out of our reach. A single Christian may now literally make his benevolence to be felt to the very ends of the earth. His prayers could always embrace the whole human family. His influence may now raise up a missionary that shall erect the standard of the cross on the most distant shore: and his donation place a Bible, translated into his own proper tongue, into the hands of the most remote man.

There is to some, indeed, to a very great extent, a disposition to receive. The success of missions, and the welcome of missionaries, both domestic and foreign, prove this incontestibly. There is desire, as well as want. From every quarter, particularly of our own land, the call for teachers of religion is distinct and loud. They who preside over the theological training of youth, receive, if I mistake not, applications of this kind, at least tenfold more than they can supply. The issues of Bible Societies are inadequate to the demands for the Bible; and it is gratefully received in many cases, even by those whose creed seems to dispense with it as unnecessary. Where cannot a pious missionary get a hearing, and gather a people? Where can the population be found that will not receive and cherish him? Who that has travelled through our land,

has not been surprised to find how many individuals, and families, and villages, there are in all its length and breadth, whose moral state is such, that all which seems to be wanted is the labourer to thrust in the sickle and reap the ripened harvest? A multitude of facts might be adduced in proof of this alleged disposition to receive instruction. What a moral phenomenon is presented in the Sandwich Islander suing for schools, and the native African stealing spelling-books in his eagerness to learn! Is not the human mind every where waking up, and a thirst for knowledge commencing, and a spirit of inquiry going out! Now if the right direction be given to that mind, and the right answer to that inquiring spirit, all will be well; but, if otherwise, it had better have slept on.

I remark further, that *a great deal has been done, and much preparation made* for the extensive diffusion of the light and advantages of the Gospel. And here I would bring together a number of facts, which will have no other connexion with each other, than as they serve the purpose of a common illustration. The human mind is more awake on every subject than it has been wont to be. A spirit of inquiry and investigation has come in the place of unquestioning submission to dictation. This is a fact that is very much in favour of the Gospel, for it appeals to the wakeful, and it courts inquiry. Within the last half century, a most important experiment has been made. Infidelity, as a substitute for Christianity, has been fairly tried, and found utterly wanting; and there is less danger now of any general

return to that chief of the refuges of lies. There has, in some parts of our own country, and in some of the continental kingdoms of Europe, where error has long had the dominion, an extensive and powerful reaction commenced in favour of the truth. The descendant of Abraham has started of late from the stupidity of eighteen centuries, and has begun to look about him: and though he has not yet asked what he must do to be saved, yet he has asked a question which is preliminary to that. He has asked, and who that has heard of it, has not felt his soul thrilling with expectation, what his sufferings mean? He has begun to consider. It deserves also to be mentioned, that the various systems of false religion are loosening their hold on the hearts of men; and there has been one instance of an idolatrous people, before they had been visited by Christian missionaries, renouncing their idolatry, and destroying those objects of worship to which they had been immemorially devoted. The signs of the times are strongly marked, and they are unusual. The affairs of the human family seem to be just on the eve of some great moral crisis. Let the Church be upon the look-out, let her be prepared for action!

There is another class of facts, which belongs to this place. Within the last thirty-five years, more has been done by Christians for the advancement of the cause of truth and holiness, than was done in all the centuries before. The work of translating the Bible into the various languages of men, has proceeded far, and missions have gained an establishment in almost all the most im-

portant locations on the earth. There is an unwonted liberality among those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to give of their worldly substance to multiply his triumphs, and spread the news of salvation. And never went there so many prayers into the ear of God for the speedy dawning of the latter-day glory, as ascend now; and the cloud of incense that rises is becoming more dense and more extended every day. To mention but one other fact. There never was a generation coming up the acclivity of life with such preparation for the saving influences of the Gospel, with so much knowledge and impression of its truths. It is a fact as novel as it is interesting, that in Great Britain and America alone, something like one million five hundred thousand children are receiving the benefits of Sunday School instruction. What an immense harvest are not these institutions thus ripening for the reaping! I have adduced these facts to prove, that the season of immaturity is past, and that the harvest, to a very considerable extent, at least, is already ripe. The previous labour has, in a great measure, been performed, and little now remains but to thrust in the sickle and reap. The labour that remains to be bestowed, will be more *productive* than heretofore. The same amount of talents and influence in the Ministry, if controlled by piety, is likely to accomplish more now, than it has ever been able to do in time past. The necessity for labourers is more urgent now than ever it has been before, because it is the season of harvesting. Causes have been for years and centuries past in silent operation, which have at

length brought things to a maturity, when the most active exertions are necessary to secure the fruits that have been ripening. The season of the maturity of every thing is short. The labour must be bestowed soon, or it will come too late. The crisis will have passed. The harvest will have ripened into rottenness, and not only will the labour that has been expended be so much lost, but it is to be feared that a period of greater and more extensive moral corruption will ensue.

Let it be observed, in the next place, *that the harvest of the Lord is to be reaped and gathered in by human labourers*; or, in other words, the instructions and advantages which are so much needed by mankind are mainly to be imparted by the instrumentality of men devoted to this work; "the harvest is great, but the labourers are few, *pray ye the Lord*, that he will send forth labourers." This is the plan that God, in his wisdom and sovereignty, has adopted for the propagation of his Gospel. Why he has adopted this, and whether he might not have adopted another as effectual, are questions in which we have no concern. It is sufficient that of all the methods by which his saving truth might have been communicated and impressed, he has selected the *oral* method. It is enough that it pleases him by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; and that he hath committed to men the ministry of the reconciliation which is by Christ, thereby constituting them his ambassadors to negotiate between him and sinners. God has uniformly acted in pursuance of this plan. The reformations which from time to time took

place among the Jews, were brought about chiefly by the preaching and personal exertions of the prophets. Who can calculate the amount of influence that such men as Elijah, and he on whom his mantel descended, exerted among their cotemporaries! How much more deplorable would not the condition of Israel have been, humanly speaking, had it not been for the voice and example of these men of God! And the same kind of remarks might be made in reference to many others. Such was the excitement produced by the preaching of John the Baptist, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan were attracted to him; and men of every class, pharisees, publicans, and even soldiers, came inquiring of him their duty, and were baptized, confessing their sins. Does any one suppose that any *written testimony* or any *printed appeal* could have produced such effects as these? No, nothing but the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord," could have done it. The Lord Jesus himself made use of this method: and the commission which he gave to his Apostles, and which will remain in full force until the Gospel shall have filled the world, enjoins the *preaching* of the Gospel, and in this manner the disciplining of all nations. So the apostles understood their commission; and acting upon it, they were successful. The preaching on the day of Pentecost alone was blessed to the conversion of three thousand souls. The extensive triumphs which Jesus Christ won among the Gentiles by their apostle, were effected through the preaching of

the cross. It was not the Eunuch's reading of Isaiah, that was blessed to his conversion, but Philip's exposition and enforcement of it. Cornelius was admonished of God to send for Peter, who should *tell* him words, whereby both he and his house might be saved. The injunction might have been communicated in another way, in the vision which directed him to send for Peter ; but God chose to communicate it in this way. So the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend unto the things that were spoken by Paul.

It may be supposed by some, that the invention of printing was intended, in the providence of God, to supercede, in a great measure, the *oral* method of communicating the Gospel. But this does not appear to be the fact. God blesses his *printed* Gospel, but he blesses his preached Gospel yet more abundantly. The *preaching* of the cross is still his unrepealed ordinance for the conversion of souls. It is found that not where there is the most general diffusion of the Bible, but where the Gospel is most frequently and faithfully preached, there is the greater number of conversions; though where this is the case, it should be observed, that there the Word of God is most extensively diffused, and most attentively read. To mention only one illustrative fact, there were in 1630, under a single sermon in Scotland, five hundred persons hopefully translated from death to life.

There *must* be labourers, then, not because the harvest of the Lord cannot be gathered in without them, but because he has determined that it shall not be. God is not *necessarily* dependent on the utterance and exer-

tions of men, but he has, in his wisdom, chosen to make himself in a manner dependent on them: in which, however, he gives up none of his sovereignty, inasmuch as he can, and does work in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

It has occurred to me, that the plan which is getting into general use, of communicating all the various kinds of knowledge by *Lectures*, is an acknowledgment, on the part of men, of the wisdom of the divine appointment of preaching, as the principal means of enlightening and converting the world.

But not only must men be employed in this work—some men at least must be *devoted* to the work. It must be their sole care, their only business. They must give themselves wholly to it. It is a work that demands and deserves the entire time, and talents, and toil of them that are engaged in it. This seems to me to be implied in their being *labourers*, and especially in their being *harvesters*. There is no period when the husbandman is so singly and sedulously employed as in the time of harvesting. The reaping and the gathering in, occupy the whole of his time and attention, and he works longer and harder now than ever. It is necessary. The grain is ripe, and the season is brief, and he is short of hands, perhaps; and he is willing to do it. It is but a little while that he must labour: and then will come the season of safety and repose, and he shall sing the harvest home. Brethren, the harvest of souls is ripe; and it is plenteous, and the labourers are few, and the season is short. The fields are now white, but they will soon change their colour. If it is the season

of maturity now, the period of putrescence is at hand. The labourers must be multiplied, and they must *work*, and work hard. Now is the time, and they ought to be willing to do it. The Church might, with less loss and less guilt, have taken her rest in time past, and she may perhaps innocently do it to some extent in the time to come, in the sabbatic period which she is anticipating, but she may not, must not, do it now. Wo to them that are at ease in Zion now, when the call of her king is to reap and to gather in the ripened harvest!

I pass to another observation. It is, that the number of labourers employed upon the harvest of the Lord, bears a very small proportion to the extent of the harvest, and to the amount of labour that is to be performed, and that behooves to be performed immediately, "*But the labourers are few.*" At that time they were absolutely few. At no period during our Saviour's sojourn on earth, did they amount to one hundred. Besides himself, the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples, who were they? What is the state of things now? The labourers are numerically many. But some of them are unfaithful, and some unskilful: and many seem not to know what the appropriate work of the Ministry is. Subtract these that have either not the will, or not the knowledge, to do the Lord's work, and who tread down the harvest, instead of reaping and gathering it in: and if still there are many left, yet what are they to work on *a field which is the world*, almost every part of which is compactly covered with the standing harvest? What can a few dying thousands do with a thousand

dying millions! There *must* be more labourers, or the consequence is inevitable; all the previous labour will be lost, all the advantages that have been gained hitherto, will have been gained to no purpose, and the fruits of the harvest will perish. How much has already perished for the mere want of the sickle! And how fast it is hourly going into a state of putrescence! Mankind are dying at the rate of many thousands a day, and multitudes who are spared, are every day going deeper in sin. There *must* be more labourers. How is it in our own country? There is nothing like enough labourers to meet the *desires* of the people of these States; how much less to meet their *wants*, which far, very far, exceed their desires! There are by no means so many as our population is *willing* to employ; to say nothing of the number that ought to be employed. It is calculated that five thousand Christian labourers are needed for our country alone, to supply the existing want; and then five hundred a year to supply the vacancies occasioned by death, and to meet the increase of population, which is computed to be at the rate of one thousand a day. I have no means of calculating accurately how many labourers are annually supplied, nor at what rate their number is increasing. This however is certain, that at the present rate of increase, they can never overtake the wants of the country, and cannot even supply the yearly deficiency. The evil is growing upon us. The melancholy disproportion is increasing; and it will go on increasing, until there is more prayerfulness, and self-denial, and liberality, among the lovers of Christ. These are appal-

ing facts. If our politicians be Christians, it must make them tremble for the liberties of the land, to see this great and growing disproportion; and they may well fear lest another experiment should be made, whether civil freedom can long sustain itself without the aid of the Gospel.

If the facts that have been adduced, have made that impression upon us, which, in their abstract sense, I think they ought, we shall be disposed to inquire, what Jesus Christ would have his disciples do, in view of this extent of field, and abundance of harvest, and dearth of labourers. He has told us what our duty is. It is not to rush forth self-moved to the field, and to undertake, in all our own unskilfulness, to cut down and gather in the suffering harvest. No, we must carry the matter to Christ first, we must go with it to our closets, and our knees. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." It is the province of the Lord to select and send forth the labourers. No man may put in the sickle to reap here, except the Lord call, and appoint him to the work. No man may take the honour to himself, but he that is called of God. The apostle speaks of himself and his fellow-labourers, as *of God* put into the Ministry. Not but that there is something in furtherance of this glorious ingathering, which every Christian may, and should do, without waiting for any more distinct and definite call than he has in the Bible. There is something, there is *much*, which it is both his privilege and his duty to do. He is authorized and obligated to go so far sometimes as to address his fellow-creatures under

certain circumstances, on the subject of religion. "Let him that heareth, say come." The qualifications for repeating is only to have heard the report. One must be careful to hear distinctly and correctly, before he repeats it. Yet it must be confessed, that the message which the passage authorizes him to deliver, is very simple. It is only to say, "Come." But in reference to official and exclusive labourers, which my remarks respect, they must be sent of the Lord. They may not go unsent; and what is more, if they understand the nature of the work, and consider their own insufficiency for it, they *will* not go unsent. They will want the *inclination*, as well as the authority, from Christ. In the primitive age of Christianity, it is certain, that a powerful divine impulse was necessary to induce even pious men to engage in this work. The disciples are commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would *send forth* labourers. The force of the original word is not preserved in the translation. It implies the use of some sort of moral violence. *Thrust forth* expresses it better. There was a disinclination to be overcome. The work of the Ministry was then one of great toil, self-denial, and danger. Even the pious heart revolted from it. The state of things *now* is in some respects different. The ease, the credit, and the emoluments of the ministerial office attract many, and they *thrust themselves* into it. But these persons do not the work of the Ministry. They scarcely know what it is. The *work* of the Ministry, the sowing of the seed, the word of God, and then the anxious and prayerful waiting for the growth,

and the watering with tears, and then, after all, the gathering in of the ripened fruit—this care of immortal interests is, and ever will be, a work of unequalled arduousness and anxiety. And it is said, that no class of men go down to the grave so prematurely as these. The remark is not made in commendation of those who sustain the office of the Ministry; for it is confessed, that they all fall short of this work, and that if they please to hazard their souls, they can make it light and easy. But I speak of it as God has made it, and I say, that if it be fairly viewed and well understood, there is a shrinking of the soul from it, which nothing but a divine impulse can overcome. Such labourers as will work hard, and faithfully gather in the harvest, there wants a supernatural influence to incline: and such, we are directed to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth.

There is no being so much interested in securing the harvest as the Lord of it. It is the very joy that was set before him, and in view of which he endured the cross. It needs no persuasions and entreaties to induce him to send forth the necessary labourers. And yet he makes it the duty of Christians to pray to him on this behalf, and withholds the labourers while he waits for their prayers. Neither the twelve nor the seventy were sent forth, until after this direction was given, and I suspect, not until after it had been obeyed. This is another interesting arrangement in the economy of grace. Here again God suspends the success of the Gospel on the will of man. He has not only made the reaping of the harvest dependent on the exertions of

men, but also the sending of the labourers on the prayers of men. He makes Ministers one link in the chain of salvation, and he makes Christians another; and if in so doing he gives an importance to us, he does also lay a proportional responsibility upon us. It is an honour, but then it is a most fearful honour, to have the destinies of immortal beings in any measure suspended on our fidelity!

I would ask, if this duty of praying for an increase of labourers is attended to in any wise as it ought to be? Is it not greatly neglected? I have asked myself the question, and it has been negatived. How is it with you? Ask ye at conscience, and hear her report. Do we not forget to make this one of our petitions in our daily prayers? There must be labourers, and they must be sent; and they will not be sent, unless we pray that they may be. We are commanded thus to pray. It is but a few things that we are expressly directed to pray for, and this is one, as being an object of pre-eminent importance. Pray ye, then, for more labourers.

But is this all that is required of us? I imagine not. It is rarely our duty merely to pray for an object. It is most commonly our duty to do something more for it than that. There are very few interests which we cannot promote in other ways, than by our prayers merely; and if we are disposed to promote them by our prayers, we shall be disposed to promote them in every other manner that is possible. There is a multitude of parts in the Christian character, and a beautiful consistency between them. It is not the shooting up and spreading

forth of a solitary virtue, but the simultaneous development and uniform growth of a multitude of virtues and moral excellencies.

It is our duty and our delight to *pray* that labourers may be sent forth; it is manifestly our duty, and ought to be our delight to go ourselves, if sent, and to be willing to be sent. Consistency requires this. You pray God to select and send forth from a company, of which you are yourself one. This implies that you are willing he should select you. But if obviously it be not your duty to engage officially in this work, is there therefore nothing remaining for you to *do*, but just to pray that labourers may be sent forth? Is this all that consistency requires of you? It is, if it be absolutely all that you *can* do. Your obligation is collateral with your ability. But you can do more than this. You are bound then to do more than this. You *can* encourage and assist others to engage in this work. Then it is your duty to do it. If there be those who seem to be qualified in point of piety and natural capacity, it is your duty to help them, if help they need, to become qualified in point of literature and theology. For the Ministry requires furniture of earth, as well as of heaven; the stocking of the head, as well as the storing of the heart. Ministers were once miraculously furnished; and so furnished were they, that there was not one of those apostolical fishermen that could not, if he pleased, entertain as well as instruct the politest audience. We have no such fishermen now! Now, men are furnished for the Ministry in the ordinary, and slow, and expen-

sive manner in which they are furnished for other employments; and if in this they need assistance, and you can render it, you ought to render it.

And now, in concluding these remarks, I may observe that *two* points of great importance have been presented in the progress of them. *First*, the necessity of great exertions being made at this present time—that the whole strength of the Church should be put forth at this particular crisis; that we should all set to at once to gather in and secure the ripened harvest. Oh, that there were such a heart in us! *The other* is, that much of the strength of the Church should be put forth in prayer to the Lord of the harvest, and that she should exert her power more in wrestling with Him. There may be some danger of the Church's placing too much reliance on money, and setting too little value on prayer. The gift of God cannot be purchased with money. It is needed, it is true; but the widow's mite, accompanied with her prayer, may be worth more to the cause, than the rich man's munificence without it. It is not money, it is not physical force, nor intellectual effort, nor secular influence, but prayer that operates upon the lever which moves the world. *Prayer is the power.* This was the secret of Abraham's influence with heaven—this the mean's of Jacob's prevailing—in this lay the strength of Elijah. What has it not done? What can it not do? It has opened heaven once, and can do it again. It can remove moral mountains. It can save the spiritually sick. The Church is omnipotent by prayer. There must be prayer, and *more* prayer, and prayer of the right

kind, and prayer impregnated with love, and made buoyant by faith, coming from the heart, and carrying the heart along with it, in the name of the great High Priest. And then there will be more labourers, and they will be *labourers* divinely sent and trained; and then there will be voluntarily offered all the money that is wanted, for the silver and gold of the world belong to Him who hears prayer. And I think we should get more for religious objects, if we practically recognized this truth, and solicited God as importunately as we sometimes solicit men. It is at the throne of grace that our hearts are made sensitive to feel, and become large to communicate. It is there in communion with God that we approximate, as near as we can, to the knowledge of the worth of the soul, and learn the comparative worthlessness of every thing but the soul. Oh, if a man will but pray, so as to be heard on high, he may do as he pleases in other things, for his pleasure will be his duty. God forbid that we should sin against him, in not praying the Lord the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

God forbid that any youth should go, unsend by Him. It were better for him that he had never been born! And God forbid, that at such a day as this, any whom He calls should *refuse* to go! He will at last enter heaven if he be God's child; but if that be possible, he will enter it with a blush of shame! How can he meet Martyn, and Buchannan, and Mills, and Urquhart, and Paul, and the Lord of the harvest! How can he bear the sight, at the last day, of souls lost, *because, when the Lord called, he refused!*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

AND

Obituary

OF

JOHN S. NEWBOLD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE is in the Library of "the Society of Inquiry on Missions" in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J. a most interesting manuscript-work in two volumes, called "THE OBITUARY," in which, as its name imports, the *last days*, especially, (though a brief biography commonly attends it) of all deceased persons who have once been members of that Institution—are recorded.

It is a work, which, alas! is but too certain of enlargement. It is replete, already, with affecting and useful sketches of the life and death of some of our most devoted and distinguished young Ministers, or candidates for the sacred office.

Not less than forty names are here registered among the dead; and the second volume is rapidly filling up. Who next shall be there enrolled, God alone can tell!

As a memorial of departed worth, these volumes are most creditable to the Society:—and to the future his-

torian of the American Church, will be rich in important matter.

But, in the mean time, it seemed a circumstance greatly to be regretted, that so many interesting and profitable narratives should be entirely withheld from the Christian public.

We feel this the more, from having intimately known many of the lamented subjects; from a careful perusal of the solemn contents; and from a persuasion that candidates for the Ministry, generally, might derive from them important benefit, as well as great pleasure. With these views it was, that we (having a special regard to the Candidates under the care of the Board of Education) requested permission of the Society, through a friend, to publish a portion of these narratives in the little volume in which they now appear:—and we cannot too heartily thank our young brethren of that venerable Seminary, for the promptitude and kindness with which they yielded to our wishes.

We present the following as specimens only, of the entire work, having no space in the present volume of our Annual for more. But we hope to be permitted to enrich its future pages with similar and more copious extracts.

It is due to the “Society of Inquiry” to say, that

though the pieces are generally well written, most of them are the productions of early youth, and were not originally designed for the press. We have thought it best, however, with the exception of a few verbal corrections, to publish them as they were written, proceeding as they do, from the hearts of pious youth, weeping at the tombs of departed brethren and fellow-students.

If these pages should meet the eye of surviving relatives of the deceased, we are persuaded they will approve our humble attempt to honour their memory, and to make them speak from the grave. The facts are considered public property; and having been furnished by their friends for the Archives of a public institution, there can be no indelicacy in making the *present use* of them.

May these simple and almost sacred annals do much good, as they go forth upon the minds of a great number of youth, now looking to the sacred office! May they learn from these solemn memorials, that no extent of present usefulness—or promise of it for the future, can avert the stroke of death!

THE EDITOR.

Philadelphia, Oct. 8th, 1832.

BIOGRAPHY OF

JOHN S. NEWBOLD.

JOHN SMITH NEWBOLD, was born on the 1st October, 1795, in the city of Philadelphia. He was distinguished from early youth by a disposition peculiarly amiable and engaging, an active and ingenuous mind, a memory uncommonly retentive, and a conscientious regard for truth. His deportment was cheerful, and, in his early years, even gay; yet a consistency and dignity marked his character, which caused him to be regarded almost with reverence by the youthful members of the family. After finishing the usual term of preparatory education, and with marks of peculiar approbation from his teachers, he left Philadelphia on the 8th November, 1813, for Princeton, and was admitted into the College of New Jersey, as a member of the Sophomore class.

We have been often led to admire the manifest leadings of an all-wise Providence at this time. His mother had always objected strongly to his going to college, on account of the fear of exposing her son to the temptations and dangers associated in her mind with a college life. He had endeavoured to quiet her apprehensions and sooth her fears on his account, considering them as

groundless, but her reluctance was still great at parting with him. How little did she know the rich blessings that were in store for him; that at this very place he should see his lost state as a sinner, and be enabled to flee to that Saviour who was his confidence and hope!

It was his intention, when he had finished his college course, to study medicine. He frequently expressed his sentiments on this subject with much animation, and thought the ability to relieve the sufferings of his fellow creatures would be productive of great happiness to him. At this time he seems to have had no claims to the character of a christian;—but his conduct and all his intercourse was distinguished by a dignity, joined to an affability, that secured the respect and affection of all that knew him.

In the October vacation of 1814, he was remarked by his family to be more serious than usual, but they could not account for it then. At this time he said, (referring to what he supposed would be his future profession) that he wished to be a *Physician to the soul* as well as to the body, and asked, privately, to have a Bible put into his chamber. He returned to college, and continued, without any particular indications of seriousness, until the 14th January, 1815, when his family received a letter stating the change which he hoped he had undergone. Addressing his mother, he says: “Although I shall not have time to write much, I thought I had better write to you in order to communicate to you a circumstance, which I hope will make you and the rest of the family sincerely glad. You have heard me speak

sometimes of the excellent preaching we have here. I have now to inform you, that through the blessing of God upon it I have been made to have some serious impressions in regard to my situation, which I hope and trust, through the mercy of God, will not be extinguished, but will continue to increase and accompany me through my whole life, and finally gain for me a blessed immortality. I do not doubt, my dear mother, that this information will give you sincere pleasure; at least, it has had this effect upon some pious young men in college;—how much more, then, upon you, who, I am certain, take such a deep interest in my welfare. It gives me pleasure also to mention, that there are appearances of several others being inclined soon to follow the same path which I am endeavouring to follow; and God grant that I may be enabled to persevere in following it. How happy should I be made, if, at my return home in the vacation, I should find a like change had taken place in all at home: that you had all been made to know your best interests! It is my daily prayer that this joy may be mine; and oh, may my prayers be heard!"

From this time we shall make frequent extracts from his weekly communications with his family, which afford the most faithful transcript of his religious views and feelings, and the most interesting outline of his noble character. Although this change in his sentiments appears to have been very sudden, yet in his next letter he mentions, it was not so much so as was supposed—"Serious impressions were made upon my mind

in some degree towards the close of the last session, which were considerably interrupted during the vacation, but revived with double force on my return to college this fall. I did not know that there was any body similarly affected in college, which, of course, kept me from declaring my sentiments until I thought they would, through the Divine blessing, be lasting."

From this time it was his constant endeavour, by the most faithful and affectionate exhortations, to interest those who were nearest his heart, in the concern of their soul's salvation. This will be exemplified fully in the following extract of a letter dated March, 1815: "I have written you so often on the subject of religion, my dear * * * * *, that I do not know what more I can say. But I do hope I have not written altogether in vain. Have you not felt sometimes that what I told you, however feebly expressed, was nevertheless true, and of the utmost importance? Have you not felt sometimes half inclined to be religious; and do you not intend to be so yet some time or other! Surely you do not intend to die without making some preparation for eternity; then why delay? What hinders you but want of inclination! Why don't you, then, strive, my dear * * * * *, while God is inviting you so tenderly, and promising that if you will strive you shall obtain it? When Jesus Christ died to save you, why will you destroy yourself? This short and sorrowful life will soon, very soon, be past, and our spirits will return to God who gave them; and oh, how awful will that return be for us, if we should be called away in an unprepared state!

The time must come, and however it may seem to linger, it is approaching with dreadful rapidity. Can you look forward without being dismayed? Can you look into the grave, that cold and silent mansion for all the living, and to which we are all hastening, and not shudder? Can you look forward to the morning of the resurrection, and not almost think you hear the archangel's trump summoning you to appear at the dread tribunal of an offended God? Remember that the same Jesus whom you might have for an Advocate and Saviour, will otherwise be your Accuser and your Judge; that as his mercy is infinite, so also is his wrath. Oh, then, while you have time and opportunity, make him your Saviour; try to obtain an interest in his death and inconceivable sufferings. Do not think me too harsh in what I have written; indeed, it is a subject not to be trifled with. Oh, may God make us all trophies of his redeeming love and grace!"

Of these letters, one of his sisters says, "I trust, with him that these affectionate remonstrances have not been in vain. All that this dear brother said and did, deeply interested us; and if any of us have a hope, through grace, of eternal life, it is entirely through his instrumentality."

In the spring vacation of 1815, (the first he spent at home after the revival in the college,) his whole deportment was impressively solemn and affectionate. He took the earliest opportunity to converse, and "I think," says his sister, "piety never shone in a more amiable, yet forcible light, than in him; bringing every power into subjection to Christ Jesus, without the least appearance

of ostentation or gloom. Yet it could not but be observed, that his face, generally pale, was now more than usually so, and a slight pain in his breast caused us some apprehension on account of his health."

From that time till he left Princeton, he was more or less subject to this pain; and dated its origin, it is believed, from the time when his mind became *occupied so much, as he said, with things of a higher nature, that bodily exercise was for a season almost entirely neglected.** On his return to Princeton, he was led to more frequent exercise, and in consequence was much better, and more free from pain than when in the city. At the close of the vacation spoken of above, he was confirmed, and afterwards made a public profession of religion in the Episcopal Church. From the time that he was first religiously impressed, his views, which had formerly been towards the study of medicine, were directed to the Ministry. He graduated 25th September, 1816, highly distinguished for talents, scholarship, and piety, having received the first honours of the class. On the 7th of November he entered the Theological Seminary in Princeton.

In his first letter from thence he says, "I hope and pray that it may please God to bestow upon me the necessary qualifications to make me a useful and faithful minister of the Gospel. My wants are very great, but in Jesus there are inexhaustible treasures of grace, from which I hope to be supplied. Oh, that I were more sen-

* How often is the Church of Christ called to deplore this sad indiscretion in some of her most promising sons!—*Ed.*

sible of the greatness of my necessities, and more earnest seeking to have them supplied!"

"From the tenor of two or three letters during his last session," says his sister, "our friends were in some measure prepared for a conversation we had with him in January, 1817, in which he mentioned the probability of his going, at some future period, as a Missionary to the heathen. In the first of these he mentions the frequent and pleasant walks he had with one of his most intimate friends, and that the subject of their conversations was of a nature very interesting to them; and of which, perhaps, he would give us some account in the vacation." In another, a short time afterwards, he writes, "We do not know how widely we may be separated in this world; and we ought to be ready and willing to make every sacrifice which our duty may require. This remark does not apply so immediately to the case in hand, as to what may be the case a year or two hence. We do not know, however, but that some separations of a more solemn and interesting kind may take place before that time, and for these it should be our constant and assiduous endeavour to be prepared. For this purpose we should study to have our affections very much loosened from earthly objects, we should walk in communion with God, in the faith of Christ, and in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." In a third, (one of the last he wrote from Princeton,) after mentioning how much we had been separated for the previous eight years, he says, "But there are many who spend a longer time than that without being at home at all, and many

whom distress, or the love of wealth, and a few whom the love of Christ and of perishing souls, lead to spend their whole lives in foreign lands. How many and how different are the causes which separate the members of the same family from one another; yet if they are also members of the family of Christ, they ought not grieve. Though in this world they are debarred the pleasure of each other's society, yet they have a mansion where they shall dwell together forever. It is a truth, there *remaineth* a rest for the people of God. Do we think seriously and frequently enough of this consoling truth? I know, that for myself, I do not; and I believe this is a common fault among Christians. If we did, we should not live such cold, unprofitable lives as we do; we would not make so much of every trifling object of time and sense, and be so much concerned about the ease and comfort with which we should pass through life. Our time of continuance here is short; our rest is sure and glorious; it has been bought with blood; it is bestowed on the unworthy; shall we not labour then to fill up our time in that way which was our Saviour's constant aim? O, let us pray for the grace of his good Spirit to mould our hearts into perfect conformity to his will." He afterwards speaks of the Missionary Society in the Seminary, and says, "It is to be lamented that a missionary spirit does not prevail more amongst us. It seems as if one might say, if a missionary spirit does not glow in *your* breasts, where are we to look for it? I do not believe a single one amongst us is resolved for this work;

and there are not more than two or three who think seriously about it!"

From the time that he became deeply sensible of the value of his own soul, he manifested a deep concern for the Heathen; and it is not recollected that he ever addressed a throne of grace without mentioning them.

The frame of his mind on entering the last year of his life may be known by the following extract from a letter dated January 2d, 1818: "This is the first time I have made the figures of the new year, and as this is the first letter of the year, I begin with sending you the compliments of the season, my sincere and hearty desires that you may have many and happy returns of it; and that every succeeding one may find you more engaged in religion, more devoted to the service of God, and experiencing more of the blessedness of it; that Jesus may become more and more precious, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit more constant, purifying, and comfortable. How much reason have I to be thankful to the Lord for his continued goodness and mercy to me. Indeed, we have all cause for thankfulness; and now, at the beginning of this year, it becomes us to enter upon it with humiliation for the sins of the past, and with purposes of new obedience for the future. Whether we shall be permitted to see the end of it, is known only to the Lord; but we should endeavour so to live, that whatever may be his will concerning us, we may be prepared for it."

He had been admitted a candidate for holy orders in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, October 28, 1817; and on

May 20th, 1818, he left the Seminary with the expectation of finishing his theological course in Philadelphia.

Here his affectionate fellow-students would record their testimony to that uncommon worth, which is so deeply engraven on the hearts of all who knew any thing of the humble and vigorous mind,—the noble, and disinterested, and holy spirit of this exemplary Christian. The memorials of his excellence are not confined to a few intimate friends who knew him best. All his fellow-students, as they were the objects of his love, and the subjects of his fervent prayers, were sharers in the influence of his godly example, and will affectionately remember NEWBOLD, their departed brother, to the end of their days. In the circle of private friendship he was cheerful, entertaining, faithful, and edifying. In societies for doing good he was always extremely active, taking a leading part in every scheme for the glory of God that was within his reach. The plan of Sabbath School instruction, which promises do so much for the world, was commenced in Princeton by him. He possessed an uncommonly penetrating mind, well stored with the most useful information; and one spurred on to fatal diligence by the best of motives, which, while it was accumulating with surprising activity the best of all knowledge, was laying it at the feet of Jesus. Yet he was well known, too, among the numerous poor whom he visited, instructed, and comforted; and even the stranger whom he met in his private walks, was soon apprised by his pious exhortations that he was a disciple of Jesus. In a word, his whole character was such as

this world had rarely known, even amongst those who have devoted the longest lives to its attainment.

Soon after he left the Seminary, it was observed that he had a slight cough, but it did not excite in us any alarm, till on the evening of the 27th, when, having coughed harder than usual, he said with great composure, "I am spitting blood." This was the beginning of his fatal disease. The family physician was sent for, but *he* appeared to look to the great Physician, for, as he afterwards said, he knew not what might be the immediate result. His mind seemed occupied the remainder of the evening in meditation. Bleeding, and a low regimen, were prescribed for him, and he was prohibited much conversation. At each return of hemorrhage, which was frequent, his strength was gradually reduced. It was, therefore, advised that he should spend as much as possible of the hot weather in the country. He left home on the second of July, attended by one of his sisters, and visited several of his relations residing in New Jersey. In the minds of all who saw him during this little tour, he excited a deep interest. Many of them viewed him as much nearer eternity than he really was, and already ripe for heaven. So perfect an example of patience and submission was he, that he seems to have left, in these, that proved, indeed, farewell visits, impressions that will never be effaced. "Perhaps you will be surprised," says his sister, "that but little conversation on the subject of the removal of this dear brother passed between him and us. The fact is, to us the suggestion of the idea was agonizing; he knew how we loved him,

and, when he remotely hinted at it, he saw the pain which it occasioned. This was the reason why so little was said. But often he took occasion to speak of the happiness of the saints in light. One Sunday evening in particular, when we were setting alone in our little room in the Pines, how sweetly did he discourse on the privilege of being called home in the season of youth, of the blessed employments of Heaven, and of the sinfulness and selfishness of immoderate sorrow for the loss of those whom we did not doubt were before the Throne of God."

He returned from the excursion on the 12th September, and, through the pleasant weather of the fall, his health was thought to be certainly improving, and a strong hope was entertained, that his passing the winter in a warmer climate would, with the Divine blessing, improve, if not entirely restore it. "Accordingly, on the 5th of November, he left home for Savannah. The parting was most painful to us all. Our trust was in God alone, to preserve and restore us again to each other. All this time my dear brother preserved the utmost composure. He seemed to indulge a faint hope that his journey might be of benefit, and with that hope, wished rather to go than not, though he said, perhaps it *would be better for me*, as Dr. Alexander once observed of persons surprised by an ill-turn, *to set my house in order, and prepare to die, instead of travelling abroad seeking health*. He took with him some suitable books, but never opened them. The Bible alone, of all books, interested him. While he had strength, nothing

prevented him from perusing it daily with meditation, and often it was read to him at his request. At these times his remarks were most edifying and beautiful. On religious subjects he continued to the last to speak with animation. His *missionary views* did not decline with his health. He frequently expressed regret that he was leading so useless and inactive a life, and that he did not feel that zeal for God that he once felt. It was observed to him, that he was now incapable of active exertion from weakness; but that if he had strength, he would, no doubt, be as ready to engage in it as ever; which he admitted might, perhaps, be the case.

“He sailed from New Castle November 7th, and was favoured with a mild, short passage. At sea he was subjected to many inconveniences, of which, however, he never complained; but which, as an invalid, he must have felt sensibly. He arrived at Savannah on Sunday evening 15th, and went to reside in the family of a friend and physician. He appeared to have taken no cold at this time, from which favourable conclusions were drawn, much as he had been unavoidably exposed on board, and in landing, and the weather had been cool and rainy. In a day or two, however, he raised a small quantity of blood; from that time he was subject to hoarseness and some degree of oppression at the breast in damp weather, from which he always recovered as soon as it became clear. Every fine day he either rode or walked out, and though all saw how weak he was, it was still hoped he would soon become stronger, as his symptoms had assumed a favourable appearance. The

week preceding the last of his life, he walked out with more pleasure and less fatigue than he had since our arrival. At this time the weather changed most unfavourably; it was very damp and cold, such a season as had not been known there for many years. This was too much for his weak frame to endure. He soon complained of a pain in his side, and a difficulty of breathing. On Tuesday morning he came down stairs, while the family were at breakfast; appeared to be weak, and ate but little. His mind, through the whole of his *last day upon earth*, seemed quite abstracted from the world. He spoke with great difficulty; not without drawing a breath between every word. He asked Dr. K. when he came in, to look at what he had expectorated. He before said that he thought it was ulcerated matter. The Dr. told him it was; he heard this without the least change of countenance, and seemed to think the time of his departure near. He said to his sister, as she sat by him, *It seems as if the Lord's blessing has not attended our coming here.* It would be almost impossible to give an idea of his appearance and manner through this day. He suffered great pain; but unless he had been asked, none of us would have known it. Not a single complaining word escaped him, nor any expression of suffering. Several times through this day he took medicine. At dinner and tea he occupied his usual place, though he eat but little. It was evident through the whole day that his illness had increased. In the evening the family all retired. During this time he said but little, but did not sleep. He sometimes inquired the

hour, and between one and two, asked if it was not time for the Doctor to come in. The Doctor was called. His patient was evidently worse, and did not appear to have sufficient strength to raise the phlegm which oppressed him. As his sister leaned over him, he said in a low, inarticulate tone, "*I hope it will please God to release me soon.*" How hard was the struggle to part with such a brother! But strength and resignation were given. She told him she hoped he would soon be *relieved*. He said I do not hope that, but that I may be *released*. She asked if it was because he suffered so much. He replied, I am afraid it is. He was told that he had no cause to think so, that he had always been resigned to the Lord's will. I was not prepared to die so soon, said he, that is, from the nature of his symptoms, he had not been prepared to expect his removal so speedily. When the Saviour, the Rock of Ages, on which he had rested, and the glories of that world to which he was soon to be introduced, were mentioned to him, and he was asked if he had not a good hope of acceptance through Christ, "Oh, yes!" he replied. On being asked if he had any thing to say to his dear family at home, he answered nothing very particular at this moment; give my love to all the dear children, and tell them to prepare for death. He then said, *give me time to pray*. For several moments he was engaged in earnest prayer. His voice was so low that his sister could understand but little of what he said; the tenor of it was in humility, confessing himself to have been unfaithful and sinful, unworthy of mercy, but hoping for it through the blood of

his Redeemer. At this time his eyes were closed, but the serenity of his countenance was not for a moment disturbed. He sunk rapidly, and spoke no more, nor opened his eyes again upon the world. "I would not," says his afflicted sister, "interrupt (by speaking to him) the peacefulness of his departing spirit." During the last fifteen minutes his breathing was scarcely perceptible; and it was difficult to say whether he was an inhabitant of this or a brighter world. On Wednesday, A. M. at quarter before 4 o'clock, the 23d of December, *he was released*. He fell asleep in Jesus. Truly "the righteous hath hope in his death." We can adopt for him the language of his favourite hymn,

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."



HENRY S. DEARBORN, JUNIOR

Late Pastor of the Presby. Church at N. Orleans

Portrait of Henry S. Dearborn, Jr.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

AND

Obituary

OF

REV. SYLVESTER LARNED.

*"The brightest star in evening's train
Sets earliest in the western main—
The brightest star in mornings' host
Scarce ris'n, in brighter beams is lost."*
James Montgomery.

BIOGRAPHY OF
SYLVESTER LARNED.

THE REV. SYLVESTER LARNED, the subject of this memoir, was born in Pittsfield, (Mass.) August 31st, 1796, and was the son of Col. Simon Larned, an officer of high standing in the American army. It is said that the germ of that commanding eloquence, for which he was so much distinguished in life, began to be seen and felt at the tenderest age. When quite a boy, while sporting with his brother on one occasion, he laid a wager with him that he could make him weep by *talking* to him. There was at that time nothing solemn in their situation or employment. But he commenced his appeal; and such was the mighty power of the young orator's pathos, that in a very short time he actually melted down his brother into unwilling tears; and then, with a wagish taunt, claimed his prize. At the early age of thirteen, he was chosen by his fellow-students of the Academy of Pittsfield, to deliver an oration on the Anniversary of our country's independence. This he did with a self-possession and a power, which surprised even those who admired him most. In his class he led without an effort; always idle, yet always eminent, it became a sub-

ject of great surprise, how this peculiar boy could, by a glance of thought, range his whole department of study, and without ever seeming to fix his attention upon his book, become familiar with its contents.

In his fourteenth year, he became a member of Williams College, (Mass.) but his instability of character in so extreme youth, soon subjected him to the censure of the ruling authorities. He therefore left this Institution; but he afterwards attached himself to Middlebury College, (Vt.) In the early part of his course here, also, he was wild and unsettled. The elements of his character were, by nature, tempestuously strong. His early life was marked by a constant tendency to excess, and his great activity of mind made him impatient of control. It was not until he had reached his senior year, that the hand of God arrested him. Of the particulars of this most important event of his life, and of the steps by which he was led on to this result of mercy, we are almost wholly ignorant. This cannot be too much lamented. In a case so striking, every circumstance would, probably, be eminently interesting and instructive. It is said, however, that his convictions of sin were deep and awful; the work rapid, conclusive, and thorough; and the change truly transforming.

Soon after this, he declared it to be the great purpose of his life to serve God in the holy Ministry. And in pursuance of this determination, after taking his first degree, at the early age of seventeen, he formed a connexion with the Theological Seminary at Andover, in

the autumn of 1813. He left that Institution, however, after the lapse of a single term, and returned home. During the period of his continuance there, which did not exceed a single year, he conducted a Grammar School, carrying on, at the same time, his preparations for the Ministry.

In the autumn of 1815, he was led to form a connexion with this Seminary.* Here every step assumes new interest, and an increasing importance accompanies every development of his unusual character. At this most solemn point, we would gladly surrender the subject to those who were members of the same little band, and who felt, and thought, and acted with him. They, who in the process of preparation knew him here most familiarly, and marked, in the successive stages, the formation of his character, possessed materials, the lack of which renders our best attempts at faithful history extremely imperfect. Yet even to those who were habitually with him, the unbroken uniformity, and noiseless progress of a course of study here, give nothing prominent in which character may be read, but the drift and general effect. Judging in this way, the result upon the whole bore a pleasing testimony to our departed brother's advancement in knowledge and in grace. He was a man of strong feeling, and of much action. Patient assiduity, and uniform habits of mind, were not so conspicuous during his connexion with this Institution. He thought more than he read, he acted and said more.

* At Princeton, N. J.

than he thought. His mind was uncommonly independent, original, rapid, and rich; so that he made much of little, and required much less preparation and thought than ordinary men to act his part with effect.

But there was an evident and most promising increase of strength of mind, of knowledge, and of personal piety, during his course of study here. It is pleasing to know, that he was often very actively engaged in doing good around him, while a member of this Institution. To the college he seems especially to have been tenderly drawn. He exerted a great influence over the minds of the youth generally; and it is believed that in more cases than one, he was the honoured instrument of converting to God those who have since preached the Gospel themselves. His religious feelings are said to have been greatly revived within him during the last year of his stay here. He had spent a short period of time in Elizabethtown and Newark, during the work of God in those places in the early months of the year 1817. From these sacred scenes he returned to Princeton deeply revived; and ever after while here, threw much more of the true spirit into all his duties, intellectual and spiritual. It was at this time, especially, that he laboured most faithfully and successfully in the College.

In the summer of 1817 he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of New York. The impression which he made upon the public mind was instantaneous, and very deep. Crowds began immediately to gather around him wherever he preached; overflowing

congregations hung in rapture on his lips, and were melted down under the power of his eloquence. Some have thought that so much popular impression has been made by no man so young, in this country, since the days of Whitefield.

About this time the claims of Louisiana, upon the Christian Church, began to be strongly felt. The standard of Christ Jesus had scarcely ever been erected in the city of New Orleans, though the centre alike of a large population and an immense influence. The Rev. Mr. E. Cornelius,* it is true, had, for a short season, been labouring there with faithfulness, and great effect. His connexion with the city was transient. But he was a *preparer of the way* to the efforts which ensued.

For the work of giving the Gospel a permanent and triumphant location here, a character of eminent enterprise was required. Most persons were as unfit as they were unwilling to attempt it. Larned was selected for it. He acquiesced, and was soon after ordained as an evangelist, for missionary labour in this important field. He very soon set out on his journey thither. Penetrating, in the first place, under the authority of a general mission, as far west as Detroit; he then went directly south, preaching the Gospel as he proceeded through Ohio and

* There was, in many points a peculiar, and very striking resemblance between these lamented servants of God, who have been removed so soon from the field below to their reward on high. It was this resemblance in fervour, boldness, commanding eloquence, and even in the nobility of their personal appearance, which enabled the one so harmoniously to succeed the other in the enterprize at New Orleans.—*The Editor.*

part of Kentucky, until he reached Louisville, of the latter State. Then, along with his fellow-labourer and friend, the Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain, he left the land, embarked on the Ohio river, and descended it and the Mississippi to New Orleans, touching as he went at the most important points of the country. He reached Orleans in good season, before the departure of the Rev. Mr. Cornelius, so as to derive all possible benefit from the influence which he had already acquired.

The arrival of such a man, under such circumstances, was well calculated to produce an extraordinary impression. A writer in the *Christian Spectator*, who was his friend and fellow-student here, speaking of this important event, says: "On his first arrival in that city, a general and unprecedented interest was awakened by his preaching; and every thing seemed to indicate that Providence had sent him there to produce a great revolution in the character of New Orleans. The uncommon majesty with which he exhibited the truths of the Gospel, the almost magic power by which he entranced and rivetted his hearers, drew after him a multitude composed of all classes, from the highest to the lowest in society. It soon became an object with some of the most respectable and influential gentlemen in the city, to secure his permanent settlement among them; and measures were accordingly adopted to accomplish this design. Mr. Larned listened to their proposals; and, as soon as was convenient, formed a Presbyterian Church, of which he consented to become the pastor."

In the summer of 1818, he made a visit to the North

and East, not only with a view to escape the sickly season of New Orleans, but to procure materials for building a house of worship. During this, the last visit he ever made to his native region, he preached in most of our northern cities, and left an impression of his solemn and overwhelming eloquence, which, it is believed, will not soon be forgotten.

In the autumn of this year, he again set out for New Orleans. Taking his route through the middle and western States, and preaching the Gospel as he went, he again embarked at Louisville, and reached his charge early in the winter. By his persevering efforts he was enabled to prepare for the reception of his congregation a spacious edifice, at the commencement of the next summer. During this season (1819,) he retired from the city to the German coasts, (in its vicinity,) until the prevalence of the epidemic had ceased. Shortly after his return to his flock, he was married to Miss Wier, formerly of Newburyport, Mass.

During the winter of 1819-20 he was invited by the First Presbyterian church, Baltimore, to succeed the Rev. Dr. Inglis; and he was at different times called to Alexandria, Savannah, &c. But he resisted every call, however seducing, and resolved to devote himself to the cause of Christ in Louisiana.

It is highly interesting here to know that he projected for himself a plan of a missionary exploring enterprize into South America, as soon as he could in safety leave his people for so long a time. But the God of Heaven had differently ordered. When the sickly season, at

which he had been accustomed to retire from the ravages of death, came on, he resolved to remain behind, and (if the God of Providence should please,) to perish with the poor of his people, who could not flee the city. Doubtless his soul was melted at the thought, that while death was making havoc of this devoted population, none remained behind when he was absent to point the dying sinner to the Saviour. The reflection must have moved him, that in affliction this hardened people might be tender; and the suspicion of having been driven by fear to fly from danger, he knew, with a people who measure every thing by courage, might have injured the cause of his Master more than even his life would benefit it. Whatever the motive, he resolved to meet the issue at his post, and if called to die, to die upon the field.

Until August, he was exceedingly well, and high hopes were cherished that the city would be spared the usual visitation of malignant fever. But they soon were awakened from these illusive hopes by its sudden appearance in the most awful form. Larned was indefatigable in his attentions to the sick and dying. It was surprising, and was made a subject of remark, how soon he found out even the afflicted strangers in the city who had been overtaken by this destructive malady.

The last Sabbath of August had been appointed by him as a day of public humiliation among his people, and prayer to God that he would deliver the devoted city from the awful visitation under which it groaned. He met his people in the morning, and also in the afternoon, of that solemn day. It was for the last time! Be-

fore its close, he was laid prostrate by a most violent attack of the fever. It soon broke his strength; it, for a season, shook the powers of his mind; and on August 31st he breathed his last! Such was the wild distraction of grief and wo around him, that scarce a fact in regard to his last hours has been treasured for the world. When the delirium of death was not on him, he was firm and collected. When most aware of his danger, he was most assured of his Saviour's presence and power; and in the language of the writer quoted above, "He was enabled to bear his dying testimony to the excellence of that religion which it had been his delightful employment to preach to others." As he approached the final conflict, he was calm and composed, and he left the world with the prospect of entering on an exceeding great reward.

His death cast the deepest gloom over the widowed city, and produced a strong sensation in almost every part of the nation. In his native region, the public grief was strikingly exhibited: and a sacred enthusiasm still kindles there, at the mention of his name!

In sketching a character so blended and peculiar, there is no small difficulty in adjusting its features so as to be just, without appearing sometimes extravagant, and sometimes severe. Of his intellect, it may be said, its most striking feature was *active power*. He was not remarkable for profound thought, or for very accurate acquirement. But every effort he made on every subject to which he chose intensely to direct his attention, bore witness that this was not owing to a want of mental

power, but of mental patience. The fervour of his feelings often made his mind discursive. His imagination was extremely bold, vivid, and impatient of control: and it is probable that his more solid qualities suffered from these propensities. It was in truth natural for him thus to be seduced by powers exerting such a controlling influence over the passions of men. The paths of cool inquiry would appear a circuitous route to the human mind, to him who, by a single effort of irresistible pathos, could transfuse his spirit through every auditor, and break the heart in pieces at a blow. His eloquence was chaste, ardent, and commanding. If it had a fault, there was too much sentiment in it, and too little thought; and the discerning hearer was sometimes called to regret that the dress of a manner almost unrivalled was not always filled up by an equal power and richness of matter. When he first appeared as a Minister of the Gospel, (as he himself has owned) he was led to bestow too much attention on what he thought most likely to attract the mass of men; we allude to his style of writing, and mode of illustrating divine truth. But when he became a settled pastor, he found that eloquence would not feed his people. A great revolution immediately took place in his style of instruction. He became more plain, more didactic, and evangelical; and the consequence was, that while they who had been attracted by human power, were displeased, the sheep of the fold found more of that food which came down from above.

His piety, though sincere, was not of an order com-

mensurate with the other features of his character. He was, perhaps, too much a man of frames, both in spiritual and intellectual things. He depended too much on feeling. When roused, he was remarkable for his power in prayer; and, whenever he spoke in public, much of the effect he produced, was by a strong tide of feeling, which, in its warm flow, melted down whatever it touched.

Sometimes he sunk into great lethargy and inaction of Christian spirit; but again he would rise to a height of glowing zeal, and long continued exertion, in his Master's cause.

His natural constitution of character was impulsive, and somewhat unstable, and might be expected to manifest itself in his religious life. Probably, too, those fluctuations of feeling to which all Christians are subject, were more exposed upon the surface of a character which carried with it no power or purpose of concealment, but lived out every emotion to the eye of man. And in an age of superficial piety, a part of the censure which these remarks may seem to involve, attaches itself to the day in which he lived.

Yet there are written on the hearts of all his Christian friends, many sacred evidences of his Christian character and worth: and every day he lived, continued to strengthen their confidence and exalt their hopes.

The strength of his nerves and personal courage was surprisingly great. It is related, that among his friends in New Orleans, he had one, a man of much personal prowess himself, who, in a fit of insanity, to which he

was subject, formed the design of taking Larned's life. This he kept a profound secret; and Larned, not aware of his friend's bewildered state of mind, was one day asked by him to take a walk into the country. He consented, set out, and had walked far out of view, when, to his amazement, the madman drew a dagger from his breast, and in a furious tone, ordered him to prepare to die! Larned was unarmed, but not intimidated, or forsaken by his presence of mind. Erecting himself before the armed madman in all the majesty of his bold and striking appearance, he exclaimed, "In the name of the Almighty, I defy you." His power of voice and manner, and his undaunted boldness, disarmed the man at once: the dagger fell from his hand; and he led him, like a harmless child, back to the city!

Such, in the freedom of truth, is the character of one of the most interesting and extraordinary young men who have ever appeared in our country. And now that he has been cut down, who will meet the foe in the field in which he fell? who will gather the scattered flock, and come forth in that city, great and guilty, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty?

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,

AT THE

ANNUAL EXAMINATION OF THE STUDENTS

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

MAY, 1832.

BY THE REV. GARDINER SPRING, D.D.
Pastor of the Brick Church, New York.

ADDRESS.

I HAVE never appreciated the embarrassment of addressing you, my young friends, until I am now, in the providence of God, called to this service. I shall not probably suggest a thought that has not frequently been suggested by those who have been called to this service before me. But if I shall be so happy as to present a few topics before your minds in such a light as shall have the least tendency to *increase and extend your usefulness* as men, as the ministers of Christ, I shall be abundantly gratified in the few moments I am allowed to enjoy with you.

The tendencies of piety are to produce good. "A good tree bringeth forth *good fruit*." The high aim of the true Christian is to be *useful*. This is the tendency of his spirit, his affections, his desires, his hopes, his efforts, his whole renewed character. It is not that he may be a *splendid man*, but a *useful man*.

A minister of the Gospel presses after a prize of very questionable lawfulness, when he aims at being a *splen-*

did minister ; but he has no misgivings of conscience when he honestly aims at being a *useful minister*. He will be very apt to be disappointed if he aims at being a *great and splendid minister* ; but he will rarely, if ever, miss his mark, if he aims at being a *useful minister*.

You have a thousand times been told, that to meet the high claims of the work for which you are preparing, you must possess *ardent and uniform piety*. Your *usefulness* will, in a great measure, depend upon the power which the religion of the Gospel exerts upon your own soul. To this, more than any other cause, may be traced the secret power of such men as Baxter, Edwards, Brainerd, and Payson. One reason why so many ministers live to so little purpose is, that while they may perhaps be good men, they are obviously *deficient* in that personal piety which has a transforming effect upon the heart and deportment. God and heaven are not the point of attraction towards which their minds and efforts are perpetually tending. I have known ministers of splendid talents not half so useful as many of their humbler brethren ; and who probably will not be found in those illumined departments of the heavenly city, where they "that turn *many* to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." You never can be faithful ministers, and therefore you never can be *useful* ministers, without fervent piety. You will not be faithful to the truth of God, nor to the souls of men. You will not take pleasure in your work, nor endure its trials, nor be eminently successful in

winning souls to Christ, without fervent piety. Piety, my young friends, must be your great adornment, and give your character its lustre. The bare hopes of piety, and even its predominating graces, ought not to satisfy you. Her self-denying spirit, her heaven-aspiring affections, her exalted and humbling joys, her unreserved self-devotement, her increasing purity, her sweet sensibility and tenderness, her absorbing confidence in the cross, and her deep and restless solicitude for the best interests of men; these, under a wise direction, will not fail to make you *useful ministers*.

It is almost too obvious a remark, especially to you, to say, that to be a useful minister, a man must be *well instructed in the oracles of God*. But there are several reasons for making this remark, just at this time. You have the best opportunity for religious instruction of every kind. To say nothing of the excellent instructions you are receiving in the different departments of divine learning, immediately from the *Holy Scriptures*, which we all know to be the *only infallible rule* of faith and practice, the standards of faith adopted in this Seminary, I am more and more persuaded, must commend themselves to every reflecting and sober man. I know there is a growing prejudice against forming and subscribing creeds or confessions of faith; and it is not surprising that this prejudice should exist in a youthful mind. But if there are essential doctrines of the Gospel, and if these doctrines can be ascertained and defined, where is the impropriety of embodying them in some well digested formula?

By nothing has the baneful influence of error been so generally counteracted, and the cause of truth so generally promoted, as by judicious confessions of faith. New England owes her orthodoxy, under God, to the *Assembly's Catechism*; and not until that excellent summary of doctrine fell into disuse, did some of her churches decline from the faith of their fathers. Old England too, owes its remaining orthodoxy to the *thirty-nine articles*. And, where will you find a formula which more clearly ascertains and defines the system of doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures, than the *Catechism and Confessions of Faith of the Presbyterian Church*? I am confident you will appreciate these remarks, gentlemen, and you will do so the more, the oftener you reflect upon them, unless you yourselves are carried about with every wind of doctrine, and fall away from the steadfastness of the Gospel. Equally confident, am I, that you have special cause for appreciating them at the present crisis of the American Church. Already are there such departures from the essential truths of the Gospel among us; already have so many become wavering and unsettled in their religious sentiments, that there is peculiar obligation on those who are preparing for the sacred office, to *investigate and understand* the meaning of the Bible. Do not allow yourselves to be satisfied with *vague notions* of the truth of God. To this we have seen, to our sorrow, not a few of the youthful Ministry are exposed. As the guardians of this sacred Seminary, the Directors have not a little solicitude that no youth should go from these walls before

he has formed a well digested system of religious truth. Let it be a maxim with you to have *no views, only so far as they are definite*. It were unspeakably better to understand a few truths well, and to know them certainly, than to expatiate vaguely over the extended fields of Christian science. The *certainty* of knowledge is a very different thing from the *extent* of knowledge. Because you may have but a *partial* and *imperfect* view of divine truth, it does not follow that you must of necessity be in darkness and uncertainty in relation to those truths with which you are familiar. Though no man that ever lived, should perfectly know all that God has revealed, this would not prove that he does not know many things with perfect *definiteness* and *certainty*. Though our natural eye-sight is limited, so that we cannot see beyond a certain circle, nor all things at once in any circle, yet, we can see one thing at a time, and that clearly. The same is true of the understanding. Though we may have no knowledge about some truths, and though we cannot contemplate and compare many truths at once; yet we can contemplate one thing at a time, and compare a few things together, and hence come to a definite and certain knowledge of such things as we can discern and compare, and from one truth clearly discover another, and so make slow, but progressive advancements in knowledge. And thus it is that we shall see clearly, and exhibit impressively the harmony, connexion, and consistency of the great truths which the Gospel reveals. It is this *definiteness* of view which we affectionately and urgently recommend to you. One

doctrine of the Bible consistently understood, will almost necessarily lead a devout and inquiring mind to perceive and appreciate, the harmony and connexion which run through all the peculiar and essential doctrines of the Gospel. The student who thoroughly understands one doctrine of the Gospel, will be very apt to understand another and another. Once let your views of divine truth be definite, and there is little danger that they will long remain distinct and prominent. Clear and definite views of God's truth, combined with ardent piety, go far to make a *useful minister*. If the treasures which infinite wisdom has accumulated in the Bible, abundantly enrich, and adorn, and give practical utility to the *Christian* character, how much more to the *ministerial*? Aim at high attainments in Christian knowledge. If you cannot excel in every thing, excel in this. Labour, study, *pray*, to excel in this. To be burning and shining lights, you must feel the pre-eminent claims of religious truth.

Another characteristic of a useful minister, is *untiring diligence and energy of action*. It was not by his talents merely, nor simply by his fervent piety, nor was it only by his enlarged views of the truth of God, but by his indefatigable diligence and action combined, with these, that the Apostle Paul accomplished a greater amount of good, than was ever accomplished by any other man. The life of a useful minister is an *eventful life*. It is fruitful in benevolent results. His energy is not developed so much upon set occasions, or by studied effort: his whole life is full of labours and events that are in-

timately connected with the best interests of men. I know of no class of men who labour more, or more severely, than FAITHFUL *ministers of the Gospel*. There are good ministers, pious men, who are called to contend with most inactive and sluggish habits, both of body and mind; and there are those who are never satisfied and happy unless they are in some way actively employed; and the difference in the aggregate of good accomplished by these two classes of men, will be found, in the course of years, to be immense, and almost incalculable. Let every young man who is looking toward the sacred office, settle it in his mind, that all his indolent habits must be broken up, if he has the most distant hope of becoming a useful minister of Christ! If he is not willing to harness himself for labour, he had better never enter the field. All the springs of his life will run down without effort. His hope and courage will sink and die away, if he has no spirit of enterprize. He will soon become a burthen to himself, and a cumberer of the ground. Perhaps I conceded too much, when I said that such ministers might be *good men*. A slothful minister is a contradiction, which it is very difficult to reconcile with the lowest standard of holiness. A man who is born for immortality; ruined by sin; redeemed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ: put into the sacred ministry; set to watch for souls; promised a reward that outweighs all the material universe; and yet, murmur at hardship, and complain that he must spend and be spent in the service of his Redeemer! My young friends, we hope better things of *you*. God expects better things. The Church demands them. The

age, the land which gave you birth, and nurtures you for scenes of toil and triumph such as the generations that are gone have never witnessed, expects better things of you, and things that accompany salvation to your own soul, and to this dying world.

To be eminently useful, you must also be *men of prayer*. In this respect every minister would do well to keep before his mind the example of such men as Luther, Knox, Whitfield, and Martyn. Nothing has so powerful a tendency to subdue the unhallowed affections of the mind, and the grosser appetites and passions of the body; nothing will so certainly control and direct your thoughts, and elevate them above all that is base and grovelling, trifling and *little*, as frequent and intimate fellowship with God. The great secret of mortifying a worldly spirit is to cultivate a heavenly one. "*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.*" "*Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds.*" No where does the world appear so much like an empty shadow, and no where is its baleful influence so certainly counteracted, as in sweet communion with things unseen. You will find also, that prayer furnishes the strongest stimulus, the most powerful incitement to self-denying duty and toil. And who has not observed that intelligent, earnest prayer improves all the powers and properties of the soul, and wakes up the mind from her sluggishness and apathy, to the exercise of the best and most ennobling affections? No where does that wonderful system of truth, that "*mighty range of motive,*" disclosed

in the Bible, obtain its sure and certain dominion over the soul, if not in the frequency, seriousness, and joys of familiarity with God. Were the history of ministers made known, I have no doubt that you might trace the distinguished usefulness of the most distinguished men to their closets. If you will review your own history, I think you will not fail to see that those periods of it have been most distinguished for usefulness, that have been most distinguished for prayer. The late Dr. Payson, in suggesting a few hints to a youthful brother in the Ministry, among other most valuable remarks, has the following: "The disciples, we read, *returned to Jesus, and told him all things; what they had done, and what they had taught.* I think that if we would every evening come to our Master's feet, and tell him where we have been; what we have done; and what where the motives by which we have been actuated; it would have a salutary effect upon our whole conduct. While reading over each day's page of life, with the consciousness that he was reading it with us, we should detect many errors and defects which would otherwise pass unnoticed." It is this familiarity with Jesus—they are these unaffected approaches to the throne of grace, through all the sins and duties, the mercies and trials of his course, that make the useful minister. I have seen ministers of very reserved habits in their intercourse with men, who were eminently useful because they conversed with God. You will *greatly abound* in the duty of prayer, if you are ever eminently useful in the sacred office.

It is also indispensable to distinguished and perma-

ment usefulness in a Minister of the Gospel that he *mortify an aspiring spirit*. Do not contend for pre-eminence. If you are thrown among those who contend for it, retire from the conflict. Strive to do good, and if your motives are impeached, let your habitual deportment be your only defence of them. I say again, beware of an aspiring spirit. There is scarcely any thing that has a stronger tendency to neutralize and counteract the benevolent designs of good men, than a self-complacent, aspiring spirit. *Beware* of it. Learn of him who was "meek and lowly in heart." He "that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

A Minister of the Gospel, to be eminently useful, must also be distinguished for no small share of *earnestness and zeal*. On this point I feel afraid of leaving a wrong impression on your minds. Zeal, without judgment and discrimination, spoils a man for a minister of the Gospel. A venerable clergyman once said, "I would make deficiency in *prudence* the ground of quite as serious and insurmountable objection against laying hands on a candidate for the Ministry, as I would a deficiency in piety or knowledge." Be ye "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." You have seen many a man who possessed commendable qualifications for the sacred office, concerning whom, after all, it might be said, *he is not a safe man*. You may possess exemplary piety, and distinguished talent, but without practical wisdom, you cannot become a useful minister. And

yet discretion may degenerate into timidity; may even lead to a trimming and calculating servility. A minister's character that is formed on the highest models of usefulness, must be distinguished for decision, energy, and zeal, as well as self-diffidence and discretion. There is no danger that your zeal will be too ardent, so long as it is the expression of *simple benevolence*. Seek not your own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent you, and you cannot be too zealous. Only be sure that your heart glows with the benevolence of the Gospel, and the flame cannot rise too high. True zeal will find its choicest aliment in cultivating the spirit of Jesus Christ. At a great remove from that false fervour and electric fire which has its origin in a selfish and ambitious mind, which hurries men on to act without consulting the sober dictates of their understanding, and which is distinguished for its subtilty, turbulence, and fickleness, it takes its rise from the meek and gentle spirit of holy love. It is warmed and fanned into flame by every breath of heavenly affection. It is simple, because it has nothing to disguise. It is strong and steady, because it is deliberate and cautious. It is unwearied, because, like the heaven-born charity from which it flows, "it seeketh not its own." And where shall we look for such a spirit, if not in the ministers of Christ? Where are there incentives to such a spirit, if not in the cross of Christ? Where did Paul find it, where did the primitive Christians find it, but in the love of Christ? What can support such a spirit, but those awful and touching realities, those weighty and tender truths which are ex-

hibited with such irresistible energy and vividness, in that wonderful redemption of which you hope to become the messengers to your apostate fellow men? A slight and cursory view of your great work, my young friends, will not answer the purpose of your high calling. Your minds must be roused to the importance of it; you must think intensely, and feel deeply; all your powers of body and mind must be awakened and invigorated in the service of your divine Master; nor should your resolution be impaired, or your efforts relaxed, till you are summoned from the field.

There is another topic on which I will make a few observations, which has an intimate relation to your usefulness, as the ambassadors of the Gospel of peace: and that is, the importance of exercising a *kind and fraternal spirit*. Charity suffereth long and is *kind*. Charity is not easily provoked. Charity thinketh no evil. Charity beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. O, if this spirit of kindness—this mutual forbearance—this patience of injury—this freedom from suspicion and jealousy—this spirit of fraternal love and confidence were more prominent in the character of the ministers of Christ, how would they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and recommend religion to the world! If I do not misinterpret, nor pervert the signs of the times, the day is near when there will be a peculiar demand for the cultivation of this spirit in the American churches. Deeply does it concern you, to wipe away this dark and foul reproach which stains the ministerial character. “If a man say, I love God, and hate his

brother, he is a liar ; for if he love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen ?” How often have we seen the usefulness of ministers lamentably circumscribed through the want of a kind and affectionate spirit ! There are ministers who need nothing but brotherly kindness to make them patterns of every thing that is praiseworthy. I know that the constitutional temperament of good men is various ; but there is no apology for the man whose external light is on the wane, because the glow of kindness declines within. You live in such an evil world ; a world where there are so many occurrences that are unavoidably painful—so many wrongs to be encountered and forgiven, and where there are such frequent requisitions for the exercise of a kind spirit, that if you do not take special pains to cultivate it, all the better feelings of your hearts will be suppressed, and the manly and generous spirit of a heaven-born religion will lose its glory in the envyings and suspicions of an earthly and selfish mind.

In a word, gentlemen, strive to possess the *uniformity* of character which the Gospel requires. It is worth much effort, watchfulness, and prayer, to guard against the more common faults and blemishes of ministerial character. It concerns you to cultivate every grace and virtue, and to be adorned with all the beauties of holiness. The usefulness of a minister of the Gospel depends much on this *uniformity* of character. As “*dead flies* cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, so doth a *little folly* him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.” *Little things* have more to do in

the formation of a spotless moral character, than we are at once willing to believe. Especially beware of *little deviations* from sterling rectitude. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." Little things exert a prodigious influence on the character of the ministers of the Gospel. It is impossible for the man who neglects them to command respect, or to be extensively useful. It is this *uniformity* of ministerial character which conciliates confidence and veneration, and which everywhere bespeaks a benevolent and elevated mind. Such a minister of the Gospel will not live in vain. He may have his superiors in some particular traits of excellence, but in that happy assemblage of excellencies that go to form the *useful minister* of Jesus Christ, he is one of the lights of the world.

THE END.

INDEX.

	<i>Page.</i>
An Introductory Essay. By the Rev. John Breckinridge.	5
Scripture doctrine of a call to the work of the Gospel Ministry. By the Rev. William S. Plumer, Petersburg, Va.	19
The importance of a thorough and adequate course of Preparatory Study for the Holy Ministry. By Samuel Miller, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.	55
Address to Students of Divinity. By Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, Scotland.	97
Considerations on Foreign Missions, addressed to candidates for the Holy Ministry. By Rev. James W. Alexander, Trenton, N. J.	123
Address to the St. Andrew's University Missionary Society on the Duty of Personal Engagement in the work of Missions. By John Urquhart, late of the University of St. Andrews.	139
An Address to Candidates for the Ministry on the importance of aiming at eminent piety in making their preparations for the Sacred Office. By Archibald Alexander, D.D., Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J.	173
On the necessity of a knowledge of the Original Languages of the Scriptures. By the Rev. Charles Hodge, A.M., Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J.	195

	<i>Page.</i>
Literary diligence recommended; a Baccalaureate discourse to the candidates for degrees in the college of New Jersey, on the Sabbath immediately preceding the annual commencement in 1820. By Ashbel Green, D.D. LL. D., of Philadelphia.	215
Essay on the wants of the world, and the way to supply them. By the Rev. William Nevins, A. M., of Baltimore. - - - - -	240
Biographical sketch and obituary of John S. Newbold. - - - - -	265
Biographical sketch and obituary of Rev. Sylvester Larned. - - - - -	287
An Address delivered at Princeton, New Jersey, at the annual examination of the Students of the Theological Seminary, May, 1832. By the Rev. Gardiner Spring, D.D., of New York. - - -	301



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